

Psalms 19-07-11a

Good evening, welcome to the Thursday night Bible class at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We're going to continue tonight our study in Psalm 119. We're working our way through this longest chapter in the Bible, certainly the longest of the Psalms, 176 verses, and we have crossed the threshold into the three-digit numbers of those verses.

We're going to be looking at Psalm 119, 105 through 112, which is the noon section. This is not N-O-O-N, this is N-U-N, the letter N in Hebrew. And with a quick review of some of the things that have preceded to read us into the picture and help us make the most of this great section of God's Word.

Let's take a moment as we begin to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study, and we'll get started. Father, what a wonderful privilege it is to spend time together with believers who share an appreciation for the many blessings that you have bestowed on us through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We thank you that through him, our lives have been redeemed from emptiness and futility and pointlessness and given meaning and purpose and definition, that our time in each day counts towards something, that we have the opportunity to learn and to grow so that we can be of service both in this life and in the life to come.

We thank you for your Word that guides us, for your Spirit that makes sense of it for us and helps us to see its applicability. We thank you for the Lord Jesus who represents us at your right hand in the throne room of heaven until that day that you send him to return and take us to himself and present us before you. We pray that as we look at this great section of Psalm 119 tonight, that you will bless us in the endeavor to understand it and to put it to use in our thinking and in our decision making.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will find us ready and willing pupils and will plow it deep into the field of our soul so that it will spring up and bear its fruit that vindicates the Lord Jesus' work on our behalf and allows our lives to be pleasing in your sight. We pray all of these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, you will recall, I hope, at this juncture that Psalm 119 is not just a smorgasbord of loosely associated ideas held together by a simple acrostic. This is the view of many commentators. And I grieve at that thought because it tells me that there's been in some quarters a failure to spend a little time with this psalm and see its richness and its depth and its value.

God would not have spent so much time putting this psalm together at its length without organizing it and presenting it in a way that would be helpful to you and to me. So it seems big and unwieldy. And we say, well, give me the 23rd psalm.

I like a psalm that's just got, you know, six or seven verses. And you've got a shepherd and sheep, you've got green pastures and still waters, you've got the enemies, you've got dwelling in the house of the Lord forever. Okay, that's that's good for short attention span theater.

I can grasp that and I can go on my way. Psalm 119 is a bit daunting because you've got so many verses, so many ideas. So God has helpfully had the inspired authors organize it.

And just by way of quick review, first of all, we have the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. So we're going to have this psalm broken into 22 sections of eight verses each. And if you do the math, that works out to 176 verses, 22 times eight.

So now we know we've got 22 subsections. Each of those subsections is helpfully organized on a structural theme. What is our favorite structural device in God's word? It is the chiasm.

If you don't do chiasm, you're going to be wandering around, bumping into things in God's word because God loves a chiasm. He even had the Lord Jesus crucified on a cross. There is a crux.

There is a meeting place between the vertical and the horizontal. And in a chiasm, the meeting place between what precedes and what follows and that symmetry is a beautiful organizing principle. Every single stanza in Psalm 119 is chiastic.

I've had a chance to work my way all the way through to the end. And I will tell you now, every one of them is a chiasm. Now, how does a chiasm work when there are eight verses? Because we like to have a single thing in the middle and that requires an odd number.

Think about it. You've got something in the middle and then you've got pairs on the outside of that. So seven verses would be the ideal.

You've got one in the middle, three leading in and three coming out. That would be a great chiasm. One right in the middle.

If you have an even number, you think, well, maybe there's two in the middle and I've got to digest them both. It's not that hard. Flip back to the beginning of the Psalm and let's just quickly, quickly, quickly refresh our minds on how this works.

The Aleph section, the letter A, blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. And it goes on from there. I'm not going to reread each of these.

I'm just going to point out that you've got eight verses here. The first seven are a chiasm. There are three that lead into it and there are three that lead out of it.

So what is the most important verse in the middle of those first seven? It's verse four. And this is the theme. You have commanded us to keep your precepts diligently.

That's the big idea in the Aleph section. So circle it. It's in the middle.

Three verses lead into it. Three verses come out of it. And if you compare verse three and verse five, they complement each other.

They do no iniquity. The people who keep God's testimonies, they do iniquity. They walk in his ways.

Verse five, oh, that my ways were directed to keep your statutes the way those people do. Those two go together. Same thing with verse two and verse six.

Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with a whole heart. If I did that, I would not be ashamed when I look into all your commandments. If I was in that number, this is the benefit to me.

