

# THE LAW OF THE LORD IS PERFECT

Psalm 19:1-14

Key Verse: 7

**“The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.”**

Tomorrow begins a new year, 2018. Do you have a new year’s resolution? Statistics say it will fail within two weeks. Why? Because we depend on ourselves, and we are weak and stupid. We need the Lord, his word and his Spirit if we are to really change and make godly progress. Today let’s listen and learn from Psalm 19, a beautiful song of meditation and prayer by David. David’s words and meditation were focused on God and his word, which led him to humble, repentant prayer to the Lord, his Rock and Redeemer. May we learn to speak and meditate likewise, by the help of the Holy Spirit. May God lead us each to his word in the Bible that will help us to grow in our faith, hope and love in him in 2018.

This psalm has three movements: David’s praise of the Creator, David’s delight in God’s law, and David’s humble prayer.

## **First: Praise the Creator God (1-6).**

**“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”**

In these opening words, David personifies the heavens and the skies, saying that they “**declare**” and “**proclaim**” the glory of God and the work of his hands. He says they pour forth speech day after day, and they reveal knowledge night after night. Then, paradoxically, he admits that they have no speech and they use no words. No sound is heard from them. And yet, their voice and words continue to go out into all the world.

What does this mean? David saw the living God in his creation. David heard God speak through what God has made. Apostle Paul wrote similar words in Romans 1:20, “**For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.**” In other words, God’s existence is self-evident through the wonders of creation. I know someone who grew up as an atheist but who testifies that when he saw a mountain range he knew that there must be a God. Yet, there are people who do not see or hear God. They see the world and their life as a random chance

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happening. To them, God is silent and so is creation. The psalmist heard the creation shouting praises to God. He gives the example of the sun in verses 4b-6,

**“In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.”**

Here David personifies the sun as a bridegroom and a champion marathon runner. A bridegroom, on his wedding day, is eager to wake up to meet his bride. A champion runner rejoices at the sight of the finish line even as he starts the race. The sun moves through a cloudless sky giving light and warmth to all beneath its path. From our perspective on earth, the sun is the most powerful and brilliant object in the sky. It is too bright to look at directly. We need find shade from its heat on a hot day. In ancient times, people even worshiped the sun. But the Bible declares that God created the heavens and the earth, including the sun. God is more powerful than the sun, and God’s days far outnumber the days of the sun. David stood in awe of the Creator God. It is easy for us to forget God our Creator. Maybe we are too busy worrying or working or seeking fun. Maybe we are too caught up in technology or gadgets to take notice of God—to hear his voice. Maybe we are more concerned or bothered with something someone said, and it drowns out the voice of God, so that we do not hear. Jesus said, **“Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”** Are we listening? Do we hear the creation crying out praises to God? Are we praising him?

**Second: The Wonders of God’s Word (7-9).** In verses 1-6, David spoke of the general revelation that all people can know the existence of God through observing created things. In verses 7-9, he speaks of special revelation, the revelation of God through his word:

**“The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.”**

Notice that David shifted from using the word **“God”** to using the name **“the LORD.”** The LORD is God the Creator, who made all things. This almighty, infinite Creator God revealed himself in the Holy Bible, which we call the word of God. The LORD revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush account as **“I Am Who I Am,”** that is, the LORD. The Hebrew word transliterated into English is

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YHWH. We don't know how to say it, but it is the personal, covenant name of God.

The LORD God made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites, the Jews. The LORD God gave detailed words to Moses to write down and give to the Jews. These written words make up the Hebrew Scriptures, which Christians call The Old Testament. In David's time, the Old Testament was not complete. He had no prophet books, and he was writing most of the psalms, by God's inspiration, including Psalm 19. What David had was the Torah, that is, the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These five books constituted the law of the LORD.

In Psalm 19, verses 7-9, David delights in meditating on God's law. He uses six words to describe it: the law of the LORD, the statutes of the LORD, the precepts of the LORD, the commands of the LORD, the fear of the LORD, and the decrees of the LORD. The ESV Study Bible explains these words in the introduction to the very long psalm 119, which uses 8 different words for God's word. Law or Torah refers to instruction. Statutes are what the divine Lawgiver has laid down. Precepts are what God has appointed to be done. Commands are simply what God has commanded. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. The decrees or rules of the LORD are what the divine Judge has ruled to be right. These words are from God and therefore share God's characteristics. The words of God are, as God is, perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant, pure, firm and righteous.

Many people think their own ideas or opinions are just as valid as the Bible. They think they are just as right as God's word. One time, Peter thought this. He didn't like the idea of Jesus suffering and dying. So, after hearing Jesus predict his upcoming suffering, Peter corrected Jesus saying, **“Never Lord! This shall never happen to you!”** But Jesus rebuked Peter saying, **“Get behind me Satan! You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns”** (Mt 16:22-23).

