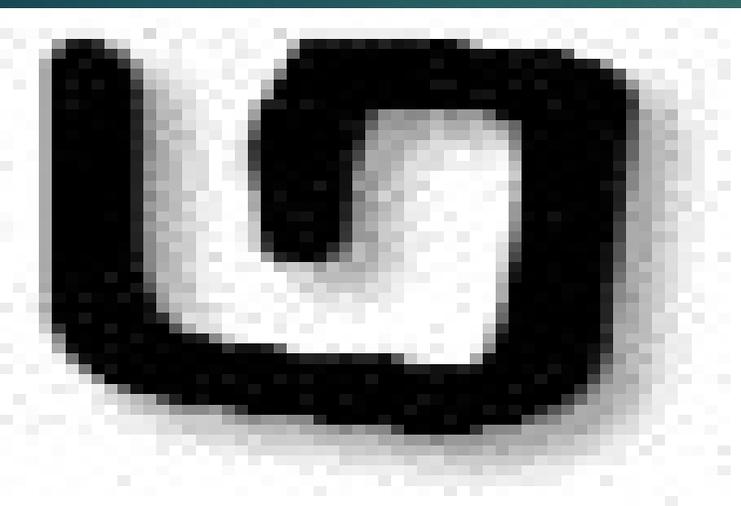
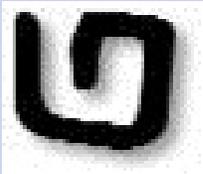


BETH

Psalm 119:9-16



Letter Name	Early Hebrew	Middle Hebrew	Late Hebrew	Modern Hebrew
BETH				

Pictograph:

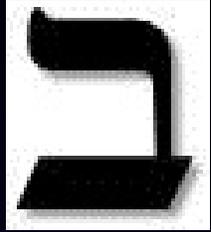
Meanings:

Sound:

Floorplan of a Tent

Family, House

B, Bh (v)



Beth

THEME: “Resolve to Obey God’s Word”
Psalm 119:9-16

- 9 How can a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed according to Your word.
- 10 With my whole heart I have sought You;
Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!
- 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You
- 12 Blessed are You, O LORD!
Teach me Your statutes.

- 13 With my lips I have declared
All the judgments of Your mouth.
- 14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies,
As much as in all riches.
- 15 I will meditate on Your precepts,
And contemplate Your ways.
- 16 I will delight myself in Your statutes;
I will not forget Your word.

Compare and Contrast the Files

Throughout the psalm, each of the eight-line alphabetic divisions is self-contained. At the same time, progression, similarity, and contrast are often apparent.

The Aleph verses (1-8) and the Beth verses (9-16) are closely related. Spiritual progress is evident.

Compare and Contrast the Files

In the Aleph file, the condition of the blessed and obedient man is *impersonally* contemplated; in the Beth file, the condition of the blessed and obedient man is *personally* experienced.

Compare and Contrast the Files

In verse 1 the author speaks of *those* who obey the word, **Blessed are the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD!**

But in verse 10 he changes to the first person personal pronoun *I*. **With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!**

What he considered in theory, he now experiences himself.

Compare and Contrast the Files

In the Aleph file, there is a *promise* to proclaim the Lord's name (119:7); I will praise You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments.

in the Beth file, there is a *practice* of proclaiming the Lord's name (119:13) With my lips I have declared All the judgments of Your mouth.

Compare and Contrast the Files

Progression of thought is seen: His desire to begin learning advances to a desire to continue learning

The focus of the Beth file is on keeping pure throughout your entire lifetime. This is only possible by means of dedication to focus on God's Word and to do God's Word.

Psa 119:9 **How** can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

How is a compound word in Hebrew made up of an interrogative meaning “what” and a preposition meaning “by.” In combination they mean “by what means.” The focus is on the Word of God as the means to a lifestyle that is clean and pure.

Young man: Can we determine anything about the age of a “young man”?

This same Hebrew word was used of Moses at 3 months (Exodus 2:6 translated “baby”). It is also used of Joseph at age 17 (Genesis 37:2 translated “youth”).

Age is a relative matter, but it would appear that the writer was an adult. We can see this as we see his experiences as he relates them in this psalm.

While the psalm focuses on a young man, this is not to be taken exclusively, as though the Word of God were not adequate for older men, younger women, or older women.

cleanse -- *to be clean or to make clean.* זָכָה
(*zakah*), be (morally) clean, be pure; cleanse;
acquit.

- to be blameless: *to be or become pure, without blame, or free of guilt.* Ps 51:6; Job 25:4
- to acquit: *to pronounce not guilty of criminal charges.* Mic 6:11
- to keep pure: *to keep free from immorality or sin.* Ps 73:13; 119:9; Pr 20:9

cleanse

If a your way is clean, the Word of God can keep it that way; if it is not clean, the Word of God can make it clean.

While sexual purity is included, it is not the primary meaning of this word.

cleanse

- In Psalm 73:13 the word *cleansed* is used in a general sense to describe one's walk with God.
- In Proverbs 20:9 the word is used in a context of honesty in business.