So verse two and verse six go together. So verse one and verse seven are going to correspond. Blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord.

I will praise you with uprightness of heart when I learn your righteous judgments. When I can be someone who is undefiled in my way and walk in your law, I will be able to praise you out of an upright heart. But I can't do that until I learn your righteous judgments like these people in verse one.

Now you say, well, but I've got a verse left over. Verse eight. The eighth verse in each of these stanzas is a reiteration, a restatement and an enhancement of the center verse.

So here our center verse was verse four. You've commanded us to keep your precepts diligently. What does verse eight say? I will keep your statutes.

Do not forsake me utterly. Give me some time. Don't leave me.

Don't give up on me. I'm going to do this. You've commanded us to keep the precepts.

I'm committing myself to do it. Stick with me while I'm in the process. You see it? Same thing on each one of these.

And if you want a wonderful set of studies for yourself, if you have a daily time of reflection and meditation and devotions where you want to get your day off to a good start, or you want to pause in the middle of the day and get yourself back on track as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and someone who is investing the time that God gives us, exercising a stewardship on that time and not having it just be sand through the hourglass, but something that is an investment and is going to create a return in the eternal future. This is a great thing to just work through. Take a stanza a day and say, I'm just going to look at these eight verses.

I know it's got a structure. And so you say, all right, Sam's not here to explain it to me, but I remember the structure. So this is you now.

Let's look at the bait section right quick. You've got your eight verses. How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to your word.

You read the rest of that and you say, all right, I know that nine, 10 and 11 are leading into the

chiasm. So 12 is going to be the big idea in this stanza. What does it say? Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes.

It's an appeal to God. God is, we appreciate him. We bless his name and we ask him to teach us the statutes.

Now we know that the ending verse is going to be a restatement of that, right? And you get the very same word. You've got statutes again in verse 16. I will delight myself in your statutes.

I will not forget your word. Teach me your statutes. I won't forget them.

This is the commitment we make. This is the attitude we express to God. And you'll be able to see the complimentary nature of verse 11 and verse 13, verse 10 and verse 14, verse nine and verse 15, they will go together.

And you can not only read this stanza sequentially, but you can get more out of it by looking at the way these phrases interact. It is true all the way through. Let's move forward to where we're going to pick up tonight, which is in the noon section.

And remember also that these are left foot, right foot all the way through Psalm 119. So Aleph and Beit, those two go together. So if you look at those first eight verses, take a look at the second and lay them side by side and Aleph and Beit are going to interact with each other.

It's amazing that when you lay them together and you realize they are a chiasm and you look across at the most important verse, and then you can look at symmetrical verses across that comparison and they inform each other. And it's the three-dimensionality of God's word. And if you really are serious, you say, yes, I believe there is a God.

Yes, I'm a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. And I do think that God has granted to me a certain amount of hours and minutes and days in this life as it's like the parable of the talents. Some of us have a longer life.

Some of us have a shorter life, even as believers. Some people come to faith early or late, but you're given this investment opportunity. What am I going to do with my time? I can convert the most mundane tasks, just doing my job, just doing chores, just doing the routine.

I can transform that time into something that partakes of eternity, eternity, something that makes a difference in the age to come. I'm going to do the job one way or another, but what if I do it as unto the Lord? What if I let these precepts and these understandings illuminate what I do? And I say, I'm wiping a table. Well, I can wipe this table as unto the Lord.

I can do this with one eye on heaven and on eternity and on pleasing God. How well do I do it? With what attitude do I do it? Am I diligent? Am I effective? If the Lord Jesus Christ had walked in and said, I've only got one thing that I need you to do for me today, and it's wipe this table, would I be offended that he didn't have something more important, something bigger,

something grander? Would I have an attitude because, well, aren't there other table wipers than me? Why me? It isn't what we do. It is how we do it.

It is why we do it. It is whether or not we look at it as a potential investment in eternity. It is all about converting capital.

Redeem the time. If you ever want a motto for your life, that's a good one. Redeem the time.

Trade your time in on eternity. Invest it in eternity. That's what these stanzas are all about.

How can a young man cleanse his way? His way is what he does with his time and with his life. Take heed according to your word. You're going to do the same things, but now they transform.

They make a difference. Did you ever realize that a microphone, any microphone, you got a microphone in your phone, people worry that somebody's listening in, you know, you know, the microphone always picks up the sound in its vicinity. Always.

