

# Whose Way Do You Walk?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let me open with prayer as we prepare to hear God's word for us this morning. Thank you, Father, that you have given us your words of scripture.

They teach, they instruct us in the way we should go. Lord, a lot of times we go through life expecting things to just automatically make sense, to be intuitive, and then we encounter so many situations, so many people in our lives, so many circumstances that it seems our instincts don't seem to help us with.

It seems that we just can't seem to grasp or comprehend. And we do not have that deep and rich wisdom that we need to walk the path that you have laid before us.

I pray, Lord God, that you would today just begin that process of opening our hearts, giving us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand what it means to walk in the law of the Lord.

I pray, Lord God, that you may bring to mind, in addition to what I prepare, Lord God, if there is more that your spirit wants me to say, bring it to mind. If there are things that I've prepared that are not best for us, hold me back from them.

[ 1 : 28 ] And make us attentive, above all, to what you have to say. Amen. Well, it's good to see you all here this morning. Enjoy preaching for the first time this year.

My name is Dave Nannery. I'm the associate pastor here at the church. And I'm glad to fill in for BK in his absence here. We're going to be looking at Psalm 119.

And this is a psalm that if you have been around the church, if you've read through the Bible before, you realize this is a psalm that talks a lot about the Bible. Now, when you look at the Bible, when you think about it, maybe you're deeply familiar with it, having spent your whole life in church, maybe you've literally never been in a church before, and this is your first Sunday, and you've never held a Bible in your hands before, maybe sometimes you wonder, what is the point of the Bible? Why would God the Holy Spirit write us a book? Why would he want us to read it? In fact, why have we spent the last couple of months hearing sermons that BK has been preaching that review that story of the Bible?

Well, honestly, can't we just do without it? And if we are being honest about the daily and the weekly habits of our lives, you know, if we look at less of what we say we believe and more how we're actually behaving, aren't many of us just trying to do without the Bible?

[ 3 : 00 ] We're trying to do without it. We'll say things like, yeah, I know I'm supposed to read this in my head. I know I should. But my heart is just kind of longing to be elsewhere, to be on my phone, to be on the ski slopes, to kind of be anywhere else.

At a gut level, you're finding God's words to be less than life-giving. Now, it's important to be honest about this. Deep inside, if you do feel that way, then you feel that way.

Let's talk about it. Why would God give us the Bible if it's just going to feel like a guilt trip to us?

Well, I could sit down and I could give you a list of, you know, 10 reasons why you should read the Bible and do what it says, but that is not going to help, is it?

It's just going to leave us burdened with a bunch of oughts and shoulds that we just don't have the heart to do. And typically what I find is if I give people a list of, well, you ought to be reading your Bible, like, yeah, yeah, I know, and then they'll do it for two or three days, and then just feel weary and just, I don't know, and then just give up.

We want something more. We need a different sort of intervention. The intervention that I want to offer this morning is this. I want us to enter the mind of a person who has a hunger for God's Word.

[ 4 : 31 ] We're so used to being inside of our own minds, our own hearts, where maybe we don't have that hunger. In fact, maybe we're just kind of, we feel like we would do without. What would it look like to be inside of another person's mind?

How are they thinking? How are they feeling? What are their, what's their gut telling them? What's it like to be inside of them, inside of their head?

To have that deep sense of need for God's Word. We're going to spend the next half hour doing that, to see what the world looks like through the eyes of that kind of person. That's what the Bible invites us to do in the longest chapter of the Bible, Psalm 119.

It doesn't get more immersive than reading 176 verses, verse after verse after verse, of someone who is inviting you to enter their world, to look at the world the way they do, to think what they think, to feel what they feel, to sense at a gut level what they are sensing.

Now, Psalm 119, if you're using the Bible as our usher's handout, that's on page 512. 176 verses, and all of them are about the author's relationship with God, the psalmist's relationship with God, through the Scriptures that God has given.

