

Inward to Up-Word

Psalm 119:25-32

All scripture is taken from the NIV translation
unless otherwise indicated.

When life is tough, it is easy to go inward and stay there. We can get fixated easily on what is going wrong, losing sight of the good. God's Word has a way of clearing our vision if we will let it. Sometimes we may need others to point out truth to us. We may not have the capacity to seek truth on our own.

Hearing the Word

1. How is God's Word described in this passage?
2. What was the psalmist's emotional state? (vv. 25, 28)
3. What does the psalmist want from God? (vv. 25-29, 31)
4. How did he pursue God? (vv. 30-32)
5. Who or what helps you keep looking up-word?
6. What is the significance in verse 31 of "holding fast" to the Lord's statutes?
7. How did God answer the psalmist's prayer in verse 32?

Responding to the Word

- Just like the psalmist, what does it mean for you as a nurse to be "soul weary"? (v. 28)
- Who or what is causing your weariness of soul?

- What needs to change in your life to experience God's peace as you seek to care well for others?
- We have an enemy who knows the value of God's Word to lift and sustain us. The enemy will do all he can to keep us away from the Word. Keeping us busy and making us feel worn out are some of his greatest schemes. Consider setting a timer as a reminder to read God's Word and see what he will speak to you.
- For verse 29, the New Living Translation reads, "Keep me from lying to myself." What verse in this psalm can help you counteract a lie you are facing? Write the verse out and put it where it can be easily seen and reviewed.

Growing Through Affliction

Psalm 119:65-72

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Although “growing through affliction” sounds spiritual, it is typically unwelcomed. No one wants to experience distress. Nevertheless, we all encounter it. According to the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon, affliction means to be depressed, downcast, oppressed, humbled, or bowed down. Wow! Afflictions are difficult, and we need God’s grace and power to overcome them. We can learn a lot about life as we identify with the psalmist’s struggles and pain.

Study Psalm 119:65-72 and put yourself in the psalmist’s shoes.

Hearing the Word

1. What affliction is the psalmist experiencing in verse 69?
2. How does he describe his troublemakers in verses 69-70?
3. What is his three-fold prayer in verses 65-66?
4. How does the psalmist explain his perspective on affliction in verses 67 and 71?
5. When you experience affliction, how do you pray?
6. What’s the difference between obeying God’s Word versus delighting in His Word in verses 66-67 and 69-72?

7. How does the psalmist keep from believing lies that the arrogant have said about him in verses 66, 68?

Responding to the Word

- How can verse 72 help counteract lies that have been voiced about you in your nursing experience?
- When you're facing affliction as a nurse, what is your view of God?
- How do you feel God sees you when you're facing affliction as a nurse?
- The psalmist concluded that it was good for him to be afflicted for his personal growth. As hard as it was, he saw the value of difficulty. He got to know God and himself on a whole new level. Pray for God to reveal His goodness to you during your times of affliction.
- The enemy, Satan, aims to keep us stuck in our old ways of thinking. He discounts new life in Christ. Consider writing out affirmations of your new life in Christ as His nurse! For example, "I am called to be God's nurse, and He will empower me to do so." Or, "I am loved by God and have the capacity to give His love to those I serve."

Comfort in Affliction

Psalm 119:73-80

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We all need comfort when facing affliction. When our hearts hurt, we need the kind of comfort only God can provide. Having loved ones during these times is important, but they can only do so much. Learning to go to God with our aching hearts is a must.

The road might seem long and hard in learning to seek God first in times of trouble. Before learning this, I sought out loved ones who seemed readily available, or maybe not. Sometimes people were there when I first thought I needed them, and sometimes they weren't. The Lord was patient and kind as I saw for myself that He needed to be my first stop. Thankfully, I also had people who pointed me back to Him.

The psalmist continues to give us an intimate look into his relationship with God. He contrasts how the arrogant have wronged him and God's faithful comfort. He chose to focus on God rather than his affliction. Read Psalm 119:73-80.

Hearing the Word

1. Why did the psalmist ask God to give him an understanding of His commands in verse 73?
2. How does God's Word in verse 77 encourage and uphold the psalmist during his times of affliction?
3. What's the significance of the psalmist wanting people to turn to God in verses 74 and 79?

4. How did God's faithfulness shape the psalmist's view of his affliction in verse 75?
5. How has God's faithfulness shaped your view of affliction?
6. What was the psalmist facing in verse 78?
7. What's significant about the descriptive love language in verses 76-77 and 80?