There's never a time that the picking up the ambient signal or your voice. If you carry your phone around with you, that microphone picks up every single thing you say. The question is, is it useful? Is it recording? Is it transferring it to someone you're trying to talk to? Or is it stopping inside the phone? There's a circuit that's switched off and so that vibration does nothing.

It's going to vibrate no matter what. You decide whether it becomes one side of a phone call, one part of a voice memo, or what, right? It's the same with everything we do in life. It's going to be done.

Time is going to pass. The second hand is going to sweep around the dial over and over again. Your digital digits are going to go from zero to 60 and flip over another minute, no matter what.

But if you turn on the soul circuitry that takes that time and invests it because we're doing what we do as under the Lord, it makes all the difference. And it is a redemption. It takes what would have been useless time and turns it into something useful, permanent, and eternal.

And the psalmist talks about that over and over again. Olive and bait go together. Gimel and dallet go together.

Each of them has that chiastic structure. I've given you handouts and there's some of them up on the website that you can download and look at. They're color-coded showing you examples of how these chiasms work.

Well, we've come all the way down and the pair we are looking at now is Maim-Nun, M and N. And Maim and Nun as a pair interact with each other because the M section is, you can think of M as the meditation section. This is what happens in my soul. This is the internal part that God's word interacts with.

I love your law. It's my meditation all the day. Through your commandments, it says, you make me wiser than my enemies for they are ever with me.

And we saw last time that this is a common understanding and a common interpretation and a common translation, but it's not what the Hebrew says. It doesn't say you through your commands make me wiser than my enemies. In 99, you make me more understanding than my teachers.

And in verse 100, I understand more than the ancients. This is the main section, right? This is the M section. And the letter M in Hebrew means from, from its source.

So what did we see last time? I love your law. It is my meditation all the day through your commandments. You make me wiser than my enemies.

This is backward. It says from my enemies, you make me wise from your commandments. That's the Hebrew word order.

It's a from and a from. Identical construction. It's maim in front of a noun, maim, the letter M in front of the word for enemies, maim in front of the word for commandments and what's in between them.

It's like a little M sandwich. It's a from sandwich. From my enemies, you make me wise from your commandments.

I have enemies, but if I have your commandments, my enemies end up being a source of wisdom for me. It doesn't necessarily mean I'm wiser than my enemies. I'm going to outwit them.

It means in the controversy of life, in the oppositions of life, in the difficulties where people may be out to get me, circumstances may be opposing me. There's a lot of friction and a lot of heat and a lot of resistance. I gain wisdom from that instead of it just being an obstacle and a stumbling block and a slowdown from that, which opposes me.

You can broaden enemies out to be any sort of opposition. Sometimes it just seems like it's a bad hair day. It's a low bio-rhythm day.

It's just a high friction, something in the universe. Everything just seems to be going wrong. Hop in the car and it won't start.

You jump it and then you got a flat. You go out in the driveway and traffic is so heavy you can't get where you're going. There was a funny song I found by an unknown guy.

It's an unknown song on YouTube. This guy used to be a boxer, but he wrote this song about all of his tribulations on a given day where he's trying to get to work and he's late. Then he spills his coffee and a traffic cop stops him.

It just goes from bad to worse. That's the enemies. What are you going to get from opposition? What are you going to get from people, places, and things that mess up your expectations? Well, the psalmist here says, from my opposition I get wisdom.

Why? Because along with the opposition I have your commandments. From the opposition and from your commandments I get wisdom. I need them both.

The opposition by itself doesn't make me wise. It makes me frustrated, angry, and out to even up the score. Your commandments by themselves may be wonderful in the abstract, but when I've got them and opposition and I mix the two together and I apply your word in the face of opposition, wisdom is the result.

It transforms a negative into a positive. The more resistance I have with your commandments, the smarter I get, the wiser I become. I get the big picture.

I transcend the mundane and the mortal and the immediate and I partake of God's eternal perspective. There's a reason for this and it makes sense to me. And what is the result of that wisdom? Peace.

I'm not rattled. I'm not frustrated. I'm not stressed.

You know they got smart watches now that you can turn on an app and it'll tell you if you're stressed. I don't need a smart watch to tell me if I'm stressed. I know when I'm stressed.

In fact, a watch bugging me and telling me I'm stressed is just going to stress me even more. Do you need somebody to tell you when you're under duress? We pretty well figured that out without any technology. So that's the idea.

From. Same thing in the next verse. So he starts out saying, I love your law.

I reflect on it all the time. And from it, even my opposition turns into wisdom for me. Then he says in 99, from my teachers, I have understanding.

