

# **"Living a Life of Order"**

## **Psalm 119:129-136**

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The great enemies of the Christian as he makes his pilgrimage through this world are the world, the flesh, and the devil. These are great and powerful enemies and we cannot overcome them except through faith. These enemies are poised to attack us at every point.

Of the world John tells us, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him."

Of the flesh, Paul wrote: "The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

Of the devil, Peter wrote: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" (1Pe 5:8 av)

The enmity of the world, the flesh, and the devil to God and his work is never more clearly manifest than their opposition to the way God would have His children order their lives.

Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.

The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou used to do unto those that love thy name.

Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.

Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." (Ps 119:129-136)

Because David recognizes the great threat to himself poised by the world, the flesh, and the devil, he prays, "Order my steps in thy word." The word "order" means to arrange or to "prepare."

Isaiah says that Christ would set upon his kingdom to "order" and to establish it with judgment.

It is said that the service of the tabernacle was "set in order" by Moses and Aaron.

The word also has the idea of "prepare" as Joseph's household "prepared" a meal when his brothers were being brought to his house in Egypt. They didn't just throw the food on the table, but prepared it decently and set it in order.

But let us get to the text and its application. My text is verse 133: “Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.”

I want to bring at least one more sermon on this subject and try to make further applications to the summary information that I am speaking about today.

As it applies to the family, it means that the home is to be well managed. It is to be ordered according to the principles of Scripture. Peter Drucker, the great management consultant, who wrote the popular book, *The Effective Executive*, said something to this effect: A well-run factory is a boring place. There is no running from place to place; everyone knows his job and does it without fanfare. It is efficient and businesslike. In contrast, a poorly run factory lurches from crisis to crisis, from emergency to emergency. People are scurrying here and there, and it appears there is a great deal of activity, and there is, but not productive activity. I was talking to a friend of mine in California about this years ago, and he responded, “Yes, an emergency reveals a lack of planning.”

I. David recognizes that the key to overcoming iniquity is to have his steps ordered by the Lord. As Solomon wrote: “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.” (Ps 37:23 av)

A. So David confesses that God’s testimonies are wonderful and David kept them in his soul, showing the spiritual nature of the commandment. Even the simple can get understanding from them; the bible is not merely for the spiritually elite, but for all the family of God.

B. The word is light and illumines the soul. David prays for mercy, the mercy that has always been given to those that love the name of god: the ordering of the steps in the word of God. This is the mercy. The Lord teaches us how to walk. He does forgive us for our missteps, but chiefly He teaches us how to walk.

C. The enemies of the Lord do not keep God’s law; they therefore are oppressors and enemies of the truth. This brings great grief to the godly.

D. The great point is this: the order that David prays for has already had its beginning in his heart! He submits to God in his soul; the law was in his heart; it wasn’t something that he was trying to impose on others in order to rule over them. It began in his own soul. This is the first principle of leadership: you must learn to obey yourself. God’s order is not imposed from without, but it is taught by God from within.

E. If my life is full of chaos, I need to look first of all to myself. It is God with whom I have to do and the first business of my life is to order my heart, my affections, my passions, my emotions, according to the Word of God. “He who has no control over his own spirit, is like a city without walls.”