[ 5 : 52 ] Now, if you're thinking, well, we are going to be here a long time, if he's going to read 176 verses and then preach on all of them. Good news, we're just going to do the first eight.

We're just going to do the first eight verses that serve as a good introduction to the entire rest of the psalm. And these eight verses drop us into a different mentality than the one that we have, maybe a different mentality than the one you've had this morning, maybe a different mentality than the one that you have carried with you your whole life.

A very different set of instincts and desires and habits than you are familiar with and you are used to. We're going to kind of do a little bit of a magic school bus sort of thing, where we're going to travel inside the head and heart of this poet, of the psalmist.

And he is going to show us the way that he thinks, the way that he feels about the Bible and about the God who wrote it. So here is what we read in these verses.

I'm going to read them slowly, and I'm going to invite you just to put yourself in his shoes. What would it be like to actually think and feel this way? What's going on here? Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

[ 7 : 11 ] Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.

You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes.

Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous rules.

I will keep your statutes. Do not utterly forsake me. Now, if this is God's word for us this morning, we would do well to try it on.

So think about this. Maybe another way of putting it is, you're trying on these eight verses like you're trying on a shirt. What's it like to wear it? What would it be?

[ 8 : 14 ] What kind of person would you have to be to write these verses? How would you have to think? Like if you wrote these and you really meant it. It wasn't just an intellectual exercise.

But this came from your heart. This came from your gut. Well, what we can do is we can look and see the patterns here. What is there to notice?

What's different here, maybe, than the way we think? Well, first, we notice in almost every verse, he is talking about the scriptures.

And he uses a bunch of different words to describe it. He uses words like law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, rules, words that make us shudder, right?

Who gets, raise your hand if you really get excited about law and statutes and commandments.

That is your thing. You love it. You know, there's nothing that gets you excited, like, you know, going to learning, you know, discovering like the bylaws of our church and like going to the district of Squamish and digging through the archives.

[ 9 : 22 ] I can't wait to see what are the laws and bylaws of our community. This is this. I just love it. Tell me how to behave. Tell me what I can't do. This is wonderful. You know?

If you work in construction, there's nothing that fills you with joy like regulations, right? This is wonderful. No, no. Most of us are like, oh, kill me now.

You know, these, those words sound restrictive. They sound cold. They sound intimidating. And they sound impersonal. And already we're finding one reason why it is so important to read the Bible, to read it slowly and carefully, and to really take note of not just what is being written, but how it's being written.

What's the tone here? If the Bible says it, here's a good rule of thumb I use when I'm reading the Bible.

If it's in the Bible, if the Bible says it, then it's something that is not obvious to you. It is something that is not obvious and not natural. If you read a verse and you're like, oh, yeah, I know that, then you're not understanding it.

[10:31] Okay? God doesn't need to write books of the Bible about, oh, hey, guys, the sky is blue. The grass is green. Brussels sprouts taste terrible when they're boiled.

You already know that. You know this by experience. It's obvious. God doesn't need to tell you that. That's part of just the general revelation he reveals to us in the world around us.

The Bible is written to teach you things that are not obvious. That are not intuitive. And that you have to be retrained and develop whole new instincts, whole new gut feel for these truths.

We forget this. We're so, if you are in the church, you read the Bible a lot, sometimes we forget. And we're used to reading these things and just, oh, yeah, I understand that cognitively. I understand that intellectually.

I've understood this with my head. But it's really only when these words sink into your heart, kind of rearrange you at a gut level.

[11:37] That's when you start to feel the tension. That's when you read these verses and you're like, oh, whoa, whoa, that is not the way I'm thinking about the world.

And here we encounter this tension, precepts, statutes, law, and we instinctively tense up. We're like, oh, oh, no. But inside, if we go inside the head of the psalmist, we leave our own way of thinking, we leave our own instincts and our own sort of gut feel and our own feelings behind, and we go into his feelings and his head and his thinking, and we notice, wait a minute, when he talks about these things, he's not reacting the way I do.

