

**DISCUSS**

How familiar are you with Psalm 119?

What from Matt's session deepened your understanding of the background and content of the psalm?

What are the two categories Matt splits verses 1-16 into?

When you consider the phrase "blessed life" what comes to mind? What do you consider important elements of being blessed?

If verses 1-8 describe the blessed life, what does David point out as marks of the blessed life?

Based on these verses, would you say you are living the blessed life today? Why or why not?

What does verse 1 identify as a foundation for those who are blessed?

Are you blameless before God in terms of the way you have lived? Have you kept His Word with your whole heart?

How well do you practice the discipline of confession?

What motivates you to project strength and sufficiency? What fears do you have when it comes to being honest about your struggles?

What does it mean to guard our ways according to God's Word?

# HANDOUT

## Session 1: Psalm 119:1-16

# PSALM 119

What are some practical ways you practice that in your life? What are some ways you could be even more intentional about living in light of God's Word?

What is holding you back from acknowledging the brokenness in your life?

What would change if you did?

How should that truth that God celebrates our progress change the way you think about your own brokenness? In what ways does it encourage you toward greater boldness in confessing where you are weak?

## LIVE IT OUT

**Pray:** Set aside some time this week to pray and ask that God would give you an accurate view of yourself so that you can move forward in genuine confession and repentance.

**Confess:** If the Holy Spirit has convicted you of any sin you have not confessed in your life, seek out a trusted believer this week and bring it to light. Invite them to carry the burden with you and ask them to help you walk in freedom.

**Memorize:** Select 2-3 verses from the passage we studied this week that encourage you to practice regular confession and repentance. Commit them to memory and ask God to call them to mind for you in times when you are tempted to hide from the truth.

**Accountability:** In addition to knowing our starting point, part of moving forward is staying on the right path, which often requires the help of others. This week, reach out to 2-3 trusted believers and begin a conversation with them about forming an accountability group in order to meet together for the sake of staying on the right path in pursuit of Christ.

**Journal:** Sometime this week, sit down and write out the characteristics that marked your life before you met Christ. Then write about how your life has been transformed since surrendering to Christ. Read over your notes and praise God for His grace to you.

### DISCUSS

What does David expect from God according to verse 17?

How do you feel about this request? Do you ask and expect from God the same benevolence? Why or why not?

What has your experience been with the prosperity gospel?

What's wrong with the prosperity gospel? In what ways does it miss the point of the gospel of Jesus?

How does Matthew 7:7-11 describe the heart of God?

How should this passage inform our expectations in prayer?

What distinction does Matt make between the prosperity gospel and a biblical view of God's generosity?

What are some words you would use to characterize David's tone in verses 18-24?

How have you experienced the tension between following God's Word and dealing with a sinful world in your own life? What did your prayer life look like during those times?

As you reflect on those times, how did God respond to your circumstances? What have you learned about Him as a result of going through them?

How does Matt describe the theme of verses 25-32?

According to verse 26, what action does David say he took in response to his circumstances?

How does God respond to Him as a result?

How have you practiced confession in your own life?

What were the practical effects you experienced after confessing sin? How did it influence your relationship with Christ? What about your witness to others?

In what ways do you practice confession today? What could you do to grow in that discipline in the days ahead?

What is the consistent theme Matt points out about verses 27-32?

What is the difference between belief and knowledge?

Where are some areas in your life where you need God to move you from knowledge to belief?

What obstacles stand in the way of you confessing your sin?

How do they keep you from the comfort of God's presence and power?

How would your life look different if you were to act on the truth you've learned

## LIVE IT OUT

**Pray:** As you think about the areas of your spiritual life where you need to move from *knowing* to *believing*, invite God to bridge that gap and transform you in such a way that your life reflects what you claim to believe.

**Study:** Over the course of the next week, devote your quiet time to studying the generosity of God throughout Scripture. Find a handful of passages that describe God's generous heart in order to further shape your understanding of your Heavenly Father.

**Confess:** If you are hiding sin or keeping secret any doubts or fears you have about your spiritual life, seek out a trustworthy believer and confess those today. Trust that the truth of God's Word will not mislead you.

