

## Craving God's Word

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Meditate; Scripture / Psalm 119:9–16

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### **Psalm 118:24 KJV 1900**

This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made;

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Though it often feels like we have less time than anyone else, the truth is this: every one of us has been given the same twenty-four hours each day—and we decide how they are spent. At first glance, it seems like there should be plenty of time. But when we look closer, we realize how much of our day is consumed by what we might call “survival living.” Our mornings are filled with rushing—getting ready, eating, preparing for the day, and getting to work. Then come the long hours on the job, followed by the drive home. Evenings are quickly absorbed with making supper, cleaning up, managing responsibilities, and preparing for the next day. Add to that a full night’s sleep, and what remains is only a small portion of time that we can truly call our own. The question is simple—but searching: What are we doing with that time?

Most people invest their free time in what they love. Some read, some exercise, some pursue hobbies, and others spend time with family and friends. But in our day, one activity towers above the rest—consuming hours without us even noticing. We live in a world driven by entertainment, where screens dominate our attention. Many people spend four, five, even seven hours a day on electronic media. There is an almost insatiable craving to be entertained—to escape into stories where we can forget reality, where we are drawn into suspense, emotion, and excitement with little effort required. Time seems to

disappear as we sit back and absorb it all. And we enjoy it. It feels effortless. It feels satisfying—at least for a moment.

But as God’s people, we are called to something deeper. Scripture tells us to “be still, and know that I am God” ([Psalm 46:10](#)), and to “be holy...for I am holy” ([1 Peter 1:15–16](#)). That kind of life does not happen by accident. It requires intentional time with God—especially in His Word. And yet, what a contrast we see. We can easily give hours to entertainment, but we struggle to give even a portion of that time to Scripture. Why? Because God’s Word does not simply entertain—it transforms. It calls us to think, to reflect, to repent, and to change. The Bible is not passive; it is “living and active...judging the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” ([Hebrews 4:12](#)). It calls us not just to listen, but to obey ([James 1:22](#)). It confronts our self-centeredness and redirects us to “seek first the kingdom of God” ([Matthew 6:33](#)).

Today, we turn to [Psalm 119:9–16](#), a passage that reveals what it means to truly crave God’s Word. If we are serious about living holy lives, then we must develop a passion for Scripture—not out of duty, but out of desire. While the Bible may not offer the effortless entertainment of the world, it offers something far greater. Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” ([Matthew 4:4](#)). Deep within us, God has placed eternity in our hearts ([Ecclesiastes 3:11](#)), reminding us that we were made for more than this world. We are citizens of heaven ([Philippians 3:20](#)), and our lives are not our own—we have been bought with a price ([1 Corinthians 6:19–20](#)). One day, we will stand before Christ, the Judge of the living and the dead ([1 Peter 4:5](#)).

So if we long to hear those words, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” then we must learn to hunger for what truly satisfies. We are not losing anything when we turn away from constant entertainment to open God’s Word—we are gaining everything. For contained within these pages are not only the instructions for holy living, but the pathway to joy, peace, and the deep satisfaction of walking in the presence of God.

## Life's Vision

### **Psalm 119:9 NIV**

How can a young person stay on the path of purity?

By living according to your word.

Life is complex, and every day places before us a steady stream of choices. Those choices are never neutral—they reveal what we truly love and, over time, they shape who we become. Scripture reminds us that our decisions are not just momentary actions; they are building blocks of our character. If we desire to be pure in God's sight, then our choices must be aligned with His will and His purpose. Purity is not something that happens by accident—it is the result of a heart that is intentionally surrendered to God. Biblical purity goes far deeper than outward behavior. It begins within the heart and flows outward into every aspect of life. A pure heart is one that is fully devoted to God—undivided, unwavering, and free from competing loyalties. It is a heart that is not pulled in different directions by sin, self, and the world, but one that is wholly set upon the Lord. As the psalmist asks, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?...He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart” ([Psalm 24:3-4](#)). Clean hands speak of outward conduct, while a pure heart speaks of inward devotion. God is not satisfied with appearances—He desires integrity at the deepest level of who we are.

