

The V.I.C.T.O.R.I.O.U.S. Perspective

Psalm 119:161-168

October 9, 2022

INTRO: When was the last time you seriously, biblically, & prayerfully considered what comes with BEing in Christ, Christianity, & His authentic Church?

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- * Psalm 119 sermon series: **PERSPECTIVE!**
- * Coming to a close... see **God & God's Word**
- * Recent focus... **crying out & victory**
- * Today = **VICTORIOUS Perspective** (vv.161-168)

BIG IDEA: To live adopted, in & under the authority of God & God's Word, is to live with a **VICTORIOUS** presence, power, purpose, promise... & perspective!

PREVIEW: V. I. C. T. O. R. I. O. U. S.

TEXT:

[Psalm 119:161-168](#)

v.161 **VALIANT** & **INSPIRATIONAL**

ILLUSTRATION:

Over the years, I have used many different inspirational, if not valiant examples to encourage the Church (ie. our quilt, charging rhinos, Irish elk, Alpine ibex...) Today I'd like to continue that pattern by asking you to consider living like a mongoose in a mongoose family!



(34, united, 80% snake-eaters, v-resistant, strategic, offensive, fearless)

Princes persecute me without cause,
But my heart stands in awe of Your words.

V = VALIANT

DEFINITION: TO ACT WITH VALOR, EXTREME BRAVERY

To be biblically valiant is to be persecuted without cause,
while persevering without compromise.

Or, conversely...

To be biblically valiant is to be persecuted FOR the cause
of Christ, while persevering without compromise. -JDP

ILLUMINATION:

- a. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego
- b. Apostle Paul
- c. JESUS!

APPLICATION:

Are you a villain, playing the victim, or BE-ing a valiant victor?

Remember... EVERY Christian CAN win ALL combat!
(Philippians 4:13 & 2 Peter 1:3)

Will you BE a valiant ambassador?

I = INSPIRATIONAL

DEFINITION: TO IMPART INSPIRATION TO OTHERS

To be biblically inspirational is to inspire others to greater Christ-likeness through one's own biblical Christ-likeness. - JDP

ILLUMINATION:

- a. Amos & young shepherd boy David
- b. "unschooled ordinary men..."
- c. JESUS

APPLICATION:

Every true Christian has the potential to inspire others by living & BE-ing born-again, resurrected, cross-carrying, giant slayers... fully devoted & committed to Christ!

Will you BE an inspirational ambassador?

v.162 CONTAGIOUS

ILLUSTRATION: **VIDEO:** "Lordship of Jesus" (Hirsch)

I rejoice at Your word,
As one who finds great spoil.

C = CONTAGIOUS (courageous + celebratory)

DEFINITION: ...TO SPREAD, CARRY OR TRANSMIT

HP + CP + CC = MI

High potency + close proximity + clear communication = Maximum impact!

ILLUMINATION:

- a. Noah
- b. Zacchaeus & the treasure-finder...
- c. JESUS

APPLICATION:

Please church... seek & share your joy in Jesus... and if you find that you are not rejoicing in God's Word, will, & ways, then confess it & cry-out to Jesus for the Gospel's want-to.

- A. Christ-like **courage**
- B. Christ-like **compassion**
- C. Christ-like **celebration**

Will you BE a contagious ambassador?

v.163 TENACIOUS

ILLUSTRATION: You can tell a lot about a person when you learn what they truly love & hate...

I hate and despise/abhor falsehood,
But I love Your law.

T = TENACIOUS

DEFINITION: holding firm & fast, persistent,
cohesive or sticky

To be biblically tenacious is to be miraculously & missionally solid & unwavering when it comes to worshipping God and faithfully obeying His Word, will, & ways – no matter what!

ILLUMINATION:

- a. Caleb
- b. Stephen & the Acts 2 Church
- c. JESUS (the cross = greatest love AND hate)

APPLICATION: 1 Peter 1:13-16

Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be serious and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. 15But as the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy

Will you BE a tenacious ambassador?

v.164 **OVERFLOWING**

ILLUSTRATION: It's been said that you can tell what's really inside someone by looking to see what spills out when they are bumped unexpectedly. *You can tell even more by what's consistently overflowing out of them.*

Seven times a day I praise You,
Because of Your righteous ordinances.

O = OVERFLOWING

DEFINITION: to overfill & spill out contents

To be overflowing biblically is to be spilling out that which is inside one's heart (be it good or bad). The greater one's in-filling, the greater will be their over-flowing (again, be it with God's goodness & Spirit OR the world, the flesh, & the Devil) – *you will know them by their fruit* (and overflowing).

ILLUMINATION:

- a. Elisha
- b. Romans 8:37
- c. JESUS

APPLICATION:

I pray that you have been so blessed and filled with truth, love, prayer, and Christ that you cannot help but to faithfully live overflowing in true Christ-likeness – ALL by God's grace and ALL for His glory!

Will you BE an overflowing ambassador?

v.165 RESTFUL

ILLUSTRATION: When was the last time you had peace?
(Note: non-Christians can't... and ALL Christians could!)

Those who love Your law have great peace,
And nothing causes them to stumble.

R = RESTFUL

DEFINITION: Being in & at biblical, divine peace.

To be rest-filled and at peace biblically is to be in a holy & healthy, refining and refreshing, relationship with the One true, living God... His name is Jesus the Christ.

ILLUMINATION:

- a. Esther
- b. Philip
- c. JESUS

APPLICATION:

The love of God's Law is the pathway to peace.

- JDP

God's Word & those who stand on it don't stumble! - JDP

Will you BE a restful ambassador?

v.166 IDEALISTIC

ILLUSTRATION: *“Aim small, miss small.”* – The Patriot

I hope for Your salvation, O LORD,
And do Your commandments.

I = IDEALISTIC

DEFINITION: being visionary, cherishing & pursuing noble principles, purposes, & goals

To be idealistic biblically is to be committed to Christ and Christ-likeness, for one’s self and for the entire world, ALL in accord to God’s Word, will, & ways – no matter what!

ILLUMINATION:

- a. Haggai
- b. Titus
- c. JESUS

APPLICATION:

“When the LORD’s Gospel is replaced with loose goals, and mechanical manipulation is inserted where Messianic miracles belong, biblical ideals and God’s inspiration are lost... and so are all those who follow such counterfeits. In short, bad definitions beget disastrous deception & eternal destruction.” - JDP

Will you BE an idealistic ambassador?

v.167 OBEDIENT

ILLUSTRATION: How important is it to you that your banker is obedient to the laws of math?

My soul keeps Your testimonies,
And I love them exceedingly.

O = OBEDIENT

DEFINITION: obeying established authority

To be biblically obedient is to be fully, 100% surrendered and submissive to Christ & Christ-likeness, as commanded and commissioned by God and His Word, will, & ways.

99% obedience, by definition is 100% disobedience! - JDP

ILLUMINATION:

- a. Joshua
- b. Rich Young Ruler
- c. JESUS

APPLICATION:

Notice that the psalmist was not merely obedient, he was joyfully & lovingly saying “Yes LORD!” Like him, we should also live with a “get to” perspective when it comes to God-honoring, faithful obedience... It’s a worship & witness thing!

Will you BE an obedient ambassador?

v.168a UNHINDERED

ILLUSTRATION: *Last week's India drum beat in persecution*

I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies,

U = UNHINDERED

DEFINITION: NOT being slowed or held back

To be unhindered biblically is to live ALL-in, joyfully following Jesus without hesitation or reservation. It is to learn, love, & live **Hebrews 12:1-3**

ILLUMINATION:

- a. Daniel
- b. John the Baptist
- c. JESUS

APPLICATION:

I want to exhort you to ask & answer this question...

Who has God called & commanded you to **BE right now?**

&

What do you need to pick up (or put down) that is interfering with your complete & uncompromised commitment to Christ?

What would you look, love & live like if you were holy & unhindered?

Will you BE an unhindered ambassador?

v.168b SURE!

For all my ways are before You.

ILLUSTRATION: What are you SURE of? I mean **SURE!**

How measurably sure are you of Christ's sovereignty?

S = SURE!

DEFINITION: confident, convinced, certain

To be "sure" biblically is to fear-not and walk by faith, being certain of Christ's Personhood, Presence, Power, Purposes, and Promises... regardless of what is seen, heard, felt, or feared to the contrary.

ILLUMINATION:

- a. Abraham with Isaac
- b. Stephen
- c. JESUS

APPLICATION:

I want to encourage you to personally try my ping-pong-exercise to strengthen your surety & sanctification...

Here's what I want you to do... prayerfully & intentionally stop what you're doing every 15 minutes or so (at least once an hour) and say "Hi" to Jesus – thanking Him for being with you.

Will you BE a SURE ambassador?

REVIEW: **V. I. C. T. O. R. I. O. U. S.**

1. Valiant
2. Inspirational
3. Contagious
4. Tenacious
5. Overflowing
6. Idealistic
7. Obedient
8. Unhindered
9. Sure!

CLOSE:

The Word of God (His name is Jesus) has given us the Word of God, the Holy Bible, in part, to save our souls and empower our victorious lives with His truth in love – Amen!