**Ask:** If you are in a season of need, boldly ask God to provide for your needs, like David in the passage we studied. Trust that He is a generous Father who gives good gifts and will provide you with whatever you need for sustenance.

**Praise:** As you reflect on the generosity of God in your life, spend some time each day this week praising God for His gifts to you.

### DISCUSS

How have you seen the cause and effect of prayer and God's response in your own life? What have you asked for and seen God provide in response?

What are you asking God to do in your life today?

As you compare your life before Christ and your life after coming to know Him, how has your perspective changed toward God's Word?

In what ways have you grown more disciplined in "keeping" His Word? Where do you find yourself struggling with consistency?

What are some areas in your life where you find full obedience most difficult?

What are some of the factors blocking that obedience?

Having watched this session, has the Holy Spirit convicted you of any ways that you are trying to obey apart from God's transforming power? How would your efforts change if you asked God to change your heart?

What can you do practically over the next week to plead with God to change your heart the way David does in these verses?

How would your life look different if God created in you wholehearted obedience?

How do you tend to respond to someone telling you what to do?

How is that response reflected in the way you tend to react to the commands in the Bible? In what ways does it affect how you see the heart of God behind His commands?

In Psalm 34:8, what does David say we find out about God when we “taste” of His ways?

How have you experienced God’s goodness in your obedience to Him? How has God shown Himself as kind and gracious to you?

How should that change the way you approach His commands? Or to put it another way, how should it cause you to trust in the goodness of God’s commands going forward?

What do you find yourself most tempted to use for your own purposes rather than in service to the Lord?

What would it look like to devote that resource more fully toward God’s purposes? What would need to change about your life currently?

What are some of the “worthless things” we pursue instead of chasing after the things of God?

How do those distractions keep us from displaying Christ to a lost world? In what ways do they weaken our witness?

According to Philippians 4:8, where does Paul say to fix our perspective?

What kind of difference do you think this perspective would make in your life?

How did Matt describe the experience of fearing God?

How have you experienced the fear of God in your own life? In what ways did it affect you?

What were the two fruits Matt keyed in on as results of David’s prayers?

How do verses 41–46 demonstrate a freedom from the fear of what others think?

How have you dealt with a fear of rejection in your own life?

How should the truth of our adoption in Christ inform our penchant for perfectionism? How should it confront our fears?

Where are you in need of God to supply you with boldness to overcome your fears?

How do verses 46–48 demonstrate a confident walk with Christ?

In what ways do you experience doubt? How do you respond to the doubts in your life?

Where do you need God to create confidence in you today?

What does the father ask of Jesus in Mark 9:24?

How should this prayer change the way you approach God with your doubts and fears?

## LIVE IT OUT

**Pray:** Each day this week, pray the prayer of the father in Mark 9:24 and trust that God will help your unbelief.

**List:** Write down at least 2–3 specific items you are asking God to accomplish in your life. Place them somewhere that you will regularly see them in order to pray daily over them and rejoice when God responds to your prayers.

**Reflect:** Take some time this week to reflect on your life before Christ and how He has transformed you since. Be encouraged by the work He has done in you and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to your heart as you resolve to pursue Christ.

**Give:** Recall whatever you identified as the thing you're most tempted to use for your own purposes rather than in service to the Lord (money, time, influence, etc.). Find a practical way this week to intentionally devote a portion of that in service to God and as a blessing to those around you.

**Draw:** If you have a creative leaning, draw an image of what you believe best pictures a biblical fear of God. Hang the image in a place for you to see it daily so that you can be reminded of the freedom that comes with fearing the Lord.

### DISCUSS

What were the three causes Matt gave for suffering?

How have you experienced suffering in your own life?

How do you tend to respond to suffering? What do you turn to for comfort and support?

When you hear the phrase “the promises of God” what comes to mind?

What are some biblical promises that stand out to you? Why?

How should the promises of God reshape the way you respond to times of suffering?

What did Matt identify as a second source of comfort from verse 57?

How have you experienced suffering as a result of your faith in Jesus?