This kind of purity means turning away from anything that contaminates the soul. It is a life that is no longer directed by sin but increasingly governed by the Spirit of God. It touches every part of our lives—our thoughts, our words, our attitudes, and our actions. Purity is not limited to one area; it is a comprehensive call to holiness. While it certainly includes sexual purity—honoring God through abstinence before marriage and faithfulness within it—it extends far beyond that. It calls us to truthfulness instead of deception, humility instead of pride,

and love instead of selfish ambition. Ultimately, purity is about reflecting the very character of God. As His children, we are called to mirror His holiness in the way we live. This is not a burden meant to weigh us down, but a calling that draws us closer to Him. The more our hearts are fixed on God, the more our lives begin to reflect His beauty. And as we walk in that purity, we discover that holiness is not restriction—it is freedom to live the life God created us to live.

As the psalmist reflects on the importance of purity, Scripture brings this truth into sharp focus. We are not ordinary people drifting through life—we are, as [1 Peter 2:9](#) declares, a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation,” called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light. That calling changes everything. Yes, the bondage of sin has been broken through Christ ([Romans 6:6–7](#)), but the battle is not over. The flesh still seeks to draw us back, warring against the Spirit ([Galatians 5:16–17](#)), tempting us toward the old patterns of self-sufficiency, self-gratification, and independence from God. The Christian life, therefore, is not passive—it is a daily choice of what we will pursue and what we will reject. Instead of chasing after what fades—things that are “here today and gone tomorrow” ([Matthew 6:30](#))—we are called to a higher pursuit. Scripture urges us to turn from “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” ([1 John 2:15–17](#)) and to seek first the kingdom of God. This transformation is not merely external; it begins deep within the heart. As Paul exhorts, we are to “be transformed by the renewing of [our] mind” ([Romans 12:2](#)), learning to “hate what is evil and cling to what is good” ([Romans 12:9](#)). What captures our attention ultimately shapes our affections, and what shapes our affections will direct our lives.

We must also recognize that what seems harmless is often deeply formative. Entertainment, social media, and the constant focus on worldly things may not produce immediate outward change, but they quietly influence the soul. Jesus makes it clear that our actions flow from within—“out of the heart come evil thoughts” and every form of sin ([Matthew 15:18–20](#)). If the heart is filled with the world, the life will reflect it. But if the heart is filled with God’s truth, the life will begin to mirror His holiness. And though this call to purity may

feel overwhelming, Scripture reminds us that it is not unattainable. We are “surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses” ([Hebrews 12:1](#)), men and women who have walked this path before us by faith. Through the power of Christ, it is possible to “lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,” and to run the race set before us. Purity is not perfection in our own strength—it is perseverance in dependence on God, as we fix our eyes on Jesus and follow Him wholeheartedly.

## Hide and Seek

### **Psalm 119:10–11 NIV**

I seek you with all my heart;

do not let me stray from your commands.

I have hidden your word in my heart

that I might not sin against you.

If a believer is to keep their heart pure, there must be both a seeking after God and a hiding of His Word within—what we might call a spiritual “hide and seek.” It reminds me of a game we used to play as children. A group of us would gather, and one person would be chosen as the “seeker.” With eyes closed, they would count while the rest of us scattered, trying to find the best hiding place. Once the counting stopped, the seeker would begin searching. And the moment they spotted someone, they would sprint back to the tree, call out the name, and declare, “You’re caught!” The goal was simple—don’t get seen, and don’t get caught. But there was one way to win. If you were paying attention—if you were watching carefully—you could slip out of hiding at just the right moment, run to the tree before the seeker, and shout, “I’m free!” That cry meant victory. You had avoided being captured.

In much the same way, the Christian life requires both watchfulness and intentional action. If we become careless or distracted, sin will “spot” us and quickly begin to take hold. To guard against this, the psalmist declares his resolve to seek God with all his heart ([Psalm 119:10](#)). A life of purity does not begin with self-effort alone—it begins with a humble dependence on God. Those who truly desire to live holy lives must first seek divine help [5], recognizing that we cannot rise to God’s standard in our own strength. As the Lord reminds us through the prophet,

**Isaiah 55:8–9 NIV**

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

neither are your ways my ways,”

declares the LORD.

“As the heavens are higher than the earth,

so are my ways higher than your ways

and my thoughts than your thoughts.