Almighty God cannot be defeated... NEVER!

His army of ambassador-warriors should ALWAYS worship, walk, work, & witness with His VICTORIOUS perspective!

Amen & **AMEN**

PRAYER

STUDY NOTES:

Barnes Notes on the Old Testament:

161. *Princes have persecuted me without a cause.* This commences a new division of the psalm, indicated by the Hebrew letter *Schin*—corresponding to our *s*, or *sh*. On the meaning of the expression here, see Notes on vers. 23, 78.

But my heart standeth in awe of thy word.

I still reverence thy word. I am not deterred from keeping thy law by any threats or intimidations. This is in accordance with the uniform statements in the psalm, that **nothing deterred him from manifesting his adherence to the law of God.**

162. *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.* Plunder in a camp; prey; booty:—as the hunter or the warrior, when he lights on great and unexpected success.

163. *I hate and abhor lying.* The mention of *lying* here particularly seems to have been suggested by the necessity, from the structure of the psalm, of finding some word at the beginning of the verse which commenced with the letter *Schin*. At the same time, **it is an illustration of the nature of piety**, and doubtless there had been numerous occasions in the life of the psalmist when he had seen and experienced the effects of falsehood. *This* sin, therefore, might occur to him as readily as any other. It is unnecessary to say that religion *forbids* this sin in all its forms.

But ***thy law do I love.*** Particularly here the law which forbids lying. The psalmist was conscious, as every good man must be, that **he truly loved that pure law which forbids falsehood in all its forms.**

164. *Seven times a day.* The word *seven* may be used here, as it is often in the Scriptures, indefinitely to denote *many*, or *often*. There is, however, nothing which makes it necessary to understand it in this sense. The number of times in which it is proper and profitable to engage in secret or public devotion is nowhere specified in the Scriptures, but it is left, under a general direction, to be determined by each one as he shall find it desirable and convenient; as his feelings or his circumstances shall suggest. On another occasion (Ps. 55:17) David mentions that he prayed “evening, and morning, and at noon;” at other times, perhaps, he might have found it in accordance with his feelings, or with his circumstances, to engage in devotion *seven* times in a day. There are circumstances in the lives of all good men when they are prompted to do this:—

times of trouble, of sickness, of bereavement, of danger, or of religious interest. There are states of mind which prompt to this, and when secret devotion becomes frequent, and almost constant;—when nothing will satisfy the mind *but* prayer. **No one would be injured by making it a rule, unless unavoidably prevented, to engage seven times each day in secret prayer, though, at the same time, no one could maintain that this is required as a rule by the Scriptures.** The times, the circumstances, the manner, the place of secret devotion are wisely and properly left to each individual to be determined by himself. Religion is essentially voluntary, and the times of secret devotion must be voluntary, and *therefore* a man can easily determine, by his own secret devotions, whether he *has* any peculiar interest at any particular time in religion, or whether he has any religion at all. *Do I praise thee.* Do I engage in devotion. *Because of thy righteous judgments.* Thy law, considered *as* righteous. I love that law, as such, and I praise thee for it.

165. Great peace have they. See Notes on **Isa. 26:3**; comp. Notes on **Phil. 4:6, 7**. *They have great calmness of mind. They are not troubled and anxious. They believe and feel that all things are well-ordered* by thee, and will be conducted to the best result. They, therefore, calmly leave all with thee. As a matter of fact, *the friends of God have peace and calmness in their minds, even amidst the troubles, the disappointments, and the reverses of life. The love of God is the best—the only—way to secure permanent peace in the soul.*

Which love thy law. It is the love of *law*, and the belief that the law of God is in accordance with justice, that gives peace to their minds. God's government is a government of law, and therefore it is loved.

And nothing shall offend them. Marg., **They shall have no stumbling-block.** “Heb., “And to them no stumbling,” or stumbling-block. See Notes on **Matt. 5:29, 30; 18:6; 16:23; 1 Pet. 2:8; James 2:10**. **The meaning here is, that they would not fall into sin; they would be kept safe; they would be preserved from the power of temptation.** The meaning is not, as it would seem to be in our version, that nothing would pain, grieve, or irritate them; but, as above, that as long as they were obedient to the law, and disposed to obey it, they would be safe from the power of temptation.

166. *Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation.* As a prevailing habit or principle in my life. I have looked to thee for deliverance in the time of danger; I have looked to thee for salvation in the world to come.

And done thy commandments. That is, habitually. This is NOT, necessarily, a claim to absolute perfection.

167. *My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.* I am conscious of loving them; I feel an inward assurance that I do love them.

168. *I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies.*

This is an appeal which is several times made in the psalm; not with boasting, but as indicating the tenor and purpose of his life. Every man *ought* to be able to make such an appeal.

For all my ways are before thee. Thou hast seen my manner of life, and I may appeal to thee in proof that I have thus kept thy law. *No one can lay claim to entire perfection, but there is many a man who, while conscious of much imperfection, and many shortcomings, can appeal to God for the truth of the statement that his great aim of life has been to keep his commandments.*

Holmon O.T. Commentary: *Steven Lawson*

119:161. The psalmist cries out for deliverance because he has kept God's Word. Mighty **rulers** persecute him **without** just **cause**. Nevertheless, the psalmist's **heart trembles** at God's Word.

119:162–164. This properly motivated fear causes him to **rejoice** in God's **promise** as when one **finds** great treasure. He hates the **falsehood** spoken by **evil** men that contradict Scripture, but he loves the truths of God's **law**. **Seven times a day**, picturing completeness, he praises God for his **righteous laws**.

119:165. **Great peace** and blessings come to those who love God's **law**. They have stability without stumbling.

119:166–168. Eventually, the psalmist’s **salvation** out of this ordeal will come, but in God’s perfect time. In the meantime, he is firmly committed to **follow** God’s **commands**. In spite of his persecution over the Word, he is determined to **obey** God’s **statutes** with greater resolve. This obedience flows from a heart of **love** for the Word, not mere mechanical, legalistic duty. He repeats and reaffirms his commitment to obey God’s **statutes**, knowing that God perfectly sees **all** his **ways**. Nothing is hidden from God.

Warren Wiersbe Commentary:

During our time of study in Psalm 119, we have noticed that the writer practiced a... life of faith, and this quality is seen especially in this stanza.

Respect and rejoicing (vv. 161–162). The princes began their campaign against him by speaking against him (v. 23), but now they were persecuting him in a direct way. **But the psalmist was not afraid of his persecutors; he stood in awe of God’s Word.** Once again we learn that **when we fear God, we need not fear anyone else.** He respected the Word and rejoiced in the Word at the same time, for **the joy of the Lord and the greatness of the Lord are friends, not enemies.** The princes wanted to rob him, but he found great wealth in the Word of God (see vv. 14, 72). **The promises of God in the Bible are better than money in the bank, because they will never lose their value, and nobody can take them from us.**

Love and hate (v. 163). ***“You who love the Lord, hate evil”*** (97:10). ***He loved God’s law but hated every false way*** (vv. 97, 104, 127–128). He loved God’s law but hated double-minded people (v. 113). Here he declared that he loved God’s law but hated falsehood.

Whoever loves and practices a lie will not enter the heavenly city and will be banished from God’s presence forever (Rev. 21:17; 22:15).

Praise and poise (vv. 164–165). The devoted Jewish worshiper would praise God and pray three times a day (55:17; Dan. 6:10–11), but the psalmist went beyond that and worshiped ***seven times a day***. **The phrase means “often, many times, beyond what is expected.”** The legalist would set a goal and be proud that he reached it; the Spirit-filled

believer sets no goal but goes beyond any goal he might have set. Just as prayer can bring peace to our hearts (Phil. 4:4–7), so praise can bring peace as well. *Focusing on the Lord, asking for nothing, and totally lost in our praise of Him, has a way of making the problems look much smaller and the future much brighter.*

But *praise also helps us to have poise in our Christian walk and to not stumble (Jude 24)* or cause others to stumble (1 Cor. 8:13; Rom. 14:13). *The singing saint is a stable saint, walking on a level path even when the enemy digs pits and sets up obstacles.*

Walking and waiting (vv. 166–168). Like the psalmist, we are waiting for “the salvation of the Lord,” when the Lord shall come and set His creation and His people free (Rom. 8:18–25; 13:11; Heb. 9:28; 1 Peter 1:9). This is the “blessed hope” that every believer anticipates and longs for (Titus 2:13). But as we wait and hope, we must walk and work, for we want to be found faithful when Jesus comes (Matt. 24:45–51). When we love His Word, we will also love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:6–8) and live like those who are ready to meet their Lord (1 John 2:28).