How did you experience the presence of God in those times? In what ways did you receive peace and comfort as a result?

How have you found God’s presence to be a sufficient “portion” in difficult times?

How would you define grace?

What should change about our view of suffering as recipients of God’s grace?

What would look different about your response to suffering if you were able to fix yourself continually on the truth that God is good to you in the midst of it?

What did Matt describe as “the story of the Bible”?

When you think about the stories within the Bible, what are some examples that demonstrate God at work in the hurt, pain, and sorrow of humanity?

What attributes of God do they illustrate?

If people like Moses, David, and even Jesus were not exempt from suffering, how should that cause us to prioritize our comfort?

How should the truth of God’s constant availability encourage us in times of darkness?

In the weeks ahead, what can you do to be more proactive about running to God in times of weakness, failure, and suffering?

How have you found the companionship of other believers to be a comfort to you in difficult periods of life?

Do you have that kind of community today? Why or why not?

Who could you invite into your life to help you carry whatever pain and loss you may be experiencing?

## LIVE IT OUT

**Pray:** Whatever pain or struggle you are feeling today, spend some time each day this week confessing it to God and asking for Him to meet you in your need.

**Resolve:** Whether you are in a season of struggle or one of comfort, resolve to face times of difficulty with confidence that God is at work in the mess.

**Memorize:** Select 2-3 of the biblical promises mentioned in the session and devote those passages to memory. Ask that God would comfort you with them in times of trial.

**Encourage:** If you know someone who is struggling, reach out to them and encourage them with the promises of God. Schedule a time to get coffee or take them to lunch and be intentional about offering them refreshment through the truth of Christ.

**Invite:** Be proactive about seeking community this week. Invite trusted believers into whatever pain, hurt, or doubt you are experiencing and allow them to help you bear that burden.

### DISCUSS

How did Matt describe the theme of this portion of Psalm 119?

What are the five benefits described by David in this passage?

As you think on your relationship with Christ, how has He been good to you? What have you found to be the benefits of knowing Him?

According to verses 67, 69, and 71 what is the spiritual benefit of suffering for believers in Jesus Christ?

What did Matt mean when he said “God does not drive an ambulance”?

How does the idea of God as a “surgeon” strike you? In what ways does it reshape the way He can use the suffering you experience for good?

How has God used suffering in your life to draw you into a deeper relationship with Him? What has He taught you during those times?

Everyone in life suffers, but what sets Christians apart in the way they are to view suffering?

According to verse 73, who “makes” and “fashions” us?

What does David ask of God as a result of his declaration?

What are some of the unique qualities God has given to you?

How has He presented you with opportunities to use those qualities for His glory?

# HANDOUT

## Session 5: Psalm 119:65–96

# PSALM 119

How should this understanding—that God has designed each of us specifically and uniquely—reorient the ways in which we think about ourselves (body image, personality, intelligence, etc.)?

As you read through verses 73–80, what attributes of God do you see David list?

Which attribute stands out to you the most? How have you experienced it in your own life?

How has belonging to a community of believers deepened your walk with Christ? What are the benefits of authentic relationships with other believers?

How do verses 81–88 demonstrate David’s hope in God through His Word?

How have you experienced hope in times of difficulty and uncertainty? How do those past experiences help to strengthen your hope today?

What did Matt point to as the assurance of our hope?

Which verses in 89–96 stands out to you as demonstrating David’s rejuvenation through God’s Word?

What are some of the ways you have experienced God’s rejuvenating work in your life?

What are some passages of Scripture that refresh your heart?

How should the truth that the rejuvenating power of God is inexhaustible impact the way you pursue Him going forward?

### LIVE IT OUT

**Pray:** Each day this week, make it a point to ask that God would use the circumstances of your life to create in you a greater dependence upon Him.

**Write:** On a single page of paper, write down the five benefits Matt listed that come from a life surrendered to God. Select the one you'd most like to grow in and spend some time each day this week asking God to mature you in that area.

**Connect:** Reach out to a believer who exhibits greater maturity in the "benefit" you'd like to grow in. Schedule some time to get together and talk with him or her about how God has matured them in that area of their spiritual journey.

