

Teach Me Thy Statutes
Psalm 119:12

In **Psalm 119:12** the psalmist, the young man of God, declared unto the Lord, “Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.”

In **Psalm 119:12** the psalmist, the young man of God requested for the Lord Himself to teach him. In fact, this is the first of nine times wherein the psalmist made this request throughout this psalm. (See verses 12, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135) In addition, the psalmist also made the request six times throughout the psalm for the Lord to give him understanding. (See verses 27, 34, 73, 125, 144, 169) Clearly this young man of God has a spiritual burden for the Lord Himself to teach him in the way that he ought to go, in the way of truth and righteousness for his life. In fact, as we consider these various passages, we are able to discern the reasons that this was such a burden upon the psalmist’s heart, and the reasons that this should also be a spiritual burden of our own hearts.

1. We should be burdened for the teaching of the Lord because of *life’s depravity*.

As we have noted, in **Psalm 119:12** the psalmist declared, “Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.” First, the psalmist focused upon the Lord’s blessed character; and then he expressed his burden for the Lord to teach him in the right way. Yet in the previous three verses of the context, the psalmist had also been considering the reality of his own spiritual character. In **verse 9** the psalmist had expressed the burden to know how he might cleanse his way – “*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?*” Thereby the psalmist was recognizing that sinful depravity and corruption was already a part of his character, for there is no need to cleanse that which is not dirty. Furthermore, in **verses 10-11** the psalmist had expressed the burden not to wander away from the Lord into further sin against Him – “With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” Thereby the psalmist was recognizing the prevalence of temptation toward sinful depravity and corruption. Thus when the psalmist focused upon the Lord’s blessed character in the opening portion of **verse 12**, he did so in direct contrast to his own faulty character. Thus also when the psalmist expressed his burden for the Lord Himself to teach him the right way, he did so with specific recognition that he needed to learn the way of victory over sinful depravity and corruption in his life, and with the specific recognition that the Lord Himself was the best one to teach him that way of spiritual victory. “Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.” In like manner, we also need to recognize the need and to develop the burden for the Lord to teach us the way of spiritual victory over sinful depravity and corruption in our own character and lives. Indeed, this is the truth of **Psalm 25:8**, “Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.”

2. We should be burdened for the teaching of the Lord because of *life’s decisions*.

In **Psalm 119:26** the psalmist declared, “I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.” The ways of the psalmist that he declared unto the Lord concerned every

detail of his life. He declared his commitments unto the Lord. In **verses 14-16** he declared, “I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.” Again in **verse 24** he declared, “Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.” He declared his concerns unto the Lord. In **verses 9-10** he declared, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.” Again in **verse 17** he declared, “Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.” He declared his circumstances unto the Lord. In the opening portion of **verse 19**, he declared, “I am a stranger in the earth.” Again in the opening portion of **verse 25**, he declared, “My soul cleaveth unto the dust.” Yet again in the opening portion of **verse 28**, he declared, “My soul melteth for heaviness.” He declared his conflicts unto the Lord. In the opening portion of **verse 23**, he declared, “Princes also did sit and speak against me.” Even so, in all of these commitments, concerns, circumstances, and conflicts, the psalmist had decisions to make; and he desired to make those decision aright. Thus he declared his ways unto the Lord, and then made request for the Lord to teach him the precepts and principles by which he might make right decisions. In like manner, we also need to develop the burden for our Lord to teach us the precepts and principles by which we might decide aright throughout the multitude of decisions that we face each day. Indeed, this is the truth of **Proverbs 3:5-6**, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