161. “Princes have persecuted me without a cause.” Such persons ought to have known better; they should have had sympathy with one of their own rank. A man expects a fair trial at the hand of his peers: it is ignoble to be prejudiced. Moreover, if honour be banished from all other breasts it should remain in the bosom of kings, and honour forbids the persecution of the innocent. Princes are appointed to protect the innocent and avenge the oppressed, and it is a shame when they themselves become the assailants of the righteous. It was a sad case when the man of God found himself attacked by the judges of the earth, for eminent position added weight and venom to their enmity. It was well that the sufferer could truthfully assert that this persecution was without cause. He had not broken their laws, he had not injured them, he had not even desired to see them injured, he had not been an advocate of rebellion or anarchy, he had neither openly nor secretly opposed their power, and therefore, while this made their oppression the more inexcusable, it took away a part of its sting, and helped the brave-hearted servant of God to bear up. **“But my heart standeth in awe of thy word.”** He might have been overcome by awe of the princes had it not been that a greater fear drove out the less, and he was swayed by awe of God’s word. How little do crowns and sceptres become in the judgment of that man who perceives a more majestic royalty in the commands of his God. We are not likely to be disheartened by persecution, or driven by it into sin, if the word of God continually has supreme power over our minds.

162. “I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.” His awe did not prevent his joy; his fear of God was not of the kind which perfect love casts out, but of the sort which it nourishes. He trembled at the word of the Lord, and yet rejoiced at it. He compares his joy to that of one who has been long in battle, and has at last won the victory and is dividing the spoil. This usually falls to the lot of princes, and though David was not one with them in their persecutions, yet he had his victories, and his spoil was equal to their greatest gains. The profits made in searching the Scriptures were greater than the trophies of war. We too have to fight for divine truth; every doctrine costs us a battle, but when we gain a full understanding of it by personal struggles it becomes doubly precious to us. In these days godly men have a full share of battling for the word of God; may we have for our spoil a firmer hold upon the priceless word. Perhaps, however, the Psalmist may have rejoiced as one who comes upon hidden treasure for which he had not fought, in which case we find the analogy in the man of God who, while reading the Bible, makes grand and blessed discoveries of the grace of God laid up for him,—discoveries which surprise him, for he looked not to find such a prize. Whether we come by the truth as finders or as warriors fighting for it, the heavenly treasure should be equally dear to us. With what quiet joy does the ploughman steal home with his golden find! How victors shout as they share the plunder! How glad should that man be who has discovered his portion in the promises of holy writ, and is able to enjoy it for himself, knowing by the witness of the Holy Spirit that it is all his own.

163. “I hate and abhor lying.” A double expression for an inexpressible loathing. Falsehood in doctrine, in life, or in speech, falsehood in any form or shape, had become utterly detestable to the Psalmist. This was a remarkable state for an Oriental, for generally lying is the delight of Easterns, and the only wrong they see in it is a want of skill in its exercise so that the liar is found out. David himself had made much progress when he had come to this. He does not, however, alone refer to falsehood in conversation; he evidently intends perversity in faith and

teaching. He set down all opposition to the God of truth as lying, and then he turned his whole soul against it in the intensest form of indignation. **Godly men should detest false doctrine even as they abhor a lie. “But thy law do I love,” because it is all truth. His love was as ardent as his hate. True men love truth, and hate lying.** It is well for us to know which way our hates and loves run, and we may do essential service to others by declaring what are their objects. **Both love and hate are contagious, and when they are sanctified the wider their influence the better.**

164. “Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.” He laboured perfectly to praise his perfect God, and therefore fulfilled the perfect number of songs. Seven may also intend frequency. **Frequently he lifted up his heart in thanksgiving to God for his divine teachings in the word, and for his divine actions in providence.** With his voice he extolled the righteousness of the Judge of all the earth. As often as ever he thought of God’s ways a song leaped to his lips. At the sight of the oppressive princes, and at the hearing of the abounding falsehood around him, he felt all the more bound to adore and magnify God, who in all things is truth and righteousness. When others rob us of our praise it should be a caution to us not to fall into the same conduct towards our God, who is so much more worthy of honour. **If we praise God when we are persecuted our music will be all the sweeter to him because of our constancy in suffering. If we keep clear of all lying, our song will be the more acceptable because it comes out of pure lips.** If we never flatter men we shall be in the better condition for honouring the Lord. **Do we praise God seven times a day? Do we praise him once in seven days?**

165. “Great peace have they which love thy law.” What a charming verse is this! **It deals not with those who perfectly keep the law, for where should such men be found? but with those who love it, whose hearts and hands are made to square with its precepts and demands. These men are ever striving, with all their hearts, to walk in obedience to the law, and though they are often persecuted they have peace, yea, great peace; for they have learned the secret of the reconciling blood, they have felt the power of the comforting Spirit, and they stand before the Father as men accepted. The Lord has given them to feel his peace, which passed all understanding. They have many troubles, and are likely to be persecuted by the proud, but their usual condition is that of deep calm—a peace too great for this little world to break. “And nothing shall offend them,” or, “shall really injure them.”** “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” It must needs be that offences come, but these lovers of the law are peacemakers, and so they neither give nor take offence. **That peace which is founded upon conformity to God’s will is a living and lasting one, worth writing of with enthusiasm, as the Psalmist here does.**

166. “Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.” Here we have salvation by grace, and the fruits thereof. All David’s hope was fixed upon God, he looked to him alone for salvation; and then he endeavoured most earnestly to fulfil the commands of his law. **Those who place least reliance upon good works are very frequently those who have the most of them; that same divine teaching which delivers us from confidence in our own doings leads us to abound in every good work to the glory of God. In times of trouble there are two things to be done, the first is to hope in God, and the second is to do that which is**

right. The first without the second would be mere presumption: the second without the first mere formalism. It is well if in looking back we can claim to have acted in the way which is commanded of the Lord. If we have acted rightly towards God we are sure that he will act kindly with us.

167. *“My soul hath kept thy testimonies.”* My outward life has kept thy precepts, and my inward life—my soul, has kept thy testimonies. God has borne testimony to many sacred truths, and these we hold fast as for life itself. *The gracious man stores up the truth of God within his heart as a treasure exceedingly dear and precious—he keeps it. His secret soul, his inmost self, becomes the guardian of these divine teachings which are his sole authority in soul matters. “And I love them exceedingly.”* This was why he kept them, and having kept them this was the result of the keeping. *He did not merely store up revealed truth by way of duty, but because of a deep, unutterable affection for it.* He felt that he could sooner die than give up any part of the revelation of God. *The more we store our minds with heavenly truth, the more deeply shall we be in love with it:* the more we see the exceeding riches of the Bible the more will our love exceed measure, and exceed expression.

168. *“I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies.”* Both the practical and the doctrinal parts of God’s word he had stored up, and preserved, and followed. It is a blessed thing to see the two forms of the divine word, equally known, equally valued, equally confessed: there should be no picking and choosing as to the mind of God. We know those who endeavour to be careful as to the precepts, but who seem to think that the doctrines of the gospel are mere matters of opinion, which they may shape for themselves. This is not a perfect condition of things. *We have known others again who are very rigid as to the doctrines, and painfully lax with reference to the precepts.* This also is far from right. When the two are “kept” with equal earnestness then have we the perfect man. *“For all my ways are before thee.”* Probably he means to say that *this was the motive of his endeavouring to be right both in head and heart, because he knew that God saw him,* and under the sense of the divine presence he was afraid to err. Or else he is thus appealing to God to bear witness to the truth of what he has said. In either case it is no small consolation to feel that *our heavenly Father knows all about us,* and that if princes speak against us, and worldlings fill their mouths with cruel lies, yet he can vindicate us, for there is nothing secret or hidden from him.

We are struck with the contrast between this verse, which is the last of its octave, and verse 176, which is similarly placed in the next octave. This is a protest of innocence, “I have kept thy precepts,” and that a confession of sin, “I have gone astray like a lost sheep.” Both were sincere, both accurate. Experience makes many a paradox plain, and this is one. Before God we may be clear of open fault and yet at the same time mourn over a thousand heart-wanderings which need his restoring hand.