He's not tensing up. If anything, he's actually more relaxed. To him, it's like breathing fresh air.

In fact, he's encouraged. He gains a sense of courage. It gives him a backbone. He feels motivated. He feels moved, even excited. You can see it. Even in verse seven, he goes, I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous rules.

In fact, the first two verses, verses one and two, if you look at them, notice the way they describe that person who knows and follows God's law and his testimonies, and the word that he uses to describe that kind of person is blessed.

[13:14] Now, there is a word throughout the Old Testament that is usually used for blessing, like these words of blessing spoken that have power to bring good to someone.

But that's actually not the word that is used here. This is a word that simply means something along the lines of happy. Another translation puts it this way.

How happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. Now, again, tension.

We encounter this tension because maybe that is not obvious to you at all. You and I know many religious people who seem perpetually unhappy and unable to be happy.

It's almost like unhappiness. It's almost like they seem to enjoy being unhappy. I don't know what it is. Some of us just want to be unhappy, I guess. I mean, honestly, sometimes that person is me, and people in our town, they do not think it at all obvious that happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

[14:25] Here in Squamish, maybe the way people look at religion is, well, that's nice for you if you want to be miserable. You know, you want to be locked indoors on a Sunday morning when you could be outside.

It's not obvious that God's word would actually make us happy. And not just because we read it, but because it is our way of life.

But what might not be obvious to us has become obvious. And maybe at some point in his life, it wasn't obvious to him either. But to the psalmist, now it has become obvious that this is a way of happiness.

And he's writing this because the reason he writes this is for you. He wants it to become obvious and natural and instinctive to you as well.

He's inviting you. I want you to sense this and feel this the way that I do. That's why it's written. And that's why God has given it to us.

[15:37] I mean, God wants you to be happy walking in his way. His holiness is a way of happiness. And he gives us a clue about what makes law and testimonies and precepts so appealing to him.

We're here inside his head and we notice the way he talks about them. He always makes them personal. They are personal.

These are not just, you know, any statutes and commandments. He's not inviting you to just be a rule follower and a bean counter. Like, oh, I just like rules, you know, and I like to follow them. No, no, no. That's not what he's inviting you to be. Look at verses five and six, okay? Take a look. Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes.

Then I shall not be put to shame having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. Notice how personal. It's I, me, my connecting with your statutes, your commandments.

[16:45] These aren't impersonal laws that are passed by a distant parliament. These aren't laws that are enforced by a bunch of bureaucrats who don't take responsibility and that you can't know personally.

This is personal. It is the law of the Lord. It is his testimonies.

It is your precepts, your statutes, your commandments, your righteous rules. For the psalmist, that is what breathes life into the words of the Bible because these are words that come from someone he loves.

Whenever I check my mail and I receive a letter from a government office, maybe from the CRA, well, I tell you what, I do pay attention. Not because I want to, but because I'm supposed to. Right? Raise your hand if you love receiving letters from the CRA. Right? Wow, that was wonderful. Yay! I feel so loved. When I receive a letter from someone that I do love and that I know, and I know their heart, I pay attention because I want to.

[18:16] Their words matter to me. And if they're a person with great wisdom whom I love and I know has my good at heart and they are giving me some instructions that come from their heart that show what matters to them, yeah, I want to read that.

That breathes life. And to the psalmist, every word of the Bible is deeply personal. That is the mentality of the psalmist.

We're inside of his head. That is the way he's thinking. That is the way he looks at the Bible. And it is also the mentality of Jesus Christ. I am struck by how often Jesus quotes the Old Testament. So sometimes I've heard people say something along the lines of, well, yeah, you know, there's the Old Testament. But I follow Jesus. It's not about the Bible. It's about following Jesus. And I'm like, have you ever actually paid attention to what Jesus says?