The gap between God’s holiness and our fallen nature is vast, but it is not a barrier to transformation—it is an invitation to depend on Him. Though we may feel small in a world of over eight billion people, we are never insignificant to God. Christ is both the agent and the goal of creation [6], and in Him we find both our purpose and our power. As it has been said, “He is great in littleness, strong in weakness, glorious in lowliness, wise in foolishness” [7]. What seems weak in us becomes strong through Him; what seems impossible becomes attainable by His grace. Scripture assures us that when we come near to God, He will come near to us ([James 4:8](#), NIV), and that when we ask, seek, and knock, the door will be opened ([Matthew 7:7–8](#), NIV). These are not empty promises—

they are invitations into a living relationship with God. Therefore, like the psalmist, we come humbly before the Lord, seeking Him with all that we are—our minds, our wills, and our emotions. We place ourselves in the hands of the Potter, trusting Him to shape and refine us. And from a surrendered heart we cry out, “I am yours, Lord.” For it is in that posture of surrender that God begins His transforming work, molding us into vessels fit for His glory.

Striving for purity requires more than simply seeking the Lord—it also demands that we hide His Word deep within our hearts. God’s commands reveal how to live holy lives, but they remain ineffective until they are internalized and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, put into practice. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, where we observe and are entertained, God’s revelation—through creation, His Word, and the Spirit’s work within us—is given not for entertainment but for transformation. Even though God promises to write His law on our hearts ([Hebrews 10:16](#)), we are still called to actively engage with it. As Moses instructs,

**Deuteronomy 6:7–9 NIV**

Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

This is a picture of a life saturated with God’s truth—where His Word is not an occasional influence, but a constant presence.

In the preceding verse, Moses commands, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” ([Deuteronomy 6:6](#), NIV). The heart is the center of who we are—it “shapes your character, choices and decisions” [8]. Therefore, purity begins with surrendering the heart fully to God through knowing and obeying His Word. This stands in stark contrast to the messages of the world. While entertainment often normalizes sin and even celebrates it, God’s Word does the opposite. It is “living and active, sharper than

any double-edged sword” ([Hebrews 4:12](#)), exposing what lies hidden within us. Its purpose is not to conceal our sin, but to reveal it—so that we might turn from it. And when it does, we are given the gracious invitation to repent and be restored, for “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” ([1 John 1:9](#), NIV).

## Learn and Recall

### **Psalm 119:12–13** NIV

Praise be to you, LORD;

teach me your decrees.

With my lips I recount

all the laws that come from your mouth.

I wonder if one reason many people choose entertainment over God’s Word is because entertainment allows us to escape into a world centered upon self. Movies invite us into fantasy worlds where we can momentarily forget responsibility, avoid conviction, and pursue pleasure without consequence. Directors do not peer into our hearts, expose our motives, or demand transformation. But when we open the Bible, we encounter something entirely different. Scripture does not merely entertain us—it confronts us. It calls us beyond the temporary pleasures of this fading world and invites us into the eternal kingdom of God ([John 3:16](#)). Unlike the voices of this world that often affirm whatever we desire, God lovingly challenges us to repent, to change, and to become more like Christ. The Bible is not a buffet where we select only the truths we enjoy while ignoring the rest [8]. It is the living revelation of a holy God who speaks with authority over every part of our lives. Listen to how the author of Hebrews describes the power of God’s Word:

### Hebrews 4:12–13 NIV

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Those words are both glorious and frightening. God's Word does not merely skim the surface of our lives—it penetrates to the deepest parts of the soul. It exposes hidden motives, sinful desires, pride, bitterness, lust, fear, and rebellion that we often try to conceal even from ourselves. This raises an important question: if God's ways are infinitely higher than ours, how can we ever hope to understand and obey His truth? Jesus understood this human weakness, and that is why, after His ascension, He sent the "Spirit of truth" ([John 16:13](#)) to illuminate the Scriptures and empower believers to obey them. The Holy Spirit searches "the deep things of God" ([1 Corinthians 2:10–11](#)), revealing God's character, purposes, wisdom, and will to His children [9]. The psalmist therefore joyfully cries out, "Teach me your decrees," because who better to teach holiness than the God who perfectly defines and embodies it? What Solomon longed for in wisdom ([1 Kings 8:57–58](#)), believers now experience through the indwelling Spirit who works within us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" ([Philippians 2:13](#); [Titus 2:11–14](#)) [10].