Notes on Verses 161–168

Verse 161.—*“Princes have persecuted me.”* The evil is aggravated from the consideration that it is the very persons who ought to be as bucklers to defend us, who employ their strength in

hurting us. Yea, **when the afflicted are stricken by those in high places, they in a manner think that the hand of God is against them.** There was also this peculiarity in the case of the prophet, that he had to encounter the grandees of the chosen people—men whom God had placed in such honourable stations, to the end they might be the pillars of the Church.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 161.—“**Without a cause.**” I settle it as an established point with me, that **the more diligently and faithfully I serve Christ, the greater reproach and the more injury I must expect. I have drank deep of the cup of slander and reproach of late, but I am in no wise discouraged; no, nor by, what is much harder to bear, the unsuccessfulness of my endeavours to mend this bad world.**—*Philip Doddridge.*

Verse 161.—“**Without a cause.**” We know what persecutions the body of Christ, that is, the holy Church, suffered from the kings of the earth. Let us therefore here also recognize the words of the Church: “*Princes have persecuted me without a cause.*” For how had the Christians injured the kingdoms of the earth? Although their King promised them the kingdom of heaven, how, I ask, had they injured the kingdoms of earth? Did their King forbid his soldiers to pay and to render due service to the kings of the earth? Saith he not to the Jews who were striving to calumniate him, “*Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s*”? **Matt. 22:21. Did he not even in his own person pay tribute from the mouth of a fish?** Did not his forerunner; when the soldiers of this kingdom were seeking what they ought to do for their everlasting salvation, instead of replying, “Loose your belts, throw away your arms, desert your king, that ye may wage war for the Lord,” answer, “Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages”? **Luke 3:14.** Did not one of his soldiers, his most beloved companion, say to his fellow soldiers, the provincials, so to speak, of Christ, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers”? and a little lower he addeth, “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, but to love one another.” **Rom. 13:1, 7, 8.** Does he not enjoin the Church to pray even for kings themselves? How, then, have the Christians offended against them? What due have they not rendered? In what have not Christians obeyed the monarchs of earth? The kings of the earth therefore have persecuted the Christians *without a cause.*—*Augustine.*

Verse 161.—“**But my heart standeth in awe of thy word.**” **If there remains any qualm of fear on thy heart, fear from the wrath of bloody men threatening thee for thy profession of the truth, then to a heart inflamed with the love of truth, labour to add a heart filled with the fear of that wrath which God hath in store for all that apostatize from the truth. When you chance to burn your finger, you hold it to the fire, which being a greater**

fire draws out the other. Thus, when thy thoughts are scorched, and thy heart scared with the fire of man's wrath, hold them a while to hell fire, which God hath prepared for the fearful (Rev. 21:8), and all that run away from truth's colours (Heb. 10:39), and thou wilt lose the sense of the one for fear of the other. Ignosce imperator, saith the holy man, *tu carcerem, Deus gehennam minatur*; "Pardon me, O Emperor, if I obey not thy command; thou threatenest a prison, but God a hell." Observable is that of David: "Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word." He had no cause to fear them that had no cause to persecute him. One threatening out of the word, that sets the point of God's wrath to his heart, scares him more than the worst that the greatest on earth can do to him. Man's wrath, when hottest, is but a temperate climate to the wrath of the living God. They who have felt both have testified as much. Man's wrath cannot hinder the access of God's love to the creature, which hath made the saints sing in the fire, in spite of their enemies' teeth. But the creature under God's wrath is like one shut up in a close oven, no crevice is open to let any of the heat out, or any refreshing in to him.—
William Gurnall.

Verse 161.—"My heart standeth in awe of thy word." There is an awe of the word, not that maketh us shy of it, but tender of violating it, or doing anything contrary to it. This is not the fruit of slavish fear, but of holy love; it is not afraid of the word, but delighteth in it, as

it discovereth the mind of God to us; as in the next verse it is written, “I rejoice at thy word.”

This awe is called by a proper name, reverence, or godly

fear; when we consider whose word it is, namely, the word of the Lord, who is our God, and hath a right to command what he pleaseth; to whose will and word we have already yielded obedience, and devoted ourselves to walk worthy of him in all well-pleasing; who can find us out in all our failings, as knowing our very thoughts afar off (Ps. 139:2), and having all our ways before him, and being one of whom we read,— **“He is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins”** (Josh. 24:19), that is to say, if we impenitently continue in them. **Considering these things we receive the word with that trembling of heart which God so much respects.**—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 161.—**“In awe of thy word.”** I would advise you all, that come to the reading or hearing of this book, which is the word of God, the most precious jewel, and most holy relic that remaineth upon earth, that ye bring with you the fear of God, and that ye do it with all due reverence, and use your knowledge thereof, not to vain glory of frivolous disputation, but to the honour of God, increase of virtue, and edification both of yourselves and others.—*Thomas Cranmer, 1489–1555.*

Verse 161.—**“Awe of thy word.”** **They that tremble at the convictions of the word may triumph in the consolations of it.**—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 162.—**“I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.”** He never came to an ordinance but as a soldier to the spoil, after a great battle, as having a constant warfare with his corruptions that fought against his soul. Now he comes to see what God will say to him, and he will make himself a saver [or gainer], and **get a booty out of every commandment, promise, or threatening** he hears.—*John Cotton (1585–1652), in “The way of life.”*

Verse 162.—**“I rejoice at thy word.”** “Euripides,” saith the orator, “hath in his well-composed tragedies more sentiments than sayings;” and Thucydides hath so stuffed every syllable of his history with substance, that the one runs parallel along with the other; Lysias’s works are so well couched that you cannot take out the least word but you take away the whole sense with it; and Phocion had a special faculty of speaking much in a few words. The Cretians, in Plato’s time (however degenerated in St. Paul’s), were more weighty than wordy; Timanthes was famous in this, that in his pictures more things were intended than deciphered; and of Homer it is said that none could ever peer him for poetry. Then **how much more apt and apposite are these high praises to the book of God, rightly called the Bible or the book, as if it were, as indeed it is, both for fitness of terms and fulness of truth, the only book to which (as Luther saith) all the books in the world are but waste paper.** It is called *the word*, by way of eminency, because it must be the butt and boundary of all our words; and *the scripture*, as the lord paramount above all other words or writings of men collected into volumes, there being, as the Rabbins say, a mountain of sense hanging upon every tittle of it, whence may be gathered flowers and phrases to polish our speeches with, even sound words, that have a healing property in them, far above all filed phrases of human elocution.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 162.—“*As one that findeth great spoil.*” This expressive image may remind us of the inward conflict to be endured in acquiring the spoils of this precious word. It is so contrary to our natural taste and temper, that habitual self-denial and struggle with the indisposition of the heart can alone enable us to “*find the spoil.*” But what “*great spoil*” is divided as the fruit of the conflict! How rich and abundant is the recompense of the “good soldier of Jesus Christ,” who is determined through the power of the Spirit to “endure hardness,” until he overcome the reluctance of his heart to this spiritual duty. He shall “rejoice” in “*finding great spoil.*” Sometimes—as the spoil with which the lepers enriched themselves in the Syrian camp—it may be found unexpectedly. Sometimes we see the riches and treasures contained in a passage or doctrine, long before we can make it our own. And often when we gird ourselves to the conflict with indolence, and wanderings, under the weakness of our spiritual perceptions and the power of unbelief, many a prayer, and many a sigh is sent up for Divine aid, before we are crowned with victory, and are enabled, as the fruit of our conquest joyfully to appropriate the word to our present need and distress.—*Charles Bridges.*

Verse 163.—“*I hate and abhor lying,*” etc. One sees here how the light on David’s soul was increasing more and more unto the perfect day. In the earlier part of this Psalm, David in the recollection of his own sin had prayed, “Remove from me the way of lying,” and the Lord had indeed answered his prayer, for he now declares his utter loathing of every false way: “*I hate and abhor lying.*” And we see, in some measure, the instrument by which the Holy Spirit wrought the change: “*Thy law do I love*”; nay, as he adds in a later verse, “*I love them exceedingly.*” And so it ever must be, *the heart must have some holier object of its affection to fill up the void, or there will be no security against a relapse into sin.* I might talk for ever on the sin, the disgrace, and the danger of lying, and though at the time and for a time my words might have some influence, yet, unless the heart be filled with the love of God and of God’s law, the first temptation would prove too powerful. The Bible teaches us this in a variety of ways. God says to Israel, not only “cease to do evil,” but, “learn to do well.” And still more pointedly does the apostle, when he was warring against drunkenness, say, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,—but be filled with the Spirit.”—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 163.—“*I hate and abhor lying.*” “*Lying,*” according to Scripture usage, not only signifies speaking contrary to what one thinks, but also thinking contrary to the truth of things, and, particularly, the giving to any other of that worship and glory which are due to the true God alone. *It is to think and act aside from God’s truth.* The men who persecuted that godly man thought of earthly prosperity and power as they should not have thought; they judged God’s servant falsely, and they thought wickedly of God himself. The man

of God took a view of these things; he saw the wickedness and the vileness of them, and he continued—***“Falsehood I hate and abhor: thy law do I love.”*** From all the false and delusive ways of men, from all the pride and pomp that surround courts, from the sinful pleasures and pursuits of worldly men, as well as from the ostentatious idolatry of heathen nations, he could turn with heart delight to the contemplation of Jehovah, in that wonderful ritual which manifested the divine mercy in vicarious sacrifices, and observances, and festivals; and to that holy law which was given as man’s rule of duty and grateful obedience, and all these he loved as the manifestations of God’s grace.—*John Stephen.*

