

# Psalm 119: Ezra's Spiritual Diary on How to Use God's Word as the Sword of the Spirit

Ephesians 6:17 & Psalm 119

What does the Sword of the Spirit look like when used in the life of a believer?

Psalm 119: The Bible's Longest Chapter is a Spiritual Diary on How to Use God's Word as the Sword of the Spirit.

## God Gives So Many Amazing Examples to Follow

**Read the Word of God** like Jeremiah & Ezra (Jer. 15:16; Psalm 119)

**Study the Word of God** like Daniel (chapter 1,6,9)

**Memorize the Word of God** like Hannah & Mary (1 Sam. 2; Luke 1)

**Meditate upon the Word of God** like Joshua & Jeremiah (Josh. 1:8; Lamentations)

**Use the Word of God** like Jesus (Mt. 4 & Cross), David (Ps. 71), Paul (God who comforts, comforted me), Ezra (Psalm 119).

Perhaps the longest treatment on the power of the Word of God comes to us in Psalm 119

Please turn onward to one last chapter of God's Word, Psalm 119.

## Who Wrote Psalm 119?

And who wrote this longest chapter of God's Word? We're not sure.

Many different men are considered possibilities: David, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Malachi, or Daniel because there is no mention of the temple.

But in Jewish history, there is the clear candidate, as there is one who stands out above the others in his life and work, and that is Ezra.

## Ezra the Spiritual Giant

To the Jews only Moses eclipses Ezra in their Jewish history.

Why?

Ezra's life actually has touched every Jew and every Christian for the past 2500 years.

How?

**Ezra launched the Jewish Synagogues**, and wrote the reading schedule Jews follow to this day.

**Ezra launched the Scribes of the New Testament era**, and personally copied all the Scriptures into the Hebrew form that we have today.

**Ezra launched the Old Testament as we know it.** The order, structure, and book layout of entire Old Testament is the product of his careful work!

The result?

Psalm 119 is Ezra's testimony and also probably the content of his teaching and preaching to the 50,000+ exiles that came home to seek the Lord in Jerusalem!

## Ezra's Worldly Congregation

Ezra faced a worldly congregation, soaked in all the worldly ways of Babylon and Persia.

What was his plan to bring about lasting change in those he served?

He started with his own life.

He learned to point his heart frequently toward doing God's Will.

## Psalm 119 Stats

Psalm 119 is the **longest chapter in God's Word** (longer than the 17 New Testament Epistles from Galatians to Jude except Hebrews),

**God is mentioned** 176 times in these 176 verses.

**God's Word is mentioned** 182 x in 173 of these verses.

**Prayers are modeled** 70 times.

**Suffering is described** 66 times.

**Ezra refers to his personal spiritual life** 325 times (that's why I call this his spiritual diary).

We can actually examine the heart of Ezra through his teaching, by the words of this his testimony to the result of feeding his soul with God's Word.

## Ezra's Inspired Description of the Sword of the Spirit

First Ezra describes in Psalm 119 an inspired list of the eight life-changing facets of God's Word as the sword the Spirit uses in our lives.

Psalm 119:1-9 (NKJV)

Blessed *are* the undefiled in **the way**, (the path God wants us to walk)

Who walk in the **law of the Lord!** (the teachings of Divine teacher)

<sup>2</sup> Blessed *are* those who keep His **testimonies**, (God's witness about truth)

Who seek Him with the whole heart!

<sup>3</sup> They also do no iniquity; They walk in **His ways**. (the path God wants us to walk)

<sup>4</sup> You have commanded *us*

To keep Your **precepts** diligently. (God's directions for our lives)

<sup>5</sup> Oh, that my ways were directed  
 To keep Your **statutes!** (God's plans for our lives)

<sup>6</sup> Then I would not be ashamed,  
 When I look into all Your **commandments.** (God's absolutes for life)

<sup>7</sup> I will praise You with uprightness of heart,  
 When I learn Your righteous **judgments.** (God's decisions, written in stone)

<sup>8</sup> I will keep Your **statutes;** (God's plans for our lives)  
 Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

<sup>9</sup> How can a young man cleanse his way?  
 By taking heed according to Your **word** (God's voice He wants us to hear).

