

Quicken Thou Me in Thy Way
Psalm 119:33-37

In **Psalm 119:33-40** the psalmist prayed, “Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear. Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.”

Throughout the eight verses of **Psalm 119:33-40**, the young man of God delivered a series of nine prayer requests unto the Lord. In **verse 33** he prayed, “Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes.” In **verse 34** he prayed, “Give me understanding.” In **verse 35** he prayed, “Make me to go in the path of thy commandments.” In **verse 36** he prayed, “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.” In the opening portion of **verse 37**, he prayed, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.” In the closing portion of **verse 37**, he prayed, “And quicken thou me in thy way.” In **verse 38** he prayed, “Stablish thy word unto thy servant.” In **verse 39** he prayed, “Turn away my reproach which I fear.” Finally, in **verse 40** he prayed, “Quicken me in thy righteousness.”

As we consider this series of prayer requests, we find that they can be divided into two parts. The first six requests concern the psalmist’s burden for direction in the way of righteousness. The first, third, and last of these six requests all make reference unto the pathway of the Lord’s Word or will. On the other hand, the last three requests of the whole series concern the psalmist’s burden for deliverance from the troubles of life. In this message we shall set our focus upon the six requests concerning direction in the way of righteousness, which conclude with the request, “And quicken thou me in thy way.” These six requests themselves can also be divided into two parts, wherein the first three concern the conduct of the psalmist’s walk and the latter three concern the character of the psalmist’s heart. Furthermore, these six prayer requests reveal that the psalmist recognized a spiritual need in his life and that he was burdened for the Lord to meet that need. Indeed, the psalmist recognized his spiritual need, was burdened over his spiritual need, understood that the Lord alone could meet his spiritual need, and turned to the Lord in prayer and dependence for the Lord to meet that spiritual need. Even so, we also should call upon the Lord with the same recognition, burden, understanding, and dependence.

1. The Need for Instruction.

First, the psalmist recognized his need for spiritual instruction from the Lord. In **verse 33** he prayed, “Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes.” Now, six times throughout Psalm 119 this young man of God asked for the Lord to teach him His statutes. Yet with this request the psalmist asked for something a little different. Herein this young man of God asked for the Lord, not simply to teach him the “what” of His statutes, but rather to teach him the *way* of His statutes. Certainly the psalmist desired for the Lord to teach him the informational truth of righteousness, which is the reason that he expressed this request six times throughout the psalm. Yet this young man of God also desired something more.

He also desire for the Lord to teach him the applicational truth of righteousness. Yes, he was burdened with the spiritual need to know what was right. Yet he was also burdened with the spiritual need to learn *how to walk in* what was right. He desired to walk in the clean way, in the right way, in the godly way. (See **verse 9**) He had chosen the way of the Lord's truth. (See **verse 30**) He was committed, not just to walking, but to running in the way of the Lord's Word and will. (See **verse 31**) Therefore, the psalmist acknowledged his need and prayed for the Lord to teach and instruct him in that way, in how he might walk aright before the Lord. In like manner, we also must come to this recognition and to this burden of prayer – for the Lord to instruct us in the way of His Word and will.