I have more understanding. It doesn't mean I have more understanding than my teachers. I study the word of God and I can outwit and out argue and I can silence my teachers.

I'm smarter than they are. All of us have teachers. We learn.

We shadow people. We apprentice. We go to school.

We have instructors who know more than us. And you can't read a few verses of scripture and come in and say, I know you're trying to teach me how to fly an airplane, but look, I read my Bible this morning. Now I'm smarter than you.

It doesn't work that way. What is it saying? Because I have your testimonies and because I reflect on them, I get more from my instructors, not than my instructors. It's from them.

When I learn things, even in the material world, I get more out of it because I've got a context and I've got a frame of reference from reflecting on your word. And so these classes expand and become multidimensional. When I listen to instructors, I get a lot more out of it than just a skill or a piece of knowledge.

I get wisdom. I get understanding. I fit it into the larger eternal context.

I have more understanding from all my teachers. It doesn't matter which teacher it is. I get more out of it.

Verse 100, I understand more from history, from tradition, from the ancient ones that gets set into a context. Why? Because I keep your precepts and that gives me insight, insight, understanding, gives me wisdom. And that perspective enables me to restrain my feet from every evil way so that I can keep your word.

And this process continues. And again, if you look at the main section here, let's try our chiasm. See if you can do it.

There's a chiasm in the main section. So what's the center verse? Somebody tell me, what's going to be the center verse in the main section? Count three down and the fourth one is going to be the middle, right? So it's going to be 97, 98, 99, and then 100, right? That's going to be the middle. Then 101, 102, and 103 are going to correspond.

And then 104 is going to restate whatever is in 100. So let's see if it works. 100 at the middle says, I understand more from the old ones, from what has gone before, because I keep your precepts.

Because I do what? Keep your precepts. So the ending verse ought to restate that in some way, right? Through your precepts, I get understanding. Therefore, I hate every false way.

You've got the very same vocabulary, precepts in 100, precepts in 104. Now surrounding 100, 99 and 101 ought to talk about each other a little bit. So 99 says, I have more understanding from my teachers because your testimonies are my meditation.

101 says, I restrain my feet from every evil way in order that I may keep your word. So the understanding that I gain from reflecting on your testimonies and the understanding I get from my teachers, that enables me to restrain my feet. There's an application.

There's a thought process and a wisdom that I gain, and then there's an application. I can restrain. We say, I can't break this bad habit.

I've got this besetting sin. I've got this weakness. And no matter how hard I try, I keep getting tripped up by it.

I realize too late that I've gone down this same old road again. When can I ever lick this problem and become strong in this area where I continually fail? Well, take a look at this Psalm.

Look at 99 and 101.

If I want more understanding than what I currently have from the instruction that I'm getting, I reflect on God's testimonies. I meditate on his testimonies. And now I can restrain my feet from every evil way and keep your word.

Why? I got some help. The instruction that I look to to help me overcome this is meaningful and powerful because I take the time. Many times when we have a problem, we've got a weakness, we've got a besetting sin, we try to attack the thing directly.

You've got to go back and read Liddell Hart and read the strategy of the indirect approach. If you've got a weak area, if you've got something that you're trying to get over and get past and quit falling for and quit being ensnared and tripped up by, don't attack that thing directly. Get the power first.

Go to the source of power. The source of power is reflecting on God's word. Now the instruction that says, here's what you do when you have this weakness, you're going to get more out of it because you've got the power of God's word behind it.

Now you'll be able to restrain your feet, feet walking in the way. This is a picture of lifestyle as we're going to see in the noon section here, right? So this is very practical, isn't it? I could say, raise your hand if you have no problems and you're perfectly content with all of your thoughts and actions and words. You never mess up.

You never go before the Lord and do the face palm thing. It's all good. You have no needs.

All of us recognize that we fall short. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And if you think you haven't, that's your problem.

Thinking that you don't have a problem is your problem. Well, how do we overcome the problem? We look for instruction, but that instruction is only going to go so far unless we've got the power that comes from regular, consistent meditation and thought about what we learn from God's word. And anything you want to do, you've got to spend some time on it.

You want your house cleaned up? Spend some time. You want your car cleaned up? Want it to look nice? Going to be giving somebody a ride soon? Better clean up my car. Well, you don't just say, boy, I sure wish that car was clean.

And next thing you know, it is. Better invest time in it, right? Same thing here. So that's the chiasm in the main section.