He's obsessed with the Bible. If you want to follow Jesus and if you want to think the way he thinks and have his heart and have his mindset and his mentality, you will love the Scripture.

[19:26] If you don't, then you don't get Jesus at all. You don't know him. Jesus quotes the Old Testament all the time.

He almost certainly had the whole thing memorized. And it had sunk into his heart. And we know that because his moments of greatest distress are when he quotes the Bible the most.

That's when the words come most readily to mind. If you cut Jesus, he would bleed Bible. He loves the law of the Lord.

That is so, so clear from him. It drives him nuts when people don't. Why?

Because it is his Father's word. And he loves his Father's word. And what seems good to his Father seems good to him. What his Father delights in, he enjoys too.

[20:27] That is the food that sustains him and feeds him. Chris read earlier in the service, at a time when Jesus was under great suffering and temptation, almost at the point of starving to death, being tempted by the devil, offered, being told, hey, make some food for yourself.

And his response in Matthew 4, verse 4, he says, it is written, which means he is quoting a passage from the book of Deuteronomy. It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

He is not just quoting this verse, he is living it. He is not only God, but he is fully human as well, and he is really experiencing hunger, and he has to go through that as a man.

He can't just, you know, cheat and escape it. And he says, it is not just bread that I need. My food is to hear, to heed, and to follow every word that comes from the mouth of God.

To not do God's word is to starve. That's how Jesus feels about it. And if you read through the rest of the Gospels, you find that not just here, he doesn't just say it, but all of his habits of thought and speech and behavior show it's really true.

[ 21 : 54 ] Jesus, because he is so well versed in the Scriptures, he's just on a different wavelength from everybody else. He's like a radio tuned into a different station. Than you and I are. Why? Because he, his, not only his thinking and his reasoning, but his feeling and his gut and his instincts are all in line with God's word, with the Scriptures.

That is his heart. They are God's words. And they're important to him. Back in Psalm 119.

We can notice something else. We're here in, you know, in the magic school bus inside the psalmist's head. And we notice that he keeps using a word picture.

And this is a word picture that I find, when we read the Bible too fast, we gloss over this a lot. And we gloss over it in part because this language in the Bible has sort of infiltrated this way into our common language too.

so we even talk this way and we don't notice that we do. He uses words and like, words like way and walk.

[ 23 : 11 ] Look at verses 1 to 3. Notice, blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.

Verse 5, oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes. Now that language, if you were to keep reading Psalm 119, it would show up again and again and again.

I mean, next verse, verse 9, how can a young man keep his way pure? You could go on and on and on, ways and walking. This language is common and it just, is not just in this Psalm, it's all throughout the book of Psalms and not just in the book of Psalms, all throughout the Old Testament and not just in the Old Testament but all throughout the Bible.

And we use it too, you know. We talk about, you know, someone's way. Even language like, what's the way that you do things? Sometimes Christians talk about their Christian walk.

[ 24 : 27 ] What do you think that means? Is that a word you just throw out or have you ever thought what that means? Why do we use that language of walking down a pathway, a road, or a trail?

It's good to stop and get that image in your mind. Picture yourself walking down a pathway. Now, when you're walking down a pathway, you're doing it because you have a destination in mind.

This is a journey and it is a journey of many steps. I don't know about you but if I'm going to walk from my house to the store, I don't take one step and I'm there.

That would be nice but it doesn't happen very often. We're not immediately teleported to our destination. It is one foot in front of the other. Left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right.

That steady repetition over and over and over. The funny thing is shortly after we learn how to walk as a child, our steps become automatic and unconscious.

[ 25 : 37 ] If you had, you know, maybe, you know, I know people who have, like they've suffered some sort of brain injury or some sort of injuries in adult and they lose the ability to walk and they actually have to relearn as an adult how to walk and only when you're like relearning how to walk do you realize how when you don't know how to do it, it is not instinctive and intuitive.

