

## Daleth

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| <p>25) My soul <u>cleaves</u> to the dust;<br/>Revive me according to<br/>Your word.</p> <p>26) I have told <u>of my ways</u> and<br/>You have answered me;<br/>Teach me Your statutes.</p> <p>27) Make me understand<br/><u>the way</u> of Your precepts, So I<br/>will meditate on Your wonders.</p> <p>28) My soul <u>weeps</u> because of grief;<br/>Strengthen me according to Your word.</p> | <p>29) Remove the false <u>way</u> from<br/>me, and graciously grant me<br/>Your law.</p> <p>30) I have chosen the faithful <u>way</u>;<br/>I have placed Your ordinances<br/>before me.</p> <p>31) <u>I cleave to</u> Your testimonies;<br/>O Lord, do not put me to shame!</p> <p>32) I shall run the <u>way of</u> Your<br/>commandments, For You will<br/>enlarge my heart.</p> |
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We are studying the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm, which is a Psalm that exalts the Word of God. It is a Psalm that has 22 sections, one section for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This is the fourth letter in the Hebrew alphabet “daleth” or “d” in English, which means every word that begins every verse in this eight verse section begins with a word that starts with the letter “d.” The underlined word in your text notes is actually the word that begins the verse. For example, the word that actually begins **verse 25** is the word “cleaves.” The Hebrew word is dabiqh. As you see, it starts with the letter “d.” The word means to be firmly adhered or glued to something, which in this case is the dust or dirt (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 185).

As the Psalm opens in **verse 25**, we read that “my soul cleaves to the dust.” That is about as depressing as it gets. There are obviously times when God’s people can get very low. They can get beaten down to the point that their soul is as low as the dust. There are times when we despair. **It is in those moments when we need the Word of God.** The Word of God has the power to pull us up out of the dirt and depression. It has the power to take a broken down bruised soul and give it a new lease on life. That is the point of this section:

**THE WRITER REALIZES THAT GOD’S WORD IS THE ONLY EXISTING REALITY THAT CAN ACTUALLY LIFT HIS TROUBLED SOUL OUT OF ITS DARKNESS AND DEPRESSION SO HE ASKS GOD THAT HE WOULD LET HIS WORD ACCOMPLISH THIS FOR HIM.**

Now in keeping with words that begin with the letter “d,” this particular section is about a soul that is very dark, dirty, depressed and drained. It has become disillusioned. God’s Word is able to revive such a soul. God’s Word can revive one from any disaster or crisis. God’s Word is able to set people free from anything.

Now in this Psalm there are a series of requests that the writer makes to God concerning the Word of God that communicate two general themes:

**(Theme #1)** - When our soul is depressed, we need to be talking with God.

**(Theme #2)** - When our soul is depressed, we need to be studying God’s Word.

Now there are six main requests to see in this section:

**REQUEST #1** – The depressed writer asks God to revive his troubled soul. **119:25**

Now the writer of this Psalm was totally depressed and beaten down in his soul. That image of a soul that is beaten down in the dust is one of being totally surrounded by and beaten down by affliction and oppression (Ps. 44:24-25). It describes one who is so low he actually thinks God has abandoned him. This is an emotional state of deep degradation.

Now in that low and depressing context, this man knew that there was something that could revive him and that something was the Word of God. The Hebrew word “revive” is one that refers to putting strength and power back into the soul of a person (*Ibid.*, p. 275).

Simply stated, this depressed person knew that God’s Word had the power to put life back into his soul. God’s Word had the power to give his soul strength and encouragement.

No matter how low or dark or depressing things were, this man knew that and he asked God to use His Word to do just that—revive him. The Word of God promises that it has living power. We must always remember God can lift pathetic souls out of their pathetic condition with His Word.

When we find ourselves low, the place for revival is the Bible. The Bible can revive your soul. Never forget that. The place for revival is not a pill or bottle or counseling session; it is the Bible.

**REQUEST #2** – The writer asks God to teach him His statutes. **119:26**

This is one very interesting verse. It is very clear that the Psalmist went to God and told of “my ways.” What this means is that this writer got before God and was open and honest about everything. He obviously got before God and told the truth. He did not try to hide or cover anything. He was open and honest about his sin, about his situation, about his sorrows. He was honest about his failures; he was honest about his fears and anxieties. He was one who obviously talked to God.

Charles Bridges said, “hypocrites often pray, but they never do this.” They will never go before God and open up their hearts and declare all their ways.

But this honesty before God is a key to getting the soul out of the dust. Because of this open relationship he had with God, and because of the fact that God had apparently answered him and had forgiven him, he felt he could go to God and ask God to teach him His Word. He knew through God’s Word that he could go to God and confess his sin and God would in fact bless him.

Even though this man was very depressed, he knew the importance of being taught the Word of God and so he asks God to teach him. He wanted God to open up his mind and heart to the instruction found in His Word.

**REQUEST #3** – The writer asks God for the ability to understand His Word. **119:27**

The writer wanted to understand God's Word to the point that he would meditate on His wonders. Now this man obviously senses his own lack. He realizes that in order to understand God's Word, he needs God's help. Spiritual truth may only be discerned by spiritual means.