Now, let's take a look at noon. This is where we pick up tonight. This is a famously well-known memory verse.

One of the first ones I learned as a child. Easy, short. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

That's how it begins. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep your righteous judgments.

I am afflicted very much. Revive me, O Lord, according to your word. Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me your judgments.

My life is continually in my hand, yet I do not forget your law. The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I have not strayed from your precepts. Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

I have inclined my heart to perform your statutes forever to the very end. Now, it's easy for that to start to kind of roll off the shiny surface of our brain, and it doesn't necessarily connect. The stanzas don't necessarily follow, do they? It just seems like a collection of statements, and in some cases, commitments.

Well, let's first of all figure out what is the theme of this stanza. Now, you're veterans of Psalm 119 at this point, so how do you figure out the theme of the noon section? Pop quiz time. What's this really about? How could you figure it out? What is the structure? Somebody tell me.

Chiasm, right? We know that it's seven plus one, so in the middle of the seven is going to be the theme. So I count down to the fourth verse in the section. 105, 106, 107, 108 is going to be the big idea here, and what does it say? Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth.

What's he talking about here? We saw in an earlier Psalm, remember, let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. Let the words of my mouth be acceptable. We have some New Testament light on this, don't we, over in Romans 12? I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, I invoke in your mind how merciful God has been.

If you think about the grace of God and the mercy of God, here's what you ought to do. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you do what? Present your bodies a living sacrifice. You don't have to go get a goat, you don't have to slaughter a lamb, you don't have to go trap a couple of pigeons and bring them down.

What sacrifice can you bring today to God? Don't have to wait for a feast day, don't have to wait for a time when the Levites have got a slot open in their schedule. You can bring a sacrifice to God right now. What is that sacrifice? Present yourself.

When it says your body, it's talking about your life. It's your visible existence, right? I can't see your soul, but I can see your body. I know where you are.

I can tell a lot by body language, by what you do, how you dress, and so on. Present your bodies a living sacrifice. What's the requirement for a sacrifice to be accepted by God? Can you get any old goat that got hit by a cart or fell on its head when it was born and it's gimpy and crippled? Can you get one that's got the mange? Can you get one that was gored by a wild

animal or something and just bring that nasty scarred up old thing down there? One that broke a leg in a fall and mended crooked? Bring a three-legged goat down there? What kind of sacrifice will God accept? Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

This is your reasonable service. I say, well, I'd love to do that, but what does it take to be acceptable? I mean, we're all as an unclean thing. Our righteousness is as filthy rags.

We fade as a leaf. Our iniquities carry us away with the wind. So how can I possibly be acceptable? Well, even in the Old Testament, the psalmist knows the answer.

So he says here, accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord. Praise coming from a cleansed soul is going to be acceptable in God's sight. He's not going to take a superficial knockoff.

Oh God, you're sure great. Please help me now, is he? But it's a freewill offering and it's a verbal offering. It's an offering of praise.

And teach me your judgments. This is a conversation, isn't it? Look at that middle verse. Any one of these stanzas, take some time and analyze the middle verse.

You can do this. It does not require the gift of pastor teacher to figure this out. Take that verse and look at it.

Who's talking here? In the first phrase, accept, I pray the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord. So this is me talking to God, thanking him, appreciating him verbally, right? And what's the second part say? And you teach me your judgments. I praise you.

You teach me because I want to know. I appreciate you and I want to know what you have to say. This is the key to success in any conversation is give and take a one-sided conversation.

I cannot tell you how many times I've come away from a conversation, just kicking myself, kicking, kicking, kicking myself because somebody asked me a couple of leading questions and I wound up doing all the talking. It's terrible. I hate it when I do that.

A good conversation, you can give an answer or two, and then you ask a question and let the other person talk. Find out what they're up to. What do they do? What's on their mind? What challenges are they facing? As believers, we should do what God does.

When we come before God, do you think we're going to say anything that he doesn't already know? But God invites us to engage in two-way conversation. And he does not speak in this paradigm until we come to him and say, Lord, I appreciate you. I appreciate you providing guidance for me, grace for me, provision for me.

And I would really appreciate it if you would share your word with me, your law, your statutes, your precepts. I not only appreciate you and what you've done, but I want to enter into your thinking. I want to understand you and what you're up to.

And I want to be a part of that. So teach me. And then we shut up and let God teach.

But it's a two-way conversation. We go to God and say our peace, and then we be quiet and let him say his peace. That's a great conversation.