It just feels like what the, whoa, you've got a hundred different muscles and you have to put everything in just the right place and get your balance just right and it feels, it's so hard to do. but I think most, for most of us, you could just stand up and just walk out the room without even thinking about it.

What was once hard, exhausting, wearying, is now just, you just do it. And not only can you do it, but you can sustain it gradually, left, right, left, right, left, right, and eventually you're going to arrive at your destination, at your goal.

Now, you can't, the thing about walking that a young child learns pretty quick is you can't just put your feet anywhere. Kids learn pretty quick.

Oh, if I'm going to walk towards Josh here, I can't just walk here and not pay attention to where my feet are going. That is a recipe for bashing my head open on the communion table.

[ 27 : 03 ] where you put your feet matters. If I'm going to walk to the doors there, there are certain pathways I can go down.

And there are some pathways that, I mean, I guess I could vault over the seats, but those aren't good pathways to take. Bad things happen when you take the wrong pathways. You've walked bad pathways before here in Squamish, haven't you?

You've been on some trails that are maybe not the best developed, not the best engineered trails. After a long, wet winter, they turn into giant pools of mud.

You've walked trails that have been really eroded by a lot of rain and by a lot of traffic. You've walked, maybe you've even walked trails that took you right next to a dangerous drop and you thought, ah, I'm not going to do that again.

Good thing I got through that okay. It might not have turned out okay. Maybe you've been on trails that have become blocked by fallen trees or there are dangerous animals around.

[ 28 : 13 ] Not every trail is a good trail. And worst of all is the person who decides they're deep into the woods and they're going to find their own trail. Ask Squamish search and rescue what they think about that.

I'm just way deep in the woods but I know better. I'm going to find my own trail. I know where I'm going. Yeah, yeah. I'm sure you do, buddy. You know where you're going in about five minutes you won't.

If you have the right destination in mind, you also need to look for a good pathway to get there. A pathway that will lead you right. A pathway that is reliable.

A pathway that is not damaged or disrupted. A pathway that is designed by a trustworthy hand. A pathway that is well worn by the feet of wise men and women who walk the same pathway before you.

You might call it a blameless pathway. Blessed are those whose way is blameless. The undamaged way, the way of God's wisdom, the way of God's law.

[ 29 : 19 ] And God says, that's where I want you to walk. That's where I want your feet to go. not to restrict you, not to shut you down and suppress you, but to keep you safe, to keep you strong, and to get you where you are meant to go, to get us back to him.

It is the pathway to our Father's house, and it is a good pathway. A pathway in which we learn how to keep in step with the Spirit of God, step by step, and in which we follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ who walked that pathway before us.

I don't know if many Christians think of their life as a pathway that we are meant to walk. I've encountered many people who have different ideas of the Christian faith. They think about it as, I just show up to church, I guess I do some spiritual stuff, and that makes me feel better about myself.

I learn some facts about God, that gives me a boost for life. Every once in a while I get this really cool mountaintop experience that's amazing, and I feel glorious, and I'm living for the next one. That's not the language of walking in a pathway. God saved us from more than that. God sent his son to die on the cross, not so that we can just do a bunch of good things and earn his favor by performing really well.

[ 30 : 52 ] That's something that you and I can never do. That's something only Jesus could do. Here's the thing. There's only one person who knew that pathway perfectly, walked it perfectly, and never strayed from it.

That's Jesus Christ. You and I, we go off trail far too often, over and over, and God needs to go in there, search and rescue, and bring us back. We wander off into foolishness and sin over and over and over.

Only Jesus walked that path perfectly. So we decide, you know what? I have to entrust myself to him. I'm going to stick with him.

If you are lost in the woods and someone comes to you and they're wiser and they know the pathway and they have walked it and they say, stick with me. You're with me.