## God's Summary of His Mighty Word

1. **The Path God wants us to walk = WAY-13x (derek)** is from darak, to tread with the feet, and denotes the act of walking. Hence it is used of a going, or journeying. It occurs in this Psalm thirteen times: 1, 3, 5, 14, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 37, 59, 168.
2. **The Teaching of the Divine Teacher God wants us to learn = LAW-25x (torah)** is from yarah, to project, issue: hence, to point out, to show (Prov. 6:13). Then, instruct, teach. The Torah contains God's Instructions to His People, pointing out to them His will. In Ps. 119 it occurs twenty-five times: always in the singular: 1, 18, 29, 34, 44, 51, 55, 61, 70, 72, 77, 85, 92, 97, 109, 113, 126, 136, 142, 150, 153, 163, 165, 174.
3. **The Witness God wants us to trust = TESTIMONIES-23x ('eduth)** is from, to turn back again, to go over again, to reiterate, hence, to testify. It occurs in this Psalm twenty-three times: 14, 31, 36, 88, 99, 111, 129, 144, 157; 2, 22, 24, 46, 59, 79, 95, 119, 125, 138, 146, 152, 167, 168.
4. **The Directions God wants us to follow = PRECEPTS-21x (pikkudim)** is from pakad, to take oversight or charge: hence, mandates enjoined on others. It occurs only in the Book of Psalms (see 19:8; 103:18; 111:7). In Ps. 119 twenty-one times: 4, 15, 27, 40, 45, 56, 63, 69, 78, 87, 93, 94, 100, 104, 110, 128, 134, 141, 159, 168, 173.
5. **The Plans God wants us to use = STATUTES-22x (and hukka)** is from hakak, to hew, cut in, engrave, inscribe; hence, to decree, or ordain. In Ps. 119 it occurs twenty-two times: 5, 8, 12, 16, 23, 26, 33, 48, 54, 64, 68, 71, 80, 83, 112, 117, 118, 124, 135, 145, 155, 171.
6. **The Absolutes God wants us to obey = COMMANDMENTS-22x (mizvah)** is from zavah, to set up, constitute. Hence, constitutional commands. First occurrence Gen. 26:5. In Ps. 119 it occurs twenty-two times: 6, 10, 19, 21, 32, 35, 47, 48, 60, 66, 73, 86, 96 (sing.), 98, 115, 127, 131, 143, 151, 166, 172, 176.
7. **The Unchanging Decisions God wants us to know = JUDGMENT-23x (mishpat)** is from shaphat, to set upright, to erect; hence, to judge. Mishpat means judgment. In Ps. 119 it occurs twenty-three times: 7, 13, 20, 30, 39, 43, 52, 62, 75, 84, 91, 102, 106, 108, 120, 121, 132, 137, 149, 156, 160, 164, 175.
8. **The Voice God wants us to hear (Spoken) = WORD-19x ('imrah)** is from 'amar, to bring forth to light; hence, to say; hence 'imrah means an utterance and the purport of it. In Ps. 119 it occurs nineteen times: 11, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76, 82, 103, 116, 123, 133, 140, 148, 158, 162, 170, 172. **God's Voice (Written) = WORDS-24x (dabar)**, is from dabar, to arrange in a row; hence, to set forth in speech. It refers to the articulate form of what is said, whether spoken or written; by which the ipsissima verba are

imparted. In Ps. 119 it occurs twenty-four times: 9, 16, 17, 25, 28, 42 (twice), 43, 49, 57, 65, 74, 81, 89, 101, 105, 107, 114, 130, 139, 147, 160, 161, 169.

## God's Word Protected Ezra's: Distraction-Surrounded Life

Ezra was called to leave the glittering distractions and allurements of Babylon, and take the final 7,000 of the over 50,000 of God's people returning from Exile.

Ezra had been called by God to go and serve Him in the stark, difficult, un-glittering land of Israel; but he had to serve to people who had been immersed in 70 years of distractions in Babylon.