Verse 163.—***“I hate and abhor lying”***: ***not only “hate” it, nor simply I “abhor” it, but “hate and abhor,”*** to strengthen and increase the sense, and make it more vehement. Where the enmity is not great against the sin, the matter may be compounded and taken up; but David will have nothing to do with it, for he saith,—I loathe and abhor it, and ***hate it with a deadly hatred. Slight hatred of a sinful course is not sufficient to guard us against it.***—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 163.—Sin seemeth to have its name from the Hebrew word *sana*, to hate, the word here used, because it is most of all to be hated, as the greatest evil, as that which setteth us furthest from God the greatest good. ***None can hate it (sin) but those that love the law of God; for all hatred comes from love.***
A natural man may be angry with his sin, but hate it he cannot; nay, he may leave it, but not loathe it; if he did, he would loathe all sin as well as any one sin.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 163.—***“Lying.”*** All injustice is abominable: to do any sort of wrong is a heinous crime, but ***lying is that crime which, above all others, tendeth to the dissolution of society and disturbance of human life; which God therefore doth most loathe, and men have reason especially to detest. Of this the slanderer is most deeply guilty.*** “A witness of Belial scorneth judgment, and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity,” saith the wise man: Prov. 19:28. He is indeed, according to just estimation, guilty of all kinds of injury, breaking all the second table of commands respecting our neighbour. ***Most distinctly he beareth false witness against his neighbour: he doth covet his neighbour’s goods, for ’tis constantly out of such an irregular desire, for his own presumed advantage, to dispossess his neighbour of some good, and transfer it on himself, that the slanderer uttereth his tale: he is also a thief and robber of his good name, a deflowerer and defiler of his reputation, an assassin and murderer of his honour. So doth he violate all the rules of justice, and perpetrateth all sorts of wrong against his neighbour.***—*Isaac Barrow.*

Verse 164.—“*Seven times a day do I praise thee.*” *Affections of the soul cannot long be kept secret; if they be strong they will break forth in actions. The love of God is like a fire in the heart of man, which breaks forth, and manifests itself in the obedience of his commandments, and praising him for his benefits; and this is it which David now protests, that the love of God was not idle in his heart, but made him fervent and earnest in praising God,* so that “*seven times a day*” he did praise God. For by this number the carefulness of holy devotion is expressed, and the fervency of his love. In praising God he could not be satisfied, saith Basil.—*William Cowper.*

Verse 164.—“*Seven times a day do I praise thee.*” “As every grace,” says Sibbes, “increaseth by exercise of itself, so doth the grace of prayer. By prayer we learn to pray.” And thus it was with the Psalmist; he oftentimes anticipated the dawning of the morning for his exercise of prayer; and at midnight frequently arose to pour out his soul in prayer; now he adds that “*seven times in a day,*” or as we might express it, “*at every touch and turn,*” he finds opportunity for and delight in praise. Oh for David’s spirit and David’s practice!—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 164.—“*Seven times a day do I praise thee.*” *A Christian ought to give himself up eminently to this duty without limits.*—*Walter Marshall.*

Verse 164.—“*Seven times a day do I praise thee.*” *Not as if he had seven set hours for this duty every day, as the Papists would have it, to countenance their seven canonical hours, but rather a definite number is put for an indefinite, and so amounts to this,—he did very often in a day praise God; his holy heart taking the hint of every providence to carry him to heaven on this errand of prayer and praise.*—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 164.—“*Seven times a day.*” Some of the Jewish Rabbis affirm that David is here to be understood literally, observing, that the devout Hebrews were accustomed to praise God twice in the morning, before reading the ten commandments, and once after; twice in the evening before reading the same portion of inspiration, and twice after; which makes up the number of seven times a day.—*James Anderson’s note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 165.—“*Great peace have they which love thy law.*” Amidst the storms and tempests of the world, there is a perfect calm in the breasts of those, who not only do the will of God, but “love” to do it. They are at peace with God, by the blood of reconciliation; at peace with themselves, by the answer of a good conscience, and the subjection of those desires which war against the soul; at peace with all men, by the spirit of charity; and the whole creation is so at peace with them that all things work together for their good. *No external troubles can rob them of this “great peace,” no “offences” or stumbling blocks, which are thrown in their way by persecution, or temptation, by the malice of enemies, or by the apostasy of friends, by anything which they see, hear of, or feel, can detain, or divert them from their course.* Heavenly love surmounts every obstacle, and runs with delight the way of God’s commandments.—George Horne.

Verse 165.—“*Great peace have they which love thy law.*” There have been Elis trembling for the ark of God, and Uzzahs putting out their hand in fear that it was going to fall; but in the midst of the deepest troubles through which the church has passed, and the fiercest storms that have raged about it, there have been true, faithful men of God who have never despaired. In every age there have been Martin Luthers... who have not only held fast their confidence, but whose peace has deepened with the roaring of the waves. The more they have been forsaken of men, the closer has been their communion with God. And with strong hold of him and of his promises, and hearts that could enter into the secret place of the Most High, although there has been everything without to agitate, threaten, and alarm, they have been guided into perfect peace. —James Martin, in “The Christian Mirror, and other Sermons,” 1878.

Verse 165.—“*Great peace have they which love thy law.*”

Clearness of conscience is a help to comfortable thoughts. Yet observe, that peace is not so much affected as preserved by a good conscience and conversation; for though *joy in the Holy Ghost will make its nest nowhere but in a holy soul,* yet the blood of Christ only can speak peace; “being justified by faith, we have peace:” Rom. 5:1. An exact life will not make, but keep conscience quiet; *an easy shoe does not heal a sore foot, but it keeps a sound one from hurt.* Walking with God according to gospel rules hath peace entailed upon it, and that peace is such a treasure, as thereby a Christian may have his rejoicing from himself. Gal. 6:4, 16. **His own heart sings him a merry tune, which the threats and reproaches of the world cannot silence.** The treasure of comfort is not expended in affliction; death itself doth not exhaust but increase and advance it to an eternal triumph. O the excellency and necessity of it! Paul laid it up for a death-bed cordial: “Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience:” 2 Cor. 1:12. And Hezekiah dares hold it up to God, as well as cheer himself up with it on approaching death. *A conscience good in point of integrity will be good also in point of tranquillity: “The righteous are bold as a lion”: they have great peace that love and keep God’s commandments: Prov. 28:1; Ps. 119:165.* And saith the apostle, **“If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God” (1 John 3:2),** and I may add also, towards men. Oh! what comfort and solace hath a clear conscience! *A conscientious man hath something within to answer accusations without;* he hath such a rich treasure as will not fail in greatest straits and hazards. I shall conclude this with a notable saying of **Bernard:—“The pleasures of a good conscience are the Paradise of souls, the joy of angels, a garden of delights, a field of blessing, the temple of Solomon, the court of God, the habitation of the Holy Spirit.”**—*Oliver Heywood.*

Verse 165.—**“Great peace.”** Note that for “peace” the Hebrew word is **שָׁלוֹם shalom: it signifies not only “peace,” but also perfection, wholeness, prosperity, tranquillity,**

healthfulness, safety, the completion and consummation of every good thing, and so it is frequently taken by the Hebrews; hence in

salutations wishing one the other well, they say, שלום לך, *shâlom lekha*, i.e., “peace be with thee”; as if one should say, “may all things be prosperous with thee.”—*Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 165.—“*They which love thy law.*” To love a law may seem strange; but it is the only true divine life. To keep it because we are afraid of its penalties is only a form of fear or prudential consideration. To keep it to preserve a good name may be propriety and respectability. To keep it because it is best for society may be worldly self-interest. To keep it because of physical health may be the policy of epicurean philosophy. *To keep it because we love it is to show that it is already part of us—has entered into the moral texture of our being. Sin then becomes distasteful, and temptations lose their power.*—*W. M. Statham*, quoted in “*A Homiletic Commentary on the Psalms*,” 1879.

Verse 165.—“*And nothing shall offend them.*” Hebrew, “they shall have no stumblingblock.” 1 John 2:10, “*There is none occasion of stumbling in him*” who abides in the *light*, which makes him to see and avoid such stumblingblocks. *Wealth, tribulation, temptation, which are the occasion to many of falling* (Isa. 8:14, 15; Ezek. 3:20; 7:19; 14:3, 4, 7), *are not so to him.*—*A. R. Faussett*.

Verse 165.—Learn the true wisdom of those of you who are new creatures, and who love God’s holy law. All of you who are really brought to Christ are changed into his image, so that you love God’s holy law. “I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” “*The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart*”: Ps. 19. *The world says: What a slave you are!* you cannot have a little amusement on the Sabbath—you cannot take a Sabbath walk, or join a Sabbath tea-party; you cannot go to a dance or a theatre; you cannot enjoy the pleasures of sensual indulgence—you are a slave. I answer: Christ had none of these pleasures. He did not want them; nor do we. He knew what was truly wise, and good, and happy, and he chose God’s holy law. He was the freest of all beings, and yet he knew no sin. *Only make me free as Christ is free—this is all I ask.* “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.”—*Robert Murray M’Cheyne*, 1813–1843.

Verse 165.—“*Nothing shall offend them.*” They that have this character of God’s children, will not be stumbled at God’s dispensations, let them be never so cross to their desires, because they

have a God to fly unto in all their troubles, and a sure covenant to rest upon. Therefore the reproaches cast upon them, and on the way of God, do not scandalize them; for they have found God in that very way which others speak evil of; they are not so offended by anything that attends the way of God, as to dislike or forsake that way. Nevertheless we must take heed that we be not offended.—*John Bunyan*.