2. The Need for Discretion.

Second, the psalmist recognized his need for spiritual discretion from the Lord. In **verse 34** he prayed, "Give me understanding." Indeed, this young man of God was burdened with the spiritual need to learn what was right, and to learn how to walk in what was right. Yet he also desired something more even than that. He also desired to learn *why* certain behavior was right and other behavior was wrong. He desired for the Lord to grant him understanding to discern between good and evil throughout the different, individual, detailed circumstances of life. He desired to "understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God." (See **Proverbs 2:5**) He desired to "understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity: yea, every good path." (See **Proverbs 2:9**) Therefore, the psalmist did not simply incline his ear unto wisdom; but he also applied his heart before the Lord to understanding. (See **Proverbs 2:2**) He did not simply cry after knowledge, but he also lifted up his voice unto the Lord for understanding. (See **Proverbs 2:3**) Furthermore, the psalmist recognized that this spiritual discretion, this spiritual understanding and discernment, could only come through the Lord's Word and by the Lord's guidance. He recognized that "the LORD giveth wisdom," and that "out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." (See **Proverbs 2:6**) He recognized that it was by reason of using and applying God's Word for his daily living wherein he might have his spiritual senses exercised "to discern both good and evil." (See **Hebrews 5:14**) Even so, in the opening portion of **Psalms 119:104**, the psalmist declared, "Through thy precepts I get understanding." Again in **verse 130** he declared, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." Indeed, six times throughout this psalm, the young man of God prayed for the Lord to grant him such spiritual understanding. In like manner, we also must come to this recognition and to this burden of prayer – for the Lord to grant us spiritual discretion between good and evil.

3. The Need for Direction.

Third, the psalmist recognized his need for spiritual direction from the Lord. In **verse 35** he prayed, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments." The picture that is portrayed by the Hebrew words of this prayer conveys the treading or trampling of a footpath. As such, with this request the psalmist was setting his focus upon the multiple steps that would make up his life-journey. Even so, he desired for the Lord to direct each one of those multiple steps in order that each one might be placed squarely in the center of obedience to the Lord's Word and will. He recognized the need to "walk circumspectly [carefully], not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (See **Ephesians 5:15-16**) He recognized the need to ponder the path of his feet, and to let all of his ways be established

in righteousness, not turning to the right hand or to the left unto evil. (See **Proverbs 4:26-27**) Furthermore, the psalmist recognized that the only sure direction for this purpose was from the Lord Himself. He recognized that he needed to trust in the Lord with all of his heart, to not lean unto his own understanding, and to acknowledge the Lord in all of his ways, in order that the Lord Himself might direct every individual step of his paths. (See **Proverbs 3:5-6**) Indeed, the psalmist desired for the Lord Himself to instruct him, teach him, lead him, and direct him in every single step of the way that he should go. Yeah, he desired for the Lord Himself to guide him with His eye. (See **Psalms 32:8**) For this reason the young man of God prayed for the Lord to make him to go in that path of the Lord's commandments. In like manner, we also should recognize our need and express our burden of prayer – for the Lord to direct us in every step of the way that we should go.

4. The Need for Motivation

Fourth, the psalmist recognized his need for spiritual motivation from the Lord. In **verse 36** he prayed, “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.” Yes, this young man of God was burdened with the need to have his daily steps directed by the Lord in the way that he ought to go. Yet he also desired for something more. He was also burdened with the need to have his heart's motivation directed by the Lord in the priorities that he should maintain. He did not just desire the Lord's direction for his outward conduct. This young man of God also desired the Lord's direction for his inward character. He desired that the motivation and priority of his heart might incline, might focus upon, might stretch toward, might long after, might be committed unto the precepts and principles of God's Holy Word. Indeed, in **verses 111-112** the psalmist expressed that very commitment of heart, saying, “Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.” Yet he also understood that his self-discipline by itself was not enough. He understood that he also needed the Lord to work and stir up in him that motivation. He understood his need for the Lord God to work in him “both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (See **Philippians 2:13**) He understood his need for the Lord to work in him “that which is wellpleasing in his sight.” (See **Hebrews 13:21**) For this reason the young man of God prayed for the Lord to incline the motivation of his heart unto the Lord's testimonies. In like manner, we also should recognize our need and express our burden of prayer – for the Lord to incline our hearts toward the precepts and principles of His Word.

