

Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your word.

Ps. 119: 17

As you settle into this time alone with the Lord, take a minute to acknowledge the state of your soul.

- Is your soul noisy? If so, name the noise that's swirling around.
- Is your soul quieted and at peace? Give voice to the source of this and express your gratitude.
- Is your soul withering? Name that for which it is thirsting.
- Is your soul in retreat and hiding? Recount the threats (perceived and real) you face which contribute to this.

Sit quiet before your God, who loves you, and become aware of the ways you need HIM today – more than anything else. Invite His Spirit in, to do the work HE knows you most need. Ask him to give you ears to hear his voice and an open heart to receive whatever it is he chooses to give you today – encouragement, correction, strengthening, rebuke, refreshment, instruction, etc. Try opening your hands as you pray, as a physical demonstration of your inner submission to His work in your life.

When you are ready, read through these verses from **Psalm 119:25-32**:

25 *My soul clings to the dust;
 give me life according to your word!*
26 *When I told of my ways, you answered me;
 teach me your statutes!*
27 *Make me understand the way of your precepts,
 and I will meditate on your wondrous works.*
28 *My soul melts away for sorrow;
 strengthen me according to your word!*
29 *Put false ways far from me
 and graciously teach me your law!*
30 *I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
 I set your rules before me.*
31 *I cling to your testimonies, O LORD;
 let me not be put to shame!*
32 *I will run in the way of your commandments
 when you enlarge my heart!*

Now work through these verses again, making these words your own prayer.

25 *My soul clings to the dust;
 give me life according to your word!*

- Is your soul, too, “clinging to the dust”? If so, in what ways? For what reasons?
- Have you been seeking life according to something else – your own wisdom; the

wisdom of this world; your ability to “make life work”; the amount of peace in your home? Speak your desire to God to receive the life he intends to give, through his word.

26 *When I told of my ways, you answered me;
teach me your statutes!*

27 *Make me understand the way of your precepts,
and I will meditate on your wondrous works.*

- Spend some time in confession to the Lord. Where have you become aware of sin in your life? Tell God of your ways.

- Think over the commandments we’ve covered so far:

I am the LORD your God.

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself a carved image.

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not murder.

Where have you taken the commands of the Lord lightly? Where are you struggling to truly obey? Where are you not at peace with these commands?

Confess these things to your Father, who already knows. Confess, too, your desire for the Lord to “teach me your statutes”. (Identify work that may need to be done beyond today to get the place of being able to say this honestly.)

- Now spend some time meditating on the Lord’s “wondrous works” to you specifically. Where have you seen evidence of his hand at work in your life? In your family’s life? The world around you? In nature? In history?

28 *My soul melts away for sorrow;
strengthen me according to your word!*

- Where are you grieving? Unpack the grief. Where does the sting of loss reside – loss of relationship? Loss of reputation? Loss of provision? Security? Loss of capacity? Independence? Is something else, besides sorrow, causing your soul to melt away? Name these things before God.
- How are you needing God’s strengthening today? Can you think of other scriptures that speak of the truths you’re needing encouragement in? (Note – if you can’t think of other scriptures, this is a good thing to ask your small group to help you with.)

29 *Put false ways far from me
 and graciously teach me your law!*
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- Consider how you are living – the patterns and rhythms of your life right now. What conscious decisions are you making to “put false ways far from” you? Your family?
- How are you choosing “the way of faithfulness” and setting God’s rules before you? How are you clinging to the Lord’s testimonies, and running in the way of his commandments?
- Consider that last phase, which is the condition that allows the Psalmist to live faithfully - “when you enlarge my heart”. How is this true of you, too? Where do you sense the *smallness* of your heart - for God’s commands? For God, himself? For others?
- As you bring your time with the Lord to a close, ask him to be enlarging you heart in all the ways that he sees it’s needed.

Before returning to your small group . . .

Are there any concrete actions, or next steps, that became clear you need to take, as you re-enter life? If so, spend a few minutes committing to these before the Lord and inviting his help to follow through.

Consider where you need God’s on-going work in your life that was perhaps revealed from your time alone with him today. How can you ask others to pray for you about this?

Return to the Garden Room at 10:40 am.