After internalizing God's holy Word, the psalmist becomes so overwhelmed with joy that he cannot help but proclaim God's righteous decrees to those around him. This same passion was seen in a man suffering from elephantiasis who came to know Christ and became so overwhelmed by the grace of God that he devoted himself to taking the gospel from hut to hut throughout his village and beyond. Though every step caused intense pain, he traveled miles on swollen and bleeding feet to tell others about Jesus. After finally returning from one exhausting journey through the jungle, he collapsed at the missionary doctor's doorstep. As the doctor cleaned and dressed those wounded feet with

tears in his eyes, he could only think of the words of Scripture: “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace” ([Romans 10:15](#)). The man’s love for Christ was greater than his suffering, and he counted no cost too high to make the Savior known [11].

Believers likewise are not called to be passive spectators entertained by the world, but active participants in God’s kingdom. Jesus declared that a city set upon a hill cannot be hidden, and neither should we withdraw from unbelievers or keep our light from “illuminating a sin-darkened world” [12]. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we have been commissioned to proclaim the Good News—a message that transcends every geographic and cultural barrier [13]. While not every believer is called to be a missionary in a foreign land [14], every believer is called to live in such a way that others see Christ in them and to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you” ([1 Peter 3:15](#), KJV).

## Rejoice and Meditate

### **Psalm 119:14–16 NIV**

I rejoice in following your statutes

as one rejoices in great riches.

I meditate on your precepts

and consider your ways.

I delight in your decrees;

I will not neglect your word.

As the psalmist reflects upon God's Word, he erupts in joy because the instruction of the Lord is of infinite worth to him. Yet he is not suggesting that obedience comes easily. The battle against sin is real and deeply personal. John Newton once described his own struggle by saying, "I [do not want] to be the sport of prey of wild, vain, foolish, and worse imaginations; but this evil is present with me: my heart is like a highway, like a city without walls or gates" [15]. Every believer understands something of this conflict. Though God's law is holy and good, Scripture says it was "powerless" because it was "weakened by the flesh" ([Romans 8:3](#), NIV). The problem is not with God's commands, but with our fallen human nature. Yet this does not mean holiness is unattainable. On the contrary, believers are commanded to "be holy" because God Himself is holy ([1 Peter 1:15-16](#)), and through the new birth we have been given a new nature capable of responding to Him. Jesus taught that we must be "born of water and the Spirit" ([John 3:5-6](#)), and through Christ the bondage of sin has been broken so that we are no longer slaves to it ([Romans 6:6-7](#)).

The key to obedience, therefore, is not merely trying harder through human effort, but surrendering the heart fully to God and cultivating a deep desire to please Him [16]. The apostle John reminds believers that God's commands are not burdensome because the Holy Spirit empowers us to obey them. Those who refuse to "walk in step with the wicked" or "stand in the way that sinners take" ([Psalm 1:1-2](#), NIV), and instead delight in the law of the Lord, discover that God's Word truly satisfies the soul. As one writer beautifully states, those who rely upon God's transforming grace can "taste the Bible" and discover that it "satisfies the deepest desires of the heart forever" [17]. God's revelation in both creation and Scripture was never meant to merely fill our minds with information; its purpose is to "bring God's will to bear on the hearer and evoke intelligent reverence, well-founded trust, and detailed obedience" [18]. To such glorious truth, the psalmist can only respond with joyful agreement—Amen!

Since God's Word is more precious to the psalmist than silver or gold, he chooses to meditate on it continually. Though believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit for eternity, this does not remove their need for ongoing spiritual

nourishment and transformation. We live in a world filled with moral confusion, where the “gray” thinking of society often treats truth as something subjective—merely existing in the eye of the beholder. As strangers and pilgrims journeying through a world that is not our home, we constantly struggle to keep our hearts pure and undefiled before God. Adding to this battle, Satan rarely presents blatant lies; instead, he whispers dangerous half-truths that subtly distort God’s character and lead people astray. This is why the psalmist intentionally reflects upon the truths of God’s Word—not merely to gain information, but to be transformed by the Creator Himself.