The word in Psalm 119:9 is an intensive stem—God's Word can keep one “sparkling clean.”

Way ('orach) may refer to anything from a highway to a crooked road. It is used figuratively of one's lifestyle. "His way" is idiomatic for all the activities of life, and so the need for purity would be applicable in many ways, in many areas, including thinking, speaking, and acting.

Our lifestyle needs to be cleansed.

Taking heed: (shamar)

Every place else in this psalm, except here and verse 34, the word is translated “keep.” Your way is kept pure by keeping it in harmony with the Word of God.

This verb has a fairly wide range of meanings.

- It refers to the activity of a gardener. In Genesis 2:15 God put Adam in the garden to “keep it.” The basic idea is guarding, keeping watch, protecting.
- It refers to the activity of a shepherd in Genesis 30:31. Jacob speaks to Laban and says, “I will pasture and keep it.”
- It refers to the activity of a watchman of a city in Isaiah 21:11 (translated watchman).
- It refers to the activity of hearing and obeying God’s Word in Isaiah 42:20 (translated *observe*).

Psalm 119 informs us of our duty to the Word of God. We are to obey its dictates, guard it from attack, and care for it as we would a garden or a flock of sheep.

The word is found in this psalm 12 times.

In each case, it is translated by some form of the English word keep, except in this verse where it is translated “taking heed,” and verse 34 where it is translated “observe.”

So, to keep is “to exercise great care over,” “do carefully or diligently. ”

Deut 11:32, “Be careful to observe” (i.e. perform carefully) all the statutes and ordinances.

This is one of the most frequent uses of the verb: the careful attention to be paid to the obligations of a covenant, to laws, statutes, etc.

The way to keep your way pure is by guarding it according to God's Word. Guarding one's way would mean to protect or safeguard it from all sinfulness and impurity; it calls for a consistent vigilance in applying the Word of God to the thoughts, speech, and actions all day long. And so the guarding is clarified with "according to Your Word."

according to Your Word

The standards of the world will not keep you clean. The practice of legalism will not cleanse your ways. You must guard your way by studying, knowing memorizing and applying the Word to your every day experience.

THE YOUNG MAN'S RESOLVE: Ps 119:10-16

The next two verses specify the goal of guarding your lifestyle:

With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!

With my whole heart

Wholeheartedness is a theme found in Ps 119:2, 10, 34, 58, 69, 145. The expression occurs in two other places in the book of Psalms and always represents total dedication, focus without distraction.

Putting them together, we learn—

- Praise is to be wholehearted (Psalm 9:1, 111:1).
- Seeking the Lord is to be wholehearted (Psalm 119:2, 10).
- Keeping the Word is to be wholehearted (Psalm 119:34, 69).
- Prayer is to be wholehearted (Psalm 119:58, 145).

Deuteronomy 6:4–6

⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!

⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

I have sought You (darash) Cf., vv. 2, 10, 45, 94, 155

To seek with care; seek to discover the details

Then Moses made careful inquiry about the goat of the sin offering, and there it was—burned up. And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron Lev 10:16

Deu 13:14 "then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently.

I have sought You

Deu 19:18 "And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother,

Psa 119:45: And I will walk at liberty, For I seek Your precepts.

Seeking God is inseparably connected to seeking His Word. How does one seek God?

One seeks God by going to the Scriptures. God's person and God's Word cannot be separated; to honor one is to honor the other.

The sincerity of the psalmist's search for God is demonstrated by hiding the Word of God in his heart (Ps 119:11).

To seek the LORD means to look for His will in every aspect of life; it describes a life lived for the sake of God.

The verb tense here stresses that this is the characteristic activity of the one who wants to please God;

The expression “with all my heart” means that this pursuit is carried out with the utmost diligence.

Because this diligent search will primarily be in the Word of God, the prayer is that God not let the faithful wander from his commandments. According to Proverbs 19:27, when people stop listening to instruction, they wander from the words of knowledge.

The psalmist is determined but not overconfident. He recognizes the need for divine help to keep him on the right path. “I pledge my best efforts—my whole heart—but it is God’s grace that will keep me true.”

Oh, let me not wander -- go astray, stray, err.
The emphasis is on sin done inadvertently,
an act perpetrated in ignorance, not willfully.

In Leviticus 4 there is a discussion of “sins of ignorance” (Lev 4:2, 13, 27), implying unconscious sins. This is also used to describe how sheep got lost (Ezek 34:6). They wander, they just nibble their way to lostness!

from Your commandments! (mitsvah) found 22 times in this psalm.

This word emphasizes the authority of what is said...the right to give orders. It refers to everything that God has commanded. It views God as *demanding duty*.

God has commanded. I do not have the right to question His authority.

The way to not wander is to keep the Word of God foremost in your thinking. This takes time, effort, discipline.

HIS GOAL Psa 119:11

“Your word I have hidden (treasured) in my heart, that I may not sin against You.”