You entrust yourself to that person. They can walk the path that you don't know how to walk. You believe in him so that you will not perish, so that you will not be shut out from the presence of God, but you can be forgiven of your sins and have eternal life.

[ 32 : 07 ] And now that you have new life, now that you're already accepted by God, now that he's, now that he has said, okay, your new destination is my home.

You belong with me. He has crafted you into a new creation and now he invites you to walk in the pathway that he has built. That's why in Ephesians 2 verse 10, 2 verse 10, it says, we are his

workmanship, we are his craftsmanship, created, made new, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

It's a pathway. God has saved you, made you new, connected you in union with Jesus Christ. you're with him and now God's put you on the pathway Jesus is on and he says, walk with him. Walk with him and you'll be doing what I called you to do. Now is that not the exact same thing we have read in Psalm 119? Now that we have believed in Christ Jesus, we follow him on the same pathway he walked and now our mindset, our heart, our instincts become the same as his. We look at the world, we see what he sees, we hear what he hears, we understand what he understands, we interpret the world the way that Jesus does.

[ 33 : 41 ] This is what it means in Psalm 119 verse 7 when the psalmist says, I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous rules. He is not talking, when he says about learning your righteous rules, you know, when I first, many, many years ago when I first read and memorized this verse, I thought that he's talking about, okay, when I first encounter something in the Bible and I learn it, I'm going to praise God.

And that's true. But he's talking about something deeper than that. It's not just reading through a list of rules and saying, okay, great, I read it, I've learned it, got it, moving on. I know of people who their mentality is, well, I read all the way through the Bible, why would I read it again?

Read it, done it, checked it off, I know the stuff. But he is talking about learning, not in the sense of just checking something off a list, understanding it cognitively, intellectually.

He's talking about learning in the sense of habit, repetition, experience, of walking step by step in these rules until they form new pathways in our minds, until we are reshaped by this process, not just of cognitively understanding the word, but experiencing it and living it out until it becomes natural to you.

That's learning. There's a difference between looking at a bike and watching someone ride and being like, okay, yeah, I can see how that works and I understand gyroscopic motion and all this stuff. Oh, but have you tried to ride a bike?

[ 35 : 22 ] Ride it for a little while and now you're learning. I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous rules. When I learn the rules of gyroscopic motion, now I'm enjoying riding the bike.

Let me give you an example. When I was a child, I learned the Ten Commandments. I even had a little someone, my Sunday school teacher taught me a little poem that helped me memorize the Ten Commandments and I still remember it to this day.

And the Ninth Commandment, which I remember is simply, you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Now, on its face, pretty straightforward. Don't bear false witness against your neighbor.

Don't tell lies about your neighbor in court. Okay. Most of us have, most of us can say, okay, checked, checked that off the list, know it, not doing it. All good. You know it's not that easy.

Right? And even then, I knew that that commandment meant something bigger. It meant that I shouldn't lie. I should adhere to the truth. Okay, great. So I thought, great, don't lie. Done.

[ 36 : 31 ] Done. I didn't get it. I hadn't really learned what it means to walk in a pathway of honesty.

honesty. The way of honesty is so much more than just, I'm not lying. How to be honest, how to actually tell the truth, how to know the truth, how to be honest with yourself and with other people and with God, when to be honest, with whom to be honest about what I'm thinking and feeling.

I had a pattern of avoiding and concealing the truth. I'm not lying, but I'm not being honest either.

How to be honest with myself about who I really am deep down and what I'm actually really wanting deep down even when it's not good. How to speak honestly with God about what these things.

In my experience, most Christians are not honest with God. We are not honest the way the Psalms are all honest. You want to see honestly, read the Psalms. People say some stuff that we're like, you're allowed to say that?

[ 37 : 54 ] I'm like, I hope so because that's where you're really at. You're telling God where you are really at. I had learned the ninth commandment in my head intellectually that the law of the Lord had not taken hold of my whole being.