**Listen:** Make time to meet with a believer you know that has experienced suffering and found deeper intimacy with God as result. Ask him or her about that process as well as how to trust God in the midst of difficulty.

**List:** Write out a list of the unique gifts God has given to you. Underneath each one, write 2–3 ways you could use that gift to serve someone in your life. Pick one of those opportunities for service and act on it at some point over the next week.

### DISCUSS

What are some of the ways you have been able to relate to David throughout this study?

How would you describe your relationship with Christ today? How do the verses we're studying in this session encourage you to be honest with the Lord about your circumstances?

What did Matt say was the theme of this session?

Who have you known to have a love for God's Word similar to David's?

Would you describe yourself as having this level of love for God's Word? Why or why not?

What would change about the way you go about your life if God's Word became your "meditation all the day" the way it was for David?

In verses 100–104, what does David say he has gained from God's Word?

How does he gain this understanding?

What word/phrase would you use to describe your feelings toward the Bible? Do you share a similar appetite for Scripture? Why or why not?

What do you find most challenging about a personal study of God's Word?

How have you seen God's Word deepen your understanding throughout your walk with Christ? How has it changed your ability to see what is good and what is false?

Based on your current routines, what are some of the intentional ways you attempt to grow in your understanding through Scripture? What could you do to be more intentional in the weeks ahead?

What are the three ways Matt explained that God’s Word sustains us from this passage?

How has God’s Word been a “lamp” for you the way David describes in verse 105? How did it provide clarity in a time of uncertainty?

How have you received hope from God’s Word during a season of suffering?

What did you learn about God as a result of these times?

According to Matt’s explanation in the session, what is the difference between joy and happiness?

What does David describe as the source of his joy in verse 111?

How did you react to Matt’s comments about living with an open hand on your life?

What does it mean to live with an “open-handedness”?

What are some areas of your life where you struggle to live with this kind of open-handedness? How would your life look different if you were able to?

According to verse 114, who is David’s “hiding place” and “shield”?

According to John 5:39–40, who does Jesus say the Scriptures bear witness to? What does that mean for our understanding of the Bible?

How should the truth that God’s Word leads to a personal relationship with Him change your approach to Scripture? In what ways should it encourage your time in the Word knowing that it is drawing you deeper into a relationship with God?

How do you tend to react to the idea of “fearing” God? What does that look like for you?

In what ways did Matt’s explanation change your views?

What did he say were the benefits of this kind of good fear?

How would your life look different if you were to walk in a biblical fear of God? How will you pursue that end in the days ahead?

## LIVE IT OUT

**Pray:** Each day this week, ask God to deepen your love for His Word and cause you to grow closer to Christ as a result.

**Evaluate:** Take inventory of your attitude toward God’s Word and evaluate whether or not you have the same affection as David describes throughout Psalm 119. Ask God to create a love within you for His Word wherever needed.

**Surrender:** If the Holy Spirit has convicted you of any areas of your life where you are not living with an open hand, surrender those to the Lord today and trust Him to be sufficient for you.

**Ask:** If you struggle with understanding how to study and meditate on Scripture, reach out to a believer you know who practices this discipline well and ask him or her to teach you.

**Serve:** If studying God’s Word is something you do well, look for ways to help those who struggle grow in their ability to study and understand Scripture.

### DISCUSS

Who is the author of Psalm 119?

What is the theme of the psalm?

What makes it unique to the rest of the psalms?

How does David describe himself in verses 122, 124, and 125?

How does David describe the world around him (vs. 121-122, 126)?

What desire did Matt say characterizes David in this passage?

In what ways can you relate to the passion Matt described having experienced after his conversion?

Who in your life has God burdened your heart with a hope to see them come to Christ?

Where do you desire for God to use you for His purposes today?

What does Matt identify as David's two motivations for being used by God?

Which verses stand out to you as demonstrating a love for God on the part of David?

How does David demonstrate a loving concern for the lost?

How to you tend to react to the brokenness of the world?