Verse 166.—“*Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation,*” etc. *This is the true posture in which all the servants of God should desire to be found—hoping in his mercy, and doing his commands.* How easy were it to demonstrate the connection between the mental feeling here recognized, and the obedience with which it is here associated! It is the hope of salvation which is the great and pervading motive to holiness, and it is the consciousness of obedience to the will of God which strengthens our hope of interest in the divine mercy.—*John Morison*.

Verse 166.—“*Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation.*” **This saying he borrowed from good old Jacob.** *Gen. 49:18.*—*John Trapp*.

Verse 166.—“*I have done thy commandments.*” Set upon the practice of what you read. A student in physic doth not satisfy himself to read over a system or body of physic, but he falls upon practising physic: the life-blood of religion lies in the practical part. *Christians should be walking Bibles.* Xenophon said, “Many read Lycurgus’s laws, but few observe them.” *The word written is not only a rule of knowledge, but a rule of obedience; it is not only to mend our sight, but to mend our pace.* David calls God’s word “a lamp unto his feet” (verse 105). It was not only a light to his eyes to see by, but to his feet to walk by. **By practice we trade with the talent of knowledge, and turn it to profit.** This is a blessed reading of Scripture, when we fly from the sins which the word forbids, and espouse the doctrines which the word commands. *Reading without practice will be but a torch to light men to hell.* — *Thomas Watson*.

Verses 166, 167, 168.—He that casts the commands behind his back is very presumptuous in applying the promises to himself. *That hope which is not accompanied with obedience will make a man ashamed.* He that has learned the word of God knows that the law is not made void by faith, but established: Rom. 3:31. Christ the Church’s

Head and Prophet, in his sermon upon the mount shows the extent of the law, requiring purity in the heart and thoughts, as well as in the life and actions, and condemns them “who shall break the least of these commands and shall teach men so”; but “those that teach and do them,” he owns as great in his kingdom: Matt. 5:19. The law spoken on Mount Sinai is established by the Legislator Christ in Mount Zion as a rule of righteousness. And they who are rightly instructed, “which walk according to this rule,” will have both heart and conversation ordered according to his direction, and “peace and mercy will be upon them,” and hereby they will show themselves to be indeed the Israel of God.—*Nathanael Vincent*.

Verse 167.— ***My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.*** Should he not have said, first, I have loved thy commandments, and so have kept them? Doubtless he did so; but he ran here in ***a holy and most heavenly circle, I have kept them and loved them, and loved them and kept them.*** If we love Christ, we shall also live the life of love in our measure, and his commandments will be most dear when himself is most precious.—*Thomas Shepard, in “The Sound Believer,” 1671.*

Verse 167.—***“My soul.”*** It is a usual phrase among the Hebrews, when they would express their affection to anything, to say, “*My soul*”: as Ps. 103:1 and 104:1, “*My soul, praise thou the Lord,*” and Luke 1. “*My soul doth magnify the Lord.*”—*Richard Greenham.*

Verse 167.—***“I love them exceedingly.”*** It is only a reasonable return to God; for the Father loved me so *exceedingly* as not to spare his own Son, but to give him up for me; and the Son loved me so *exceedingly* that he gave himself to me, and gave me back to myself when I was lost in my sins, original and actual.—*Gerhohus (1093–1169), in Neale and Littledale.*

Verses 167, 168.— ***Let not our consciousness of daily failures make us shrink from this strong expression of confidence. It is alleged as an evidence of grace, not as a claim of merit,*** and therefore the most humble believer need not hesitate to adopt it as the expression of Christian sincerity before God. David aspired to no higher character than that of a poor sinner: but he was conscious of spirituality of obedience, “*exceeding love*” to the divine word, and an habitual walk under the eye of his God—the evidences of a heart (often mentioned in the Old Testament) “perfect with him.”—*Charles Bridges.*

Verse 168.—***“I have kept thy precepts, for all my ways are before thee.”*** When men are some way off in a king’s eye they will be comely in their carriage; but when they come into his presence-chamber to speak with him they will be most careful. Because saints are always in God’s sight, their constant deportment must be pious and seemly.—*George Swinnock.*

Verse 168.—“*I have kept thy precepts*, etc. The Hebrew word שמר, *shamar*, that is here rendered **“kept,”** signifies to keep carefully, diligently, studiously, exactly. It signifies to keep as men keep prisoners, and to keep as a watchman keeps the city or the garrison; yea, to keep as a man would keep his very life. But now mark what was the reason that David kept the precepts and the testimonies of the Lord so carefully, so sincerely, so diligently, so studiously, and so exactly. **Why**, the reason you have in the latter part of the verse, **“for all my ways are before thee.”** O sirs! it is as necessary for him that would be eminent in holiness, to set the Lord always before him, as it is necessary for him to breathe. In that 31st of Job you have a very large narrative of that height and perfection of holiness that Job had attained to, and the great reason that he gives you, for this is in the 4th verse, “Doth not he see my way, and count all my steps?” ***The eye of God had so strong an influence upon his heart and life, that it wrought him up to a very high pitch of holiness.***—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 168.—“***All my ways are before thee.***” That **God seeth the secrets of our heart,** is a point terrible to the wicked but joyful to the godly. The wicked are sorry that their heart is so open: it is a boiling pot of all mischief, a furnace and forge-house for evil. It grieveth them that man should hear and see their words and actions; but what a terror is this—that their Judge, whom they hate, seeth their thought! If they could deny this, they would. But so many of them as are convinced and forced to acknowledge a God, are shaken betimes with this also—that he is All-seeing. Others proceed more summarily, and at once deny the Godhead in their heart, and so destroy this conscience of his All-knowledge. But it is in vain: the more they harden their heart by this godless thought, the more fear is in them; while they choke and check their conscience that it crow not against them it checketh them with foresight of fearful vengeance, and for the present convinceth them of the omniscience of God, the more they press to suppress it. But the godly rejoice herein; it is to them a rule to square their thoughts by; they take no liberty of evil thinking, willing, wishing, or affecting, in their hearts. Where that candle shineth, all things are framed as worthy of him and of his sight, whom they know to be seeing their heart.—*William Struther, 1633.*

Verse 168.—“***All my ways are before thee.***” Walk Christian, in the view of God’s omniscience; say to thy soul, *cave, videt Deus*; **take heed God seeth.** It is under the rose, as the common phrase is, that treason is spoken, when subjects think they are far enough from their king’s hearing; but did such know the prince to be under the window, or behind the hangings, their discourse would be more loyal. This made David so upright in his walking: “*I have kept thy precepts, for all my ways are before thee.*” If Alexander’s empty chair, which his captains, when

they met in counsel, set before them, did awe them so as to keep them in good order; how helpful would it be to set before ourselves the fact that God is looking upon us! The Jews covered Christ's face, and then buffeted him: Mark 14:65. So does the hypocrite; he first says in his heart, God sees not, or at least forgets that he sees, and then he makes bold to sin against him; like that foolish bird, which runs her head among the reeds, and thinks herself safe from the fowler, as if because she did not see her enemy, therefore he could not see her. *Te mihi abscondam, non me tibi* ([Augustine](#)).

I may hide thee from my eye, but not myself from thine eye.—*William Gurnall*.

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Developing A Holy Lifestyle

(1 Peter 1:13-16)

A California driver's license examiner told about a teenager who had just driven an almost perfect test. "He made his only mistake," said the examiner, "when he stopped to let me out of the car. After breathing a sigh of relief, the boy exclaimed, 'I'm sure glad I don't have to drive like that all the time!'" (*Reader's Digest* [1/84].)

That boy was like a lot of churchgoing Americans. They put on a good front when they know someone is watching, but the rest of the time they let down their standards. There's not much difference between them and those in the world, except that they go to church a little more. The divorce rate among Christians is about the same as in society at large. In fact, the third highest divorce rate occupationally, after doctors and police, goes to pastors! Christians watch the same TV shows and movies for the same number of hours weekly as everyone else. Christian youths are involved in sexual immorality to the same extent as those not naming Christ as Savior. Many Christian businessmen have a bad reputation. It would seem that our Christianity doesn't have much effect on the way we live.

I know of no text that needs to be burned into the thinking of American Christians more than [1 Peter 1:13-16](#). Writing to many who had come from pagan backgrounds, living in a pagan society where there was great pressure to conform, Peter calls his readers to holiness in light of the coming of Jesus Christ and the holy character of the God who calls us to salvation. He makes three points:

To be holy people, we must be focused on Christ's coming, obedient in all of life, and growing in our knowledge of God's holiness.

The word "holy" means to be separate. When applied to God, it points to His transcendence, that He is above and beyond His creation in such a way as to be distinct from it. Contained in the word is the notion of God's purity, that He is totally separate from all sin. When God calls us to holiness, it means that we are to be set apart from the world unto God, separate from all sin. But since sin dwells in the very core of our being as fallen creatures, how can we ever hope to be holy?