It had not become my gut instinct at all. To the degree that it has, and I would say I've got a long way to go to really learn the way of honesty, but to the degree that it has, that has come by walking in it, practicing it, experiencing honesty with others, myself, with God, even when it is painful, even

when it feels like, ugh, I'd rather not.

I'd rather be anything but honest right now. No longer walking in my own comfortable pathways, but walking in the law of the Lord. This is personal.

It is intensely personal because these are God's pathways, God's law. That pathway of honesty is God's pathway. God's pathway. If we dismiss it, we are dismissing him.

And so it is with all of God's law. The world encourages us to avoid God, to dismiss him, to act like he's not there at all, like he's irrelevant.

[ 39 : 22 ] We know what happens in our personal relationships when we dismiss somebody who is deeply important to us. The worldly counterfeit of Psalm 119 verse 1 is, how happy are those who don't let anyone judge them for how they live?

How happy are those who find their own way, who chart their own paths? That is a mentality, let me be blunt, that is a mentality that holds the Lord in contempt.

It acts as though he is not even there. way. And this is an intensely personal decision. Whose way do you walk?

Do you walk your own way? Do you walk your parents' way, the way that you learned from them? And a lot of that can be really good, but sometimes the ways that we grew up in in our family are not God's ways.

do you walk in your culture's way, what seems acceptable to all the people around you and to kind of the general trend of our culture?

[ 40 : 37 ] Or do you walk in God's way? Whichever pathway you choose will determine the allegiance of your heart. It will determine how over time the instincts you develop about the world.

And it determines who you become. When we enter the mind of the psalmist, we see the kind of man that he wants to become. Now notice, he knows he hasn't arrived yet, by the way.

These are not the words of somebody who just got it all perfect. He says, verse 5, Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes.

That is who he longs to be, the kind of person who knows the right trail and is steadfast. He stays on it. He is faithful and consistent. His whole heart, his intellect, his instincts, it remains on course. Someone who wants to be with the God he loves, someone who wants to become like him. He wants the mindset of Jesus Christ. And so, he isn't irritated by verse 4 when he says, you have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.

[ 41 : 55 ] To stay on the trail, to be diligent in keeping God's precepts. That's not a guilt trip to this guy. That's not a get off my back God thing to him.

That's exactly what he wants for himself. I want to be diligent. You've commanded it. Your command is exactly what I'm wanting too. Perfect. perfect. The fact that God his Father would give him such a calling, such a noble calling, to diligently walk in his pathway, it stirs his heart. He is being summoned to something noble, to a pathway that is good for his soul, and he knows it. Whose way does he walk? He walks in the law of the Lord.

His eyes are focused and his eyes are fixed on God's commandments. And so we reach the final verse of this section, verse 8, and it summarizes this mindset of the psalmist.

It is a mindset of resolve, and it is a mindset of dependence. I will keep your statutes. Do not utterly forsake me. First is his resolve.

[ 43 : 05 ] I will keep your statutes. This isn't a boast. You know that by the next line. This isn't some sort of brag. Look how great I am at keeping your statutes. I'm going to do it.

No, no, no, no, no. This is a guy who says, I'm not going to shrink back. I'm not going to play the victim here. I'm not going to act powerless and helpless and, oh, I can't do this, I can't do this. He has no illusions. He says, I am making, no matter what I do, I am making a choice. I'm going to walk this way or I'm going to walk that way.

And my resolution, he says, is this, I will not walk in my own way. I will not walk in the world's way. I will not walk in Satan's way. Lord, I will keep your statutes. That is resolve. That is a backbone.

That's what he's talking about.

[ 44 : 04 ] how good it is to walk the Lord's pathway and to have a backbone. Don't we need that? Some of us struggle with that.

We struggle to kind of stay on the path. We just give in so easily. We quickly feel, we are quick to feel powerless and helpless and we don't have a backbone. And he says, but sometimes it's good just to enter the head of somebody who does and say, all right, what would the psalmist do?

