



Psalm 119:169-176 “Give Me Understanding”

Intro:

Decisions, decisions, decisions. Even when we know the truth and have a solid understanding of Scripture, we still struggle to make them. Yet the decisions we make shape the direction of our lives. So the question becomes: as believers, how do we navigate those decisions? How do we know which path God wants us to take? After twenty-one sections praising and exalting the Word of God, the psalmist ends Psalm 119 by asking God to help him truly understand it and apply it to his life. This is a fitting conclusion because it reminds us that knowledge alone is not enough. We must not only hear the Word of God, but also live it and apply it to the decisions we face every day. As we study this final section, we observe how the psalmist seeks the discernment he needs. The Hebrew word used for “understanding” is “**bin**”, which means to discern, consider, distinguish, or perceive wisely. The psalmist is not merely asking for knowledge, but for the ability to rightly apply God’s Word to the decisions of life.

V.169-170

“Let my **cry** come before You, O Lord; **Give me understanding** according to Your word. Let my **supplication** come before You; *Deliver me according to Your word.*”

1. **Pray**

The words *cry* and *supplication* reveal that the psalmist is not merely wishing for discernment; he is praying for it. He recognizes that true understanding ultimately comes from God. The deliverance he asks for in verse 170 appears connected to the understanding he seeks in verse 169. In other words, he is asking God to guide him through his situation by giving him the wisdom to apply God’s Word correctly. When we pray for understanding, Scripture shows us a pattern. First, we humble ourselves and turn from sin, acknowledging our need for God’s wisdom (2 Chronicles 7:14; James 1:5). Second, we align our requests with His will, seeking what pleases Him rather than our own desires (1 John 5:14). Third, we persist in asking, trusting that God delights to give good gifts to His children (Luke 11:5–13). Discernment begins in prayerful dependence on God.

V.171-172

“**Let my lips utter praise**, *For You teach me Your statutes.* **Let my tongue sing of Your word**, *For all Your commandments are righteousness.*”

2. **Praise Him**

The psalmist responds to God’s instruction with praise. His lips and tongue proclaim the goodness and righteousness of God’s Word. Jesus taught that what comes out of the mouth flows from the heart (Matthew 12:34). As we intentionally praise God and speak of His goodness, our hearts are reminded of who He is. This posture strengthens our trust in Him. When difficult decisions arise, a heart filled with praise is far more ready to trust God’s character and follow His Word.

V.173-174

“**Let Your hand be ready to help me**, For I have chosen Your precepts. **I long for Your salvation**, O Lord, And Your law is my delight.”

3. **Wait on The Lord**

The psalmist asks for God’s help and expresses his longing for God’s salvation. At the same time, he says he has already chosen God’s precepts. This shows that he is not trying to force his own way forward; he is waiting on the Lord to act. When making decisions, waiting on God is crucial. Scripture promises that when we trust in the Lord and do not lean on our own understanding, He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5–6). As our minds are renewed by His Word, we learn to discern His will (Romans 12:2). Sometimes God’s guidance comes quickly; other times it requires patient waiting. But God is faithful to lead those who trust Him.

- “For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, Nor has the eye seen a God besides You, **Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him.**” Isaiah 64:4 NASB1995

V.175

“Let my soul live that it may praise You, And let Your ordinances help me.”

4. **Know Your Purpose**

If you don't know your purpose in this life then you won't have direction or basis for making decisions. Without a clear purpose, decisions become inconsistent and driven by emotion. The psalmist recognizes that the purpose of his life is to praise God and live according to His Word. As believers, our purpose is the same: to glorify God and reflect His character.

When facing difficult decisions, a helpful question to ask is: **How does this glorify God?** When our purpose is clear, our direction becomes clearer as well.

V.176

“I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments.”

5. **Know Your Condition**

The psalmist ends with a striking confession: he compares himself to a wandering sheep. God often uses sheep as a picture of His people because sheep are prone to wander and are completely in need of their Shepherd for survival. Even though the psalmist loves God's Word and knows it well, he acknowledges his weakness. He knows that he is a sheep that often wanders and needs his Shepherd to constantly bring him back to the sheepfold. Recognizing this reality leads him to depend fully on God's grace and guidance. For us as believers, this confession is both humbling and comforting. Though we are prone to wander, we belong to a faithful Shepherd, Jesus the **Good Shepherd** who seeks and saves His sheep (John 10:11). Even when we stray, He pursues us, restores us, and leads us back to the safety of His fold.

Conclusion and Main Idea:

Psalm 119 ends with the image of a sheep and a shepherd. After praising God's Word for 176 verses, the psalmist ultimately acknowledges his need for God's guidance and grace. He knows that true understanding does not come from human wisdom alone but from walking closely with the Shepherd who leads him. Jesus once told a parable about a shepherd who had one hundred sheep. When one wandered away, the shepherd left the ninety-nine and went searching for the one that was lost until he found it (Luke 15:4-7). That is the heart of our Savior. We may struggle with decisions, wander in weakness, or lack understanding, but our Good Shepherd does not abandon His sheep. He seeks us, restores us, and leads us through His Word. When we seek God through prayer, praise Him, wait on His guidance, remember our purpose, and remain aware of our weakness, we place ourselves in His Will and open to His direction.

Memory Verse:

“I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, For I do not forget Your commandments.”

Psalms 119:176 NASB1995