Responding to the Word

- What barriers do you face as a nurse in your relationship with Christ?
- How can you allow Jesus to comfort you when afflicted as a nurse?
- What words of encouragement is Jesus saying to you today?
- Because of the psalmist's relationship with God, he was able to see the difficulty and God's faithfulness. Not only did he see it, but he wanted to be an example of trusting and receiving God's love in difficulty. Thank God that he wants to love and care for you in the hardest places of your work.
- The psalmist gives us a great example of how he dealt with affliction before God. Write a prayer to God about what you're facing today. Be honest. Tell Him what you need. How did He respond to you?

The Life-Giving Word

Psalm 119:89-96

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The enemy, Satan, is the father of lies and death; he doesn't want anything near us that provides life. At times, this life is so hard we feel as though we're sinking fast—grasping, seizing whatever we think can save us. Only God and His life-giving Word can save us. This Psalm reveals that God's Word is alive and life sustaining.

As we continue to walk with and grow in Christ, we find out for ourselves that His Word is true. We may hear that it's true, but until we experience its active work in our lives, it's only hearsay. In times of trouble, the psalmist remembered and reflected upon God's attributes. By doing so, he set an example for us to follow when we face affliction. Read Psalm 119:89-96.

Hearing the Word

1. What is the psalmist's view of God in verse 90?
2. How is God's faithfulness displayed in verses 91-93?
3. How does the psalmist describe God's Word? (vv. 89, 96)
4. What actions does the psalmist take in relating with God's Word in verses 92-95?
5. What's the psalmist's problem and prayer in verses 94-95?
6. What are you facing today that may be troubling to your soul?

7. How are perishing and preservation contrasted in verses 92-93?

Responding to the Word

- How does God's Word help you in times of trouble?
- As a nurse, in what ways can you relate to the psalmist's experiences in this passage?
- What do you need from God today?
- The psalmist knew God. He also knew who he was in God. He recognized the importance of remembering both. In this right remembering, he had the recipe of God's life-giving and sustaining Word. Pause and thank God for his life-giving Word and the ways it has sustained you.
- The psalmist describes God's Word in numerous ways. Choose and ponder the two that speak to you the most right now.

Sustain and Uphold Me!

Psalm 119:113-120

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God is with us moment by moment. Without this reality, we would all despair. Life can be “that “challenging. We may be “that” one who undergoes a certain predicament, leaving us asking, ‘Why me?’ None of us is exempt from hardships, whether we understand them or not. Thankfully, we are never alone--God Himself sustains us!

In Psalm 119, both the psalmist and God were very displeased with the wicked. Although the psalmist declared his faithfulness to God, he needed God to give him the faith to stand strong. As you study this passage, pay attention to God as sustainer and the psalmist as recipient of God’s sustenance. Read Psalm 119:113-120.

Hearing the Word

1. Who are the characters in this passage?
2. What is the psalmist’s perspective of the wicked in verses 113 and 115?
3. How does God respond to the wicked? (vv. 118-119)
4. How was God sustaining the psalmist in verse 115?
5. In what ways is God sustaining you today?
6. How does the psalmist respond to God? (vv. 113-114, 119-120)

7. Repeat aloud the prayer in verses 116-117.

Responding to the Word

- How do you respond to what appear to be evil situations at work?
- How does your life in Christ enable you, as a nurse, to face life's challenges victoriously?
- What's the prayer focus of your work these days?
- This passage clearly reminds us that God is the keeper and guardian of our lives. Left to ourselves, we would self-destruct. True worship reveals a heart of thanksgiving for God's care and keeping power. Thank God for the ways He has cared for and kept you as a nurse.
- Think back to a time when you obviously needed God's sustenance and support. How did God use His care for you to be an encouragement to someone else?

Trusting God

Psalm 119:145-152

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“Do not trust!” is often the sign hanging in our minds and emotions when life is hard. As strong as our desire is to trust, sometimes pain or disappointment just won’t let us. We may feel stuck, buried in the trough of despair. But God never leaves us. We can cry out at any time and He will be entirely faithful. Ultimately, only He can lift us out of the trough and instill in us a trusting heart.

Trusting: believing, relying on, confiding in, expecting, and depending. Serious stuff! Trusting can set us up for feelings of betrayal, betrayal by others and possibly by God. Yet, trusting is necessary. Living life with fear of about trusting can be very difficult. May we gather some tools for trusting from this Psalm. Read Psalm 119:145-152.