If I were someone who loved and walked in the law of the Lord, what would that look like in this situation right now? What would it look like to have a backbone and then do that? But he also senses that he can't stay on the path himself.

He cannot walk in the law of the Lord unless the Lord is with him. he's like Moses. When Moses was faced with the prospect of entering the promised land, leading the people of Israel into the promised land without the Lord being with him, Moses was very clear.

He did not want that at all. He had no happiness and he had no confidence that the Lord was not with him. In Exodus chapter 33 he says, Moses says to the Lord, if your presence will not bring us up from here.

[ 45 : 34 ] He's saying, be with me or I can't go at all. It is not a boastful resolve that says I've got it within myself to do this all by myself.

It is not a resolve that says I can do this if only everybody else supports me. It is a resolve that says I need the Lord.

I can only do this if he is with me. And so the psalmist says to the Lord, do not utterly forsake me. Perhaps the Lord may discipline us.

His presence may seem distant. We may fall or be afflicted, confused, persecuted, struck down. But if he is with us, we are not utterly forsaken.

We will never be cast headlong, never crushed, never lost in despair, never forsaken, never destroyed. The psalmist's resolve is humble and dependent on God.

[ 46 : 40 ] He will not walk the pathway alone. And I've seen far too many churchgoers trying to walk in the law of the Lord and trying to do it alone. Trying to do all the right and proper things that Christians ought to do, but without the resolve to choose new habits and practices, to actually look at their lives and say, wait a minute, how is my life structured right now?

What habits and practices are present in my life? What would it look like for those to change so that I can be changed? For me to put myself in the place where the Holy Spirit will change me?

To be in the right place where God's Spirit is present and powerful? or without that humble independent mindset, without the help of other Christians in the church, without asking God that he would use these means to reshape their heart.

I'll tell you what, in my experience, walking alone is exhausting and I promise you, if you walk alone, you will wander off trail. You will withdraw from the very things that give you life, from church, from the Bible.

It's funny how that is, right? The more we withdraw, the more we want to withdraw. Kind of like a man who feels lonely so he just withdraws from his friends.

[ 48 : 02 ] A starving man who's afraid to eat because he might get indigestion. When we pull away from what's good, we tend to keep pulling away.

How important it is to stay on the right path. When you forget that walking in the law of the Lord, you know what, that is the only way to be happy in Jesus, to trust and obey.

I invite you to do this. When you feel lost, when you feel off path, when your heart is just not in it, when you feel distant from God and you know you're not walking right, open your Bible to Psalm 119, read verses 1-8, put yourself in the mind of someone who is wiser than you, who is more mature than you, and who knows the right way to walk.

See who God is, how good his words are, and how good it is to walk in them. Here's the mentality to try on. Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.

[ 49 : 26 ] You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes. then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous rules. I will keep your statutes. Do not utterly forsake me. Is that the mind and heart that you want?

If so, whose way do you intend to walk in? Let me pray. Our God, our Father, we recognize that we do not, we were not born naturally walking in your way.

We sense that our thoughts travel down roads they shouldn't. Our feelings don't line up with what's true. Our instincts seem all awry.

Something is terribly wrong. And if we don't feel that way, Lord, then if by your grace at some point you will bring into our lives things that will show us that this is indeed the case, that apart from you and apart from your word, we do not know the way to walk in.

[ 51 : 01 ] open our eyes to see Jesus Christ. He is the only one who can save us. He is the only one who is the pinnacle of wisdom, the sum total of all wisdom and all righteousness, all the right paths for our feet.

May we entrust ourselves to him, to be the man that we could never be. forgive us our sins, Lord God. Forgive our foolishness and teach us the right ways.

Let us not be put to shame. But draw us near to the glorious Christ. And as we draw near here in taking communion, Lord God, may our hearts be refreshed.

Amen.