

Week #17



Psalm 119:129-136

"Sin Wants to Be the Boss of You"

Psalm 119:129-136

129 Your testimonies are wonderful;
Therefore my soul keeps them.

- As you read the Word of God, are you sometimes just struck with how wonderful it is?
- How many Bibles do you have in your house?
- Do you know anyone who needs a Bible?

The following is taken from Inside the Revolution, by Joel Rosenburg:

"In my third novel, The Ezekiel Option, I tell the story of two Christians driving through the mountains of Iran with a car full of Bibles. Suddenly, their steering wheel jammed and they had to slam on the brakes to keep from driving off the side of the road. When they looked up they saw an old man knocking on their windows and asking if they had the books.

"What books?" they asked.

"The books about Jesus," the old man replied. He went on to explain that an angel recently came to him in a vision and told him about Jesus. Later he found out that everyone in his mountain village had had the same vision. They were all brand-new followers of Jesus, but they did not know what to do next. Then the old man had a dream in which Jesus told him to go down the mountain and wait by the road for someone to bring books that would explain how to be a Christian. He obeyed, and suddenly two men with a car full of Bibles had come to a stop right in front of him."

Joel goes on to say:

"This was one of my favorite passages in The Ezekiel Option, but it's not fiction. I didn't make it up. It's true. I got it directly from a dear friend of mine who is the head of a ministry in the Middle East. He personally knows the men involved. I simply asked if I could change their names for use in the novel, and my friend agreed."

People are hungry for the Word of God. Could you give away one or two of your extra Bibles?

130 The entrance of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple.

- Can you think of any creative ways to get the light of the Word of God into a dark place?

Just take a few minutes and think. How could I give someone the Word of God?

- ☐ Crochet a verse and give it as a present?
- ☐ Go to a nursing home, visit people and offer them a Bible?
- ☐ Start a Bible study somewhere...anywhere...and offer free Bibles the first week?
- ☐ Give away Bibles door-to-door in an apartment community?
- ☐ Set up a booth in a county fair or city event and give away Bibles along with a bottle of water?
- ☐ Etc.....I'll bet you could think of 100 ways!

- If a person is not very intelligent, or even if a person is retarded, can the Word of God still bring understanding into his/her life?

The answer is yes. I know your approach might have to be different with each unique person, but the scripture speaks to the heart, not just the mind – so retarded people can definitely know Jesus and grow in their faith.

131 I opened my mouth and panted,
For I longed for Your commandments.

- People seem to long for the Word of God more when Christians are being persecuted than at any other time...why is that?

Again, from “Inside the Revolution”, by Joel Rosenberg:

“In Sudan...one of the biggest stories in modern Christendom is unfolding – a spiritual awakening of almost unimaginable proportions amid civil war, radical Islam, rampant persecution, and outright genocide. Some three hundred thousand Sudanese have been killed in recent years in Darfur alone. More than 2.5 million Sudanese have been displaced by all the fighting. Yet the God of the Bible is moving powerfully there to draw these dear people into his family.

In Epicenter (a previous Joel Rosenberg book), I reported that one million Sudanese had turned to Christ just since the year 2000 – not in spite of persecution, war and genocide, but **because** of them. “People see what radical Islam is like,” one Sudanese Christian leader told me, “and they want Jesus instead.”

Since the book’s release in the fall of 2006, more than a quarter of a million additional Sudanese have given their lives to Christ bringing the estimated total number of believers in the country to more than 5.5 million. The crying need now is for more trained pastors, Bible teachers, disciple makers, and humanitarian relief workers.”

Also...

“Without a doubt, the hunger for Christ inside Iraq is also at an all-time high, say the numerous Iraqi pastors and ministry leaders I interviewed. Several million Arabic New Testaments and Christian books have been shipped into Iraq since the liberation. Millions more are being printed inside the country, and pastors say they cannot keep up with the demand. What’s more, Iraqis today are turning to Christ in numbers unimaginable at any point during Saddam Hussein’s reign of terror.” Inside the Revolution – Joel Rosenberg.

This Joel Rosenberg book is riveting!!! You have to read it.

132 Look upon me and be merciful to me,
As Your custom *is* toward those who love Your name.

- Why would the Psalmist need mercy when God looked at him?

Because he was a sinner. He had broken the laws of God.

133 Direct my steps by Your word,
And let no iniquity have dominion over me.

Now we come to the verse I'd like to take as our major theme for this octuplet. The Psalmist is pleading with the Lord to help him do the right thing...to direct his steps in accordance with the Word of God. And he is asking, too, that sin will not be the boss of him.

When our kids were young, we would sometimes leave them home alone together, with our oldest, Steve, in charge. It didn't always work very well, because somehow we ended up with 5 children who didn't like anyone to be in charge of them!!!! I can remember Chad quite often telling Steve "You aren't the boss of me!"

Well – sin likes to be the boss of us. And, wow!, sin can sure find ways to be in charge!

- What do you know about sin?

Let's do a little Bible study on I Samuel Chapter 15 to learn a few things about sin:

Background: Saul, the new King of Israel, is given an assignment from the Lord: Go attack the Amalekites.