The words **in my heart** are placed first, giving them special emphasis. The focus is on where the Word of God must be in order to be effective.

I have hidden (treasured). The word occurs 36 times. It means to conceal something with a definite purpose, either for protection or for sinister reasons. Moses was hidden for 3 months to protect him from Pharaoh's edict.

Amidst trials and plots of men, God hides His people in His presence (Ps 27:5)

Psa 31:19 Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You ...

Pro 2:1 My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you,

Pro 10:14 Wise *people* store up knowledge,

Treasured: to stockpile and to accumulate by great effort.

In Prov 10:14 it is used metaphorically of wise men accumulating knowledge (cf, Prov 2:1; 7:1).

This activity is so important that Job regards it more important than eating (Job 23:12). “I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary *food*.”

To hide the Word in your heart is to have it continually present in your thinking.

This is not just memorizing, but thinking about it, using it, applying it as you go about your daily routine.

You treasure it; you regard it as valuable; you have it available to use at all times.

That I might not sin against You

The word “that” expresses intent. The psalmist is introducing the practical and moral purpose of knowing the Word of God. The intent of the Word of God stored up in the mind is to prevent sin. This is preventive medicine.

“Sin will keep you from the Word, or the Word will keep you from sin.”

HIS WORSHIP Psa 119:12-14

Blessed are You, O LORD; teach me Your statutes. ¹³With my lips I have told of all the ordinances of Your mouth. ¹⁴I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches.

“**Blessed** – barak – to praise, adore, worship. It recognizes God as the source of grace

Psa 119:12 Blessed are You, O LORD; teach me Your statutes.

teach is an intensive stem. He wishes to be taught thoroughly and well. This word has the idea of training as well as educating.

The training aspect can be seen in the derived term for "oxgoad." In Hos 10:11 Ephraim is taught like a heifer by a yoke and goad.

Nine times in this psalm he uses this word as he petitions the Lord: teach me.

This is truly a prayer of humility. It acknowledges that God is the sovereign and has the right to rule over me. It recognizes that I don't know what is best for me, that I am not self-sufficient.

I need to know God, His plan, His provision, His promises.

Psa 119:13 With my lips I have declared All the judgments of Your mouth.

The verb **have declared** is used primarily of mathematical activity and means to count. However, here it means to recount, taking on the idea of recitation.

All the judgments (mishpat) 23 times in Psa 119.
It refers to the decisions made by God, resulting
in a rule of life for us.

of Your mouth. Here is a clear statement of his
view of Scripture. He regarded it to be a divine
revelation spoken in human language.

The psalmist is not only committed to hiding the Word in his own heart, but he proclaims it to others as well. He has publicly proclaimed the Word to which he is privately devoted. His light is not hidden under a bushel.

Psalm 78:1-4 perfectly illustrates the meaning of the word “declared.” Its theme is the passing of the Word of God from generation to generation.

“And our fathers have told us, We will not hide them from their children, Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.”

Psa 119:14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, *As much as* in all riches.

This does not mean that he rejoices in riches to the same degree as he rejoices in God's testimonies.

Literally, he says he rejoices in the Word "as over all" riches. The Word of God means more than riches—it is the treasure above all treasures. "More to be desire than gold" (Psa 19:10)

I have rejoiced – to rejoice, to exult. The word conveys an enthusiasm.

in the way – the path that God has laid out for us to walk

of Your testimonies—God's witness or testimony; what God has declared as absolutes.

In Psa 119 “testimonies” is used as a synonym of the Word. It occurs 9 times (14, 31, 36, 88, 99, 111, 129, 144, 157). Here the psalmist reflects his great delight in and his great respect for the Word of the Lord.

The Promise 119:15-16

“I will **meditate** on Your precepts, and **contemplate** Your ways. ¹⁶I shall **delight** in Your statutes; I shall **not forget** Your word.”

“I will **meditate** (siyach) -- remember, take to heart, consider, go over a matter in one’s mind.

The concept is clearly seen in Psa 77:6: I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, And my spirit makes diligent search.

on your precepts – the responsibilities God places on His people

contemplate Your ways. The word “contemplate” is literally “to see.” But it is used here for seeing only with the mind. As he considers God’s precepts, he will see or come to understand what he must do.

¹⁶I shall **delight** in Your statutes;

To take delight in, be glad, enjoy oneself.

I shall **not forget** Your word. שָׁכַח (*shakah*)

This is another way of saying that I will remember.

not forget is used 9 times in this psalm: Psa 119:16,
61, 83, 93, 109, 139, 141, 153, 176

Forgetting is not simply a temporary or permanent lapse of memory. This is indicated by the frequent identification of the verb with an action.

To forget God is to ignore His commandments (Dt 8:11).

To forget God is to follow other gods (Deut 8:19);

To forget God is to live in fear and worry (Isa 51:13).

To forget God is to challenge Him (Ps 106:13).

To forget means to ignore, neglect, refuse to trust or obey.

I shall not forget Your word = I will remember it, I will believe it, I will live by it, I will walk in it.