**What are your relationships like with those who do not have a relationship with Jesus? What are some of the obstacles that keep you from greater compassion for the lost?**

**How should our call to be marked by sacrificial love change the way you view verse 128 and other passages in the Bible that speak of “hating” sin and sinful ways?**

**What are some of the areas in your life where God has placed you around those who do not know Him?**

**How has God given you opportunities to bear witness to the lost? In what ways do you need to grow in your compassion for those who do not have a relationship with Christ?**

**How have you experienced the temptation to return to former ways around those who do not know Christ? What would doing so communicate about your faith?**

**Where do you need God’s protection today?**

## LIVE IT OUT

**Pray:** Ask the Lord to give you opportunities this week to share with those around you the good news of Jesus Christ. Pray that He would protect you from temptation in those times as well.

**Proclaim:** As God gives you opportunities, be intentional about speaking the gospel to those around you who do not yet know Jesus.

**Confess:** As a result of this session, if the Holy Spirit has convicted you of a lack of compassion for the lost around you, bring that to light and confess it to God. Ask Him to give you a heart that breaks for the lost and a desire for them to know Christ.

**Forgive:** If you struggle to love those who do not know Christ because of bitterness in you toward someone that has hurt you, take steps to forgiving that person and ask God to remove that bitterness and replace it with compassion for the lost.

**Serve:** Identify a need you can meet in your neighborhood, workplace, or community and consider ways in which you can meet it. At some point this week, use the gifts and resources God has given you to serve that need as an expression of your belief in Christ.

### DISCUSS

Which of the descriptions of God and His Word stands out to you the most from verses 137-144? Why?

What characteristic of God and His Word does David use repeatedly?

What term did Matt use to sum up these terms as a description of God?

How would you define the term “holy”?

What are some of the descriptions David uses for himself?

In verse 139, what did Matt key in on as a characteristic of all humanity?

How does drifting from God’s Word affect us?

How have you experienced these effects in your own life?

According to verses 145-152, what is the opportunity God provides in the midst of our brokenness?

How has God used brokenness in your life to bring you to a place of recognizing your need for Him?

What circumstances did God allow in your life that eventually led you to cry out to Him for salvation? How did He respond?

What are the two truths Matt highlighted that our hope of salvation rests on?

How have you experienced the steadfast love of God? In what ways is it different from any kind of human love you’ve experienced?

**How have you experienced the nearness of God? In what ways has God's presence encouraged you during difficult times?**

**How should the truth that God's presence is our most desperate need in life change the way you think about your sin and that of others? How does it encourage you to look beyond the surface and recognize the deeper need?**

**What were the four marks Matt covered of being a Christian?**

**As you reflect on your life, how have you changed since beginning a relationship with Jesus Christ? What has God done to transform you?**

**Where do you desire to grow in your walk with Christ? What are you asking God to do in your life?**

**Where do you need to surrender to the love and presence of God? In what ways are trusting in yourself as opposed to the promises of God?**

**How will you take steps toward repentance and new life as a result of this session?**

## LIVE IT OUT

**Pray:** Throughout this week, ask God to reveal to you the areas of your life where you need to grow and be proactive about pursuing maturity.

**Remember:** Write out Ephesians 2:1-10 on a piece of paper and place it somewhere where you will see it on a daily basis as a constant reminder to you of the truth about who you are, who God is, and the hope you have through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Worship:** Take some time to reflect on how God has been gracious to you in your failures and disobedience. As you do, worship Him for the steadfast love that He has shown you continually.

**Memorize:** Commit to memory the four marks of being a Christian that Matt shared in this session in order to clearly communicate to others what it means to believe in Christ.

**Invite:** Reach out to a mature believer in Christ and invite him or her to mentor you in a discipleship relationship as a way of growing in your walk with the Lord.

### DISCUSS

How does David describe his circumstances in verses 153–160?

How does he describe himself?

In what ways can you relate to David's frustrations about striving for obedience, yet observing his enemies succeeding in their plots against him? What are some ways in which you are prone to similar discouragement? What causes you to wonder where God is at work?

How do you tend to react during those times? Where do you turn for hope and encouragement?