Biblical meditation means far more than casually reading Scripture. It means to “chew on” God’s truth—to ponder it deeply, repeat it aloud, apply it personally, and pray earnestly for God to teach and empower us to obey. It is the deliberate act of slowing down long enough for God’s Word to move from the mind into the heart. As believers meditate day and night upon Scripture ([Psalm 1:2](#); [Joshua 1:8](#)), the Holy Spirit renews their thinking, sharpens their discernment, and anchors them in truth amidst a culture of deception. What an incredible privilege it is to open God’s beautiful love letter and encounter the living God Himself—to hear who He is, to understand who we are in Christ, and to discover the kind of holy lives we are called to live in His presence!

Many believers wonder why their spiritual lives feel dry while their minds are constantly saturated with the noise of the world. Hearts rarely drift accidentally toward holiness. Whatever we meditate upon slowly becomes the atmosphere of the soul. If we continually meditate on fear, we become anxious. If we meditate on pleasure, we become worldly. If we meditate on ourselves, we become prideful. But when we meditate upon God’s Word, the Spirit slowly reshapes our desires until we begin loving what God loves.

## Conclusion

The world constantly tells us to fill our hearts with entertainment, distraction, and temporary pleasures, but the psalmist points us to something infinitely

greater—the living Word of God. Throughout this passage, we have seen that purity does not happen accidentally. It comes from seeking the Lord wholeheartedly, hiding His Word within our hearts, learning His truth, proclaiming His goodness, and meditating upon His promises day and night. God’s Word is not merely information to be studied; it is spiritual nourishment that transforms the soul, renews the mind, and shapes us into the likeness of Christ.

So the question before us is simple: What are we truly craving? Are we feeding our hearts on things that fade away, or are we delighting in the eternal truth of God? The psalmist declares, “I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word” ([Psalm 119:16](#), NIV). May that become the cry of our hearts as well. Let us not merely admire the Bible from a distance, but open it, meditate upon it, obey it, and allow the Holy Spirit to use it to transform us. For when we hunger for God’s Word more than the distractions of this world, we discover that in His presence there is fullness of joy, lasting peace, and the strength to walk faithfully until the day we stand before Him.

One day, every screen will go dark. Every earthly distraction will fade. Every source of temporary entertainment will disappear. But the Word of God will stand forever. And when we stand before Christ, we will not wish we had consumed more of the world—we will wish we had treasured Him more deeply. So do not merely admire the Bible from a distance. Open it. Read it. Meditate upon it. Hide it within your heart. Let it confront you, comfort you, shape you, and transform you. For the believer who truly craves God’s Word will discover that what the world promises but never delivers—joy, peace, purpose, satisfaction, and life itself—is found fully and eternally in Christ.

## Footnotes

- [1] R.A.F., “Purity,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. R. W. Wood et al. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 991.
- [2] Got Questions Ministries, *Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2014–2021).
- [3] Douglas J. Moo, *Romans*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 395.
- [4] Glenn W. Barker, “1 John,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 321.
- [5] Andrew M. Davis, *Exalting Jesus in Isaiah* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017), 333.
- [6] Arthur G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 30.
- [7] John Peter Lange et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Isaiah* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 601.
- [8] Matt Carter and Josh Wredberg, *Exalting Jesus in John* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017), 326.
- [9] R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), 106.
- [10] Landon Dowden, *Exalting Jesus in Ezekiel* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2015), [Eze 35:1–15](#)
- [11] Donald Grey Barnhouse, “Epistle to the Romans,” part 62, “[Romans 10:14–19](#)” (Philadelphia: The Bible Study Hour, 1956), pp. 7–10. The story is told in a shorter but more polished version in Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Let Me Illustrate: Stories, Anecdotes, Illustrations* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1967), pp. 344–346.

[12] D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 140.

[13] Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 215.

[14] Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Acts* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017), 11.

[15] David Platt and Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Galatians* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 111.

[16] Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2014), 124.

[17] J. Josh Smith and Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in [Psalms 1–50](#)*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2022), 141.

[18] Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 15, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 117.