God was far from their hearts, minds, schedules, and life styles.

How do you reach people who live immersed in distractions?

How do you keep from also getting immersed with them in distractions?

How do you keep from losing your focus on God, when most others have?

That is the immense challenge that Ezra faced.

From Ezra's life we get perhaps the longest treatment on the power of the Word of God.

We saw how God's Word protected Ezra.

Ezra 7:10 (NKJV) For Ezra had **prepared his heart** to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do *it*, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

## Ezra's Life was Filled with Scriptural Responses

First, Ezra shares in Psalm 119 a list of his Habits or SPIRITUAL RESPONSES he had cultivated toward the Lord. There are at least 10 of them.

1. **He wanted the Lord.** Psalm 119:10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.
2. **He wanted the Word.** Psalm 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. (Have you ever had a treasure so precious, or a possession so fragile, or a favorite cereal, drink, cookie, etc. that you wanted so badly -- that you hid it away so that no one else could take it from you?)
3. **He loved God's ways.** Psalm 119:14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.
4. **He obeyed the Word.** Psalm 119:22 Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.
5. **He talked about God.** Psalm 119:26 I have declared my ways, and You heard me: teach me Your statutes.
6. **He followed the pathway of God.** Psalm 119:30 I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.

Did you know your pathway either gets clearer and better, or darker and harder -- ever day we follow that pathway?

Proverbs 4:18-19 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. 19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

7. **He was stuck to the Word.** Psalm 119:31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame.
8. **He was excited about God!** Psalm 119:35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.
9. **He feared disappointing God.** Psalm 119:39 Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.

A teen once demonstrated this heart attitude as his friends suggested that they go to a certain restaurant for a good time. "I'd rather go home, my parents don't approve of that place." "Afraid your father will hurt you?" one of the girls asked sarcastically. "No," he replied, "I'm not afraid my father will hurt me, but I am afraid I might hurt him." He understood the principle that a true child of God, who has experienced the love of God, has no desire to sin against that love.

10. **He longed after the Lord.** Psalm 119:40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

## **Ezra's Life was Filled with Scriptural Resolves**

So, First Ezra shares in Psalm 119 a list of his Habits or RESPONSES he had cultivated toward the Lord.

Secondly, he records his hopes or RESOLVES

1. Psalm 119:7 **I will praise** thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.
2. Psalm 119:8 **I will keep** thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.
3. Psalm 119:15 **I will meditate** in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.
4. Psalm 119:16 **I will delight** myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.
5. Psalm 119:32 **I will run** the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.
6. Psalm 119:45 And **I will walk** at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.
7. Psalm 119:46 **I will speak** of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.
8. Psalm 119:47 And **I will delight** myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.
9. Psalm 119:48 My hands also **will I lift up** unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes. (Literally 'in my hands I will carry...' God's Word was close at hand).

## **Ezra's Life was Filled with Scriptural Choices**

Ezra wanted and allowed the Word to Transform His Life

## **He chooses to turn his life toward God.**

**Psalm 119:59 I thought about my ways,** and turned my feet **to Your testimonies.**

Like a person who hears something, or sees something that stops them, and they turn to go in that direction. Ezra examines his life, looks at the Word and goes the way of the Lord.

## **He chooses to avoid evil in any form.**

Psalm 119:101 **I have restrained** my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.  
What do you restrain yourself from?

## **He chooses to lean God's Way by obedience.**

Psalm 119:112 **I have inclined** my heart to perform Your statutes Forever, to the very end.  
What do you lean towards?

## **He chooses to set his hopes in the Lord.**

Psalm 119:114 You are my hiding place and my shield; **I hope in Your word.**  
Just like Paul asked the Roman believers to do in Romans 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

What do you have your hopes set upon?

## **He chooses to cultivate spiritual appetites.**

Psalm 119:131 **I opened my mouth** and panted, For **I longed for** Your commandments.  
What do you pant for?

