

Psalm 119:33-40 “Keep my eyes from Worthless Things”

נ (He)

Intro:

In this portion of Psalm 119, the psalmist expresses his **dependence** on God’s instruction to live a life of obedience that results in **devotion** towards Him. Yet he confesses the lure of worldly **distractions** and the **deception** of seeking fulfillment apart from God. In this struggle, he models a faith anchored in God’s Word as the source of true contentment.

V.33-34 “Dependent on God”

“Teach me your decrees, O Lord; I will keep them to the end. Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions; I will put them into practice with all my heart.”

- Our dependency on God doesn’t end when we are born again and receive His forgiveness, in fact, it continues throughout the rest of our lives. We need His grace every day as His Holy Spirit continues to give us understanding – John 14:26 “But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.”
- By faith, the psalmist knows that through God’s work he will be able to keep His decrees to the end, as Paul said in Philippians 1:6 “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.”
- The phrase “with all my heart” speaks of integrity and not of infallibility. The Lord commanded us to love Him with all our heart, soul and strength (Dt. 6:5) and that is the desire of a true child of God.
- Our ability to obey God is directly proportional to our commitment to abide in His Word (John 15:3-6). We need to be like the man described in Psalm 1, who delights in the law of God and meditates in it day and night.

V.35 “Devoted to God”

“Make me walk along the path of your commands, for that is where my happiness is found.”

- Walking in God’s path simply means to behave in accordance with His word. Scripture illuminates the path for our feet to walk, guiding our way in this world – Psalm 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.”
- Jesus walked in God’s ways as a perfect example for us (Matthew 26:39; John 14:31; Philippians 2:8), He said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). There is a cost to walking in God’s ways, but also an eternal reward “If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it” (Luke 9:24)
- Obedience and love for God are closely linked: “But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him” (1 John 2:5)
- The word “happiness” in this verse comes from the Hebrew *ḥāpēš*, meaning delight, pleasure, or desire. Obedience to God’s commands is not merely evidence of our new nature but also the source of a deep and lasting joy—a joy that enables believers to worship and praise God in every circumstance, for in Him alone is true contentment found.

V.36-37 “Distracted by worthless things”

“Give me an eagerness for your laws rather than a love for money! Turn my eyes from worthless things and give me life through your word.”

- In 1 Timothy 6, Paul urges Timothy to run from evil things, and instead, to pursue godliness. In fact, “**love for money**” is described as the root of all kinds of evil.
- We often forget that we are foreigners in this land, and we get easily distracted with the fascinations that the world offers (money, fame, status, comfort, physical beauty, pleasure, entertainment, etc.). Our flesh is naturally attracted to these worldly things, and the problem is that our attention, time and energy are devoted to these things and not to God. (1 John 2:15-17)

- The psalmist cries out seeking God’s help to turn his eyes away from these things and to give him life through His word. Jesus said “The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life” – The only antidote to resist our desires for worldly things is the Word of God itself.
- Contentment is only possible in God and not in the things that the world has to offer – Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 “Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness! The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth—except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers!”
- That’s why Paul said to Timothy that godliness with contentment is great gain, and that we should be content if we have food and clothing, not riches! This is consistent with Jesus’ teachings in Mathew 6 which conclude: “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Mathew 6:31-33)

V.38-40 “Delivered from deception”

“Reassure me (your servant – H5650 “ebed”) of your promise made to those who fear you. Help me abandon my shameful ways; for your regulations are good. I long to obey your commandments! Renew my life with your goodness (righteousness – H6666 “š^odāqâ”).”

- If we get distracted by worldly things, we’ll stop having communion with God; this is a slippery slope which inevitably leads to sin. The situation can get worse if we don’t break this vicious cycle because we get used to living in disobedience which can result in a shameful lifestyle.
- Hebrews 3:12-15 warns us “Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. Remember what it says: “Today when you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled”.”
- We know that God’s regulations are good and beautiful and desirable, but the battle with our flesh is real, we long to obey God, yet we often fall short. This is to be expected, however, fighting in prayer and in devotion to His word is expected as well. In fact, we have been enabled though the Holy Spirit to repent (180° turn) and to live according to the Spirit and not to the flesh.
- In his final thoughts, the psalmist asks God to reassure him of His promise to those who fear the Lord. There are countless promises in Scripture but given the context it is very likely that he was thinking about the covenantal promises where God promises blessings to those who obey. – Deuteronomy 5:29 “Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!”
- We know as much as the psalmist did, that we can’t earn our salvation through works, and that we even depend on God’s provision to be able to obey. Here’s where the amazing reality of God’s revelation through scripture takes form, we need to depend on Him and ask for his help and once enabled, we need to walk in obedience.

Main idea:

Those who humbly depend on God’s guidance are strengthened to obey Him and discover lasting contentment in His will. Even when the world distracts or deception ensnares, His righteousness sustains and delivers all who trust in His Word.

Memory Verse:

“Turn my eyes from worthless things and give me life through your word.” Psalm 119:37