II. How does the world, the flesh, and the devil war against the order of the Holy Spirit?

A. They war against personal holiness and godliness.

1. We need to pray that our individual lives be ordered in godliness and not by the body.

- a) The body must not be allowed to rule the life. “I keep under my body....”
  - b) Of the wicked: “Their god is their belly.”
  - c) Love of comfort, love of pleasure
2. We need to pray that our emotions be brought under control, and not allowed to rule us.
- a) Anger, discouragement, gloom, depression, bitterness, vindictiveness, malice, pride, fear etc. are not to have dominion over us, but the joy of the Lord is our strength. Put on meekness and tenderheartedness.
  - b) Our spirits are to be sanctified by the word of God.
  - c) Decisions are to be made according to Scripture, not according to our feelings and our pride.
3. Children need to learn these things as they have the capacity to learn them.
- a) Self-control. Not to give in to weariness, to anger, to fear, self-will, and pride. Do not promote these things, but recognize them as soul-destroying
  - b) Especially to control the tongue. Whole families are brought under control by out of control children who think that what they have to say and what they think is more important than anything in the world. They grow up to self-important adult, full of themselves, and satisfied that the whole world should pay attention to them.
  - c) Children have different kinds of temptations, because of differing temperaments: Some need to be stirred out of laziness and passivity, being content to let others do it and not take responsibility. Others will try to dominate and walk over others.
4. The order that God has for you in your life will be opposed
- a) By your own flesh. Your mind will rationalize and make excuses for you; you body will be weary; you will be discouraged or angry or disappointed, etc., and welcome the excuse, but remember the words of the apostle: “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”
  - b) By the world around you: by this we mean the people. The people on the job, the people in your extended family; even religious people. They will raise many voices against what God is doing in your life. If you do not understand the scriptures and do not bring your thought captive to Jesus Christ, you will be swept away in the flood of voices and opinions and the traditions of man. You must put your hand to the plow and not look back. But remember, the Lord forgives you all your sins, but he would establish your way in His word. This means a life of self-control.
  - c) By the devil. Satan would move you away from Christ, away from the word, away from the path of godly order, to introduce chaos into your life and family. Satan is a liar from the beginning. He knows what good order is, and will not permit chaos into his own kingdom, as Jesus said. But he would introduce rebellion and dissension into your home and your family.

5. The devil's work, supported by the flesh and the world is fueled by pride, malice, and deceit. He was a murderer and a liar from the beginning and rebelled against God and the order of heaven. Everywhere you see rebellion, pride, lying, and hatred, there you see the work of the devil and the chaos it brings.

a) Let us be perfectly clear, however: the order does not produce the godliness; it is godliness that produces the order.

b) David prays for himself first: "order my steps in thy word." My heart is to be subdued unto thee, O God. I must disciple myself so that I can disciple others. If there are fightings and turmoil within my heart, the disorder of my heart will infect my family and my friends. If the peace of God rules my heart and mind, that peace will be manifesting in my family and friends.

B. The world, the flesh, and the devil war against godliness in the family.

1. By alien doctrines and rebellions, the very work of the devil, supported by the flesh and the world.

a) By the devil's own pride, taught to men.

(1) By subtraction or by addition, usually by both. Satan denied God's authority and seeks to establish his own; his servants to the same thing. Iniquity and dominion gain authority and oppress the child of God when God's order is rejected.

(2) We are administrators, not lawgivers. Christ has given us the law, that we are to love one another and esteem others better than ourselves; those in authority are to administer the affairs of the family to promote this love and humility.

b) The Bible sets forth the fundamental principles of the law of the family, in Ephesians 5: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." (Eph 5:14-21)

(1) We are to walk circumspectly: Our lives are to be in order. There is a "strict" order that takes everything into account. Leave no loose ends.

(2) We are to use the time that God gives us wisely, and not waste it like fools. The days are evil: the world the flesh, and the devil are our enemies.

(3) Be filled with the Spirit, not drunk with wine. Wine destroys

judgment and good order. The contrast is a powerful one. He is not saying be drunk and irrational by the Spirit instead of wine; that is silliness. The contrast is between a life of discipline and order, and a life of chaos and drunkenness.

2. Three evidences of the filling of the Spirit:

a) Joy in the heart: melody in your hearts to the Lord.

b) Thanksgiving: no anger, bitterness, strife, pride, self-will, arrogance, etc.

c) Submission one to another: according to the gift and purpose of God. We live for the good of others and not to please ourselves. I will expand this next week.

Application: I have made a number of applications as I have considered the scripture before us, and will make others next week. God bless you.

May God bless you.

Amen and Amen.