3. We should be burdened for the teaching of the Lord because of *the Lord's glory*.

In **Psalm 119:27** the psalmist prayed, “Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.” Herein the psalmist revealed his desire to bring glory unto the Lord. In the latter portion of the verse, he expressed his commitment to bear witness unto the wondrous works of the Lord. Thereby he would glorify the Lord through his verbal witness. Yet the psalmist also understood that he must glorify the Lord through his righteous behavior, through the testimony of his righteous life. For this reason the psalmist requested for the Lord to grant him understanding in the righteous way of the Lord's righteous precepts. He could not bring glory unto the Lord unless he walked in the way of righteousness, and he could not walk in the way of righteousness unless he possessed understanding in the Lord's righteous precepts. He desired for the Lord to teach him the right way in order that he might be victorious over life's depravity and might choose aright in life's decision, and his primary motivation for this was to bring glory unto the Lord's name. In like manner, we also should be burdened for the Lord to teach us the right way, in order that we might bring glory unto our Lord as we walk in the right way.

4. We should be burdened for the teaching of the Lord because of *life's direction*.

In **Psalm 119:33-34** 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.” Herein the psalmist revealed a concern, not only for his present walk in righteousness, but also for the end of his walk in righteousness. Herein he revealed a concern and a commitment that he might continue faithfully in his walk of righteousness from that time

forth unto the end of his life. He wanted to continue the course of his life aright and finish the course of his life aright. Thus he expressed a burden for the Lord to teach him in the right way, not just for individual decisions here and there, but the whole direction of his life. The psalmist understood the principle that how he ended his life in faithfulness or unfaithfulness was determined by how he proceeded in each present step along the way. He understood the principle that the character of his life's conclusion was determined by the direction of his present choices. Thus he desire for the Lord Himself to teach him and give him understanding all along the way, in order that the whole direction of his life might be in righteousness. In like manner, we also should be burdened for the Lord to teach us the right way, not only for momentary decisions, but for the whole direction of our lives.

5. We should be burdened for the teaching of the Lord because of *the Lord's grace*.

In **Psalm 119:64** the psalmist proclaimed, "The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes." Again in **Psalm 119:124-125** the psalmist prayed, "Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes. I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies." Yet again in **Psalm 119:135** the psalmist prayed, "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes." In these three passages the psalmist made reference unto the mercy of the Lord and unto the favor of the Lord. Both of these are aspects of the Lord's grace toward us who are His servants. The Lord's mercy is His grace toward us to help us in our time of need. The Lord's favor is His grace toward us to shower us with His abundant blessings. Now, the psalmist understood that the Lord our God bestows His grace, both the mercy of His grace and the favor of His grace, unto those who serve Him faithfully in obedience and righteousness. In **Psalm 119:57-60** he declared, "Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words. I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." For this reason the psalmist desired for the Lord Himself to teach him in the ways of truth and righteousness, in order that he might walk in the Lord's grace. In like manner, we also should be burdened for the Lord to teach us the way of His righteousness, in order that we also might walk in the mercy and favor of His grace. Indeed, this is the truth of **Psalm 5:12**, "For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield."

6. We should be burdened for the teaching of the Lord because of *life's discipline*.

In **Psalm 119:65-68** the psalmist proclaimed, "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes." Herein we observe a connection between affliction upon the life the Lord's servant and the Lord's goodness in the life of the Lord's servant. In like manner, the psalmist revealed this connection again in **verse 71**, saying, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." Yet the affliction unto which the psalmist was referring in this context was not the general afflictions of life in this world, nor was it the suffering of affliction for righteousness' sake. Rather, the affliction about which the psalmist was referring in this context was the affliction of the Lord's

discipline upon his life due to his transgression against the Lord. Even so, in **Psalm 119:67** the psalmist acknowledged, “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word;” and then in **verse 75** he acknowledged, “I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.” In the recent past the psalmist had gone astray from the Lord, and the Lord had brought the affliction of discipline into his life. Even so, this discipline had moved the psalmist to repent and return unto the way of the Lord’s righteousness. Now the psalmist has again focused his heart upon learning and obeying God’s Word. In **Psalm 119:71** he proclaimed, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes;” and again in **verse 67** he proclaimed, “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.” Through all of this, the psalmist has now also been brought to the recognition that the Lord has dealt well, done good, and been faithful toward him by bringing the affliction of discipline into his life. For this reason the psalmist desired for the Lord Himself to teach him “good judgment and knowledge,” in order that he might grow more fully in his recovery from the path of unrighteousness and in his resistance against the temptation for unrighteousness. He understood that the Lord Himself was the only One who could truly reveal the sinful weaknesses of his character and the only One who could truly teach the way of overcoming those sinful weaknesses. Even so, in **Psalm 119:73** the psalmist proclaimed, “Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.” In like manner, we also should be burdened for the Lord to teach us the “good judgment and knowledge,” in order that we might grow more fully in righteous recovery from sin and victory over sin. Indeed, this is the truth of **Psalm 139:23-24**, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