I Samuel 15

1. :1-3 Why did God send Saul to attack the Amalekites? (Exodus 17:8-15).

Why would God punish people who were descendents of those who had committed the original crime?

What does that tell us about sin? (also see Ex. 34:7)

2. :4-6 Saul showed mercy to the Kenites by warning them to leave the area. Do you see any reason he should not have done this?

3. :7-9 Compare Saul's actions to God's instructions

What does that tell us about sin? (Also see Hebrews 11:25)

4. :10-11 What was God's response to Saul's action? What was Samuel's response to God's reaction?

What does that tell us about sin? (also Numbers 32:23)

5. :12-15 What was Saul's next sin?

What does that tell us about sin? (also Proverbs 5:22, John 8:34)

6. :16-22 "To _____ is better than sacrifice."

What was happening to Saul's life? (see Romans 1:29-32)

7. :23 Why was the Kingship taken away from Saul?

8. :24-35 Why did Samuel have to do what he did?

What does that tell us about sin?

So...what have we learned from I Samuel 15 about sin?

- ✓ The awful results of sin often extend to future generations (Adam & Eve, Exodus 17:8-15, Exodus 34:5-7)
- ✓ Sin does have pleasure..at least for a while. (Hebrews 11:25)
- ✓ Sin never stays hidden (Numbers 32:23)
- ✓ Sin enslaves (Proverbs 5:22, John 8:34)
- ✓ Sin often has results that stay for life (I Samuel 15:24-29)
- ✓ Sin makes us blind to sin (II Samuel 12:5-6)
- ✓ Other people suffer because of sin (David's sin with Bathsheba)

- So...with all those horrible results...why is sin so attractive to us?

It's attractive because sin tells us a lie. The lie is that we will be happy when we sin. The lie is that we are cheated when we aren't allowed to sin. The lie is that we know better than God how to have a full and happy life.

We see the results of sin...but we still want to sin...because we don't really think it will happen to us.

- What kind of hold can sin have on us?

Sin is addictive. It wants to be the boss of us.

- How do we ever break an addiction to sin?

It's hard. But it can be done. But don't take shortcuts:

1. **Confess.** Openly admit to God that you have chosen to do something against His ways.
2. **Ask for forgiveness from God.**
3. **Ask for forgiveness** from anyone you have harmed.
4. **Do an about-face.** Go the other direction from sin. Take steps to make sure you are not easily tempted.
5. **Pray.** Ask God to change you and give you the "want-to" to do the right thing the next time you are tempted to do the wrong thing.

134 Redeem me from the oppression of man,
That I may keep Your precepts.

- Why do men like to oppress other men?

Sin. Men like to be the boss of other men so they can get what they want.

135 Make Your face shine upon Your servant,
And teach me Your statutes.

- In eternity, will we need the sun? Revelation 21:23-27

Nope. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb will be our light. We won't need candles, or the moon, either.

There will be no dark corners where sin can hide and wait to pounce on us. All will be open. And light. And peace. And freedom from sin. Forever.


136 Rivers of water run down from my eyes,
Because *men* do not keep Your law.

- Does sin make you sad...or mad?

Probably both, right? But here, the Psalmist is showing us the depths of his heart. He weeps for the sinners who do not know and keep the law of God. Why? He grieves for them because they are the prisoners of sin. He has experienced the addiction of sin himself, and he hurts for those who are caught in it.

If I am sad for someone held tight by sin, what do I do? Weep. Pray. Give them hope from God's Word. Romans 8:1,2

Your Assignment for next week:

- Read  "Tzaddi"— Psalm 119: 137-144
(about one verse per day)
- Answer the following questions as you read through these verses
 - Memorize Psalm 119:136
" *My zeal hath consumed me
because mine enemies have forgotten your law.* "

Psalm 119:137-144

137 Righteous *are* You, O LORD,
And upright *are* Your judgments.

- If the judgments of any judge in our court system would be not "just", what would happen? Deut 25:1
- How would you define "justice"?

138 Your testimonies, *which* You have commanded,
Are righteous and very faithful.

- What happens when someone is unfaithful in a relationship?
- What is "faithfulness"?
- How do I decide what's righteous and what isn't?
- What are some of the commandments of God? How much do you value them?

139 My zeal has consumed me,
Because my enemies have forgotten Your words.

- How can we understand God?
- What is our reliable source for information about God?

140 Your word *is* very pure;
Therefore Your servant loves it.

- What can you think of which is very pure?
- What is so great about purity?
- Why would something pure be loveable?

141 I *am* small and despised,
Yet I do not forget Your precepts.

- Is our righteous God too big for the smallest ones?
- How would you describe God's love?

142 Your righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness,
And Your law *is* truth.

- What does "true" mean?
- How do we know what is true?
- Is there such a thing as absolute truth?

143 Trouble and anguish have overtaken me,
Yet Your commandments *are* my delights.

- How do most of us react to "commandments"?

144 The righteousness of Your testimonies *is* everlasting;
Give me understanding, and I shall live.

- How long is “everlasting”?
- Do you have righteousness?
- God’s righteousness is everlasting. Is ours?