Where does Matt say we find true encouragement in times of doubt?

What concept does Matt say verses 161–168 introduce?

How does he define "awe"?

How have you experienced awe in your own life?

How have you experienced awe in your spiritual life? In what ways did it affect you?

What about God inspires you to worship Him?

What spirit does this Romans 8:15–17 say we have received in Christ?

According to verse 15, if the end result of the spirit of slavery is fear, what is the end result of the "Spirit of adoption"?

How did Matt's explanation of "Abba" change any views you previously had about the term?

Bearing in mind that you are a child of a strong and caring Father through faith in Jesus Christ, how should that truth change your response to difficult times of life? How should God's protective care encourage a greater boldness within you?

While it begins with God's Word, what else stirs your affections for Jesus? What causes your perspective to lift so that you see and savor your Father?

What distracts you from focusing on Christ?

As you consider your answer to these questions, has the Holy Spirit convicted you of any ways that you need to be more intentional about pursuing the things that deepen your love for Christ? What changes will you make as a result of this session?

## LIVE IT OUT

**Pray:** Each day this week, ask God to lift your perspective to fix your eyes on Christ rather than your own performance.

**Detox:** Make time this week to spend at least one hour in nature to disconnect from the busyness and distraction of life. Turn off your phone and bring only a Bible with you in order to be still and spend time in silence with God.

**Encourage:** Reach out to someone you know who feels discouraged because of their performance and help them to focus on the righteousness they receive through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Reflect:** Spend some time this week reflecting on what God has saved you from through His Son, Jesus Christ and let that lead you into a greater awe of your Savior.

**Surrender:** If the Holy Spirit has convicted you of any unhealthy fear that remains in you, be intentional about surrendering that to God and asking Him to help you embrace His spirit of adoption.

### DISCUSS

What does David ask for in verses 169–170?

In what form does he ask for these to be given?

When have you prayed a prayer similar to David's? How did you see God respond?

How do you work to differentiate between worldly wisdom and the wisdom of God?

What could you do to be more intentional about pursuing God's wisdom as you make decisions in the future?

How do verses 171–172 indicate God's Word shapes David's praise?

How do you feel about reading the Old Testament? Does it create in you the same kind of joy David writes about as the New Testament? Why or why not?

What are some of the obstacles that stand in the way of allowing God's Word to shape your praise?

What do you think about this statement from Matt: "God is never trying to take anything from us, He's trying to give to us"? Do you see God's commands as leading to joy? Or do you tend to see them as restrictive?

What would have to change for you to praise God for His Word like David?

How do verses 173–175 reveal a longing on the part of David for a deeper intimacy with God through His Word?

Who have you known that longs for God with a "holy dissatisfaction"? How has their relationship with Christ impressed upon you?

What would it look like for you to grow in your longing for God and His Word? How could you begin pursuing that longing in the days ahead?

What is David confessing in verse 176?

How do you react to your own failures to obey God's Word? What does your response tell you about your view of God?

Who does Jesus say He came to save in Luke 19:10?

What did Matt say believing in Jesus does for our inconsistencies?

How should this truth change the way you respond to your own shortcomings? What will you do differently when confronted with your failures in the future?

## LIVE IT OUT

**Pray:** Over the course of this week, ask that God would give you a holy dissatisfaction toward the things of the world and continue to create an appetite in your for Christ alone.

**Invite:** If you are in the process of thinking through a decision, reach out to 2–3 trusted believers and ask them for wisdom. Invite them to help you discern what is spiritual wisdom and what is earthly wisdom and trust God to lead you as a result.

**Study:** Pick a book of the Old Testament that you don't know well and commit to studying it over the next several weeks in order to begin familiarizing yourself with the parts of Scripture that remain alien to you.

**Memorize:** Commit to memory Luke 19:10 and let the truth that Jesus came to seek and save the lost encourage you when you identify failures and shortcomings in your life.

**Worship:** Spend time meditating on the ways God has extended His grace to you through Jesus Christ and worship Him for the goodness of His gospel and the lengths He has gone to in order to save you.