7. We should be burdened for the teaching of the Lord because of *life’s difficulties*.

In **Psalm 119:107-110** the psalmist proclaimed, “I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word. Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments. My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law. The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.” In the midst of this passage, the psalmist made his request that the Lord might teach him the discernment of the Lord’s judgments. Surrounding this request in this context, the psalmist spoke about the difficulties and troubles of life that he was experiencing. Now, As we noted previously, in the context of **Psalm 119:65-71**, the affliction which the psalmist had experienced was that of the Lord’s discipline because of the psalmist’s transgression against the Lord. However, in this context of **Psalm 119:107-110**, the affliction which the psalmist experienced was not that of the Lord’s discipline, but was that of life’s difficulties and troubles. In **verse 107** the psalmist makes reference unto circumstantial troubles; in **verse 109** he makes reference unto emotional troubles; and in **verse 110** he makes reference unto relational troubles. Even so, in the midst of all this trouble, the psalmist made request for the Lord to teach him. In the midst of such trouble, there often arises an overwhelming sense of darkness. It is the darkness of uncertainty – What to do; how to proceed; from whom to take counsel or direction; where to find help and deliverance. Yet he psalmist understood the principle that light in the darkness of life’s difficulties and troubles can only be found through obedience to the wisdom of God’s Word. Thus in **Psalm 119:105-106** the psalmist declared, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I

will keep thy righteous judgments.” In addition, in the midst of such trouble, there often arises an overwhelming sense of grief, the grief of sorrow, the grief of pain, the grief of loss, the grief of frustration, etc. Yet the psalmist understood the principle that joy in the grief of life’s difficulties and troubles can only be found through obedience to the wisdom of God’s Word. Thus in **Psalm 119:111-112** the psalmist declared, “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 alway, even unto the end.” For this reason the psalmist desired for the Lord to teach him the way of godly discernment, in order that he might walk in obedience to God’s Word and find light and joy in the midst of life’s difficulties and troubles. Even so, in **Psalm 119:169** the psalmist cried out in prayer for deliverance from life’s difficulties and joined it with the request for the Lord to give him understanding, saying, “Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.” In like manner, we also should be burdened for the Lord to teach us in the way and wisdom of His Word, in order that we might walk in obedience and experience the Lord’s light and joy in the midst of life’s troubles and difficulties.

8. We should be burdened for the teaching of the Lord because of *the Lord’s goodness*.

In **Psalm 119:68** the psalmist proclaimed, “Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.” Again in **Psalm 119:137-144** the psalmist proclaimed, “Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments. Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful. My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words. Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it. I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights. The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.” The nature of our Lord God is good and righteous. The works of our Lord God are always done in goodness and righteousness. Even so, the Word of our Lord God is thoroughly good, and righteous, and faithful, and pure, and true. For this very reason the psalmist loved and delighted in the Word of the Lord his Good. For this very reason the psalmist desired that his good and righteous Lord God might teach His good and righteous Word unto him. Indeed, the psalmist desired that his good and righteous Lord God might give him understanding through His good and righteous Word, in order that he might live and walk in a good and righteous life. In like manner, we also should be burdened for our good and righteous Lord God to teach us and give us understanding in His good and righteous, true and faithful, pure and holy Word, in order that we might live a good and righteous life before Him.