## **He chooses to cultivate spiritual disciplines.**

Psalm 119:147 **I rise** before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; **I hope** in Your word.  
Ezra disciplined his time to make room for God in his schedule.

## **He chooses to live a life of praise.**

Psalm 119:164 Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgments.

## **What Was Ezra's Secret?**

How did Ezra do this on a consistent basis? By living by God's Word.

Remember God gave us a soul that only maintained by His Word.

We were designed to thirst for God, and drinks of Him in His Word; that longs for the waters of life and drinks them of God in His Word.

In the Scriptures we find an ever present oasis in the arid, sun baked, lifeless deserts of life.

We are satisfied only through finding and communing with God in His Word.

What was Ezra's plan to bring about lasting change in those he served? He started with his own life. He learned to point his heart frequently toward doing God's Will.

## **Ezra's Invited God into Every Part of His Life**

Fifty-three times with 22 phrases, Ezra cries to the Lord.

The secret of Ezra's fruitful life was his choice to invite the Lord into every part of his life, and invite Him into every part of his day.

1. Teach me (10): 12; 26; 33; 64, 66; 68; 108; 124; 135, 171.
2. Remove from me (2): 22, 29
3. Revive me (9): 25, 37; 40; 88; 107; 149; 154; 156; 159.
4. Make me (3): 27; 35, 98
5. Strengthen me: 28;
6. Remove from me: 29,
7. Grant me: 29,
8. Give me (5): 34; 73; 125;144; 169.
9. Incline My: 36,
10. Turn away my (2): 37, 39
11. You are my: 57,
12. Comfort me: 82,
13. Help me (2): 86, 175.
14. Save me (2): 94; 146.
15. Uphold me (2): 116; 117.
16. Look upon me: 132,
17. Redeem me (2): 134; 154.
18. Hear me: 145.
19. Consider my: 153,
20. Deliver me (2): 153; 170.
21. Plead my: 154,
22. Let my (2): 169, 170,

## The Choice is Ours

Are you seeking & finding each day:

**The Path God wants us to walk? That's His WAY-13x** It occurs in this Psalm thirteen times: 1, 3, 5, 14, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 37, 59, 168.

**The Teaching of the Divine Teacher God wants us to learn? That's His LAW-25x** Psalm 119: 1, 18, 29, 34, 44, 51, 55, 61, 70, 72, 77, 85, 92, 97, 109, 113, 126, 136, 142, 150, 153, 163, 165, 174.

**The Witness God wants us to trust? That's His TESTIMONIES-23x** (Psalm 119: 14, 31, 36, 88, 99, 111, 129, 144, 157; 2, 22, 24, 46, 59, 79, 95, 119, 125, 138, 146, 152, 167, 168.

**The Directions God wants us to follow? That's His = PRECEPTS-21x** Psalm 119:4, 15, 27,

40, 45, 56, 63, 69, 78, 87, 93, 94, 100, 104, 110, 128, 134, 141, 159, 168, 173.

**The Plans God wants us to use? That's His STATUTES-22x** Psalm 119:5, 8, 12, 16, 23, 26, 33, 48, 54, 64, 68, 71, 80, 83, 112, 117, 118, 124, 135, 145, 155, 171.

**The Absolutes God wants us to obey? That's His COMMANDMENTS-22x** Psalm 119:6, 10, 19, 21, 32, 35, 47, 48, 60, 66, 73, 86, 96 (sing.), 98, 115, 127, 131, 143, 151, 166, 172, 176.

**The Unchanging Decisions God wants us to know? That's His JUDGMENT-23x** (Psalm 119:7, 13, 20, 30, 39, 43, 52, 62, 75, 84, 91, 102, 106, 108, 120, 121, 132, 137, 149, 156, 160, 164, 175.

**The Voice God wants us to hear? That's His WORD-43x** Psalm 119:11, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76, 82, 103, 116, 123, 133, 140, 148, 158, 162, 170, 172; 9, 16, 17, 25, 28, 42 (twice), 43, 49, 57, 65, 74, 81, 89, 101, 105, 107, 114, 130, 139, 147, 160, 161, 169.