Yet in his prayer request, the psalmist included one further element. He included the phrase, “And not to covetousness.” With this phrase the psalmist recognized one of the greatest sinful motivations that competes in our hearts and lives against the motivation and priority of God's Word. In **Mark 4:3-8** our Lord Jesus Christ delivered a parable concerning a sower who went forth to sow seed. In that parable our Lord stated that some of the seed “fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.” (See **verse 7**) Then in **Mark 4:14-20** our Lord Jesus Christ proved the explanation for that parable. Even so, in **verses 18-29** our Lord explained concerning the thorny ground, “And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.” By its very nature, covetousness chokes out the fruitfulness of God's Word from our hearts and lives. Thus in **Jeremiah 6:16-17** the Lord God pronounced the

following rebuke against His people, saying, “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.” So then, why would they not hearken unto the Lord’s warnings? Why would they not walk in the Lord’s ways? The answer is given in the opening portion of **verse 13**, wherein the Lord God delivers the report, “For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness.” Also in **Ezekiel 33:30-31** the Lord God gives the report and rebuke, “Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: [Why?] for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.” The heart motivation of covetousness had choked out their heart motivation for God’s Word. Indeed, the psalmist understood the choking force of covetousness against the motivation and priority of God’s Word in his heart. For this reason the young man of God prayed for the Lord to incline his heart toward the Lord’s testimonies AND not toward covetousness. In like manner, we also should recognize our need and express our burden of prayer – for the Lord to incline our hearts toward His Word AND away from covetousness.

5. The Need for Protection.

Fifth, the psalmist recognized his need for spiritual protection from the Lord. In the opening portion of **verse 37**, he prayed, “Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.” Now, this prayer for protection was not a request for physical protection or circumstantial protection. Rather, in this context this prayer was a request for spiritual protection. This young man of God understood that his spiritual focus would determine his spiritual success. He understood that his spiritual gaze would develop into a spiritual focus, and that his spiritual focus would develop into a spiritual direction. Even so, because he desired for his spiritual direction to be right, he desired first that his spiritual gaze and focus might be right. He understood the principle of **Proverbs 4:25**, that he needed his eyes (his spiritual focus) to “look right on” toward a walk with the Lord, and that he needed his eyelids (his spiritual focus) to “look straight” before him toward the way of the Lord’s righteousness. Indeed, the psalmist fully understood that the great competitor to this spiritual focus was the alluring vanities of this present evil world. He understood that the vanities of this world, as bound up in “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” ever seek to draw away our spiritual focus from the Lord and ever seek to entice us unto the way of unrighteousness. (See **1 John 2:16 & James 1:14**) Yet this young man of God did not desire to set his spiritual focus upon the world’s lying vanities, but to maintain the spiritual focus of his faith upon the Lord his God. Yeah, he desired that his spiritual focus might not be attracted unto the vain glitter and glisten of this world even for a moment. For this reason the young man of God prayed for the Lord to turn away his spiritual focus from beholding the vanity of this world. In like manner, we also should recognize our need and express our burden of prayer – for the Lord to guard and turn away our spiritual focus from being attracted toward the vanities of this present evil world.

6. The Need for Transformation.

Sixth, the psalmist recognized his need for spiritual transformation from the Lord. In the closing portion of **verse 37**, he prayed, “And quicken thou me in thy way.” Now, the word “quicken” means “to make alive.” Yet in this context the psalmist was not requesting for the Lord to grant him live physically or circumstantially. Rather, in this context the psalmist was requesting for the Lord to fill him with life spiritually. He was requesting for the Lord to make him alive in the righteous way of the Lord. With this request this young man of God revealed his understanding that the direction of his way and the motivation of his heart all was centered in the transformation of his character. For the Lord our God to make us alive in his way is for the Lord to make us alive spiritually from within. It is for the Lord to transform the character of our inner man unto the likeness of His own righteousness and holiness. Indeed, this young man of God understood his need for the Lord to transform his inner character. He understood that much transforming work by the Lord’s own hand was needed, and that he could not transform his own character aright. For this reason the psalmist prayed for the Lord to make him alive in the Lord’s way. In like manner, we also should recognize our need and express our burden of prayer – for the Lord to revive us and transform us spiritually in His own character and way of righteousness.