There are three senses in which we are holy (or "sanctified") as God's people. The moment we put our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, we are **positionally** sanctified or set apart unto God. Then we must be **progressively** sanctified by growing in holiness. This process will not be complete as long as we're in this body, but we must actively work at it ([Gal. 5:16](#); [Rom. 8:13](#)). When we meet the Lord we will be **perfectly** sanctified, made completely like Him ([1 John 3:2](#)).

Dr. Ryrie illustrates these three aspects of sanctification with a little girl with a new lollipop. She sees her friend coming and knows that she should share her lollipop, but she doesn't want to. So she sets apart that lollipop unto herself by licking it all over. Now it's hers. Then she starts licking it to make it progressively hers. Finally the process is over when the lollipop is completely gone. If we belong to God, He has set us apart unto Himself. He is progressively making us like Him. And someday we will be completely like Him.

Let me make it plain at the outset that you cannot get to heaven by striving to be holy. Good works cannot pay the penalty for our sins. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can satisfy the justice of God. We must put our trust in Him, not in our good works. But, if our faith in Christ to save us is genuine, it will result in a life of progressive holiness. If a person is not striving against sin and seeking to grow in holiness, it is doubtful whether his faith was saving faith. Scripture says, "Without holiness no one will see the Lord" ([Heb. 12:14](#), NIV). Peter shows us three ways that we can be developing a holy lifestyle as those who have trusted in Christ:

1. To be holy people, we must be focused on Christ's coming (1:13).

The Greek text has only two commands in 1:13-16: "Fix your hope"; and, "Be holy." The other action words are participles which are dependent on the main verbs. Thus the sense of 1:13 is, "Girding your minds for action, keeping sober, fix your hope completely on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Thus the command is to have a determined focus on the grace that will come to us when Christ returns. There are three aspects of this focus:

A. HOLY LIVING IN LIGHT OF CHRIST'S COMING BEGINS IN THE MIND.

"Gird up the loins of your mind" is a figure of speech stemming from the fact that the men in that day wore long outer robes which got in the way when they needed to run, work or fight in a battle. So they would tuck their robes into a belt so that they wouldn't be a hindrance. We might use the expression, "Roll up your sleeves." The idea is, be mentally prepared for combat or action in the realm of holiness. One commentator puts it: "We must begin to act as those who mean business" concerning this matter of holiness (Alan Stibbs, *The First Epistle General of Peter, Tyndale N.T. Commentaries* [Eerdmans], p. 85). The point is, holiness begins in your thought life. What you think determines how you live. One of the most practical things I can tell you about living the Christian life is: Deal with sin on the thought level! Judge wicked thoughts the instant you have them, confess them to God and replace them with thoughts of Him and His Word. If you are envious of someone, judge it, confess it, and ask God to replace it with His love for that person. If you are lusting after a woman (or man), deal with it instantly. Flee from it, both mentally and physically! As Paul put it, take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)).

It's on the thought level that your Christianity is either real or fake. You can fool everyone else, but God knows your thoughts. If you're faking it and not cultivating a holy thought life, sooner or later it's going to come out in the open in some form of sin that everyone can see. There isn't anyone who ever committed adultery who didn't first entertain the thought in his mind.

You need to guard what enters your mind as carefully as you guard what you eat. You wouldn't think of eating garbage from the gutter because it would make you sick. If you feed your thoughts daily on the sensual, materialistic garbage on TV and in the other media and you seldom feed on God's Word, you will not become a holy man or woman. Peter says that we must fix our hope completely on the grace that will be brought to us at the

revelation of Jesus Christ. Holiness begins in our minds as we think often of our Savior and the gracious salvation we will fully experience when He returns and we are changed into His likeness!

B. HOLY LIVING IN LIGHT OF CHRIST'S COMING REQUIRES SPIRITUAL ALERTNESS.

"Being sober" (1:13) is a favorite word for Peter (he uses it 3 of its 6 uses in the New Testament-- 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). It literally means "not drunk," but obviously has a spiritual application, meaning to be alert and self-controlled. It refers to clarity of mind and the resulting good judgment. The noun is used as a qualification of elders and women who serve as deaconesses ([1 Tim. 3:2, 11](#), "temperate").

Peter uses it in 5:8: "Be sober, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." If a literal lion were on the loose outside, it wouldn't be wise to go for a stroll out there! You wouldn't be goofing off. You'd be on the lookout for any sign of it. You'd make sure your kids were indoors. You'd warn them sternly of the dangers. You'd take every precaution so that you wouldn't become his next meal!

The point is, we live in enemy territory. If you feed your mind on the garbage of the world and don't feed on God's Word, it's like getting drunk and staggering outside when there's a lion on the prowl. You're dead meat! You're not going to be a holy person. Maybe you're thinking, "This sounds kind of legalistic!" But notice:

C. HOLY LIVING IN LIGHT OF CHRIST'S COMING IS MOTIVATED BY GRACE.

"Fix your hope completely on the grace being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." God's grace is the motivation for holy living. As I mentioned last week, the word here and in 1:10 is used as a synonym for our salvation. The "therefore" in 1:13 also points us back to the great salvation Peter talks about in 1:3-12. The present participle, "being brought to you" hints at the fact that we've already begun to enjoy what God is going to unveil completely when Christ returns. The word "brought" "underscores the sovereign action of God in bringing grace to his people" (J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary 1 Peter* [Word], p. 56).

Why does Peter tell us to focus on the grace that will be brought to us when Christ returns rather than on the grace we've already received? I can't be dogmatic, but I think it's because his readers were going through intense trials. Peter is telling them, "You've already tasted of God's salvation in Christ, but you ain't seen nothin' yet! Just hang on through the trials and focus on the fact that God is going to bless you beyond what you can imagine, not based

on what you deserve, but based on His undeserved favor!" That future grace should motivate us to live holy lives right now, no matter how much we suffer.

Thus the first aspect of developing a holy lifestyle is to focus on Christ's coming, being alert in our thinking, motivated by God's grace.

2. To be holy people, we must be obedient to the Father in all of life (1:14, 15b).

There are three things involved in such obedience:

A. WE MUST MAKE A BREAK WITH OUR PAST LIFESTYLE.

"Do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance" (1:14). The word "conformed" is used only one other time in the New Testament, by Paul in [Romans 12:2](#): "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind [there's that concept again!] that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Phillips paraphrases it, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within ..."

Our past lifestyle was marked by our efforts to fulfill selfish desires. The word "lusts" ([1 Pet. 1:14](#)) refers not only to sexual lust, but "to all kinds of self-seeking, whether directed toward wealth, power, or pleasure" (Michaels, p. 57). It brings out the strong emotional tug of temptation and sin. These lusts have full sway in unbelievers because they are ignorant of God and His holiness and grace as revealed in His Word. But as Christians, growing in our knowledge of God, we don't have to be controlled by selfish desires. We make a break with the self-centered living that marked us before we met Christ and now live under His lordship and for His purposes.

I think this explains much of the shallow Christianity of our day. People "invite Jesus into their heart" because they're told that He will give them an abundant life. If they like what Jesus is doing for them, if they feel that their lives are happier now than before, they'll let Jesus "stay in office." But they've never made a break with their past life. They've never repented of sin or yielded to Christ as Lord. They're still running their own lives, living for the same selfish desires they formerly lived for. The only difference is that now they're trying to "use Jesus" to fulfill selfish desires. That's not saving faith. Saving faith involves repentance. It makes a break with the past lifestyle and seeks to follow Jesus as Lord.

B. WE MUST ESTABLISH A HABIT OF OBEDIENCE.

“As obedient children” (1:14) is a Hebrew expression that means “characterized by obedience,” or “habitual obedience.” The implication is that God is our Heavenly Father whom we obey. His Word tells us how He wants us to live. We ought to obey God as a conditioned response. Such obedience is not legalism, but rather should characterize those under grace. Peter quotes from the Law ([Lev. 19:2](#)) and applies it directly to his readers under grace: “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” We are not under the ceremonial or civil laws of Israel. But God’s moral law stems from His holy nature and is just as applicable under grace as it was under law (see [1 Cor. 9:21](#)). As God’s children, we need to get in the habit of asking, “What does God’s Word say?” Then we obey it.

C. WE MUST ERASE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SACRED AND SECULAR.

“Be holy yourselves in all your behavior” (1:15b). The word behavior is another favorite for Peter (6 of 13 New Testament uses are in 1 Peter, with two more in 2 Peter). It refers to conduct or, what we would call “lifestyle.” That Peter here links “holiness” with “behavior” and adds the word “all” is significant because many pagan religions of that time separated “cultic holiness” from everyday life. Peter is saying that our separation unto God is to affect every area of life, both private and public. There is no such thing as secular life that is not sacred for the Christian.

J. I. Packer, in his excellent book, *A Quest for Godliness* [Crossway], subtitled, “The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life,” makes the point that the Puritans did a good job of integrating their Christianity into every aspect of life, from the most intimate aspects of married life to the most public aspects of political and social life. He writes (pp. 23-24), “There was for them no disjunction between sacred and secular; all creation, so far as they were concerned, was sacred, and all activities, of whatever kind, must be sanctified, that is, done to the glory of God.”

