

Reflections on Psalm 119:1-8

In this study, we will explore the meaning of this passage by asking questions. We will begin with a general overview of the passage, followed by an in-depth look at individual verses. After this, we will step back again, look at what we have learned, and ask ourselves a few summary questions that can help us apply this passage to our own lives. Additional suggestions are provided for further study.

Note that the word "blessed" is sometimes translated as *happy*, but it goes beyond the normal use of that word. It represents an *internal* condition that is *not* dependent on *external* circumstances.

Psalm 119:1-8

- 1 Blessed are they whose ways are blameless,
who walk according to the law of the LORD.
- 2 Blessed are they who keep his statutes
and seek him with all their heart.
- 3 They do nothing wrong;
they walk in his ways.
- 4 You have laid down precepts
that are to be fully obeyed.
- 5 Oh, that my ways were steadfast
in obeying your decrees!
- 6 Then I would not be put to shame
when I consider all your commands.
- 7 I will praise you with an upright heart
as I learn your righteous laws.
- 8 I will obey your decrees;
do not utterly forsake me.

PART 1 - Overview Questions:

What does this passage tell us about the Bible (laws, decrees, commands, etc.)?

What does this passage tell us about God (his attitude, character, and actions)?

What does this passage tell us about the person who loves God and his Word (the person's attitude, character, and actions)?

Application:

- Do you believe (accept as true) what this passage says about God and his Word? If so, does it have an affect on your attitude, character, and actions? How?
- There are many passages in the Bible, which describe people who *don't* love God and his Word. Based on what you know from other passages, what are some of the contrasts between the person who *doesn't* love God and his Word, and the person who *does* love God and his Word (as described in this passage). What are some of the differences in their attitudes, character, and actions? How would these differences be expressed in the way each of them lives? Which of them best characterizes *your* lifestyle? Why?

PART 2 - Individual Verse Questions:

(The following questions focus on specific verses, but they take into consideration the entire passage (the context). Knowing this fact may influence the way you answer some of the questions.)

- v. 1-2 Who (or what type of people) are described as "blessed"? What is their attitude toward the Word of God?
- v. 3 What is the resulting lifestyle of these "blessed" people? In other words, how is their attitude (v. 1-2) reflected in their lives?
- v. 4 What does verse 4 say about the Word of God? (You can answer this question using all of v. 1-8, if desired.) Compare the description of those who are blessed (v. 1) to the requirements of verse 4. What is *your* rightful response, as suggested by these facts?
- v. 5 What is the author's desire? Are his desires being fulfilled? Why? (You may have to consider the entire passage, to answer this.)
- v. 6 When the author thinks about what God's Word says, what happens if he discovers that he has *not* been steadfast (v. 5)? Why? How do *you* respond when you haven't been faithful? Why?
- v. 7-8a Consider the author's resolve. What does he think about the Bible? What effect is it going to have on him? Why is he filled with praise? How does he get an upright heart?
- v. 8b What does the author *deserve* from God? Why? (*Everyone* has sinned. What do we *all* deserve from God?) What is the author's prayer or desire? Do his actions demonstrate the genuineness of his desire? Explain. Is his primary motivation "God-centered" or "self-centered"? Explain.

Application:

- Various facts are listed in verses 1-4. Compare your reaction to those facts to the author's reaction to them (beginning in verse 5). Do you have the same burning desires and resolve to do what is right? What do you demonstrate by your actions?
- This whole Psalm describes the attitude of a person who loves God and his Word. According to the things stated in these first eight verses, are you qualified to be called "a person who loves God and his Word"? Explain.
- If this passage does *not* describe your attitude and actions, what do you need to do, to change them? Are you going to do it? (How?)

PART 3 - Summary Questions

- Does the author consider himself to be one of the "blessed" people, described in verses 1-3? Does he do the things required in verse 4? If not, what is he willing to do, to become "blessed?"
- Compare yourself with the author. Are you qualified to call yourself "blessed," based on verses 1-3? How does your lifestyle reflect your values and attitudes (verse 3)? How does your view about God's Word compare/contrast with the author's view (v. 4 and elsewhere)?

Things You Can Do:

- Underline the words used to describe the Word of God. Observe their usage in other parts of this psalm. If you can, use a Bible dictionary or concordance, to study the meanings of these words, or to look at their usage in other parts of the Bible. [Some of the words are synonyms. Because of this, two Old Testament Hebrew words may sometimes be translated the same way, or different English translations may use different words for the same Hebrew word. This will not have any negative impact on your study, but will explain why the verses you look at may be slightly different from those you find in a different translation.]
- Write a small summary (or outline) of Psalm 119:1-8. Include a title which shows the primary focus of this passage.

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