That's how conversation should work. That's just the middle verse. We haven't even really talked about the rest of it yet.

But what else do we know based on structure? What do we know about this psalm in terms of that theme? Is it going to come up again somewhere? It's an eight-verse section. We've got a seven-verse chiasm. So it's going to wrap up with another emphasis on that same idea.

If our notion holds true, well, let's take a look at it. What's the last verse in the main section? Verse 112, I have inclined my heart to perform your statutes forever to the very end. What is this? How does that tie into the center verse? Lord, I appreciate you, and if you will teach me, here's my response.

I have inclined my heart. I didn't wake up with John Calvin telling me that God inclined my heart. I have consciously made the decision to point my heart at the performance of God's statutes.

I've made this my goal. We set goals all the time. It's a good thing to set goals.

You're not going to get things done if you don't set a goal and then put some time hacks in there. Well, if I'm going to finish my unfinished garage, what I should do is start by saying, well, I can't finish anything until I get the wiring and plumbing done. Why don't I say I'm going to get that done by the end of this month? That gives me, let's say, two weeks to put in the baseboards and the fixtures, the cabinetry, and all the rest of it, because that's got to be in place before I can lay the floor.

So I'm going to try to get the wiring done by this date. I'll get the cabinetry and all the rest of that stuff done by this date. Then I can lay the floor and put in the baseboards after the and then I'll be ready to move in.

I'd not only have a goal, but I need to take concrete steps toward the achieving of that goal or it's never going to happen. Having a goal is not the same as achieving a goal. Achieving a goal means putting some work into it.

What is the psalmist goal here in the noon stanza? I have inclined my heart to perform your statutes. Well, that's great, but have you taken any active steps? Yes, he has. I come before God with well-thought-out, well-researched praise, and it's a freewill offering of my lips.

And I've gone to God with a request that he teach me. I want to learn. Teach me.

And if you'll teach me, I've inclined my heart to follow that teaching. I'm going to keep it. If you go to pilot school, they teach you how to inspect an airplane, teach you all the working parts.

Here's the rudder, here's the flaps, here's how you take off, here's how you land, here's all of the indicators on what you might call the dashboard. You don't want to be dashing into that board, but the instrument panel, airspeed, your artificial horizon, and the fuel levels and the throttle and all the other controls and whatnot. You've got your pedals for rudder and such.

You can tell I haven't really done much flying. I have flown. I've actually taken off and landed a plane several times to everyone's infinite terror.

But it's one thing to say, teach me how to fly. But if you don't implement that knowledge, if you don't practice it, if you don't gain experience with using it, what have you actually learned? Well, I can go to Microsoft Flight Simulator and fly around in a virtual space. Maybe, maybe not.

So you want to not only establish this goal, but understand the steps to fulfill it. And that's what he's talking about here. Accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, teach me your judgments.

Then I have inclined my heart to perform your statutes, and not just in the short term. I'm going to do it now, and I will be able to do it later. Learning God's statutes and working within the framework of his plan and purpose is good unto the ages.

It's an investment in eternity. What you know now is going to parlay and transfer into the eternal future in ways that we can't even understand. And I've used the example many times.

A needle following the groove in a record is a very small movement. But when it goes through an amplifier and comes out speakers, it can make a really big noise. And the little faithful following of the groove in this life can make an amplified difference in the ages to come, because we learn how to follow God's law.

And that small perception is going to mean big things. Do you not know that you will judge angels? What if the Lord Jesus invites you to sit with him on his throne, and he makes you ruler over many things? How are you going to adjudicate? How are you going to decide who's right and who's wrong in the millennial kingdom when somebody brings a case? And you say, well, there's mayor on this side and mayor on that side. I'm not Solomon.

How am I going to know? You will know because God gives us experience in this life of perception and where is the right and where is the principle that pertains? Where is the priority? Yes, this is good, but this is better and better trumps good and best supersedes both better and good. And because I've had practice, because God put me through paces and trained me and gave me practice and experience, I can serve. I can be part of God's administration in the ages and in the kingdoms to come because I learned how to do it here.

Aren't you glad when you've learned something and then you get the chance to put that into practice and they put you in a situation you say, you know, I've got this. I actually know how to do this. I've done this kind of thing before.

It's a wonderful thing because you grow into a new and wider responsibility based on experience you've had in the past. That's what God is doing with us now. If we follow this guidance, listen, we'll pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to see the culmination of this, of this main noon pair, this left foot, right foot step forward in the plan and purpose of God. Let's pause here and take our break.