That kind of integrated living eliminates hypocrisy. There’s nothing that turns people off more than to see someone who professes to be a Christian, but whose lifestyle denies it. Kids read it loud and clear in their parents. This doesn’t mean that you must be perfect. It means that you live with integrity, confessing sin when you blow it, making your Christianity practical in every aspect of life. We’re the only “Bible” many unbelievers will ever read. Just as we can learn quite a bit about a father by watching his children, so the world learns about our Heavenly Father by watching His children. That means that we must learn to obey our Father in all of life.

Thus, to be holy people we must be focused on Christ's coming and obedient in all of life.

3. To be holy people, we must be growing in our personal knowledge of God's holiness (1:15, 16).

"Like the Holy One who called you," and "You shall be holy for I am holy," imply that we know something about who this Holy God is. The Christian life is a process of growing to know God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture. This knowledge of the Holy One has a transforming effect on our lives. We can never be as holy as God is holy, since such absolute holiness belongs to God alone. But we can and must grow in personal holiness as we grow to know our Holy God.

Both Stephen Charnock, in his classic work, *The Existence and Attributes of God* ([Baker], 2:112) and, more recently, R. C. Sproul, in his *The Holiness of God* ([Tyndale], p. 40), point out that no other attribute of God is elevated to the third degree. The Bible never says of God, "Eternal, eternal, eternal," or "Love, love, love," or "Mercy, mercy, mercy." But it does say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory" ([Isa. 6:3](#)). We are a bit flippant and shallow in our knowledge of God in our day. Many Christians talk about God without any fear of the awesomeness of His absolute holiness. John MacArthur tells about a well-known charismatic pastor who told him that sometimes in the morning when he's shaving, Jesus comes into his bathroom and puts His arm around him and they talk together. I like John's incredulous reply: "And you keep shaving?!" Every time in the Bible someone gets a glimpse of Christ in His resurrected glory, the person falls on his face!

It was Isaiah who had that vision of God on His throne with the angels crying, "Holy, holy, holy." As both A. W. Tozer (*The Knowledge of the Holy* [Harper & Row], p. 110) and Sproul (pp. 41-44) point out, it was an emotionally violent, personally disintegrating experience. Sproul writes (p. 45), "In the flash of a moment Isaiah had a new and radical understanding of sin. He saw that it was pervasive, in himself and in everyone else." To whatever extent we gain insight on the holiness of God, we will gain equal insight on the magnitude of our sin. At the same time, we will revel in the amazing grace of God who saved us through the cross of Jesus Christ. That knowledge will make us more holy in all our behavior.

Conclusion

Today I'm probably speaking to some whom God is calling to repent of sin and put their trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. I may be speaking to others who are faking the

Christian life outwardly, but inwardly, you're not living in holiness. You're not dealing with sin in your thought life. It's only a matter of time until you fall outwardly. I may be speaking to yet others who have fallen outwardly. Your life is not right before God, even though you profess to know Christ as Savior.

The solution is the same for all: To turn to God from your sin and appeal to Him for a clean conscience and an obedient heart, based on the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed for you. Listen to what God says in [Isaiah 57:15](#): "For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, 'I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.'" That's good news! God, though He is altogether holy and exalted, condescends to dwell with those who humble themselves before Him! Like the father of the prodigal son, God joyfully welcomes all who turn back to Him!

Leonard Ravenhill has written (source unknown), "The greatest miracle that God can do today is to take an unholy man out of an unholy world, and make that man holy and put him back into that unholy world and keep him holy in it." He does it as we focus on Christ's coming, as we're obedient in all of life, and as we grow in our personal knowledge of God's holiness.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some practical ways to develop a holy thought life?
2. Is God's grace opposed to or coupled with human effort in the matter of growing in holiness? Cite biblical evidence.
3. Is it legalistic to obey God even when we don't feel like it? Why/why not?
4. Should God's holiness create fear in us? How can we be intimate with such a Holy God?

4383. mikshol 

Strong's Concordance

mikshol: a stumbling, means or occasion of stumbling, a stumbling block

Original Word: מְשׁוֹל

Part of Speech: Noun Masculine

Transliteration: mikshol

Phonetic Spelling: (mik-shole')

Definition: a stumbling, means or occasion of stumbling, a stumbling block

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [kashal](#)

Definition

a stumbling, means or occasion of stumbling, a stumbling block

NASB Translation

fall (1), obstacle (2), occasion of stumbling (1), stumble (2), stumbling block (6), stumbling blocks (1), troubled (1).

Brown-Driver-Briggs

מְשׁוֹל **noun masculine** ^{Jeremiah 6:21} **a stumbling, means or occasion of stumbling, stumbling-block**; — מ' absolute [Isaiah 8:14](#) 3t., מְשׁוֹל [Leviticus 19:14](#); construct **1** מְשׁוֹל [Samuel 25:31](#) 6t. Ezekiel; plural מְשׁוֹלִים [Jeremiah 6:21](#) + [Ezekiel 21:20](#) ⁰ (Co and others מְשׁוֹלִים, see *below*); —

1 *stumbling*, מ' צוֹר [Isaiah 8:14](#) (fig) *a rock of stumbling* (i.e. over which one stumbles); literal הַמְשׁוֹלִים הַרְבֵּה [Ezekiel 21:20](#) *an abundance of stumblings, falls* (si vera lectio; ^{m5} oi ἀσθενοῦντες, apparently reading participle, compare Sm; so Co Da (as a possibility), i.e. מְשׁוֹלִים

Hoph`al Participle of כָּשַׁל = *those who have stumbled or been overthrown*).

2 *means, or occasion of stumbling, stumbling-block*; **a** literal [Leviticus 19:14](#).

b. figurative of misfortune, calamity Paslm Lev 119:165; in divine judgment [Jeremiah 6:21](#); [Ezekiel 3:20](#), as a hindrance to restoration of people [Isaiah 57:14](#).

c. in ethical sense מ' עֲוֹנָם [Ezekiel 7:19](#) *a stumbling-block of* (i.e. occasioning) *their iniquity*, so [Ezekiel 14:3,4,7](#); [Ezekiel 18:30](#); [Ezekiel 44:12](#) (mostly with reference to idols).

d. **1** מ' לֵב [Samuel 25:31](#) *a stumbling-block of heart* i.e. ground for remorse.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

caused to fall, offence, nothing offered, ruin, stumbling-block

Jeremiah 6:21

HEB: הָעַם הַזֶּה מִכְשָׁלִים וְכָשְׁלוּ כָּם

NAS: I am laying *stumbling blocks* before

KJV: Behold, I will lay *stumblingblocks* before this people,

INT: people this *stumbling* will stumble Fathers

Ezekiel 3:20

HEB: עָלַי וְנָתַתִּי מִכְשׁוֹל לְפָנָיו הוּא

NAS: and I place *an obstacle* before

KJV: and I lay *a stumblingblock* before

INT: iniquity place *an obstacle* before he

Ezekiel 7:19

HEB: יִמְלֵאוּ כִּי־ מִכְשׁוֹל עֲוֹנֵם הָיָה:

NAS: has become *an occasion of stumbling*.

KJV: their bowels: *because it is the stumblingblock* of their iniquity.

INT: fill for *an occasion* their iniquity has become

Ezekiel 14:3

HEB: עַל־ לְבָבָם וּמִכְשׁוֹל עֲוֹנֵם נָתַנוּ

NAS: their faces *the stumbling block* of their iniquity.

KJV: and put *the stumblingblock* of their iniquity

INT: in their hearts *the stumbling* of their iniquity put

Ezekiel 14:4

HEB: אֵל־ לְבָבוֹ וּמִכְשׁוֹל עֲוֹנוֹ יָשִׁים

NAS: his face *the stumbling block* of his iniquity,

KJV: and putteth *the stumblingblock* of his iniquity

INT: in his heart *the stumbling* of his iniquity puts

Ezekiel 14:7

HEB: אֵל־ לְבָבוֹ וּמִכְשׁוֹל עֲוֹנוֹ יָשִׁים

NAS: his face *the stumbling block* of his iniquity,

KJV: and putteth *the stumblingblock* of his iniquity

INT: in his heart *the stumbling* of his iniquity puts

Ezekiel 18:30

HEB: יִהְיֶה לְכֶם לְמִכְשׁוֹל עֲוֹן:

NAS: may not become *a stumbling block* to you.

KJV: so iniquity *shall not be your ruin*.

INT: may not become *A stumbling* iniquity

Ezekiel 21:15

HEB: לֵב וְהִרְבֵּה הַמִּכְשָׁלִים עַל כָּל־

NAS: and many *fall* at all

KJV: may faint, *and [their] ruins* be multiplied:

INT: that hearts and many *fall* at all

Ezekiel 44:12

HEB: לְבֵית־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִכְשׁוֹל עָוֹן עַל־

NAS: and became *a stumbling block* of iniquity

KJV: of Israel *to fall* into iniquity;

INT: to the house of Israel *A stumbling* of iniquity against

14 Occurrences

Strong's Hebrew 4383

14 Occurrences