Though we should strive to be, we cannot say that we are perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant, pure, firm and righteous. Only God and his word can be described in this way. As David pondered the character of God and his word, he was moved with delight. He realized all the blessings that come from God and his word. He wrote the perfect law of the LORD **“refreshes the soul.”** The LORD's trustworthy statutes **“make the simple wise.”** The right precepts of the LORD **“give joy to the heart.”** The LORD's radiant commands **“give light to the eyes.”** The pure fear of the LORD **“endures forever.”** The firm decrees of the LORD, are all righteous. Everyone in their deep heart and soul wants a refreshed soul,

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wisdom, a joyful heart, light for our eyes, something that endures forever. Where can we get these things? We can get them when we love God and his word.

David testifies about God's word in verse 10: **"They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb."**

Can we say, like David, that the word of God is more precious than anything we own or that we could own, like a diamond necklace (for the ladies) or like a fancy sports car (for the gentlemen)? Do you desire anything more than the word of God? How about sweeter than honey? Do we taste and see that the LORD is good, along with his word? Are we experiencing deep delight in God, like David expresses here? If so, the Holy Spirit is working mightily in us. If not, we need to do some repenting and praying.

How has the word of God helped and guided you in this last year, or even this past week? This past week I was grateful to share some morning reflections from God's word with some family members. It helped me to realize how prone people are to follow their own ideas and common sense rather than God's word. So I realized again the importance of meditating on and pondering the word of God, rather than getting caught up in my own worries, ideas and human talk. If we find ourselves confused, go back to God's word. If we notice that others are downcast, we can prayerfully urge them to read and pray over God's word.

In verse 11, David declares two personal benefits of God's word: warnings and rewards: **"By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward."** God's word keeps us from trouble and disaster. At the same time, God's word leads us to rewards and blessings. Lord, help us to delight in your word, which is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Ps 119:105).

**Third: A Humble Prayer (12-14).** David concludes the psalm with a humble meditation in verses 12-14:

**"But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer."**

As David delighted in God and his word, he was also quite aware of his own errors and faults. He realized he could not keep himself from sin. So he prayed, **"Forgive my hidden faults."** We can hide our sins from people. But no one can hide their sins from God, who sees and knows all. The way to forgiveness is to

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confess our sins to God. 1 John 1:9 says, **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”**

David also prayed, **“Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression.”** Willful sins come from a defiant, rebellious spirit. May God give us a humble spirit to pray. May he keep us from defiance and rebellion against him, so we can earnestly seek him with a repentant mind and heart by the help of the Holy Spirit.

David closes this psalm with a beautiful prayer in verse 14: **“May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.”** How about the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts? Are they directed to God, for his glory? Who was the LORD to David? The LORD was his Rock and Redeemer. The LORD God was his source of strength and confidence, his shield and refuge in storms. The LORD God was his protection in times of attack. The LORD God was also his Deliverer and Savior and Rescuer.

Can we say like David that the LORD is my Rock and Redeemer? The LORD buys me back even when I feel worthless. The LORD helps me when I feel helpless. How do I know this? In what is my confidence? Not in my own goodness, but rather...

My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand. All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.

David's delight was in God our Creator and the LORD our Rock and Redeemer. He meditated on the word of God. For Christians, we have both the Old and New Testaments to read and study and meditate on. We have the supreme example and promises of Jesus Christ to follow and cling to.

What words of God have sustained and guided you? I'd like to share some verses that have helped, guided and sustained me over the years. One of them is Psalm 1:2, which is similar to this psalm: **“But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.”** This verse helped me to read the Bible more consistently.

Another verse is John 15:5 about remaining in Jesus: Jesus said, **“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear**

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**much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”** This helped me to remember Jesus as the reason for my ministry and life activities. Acts 6:4 helped me with a proper focus in concise words: **“...and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”**

Last year my key verse was 2 Peter 3:18, **“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.”** I chose this verse as my prayer to grow in Jesus. The year before that I noticed that I had been getting angry a lot. So I chose James 1:19-20, **“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”**

I shared five verses that helped me in years past. If you haven't chosen a Bible verse for the new year yet, it could help to prayerfully review the past year. Especially consider, where you struggled and needed help the most? This could help you to see where you need to grow and make spiritual progress. If you don't know yourself very well, ask someone you know and trust for a graceful suggestion. If you know the topic but not a verse, search at [Biblegateway.com](http://Biblegateway.com) or ask a mature Christian to recommend a related Bible verse.

May the LORD and his word be our delight and meditation in this new year. May the Lord, our Rock and Redeemer, guide us by his word, by his grace, and by his Holy Spirit. May the word of God refresh our souls, make us wise, give joy to our hearts and enlighten our eyes. May our words and meditations please the LORD, our Rock and Redeemer.