Now do not overlook what is implied here. God's Word reveals wonderful things about God. The writer longed to carefully and accurately understand the Word of God so he could meditate in his mind on the deep things of God.

The words "meditate on your wonders" do reveal that there are some amazing things to be seen in the Word of God that are worth thinking about.

Now in order to understand those wonderful things, God must grant that ability to understand. So he asked God to enable him to understand all the precepts of God and all the ways of God. Prayer for understanding is critical to understanding God's Word.

Let us keep our context in mind. This man is in total depression. His soul "cleaves to the dust." But the key to getting his soul out of the dust is God's Word. When one meditates on the Word, it has an uplifting effect.

**REQUEST #4** – The depressed writer asks God for strength. **119:28**

The soul of this man was very depressed. In fact, this man was overwhelmed with grief. His soul wept. The NET Bible Hebrew scholars suggest that a good way to understand this is that the soul is collapsed or crumpled in grief (*Psalms 119:28*, ft. nt. 18, p. 1049). Where can a soul that is so low find strength to go on? That strength is found in the Word of God.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon's church collapsed and many people were killed and he fell into a very deep depression. He wrote these words: "Heaviness of heart is a killing thing, and when it abounds, it threatens to turn life into a long death, in which a man seems to drop away in a perpetual grief" (*Psalms*, p. 520).

It was in this very context of a sorrowful soul that the writer prayed and asked God to strengthen him.

**REQUEST #5** – The depressed writer asks God to remove one thing and grant another. **119:29**

It seems to me that the writer was depressed in his soul because he had wandered off the true path of God. He apparently had drifted off into a way that was false.

In this passage, he asked God to “remove” the false way from him. The false way that he refers to is a lifestyle that wandered away from the true, pure ways of God. He is asking God to never let him go in any false direction again.

The false ways of lying are much more than just verbal lying. There are people who live a lie. There are lying religious, there is a lying self-righteousness, there are lying philosophies. The writer of this Psalm asked God to “remove” anything false from him. Why? Because people who lie and are false cannot ever have a close relationship with God.

But having asked God to remove him from anything false, he also asks God to be gracious to him and permit him to understand and apply His Word. One cannot ask God to grow in grace and knowledge if one is persisting in a lifestyle that is false according to God’s Word.

**REQUEST #6** – The writer confesses to God what he has decided to do. **119:30-32**

Keep in mind that this is a very depressed man. So these are decisions being made by a man whose soul is very low:

**Decision #1** - He has chosen the faithful way. **119:30a**

Now the word “faithful” means that the writer has chosen the way of the Word of God that is faithful, firm and secure (*Ibid.*, p. 58). Instead of the way of lying, there is the way of truth. This writer wanted to know truth so he could obey truth.

Anything that is contrary to God’s Word is not a way you want to choose to go because you will not end up secure and stable.

**Decision #2** - He has committed himself to God’s Word. **119:30b**

The Hebrew word “ordinances” is one that refers to forensic judgments (*Ibid.*, p. 519). The soul that will be revived is one that makes decisions that are in accordance with the Word of God.

One will think through decisions and actions in light of the Scriptures. There will be a very reverent commitment to the Word of God.

**Decision #3** - He clings to God’s Word. **119:31a**

While his soul cleaved to the dust (**v. 25**), he also clings to the Word of God (**v. 31**). It is the same Hebrew word. What this shows us is that the way out of the dirt, is not to cling to the dirt; but to cling to the Word of God.

The idea behind clinging to God’s testimonies is the idea of holding fast, keeping and guarding the Word of God.

No one will ever regret clinging to the Scriptures no matter what one is facing. Now one who clings to the Scriptures has every right to ask God not to let them be ashamed. Charles Bridges appealed to backsliders with this verse and said, “O backslider get off the shameful path and cling to the word of God.’

This man knew that a key to not being ashamed was clinging to the Scriptures; but he also knew in order to cling to the Scriptures so he would not be ashamed he needed to ask God for help.

**Decision #4** - He will run according to the Word of God. **119:32**

This final verse in this section is critical. A major key to reviving a depressed soul is rapid movement into God’s Word. As one commentator said, “slow motion is easily stopped” when it comes to the Word of God.

Run to the Scriptures because your heart and soul will be enlarged. Remember when this section started, the soul was in the dust. Well, the Word of God can enlarge the soul and revive it.

Dr. Merrill Unger said spiritual revival through God’s Word produces ten great effects (*Vol. 1, p. 931*):

- 1) It lifts the soul from the dust of sin, worldliness and carnality.
- 2) It fully uncovers one’s sin and prompts confession.
- 3) It results in a renewed powerful prayer life.
- 4) It enhances new learning and understanding by the Holy Spirit.
- 5) It gives new power for witnessing and testimony.
- 6) It results in deep contrition for sin.
- 7) It produces renewed strength and courage.
- 8) It causes a deep hatred for falsity.
- 9) It causes the revived soul to grow deep in honoring and obeying God’s ordinances.
- 10) It results in an enlargement of heart as all the other effects are experienced.