Hearing the Word

1. How does the psalmist describe his approach to God in verses 145-149?
2. What is his prayer in verses 145-147 and 149?
3. How does he describe God’s Word in verses 151-152?
4. What does the psalmist say he will do regarding God’s Word? (145-148)?
5. How does the psalmist’s association with God’s Word keep him trusting?

6. How does your interacting with God's Word keep you trusting Him?
7. How does the nearness of God differ from the nearness of the wicked in verses 150-151?

Responding to the Word

- In a time of need on your job, how do you approach God?
- What does your relationship with God look like in this season of your life as a nurse?
- Who or what contributes to the growing of your faith?
- The psalmist unashamedly speaks of his faithfulness to God. Yet, he knows that he cannot remain faithful without God's presence in his life. The psalmist also has developed a rich relationship with God's Word. Thank God for his Holy Spirit who enables us to know and walk in the truth, no matter where we are.
- Explore this passage using different translations of the Bible to see how they might enhance your understanding. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you as you read.

Preserve Me

Psalm 119:153-160

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“Preserve me!” Who prays that today? What you would probably hear is, “God, keep me!” This may be a “keep me in ...” or “keep me from...”. In any given moment, we could each fill in, “God keep me...!” If anything is worth having, it is worth saving!

Once again, the psalmist pours out his heart. He doesn’t mind calling on God in the midst of his troubles. God regarded the psalmist as a person of worth and value and He sees you the same way. Put yourself in the psalmist’s shoes and learn from him as you study this passage. Take note of his honesty and vulnerability before God. Read Psalm 119:153-160.

Hearing the Word

1. How does the psalmist describe his relationship with God’s Word in verses 153, 157, and 159?
2. What does the psalmist ask God for in verse 153?
3. Along with preserving his life, what else does the psalmist ask God to do for him (verse 154)?
4. How are those who are troubling him described in verses 155 and 157-158?
5. How would you describe troubles you may be facing today?

6. What was the psalmist's perspective of God in verse 156?
7. What is the psalmist suffering in verse 157?

Responding to the Word

- What can you learn from the psalmist in this passage when suffering as a nurse?
- How do you see God's compassion in your life today, personally and professionally?
- In what ways do you need God to preserve your life?
- The psalmist had learned to be gut honest with God. Sometimes it may take us a while to establish such candor before our Creator. Nevertheless, God invites honesty, for in it, He provides just what we need. Express your thanksgiving to God that you can be honest with Him in every situation.
- The psalmist says the Lord's compassion is great. Look up the word compassion for a greater understanding of God's care towards us. How can you display compassion toward yourself and others?

Following God

Psalm 119:161-168

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The psalmist gives us a clear look at how hard he followed after God. When I'm following hard after someone or something, I'm giving it my best effort. Signs are clear that I'm devoted. Life sorely tests our faith and commitment to God, and sometimes we get worn out. Thankfully, He understands when it feels too hard to follow Him. Even though the psalmist was faithful in his pursuit, he knew that he could not do it without God's provision.

God must provide the power to follow him. We can have willing hearts and yet lack strength to follow God. God, the Father, knew this, so he provided the Holy Spirit who enables us to apply God's Word as we pursue Him.

In this passage, the psalmist freely declares his devotion to God and his Word. His loyalty is clear. Although our loyalty might not be as strong at this time of our lives, God still loves and invites us to draw near. Instead of beating ourselves up because we may not feel as devoted, we can learn and grow in God's grace and persistence toward us. Read Psalm 119:161-168.

Hearing the Word

1. What are the psalmist's troubles and what is his immediate response to them in verse 161?

2. How does the psalmist describe God's Word throughout the psalm?
3. What other responses throughout the psalm does the psalmist display as a result of persecution?
4. What's the significance of the psalmist praising God seven times a day in verse 164?
5. How can this practice motivate you in praising God?
6. Why did the psalmist need to wait for the Lord's salvation in verse 166?
7. What motivated his commitment to God's Word in verses 162 and 165?

Responding to the Word

- When was the last time you experienced persecution on the job?
- In what ways did you allow God to care for you during your troubles?
- How can pursuing God's Word help you when facing difficulties, especially at work?
- The psalmist knew what to do when he faced persecutions. He pursued God in the way that he knew how. God accepts us right where we are. He knows that we don't always understand what to do when things are hard, but He knows that we need Him. He waits for us to invite Him into our situations. Thank God for His pursuit and care for you.
- The psalmist spoke of praising God seven times a day. Mark out a consistent time during your work hours to pause and praise God. Pay attention to how God meets you in that time.

