

*Directing Our Ways to Keep God's Word*  
(Part 4)  
*Psalm 119:5*

**Psalm 119:1-8** reads, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.”

Four times in the first eight-verse section of **Psalm 119** the word “keep” is employed with regard to keeping God’s Holy Word. In fact, throughout the psalm the words “keep” and “kept” are employed twenty-nine times in twenty-nine different verses. This is almost one fifth of the verses in the psalm, and unto this might be added the various reference to walking in obedience unto God’s Word. Certainly then, one of the primary themes of **Psalm 119** is the need to direct our ways to keep God’s Word. Even so, within the opening section of the psalm, in **verse 5** the psalmist exclaimed so passionately, “O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!” What then do we learn from **Psalm 119** concerning this matter of directing our ways to keep God’s Word? Already in the first three parts of the message, we have learned that keeping God’s Word is the prerequisite for the Lord’s blessing, is the Lord’s plan for our daily lives, should be the passion of our hearts, should be the practice of our daily living, should be the priority of our hearts and lives, should be the platform for our prayer lives, should be the purpose for our learning of God’s Word, should be the pattern for our whole lives, should be the pleasure of our hearts, should be our policy because of the Lord’s grace, and should be the pursuit of our lives. In this fourth part of the message, let us consider three additional truths.

12. Keeping God’s Word should be the principle for our friendships.

In **Psalm 119:63** the psalmist expressed the principle for his choice in friendships from the positive perspective, saying, “I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.” Again in **verse 115** he expressed the principle for his choice in friendships from the negative perspective, saying, “Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.” On the one hand, the psalmist pursued companionship and friendship with those who walked in the fear of the Lord and in obedience to the Lord’s Word. On the other hand, the psalmist separated himself from any friendship with those who walked in disobedience to God’s Word. Indeed, the psalmist had an established principle for choosing or denying friendships – obedience to God’s Holy Word. He had chosen obedience to God’s Word as the pursuit of his life. Therefore, he desired friendship with others who had also chosen obedience to God’s Word as the pursuit of their lives because they could be a help to him in his own pursuit. However, he rejected friendship with those who walked in disobedience to God’s Word because they could only be a hindrance to his own pursuit. In like manner, we also should establish the standard of obedience to God’s Word as the principle for choosing friendships, both for our own lives and for our children’s lives. Indeed, we need to grasp the warning of **1 Corinthians 15:33** – “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.” In addition, we need to grasp the wisdom of **Proverbs 13:20** – “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

13. Keeping God's Word should be our persuasion under the Lord's chastening.

In **Psalm 119:67** the psalmist gave the report, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word." Then in **verse 71** he expressed his persuasion concerning that affliction, saying, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." Before the psalmist was afflicted, he had gone astray from the Lord through sinful disobedience. Yet then the Lord's hand of chastening fell heavy upon him, and he experienced the affliction of that chastening. Even so, the affliction of the Lord's chastening hand moved the psalmist to repent of his sinful ways and to return unto the Lord his God. Indeed, the affliction of the Lord's chastening hand motivated the psalmist to learn the statutes and standards of God's Holy Word and to keep those statutes and standards in his daily walk. Thus the psalmist declared he assessment that it was a good thing for him to have been afflicted by the Lord's chastening hand. Why? The psalmist declared that the affliction of chastening was a good thing because it had motivated to learn and to obey God's Word. Yea, he had been persuaded by the affliction of the Lord's chastening hand to keep God's Word fervently and faithfully. In like manner, when we ourselves have gone astray from our Lord into sin, we also must be persuaded by the affliction of our Lord's chastening hand to repent of our sin and to return unto a walk of obedience. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (**Hebrews 12:11**) We must not despise the affliction of our Lord's chastening hand, or become discouraged by it. (**Proverbs 3:11**) Rather, we must recognize that our Lord afflicts us with His chastening hand "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." (**Hebrews 12:10**) Therefore, we must be persuaded under the Lord's chastening hand to be spiritually exercised unto keeping God's Word.

14. Keeping God's Word should be our perseverance against persecution.

In **Psalm 119:69** the psalmist expressed his perseverance in the face of persecution, saying, "The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart." No matter how severe the persecution that he might face for righteousness' sake, the psalmist committed himself to persevere in keeping God's Word. No matter how great the persecution, he had no intension whatsoever to turn aside from the walk of obedience to God's Word. Indeed, in **verse 23** he declared, "Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes." Again in **verse 51** he declared, "The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law." Again in **verse 61** he declared, "The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law." Again in **verse 87** he declared, "They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts." Again in **verse 95** he declared, "The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies." Again in **verse 110** he declared, "The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts." Again in **verse 157** he declared, "Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies." Finally, in **verse 161** he declared, "Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word." In like manner, we also must commit ourselves to persevere with faithful, fervent obedience no matter how greatly we may be persecuted for righteousness' sake. Yea, keeping God's Word must be our perseverance against persecution.