

Foundations Devotional

• FOR THE WEEK OF DEC 6 - DEC 12 •

MONDAY // PSALMS 119:129-176; 139

The remainder of Psalm 119 continues the theme of delighting in God's Word. Today's reading reminds us that while God's principles are a joy to obey, many people do not follow them. This truth should be a source of sorrow for us as it was for the psalmist, and it should compel us to live on mission for the gospel. Verses 153-159 teach that the way God's people show their love for Him is through obedience to His Word, which challenges us to oppose sin and pursue Christlikeness. Among the promises God makes to His people is the promise that He will help us as we strive to live, study, and obey His Word (119:169-176). This is encouraging no matter where we are in our spiritual journey. The psalm ends with a reminder that the goal of delighting in God's Word is obedience while we wait for our promised eternal life with God to become reality.

TUESDAY // PSALMS 148-150

The Book of Psalms includes 150 individual psalms with themes that range from praise to lament and from thanksgiving to songs of ascent (specific psalms used during times of Israelite feasts and religious pilgrimages). Regardless of their original purpose or their tone, all of the psalms are hymns of worship to God. The book ends with three psalms of praise. Psalm 148 praises God for His glory, made evident through His creation. The final verse of that psalm references a "horn" God raised up for His people, which is a reference to the honor God bestows on His people through His redemptive grace. While God did this time and again for His people in the Old Testament, the final and perfect act came when He sent His Son to be our Redeemer. In Psalm 149, the focus remains on praising God, but the emphasis shifts to His acts on behalf of His people—the ultimate one being salvation, both physical and spiritual—and the appropriate way we should respond to Him. Psalm 150 closes the book with shouts of praise and the call for everything that has breath to praise the Lord. These psalms are a great reminder to us that, regardless of our present circumstances, God is always worthy of our praise, and that is the very act for which we were created.

WEDNESDAY // 1 KINGS 2

The Book of 1 Kings picks up where 2 Samuel left off with the transition from David's kingship to that of his son Solomon. Solomon's rise to power wasn't without controversy—Adonijah, his older brother, saw himself as the rightful heir to the throne, and Solomon killed him in order to maintain peace and establish his authority as king. After David made Solomon king, and as David was about to die, he gave Solomon some parting wisdom. David told Solomon to make obedience to God his priority so that God would continue to be faithful to His covenant promises. Solomon's predecessors—Saul and David—had learned the hard way the importance of obedience to their covenant with God. Both men had made mistakes that Solomon could learn from, but as his story unfolds, it becomes evident that Solomon too was a broken human leader unable to faithfully uphold his covenant with God. Thankfully, as God's children today, we are recipients of God's covenant of grace, which means our relationship with God is based on Jesus' perfect obedience rather than our own efforts.

THURSDAY // 1 KINGS 3; 6

With the kingship secured, Solomon turned his attention to ruling Israel. Early on, God appeared to Solomon in a dream and gave him the opportunity to ask for anything. Solomon knew that the responsibility he had as God's anointed king would require great wisdom, so that is what he asked for. God granted his request and gave him riches and honor as well. The story in 1 Kings 3:16-28 shows God was faithful to give Solomon the wisdom he asked for. During David's time as king, he had asked God to let him build a temple for Him, but God told him that was not part of His plan for David's rule; instead, that became Solomon's primary task as God's anointed leader. In the midst of Solomon's great success and grand projects, God gave guidance on how to genuinely honor Him. The key to honoring the Lord does not lie primarily in outward expressions of devotion, but in learning and obeying His commands. The temple could crumble (and eventually did), but unselfish dedication and service to God bear fruits that last for eternity.

FRIDAY // 1 KINGS 8; 9:1-9

With the temple and Solomon's own palace complete, Solomon assembled the elders of Israel at Jerusalem. The priests and Levites brought the ark of the Lord and the sacred furnishings from the tabernacle and placed them in the temple. After the Lord's glory in the form of a cloud filled the temple, Solomon offered a prayer of dedication, thanking God for keeping His promise to David, asking God to fulfill the remaining promises He had made to David (2 Sam. 7:5-16), and asking God to hear and answer the Israelites when they prayed in times of need. Then God spoke to Solomon and emphasized the importance of obedience for Israel's continued blessing. The call to obedience surfaces time and again in Scripture, which points to its significance as one of the most important disciplines a follower of God can develop. As Christians today, obedience to God does not earn us salvation—that has been freely given to us through Jesus. Instead, obedience is our loving response to God for who He is and all He has done for us. It's also the primary way we display our devotion to God to a watching world.

WEEKEND // FINISH UP ANY YOU DIDN'T DO