

Psalm 119:33-40
Lord, Change Me

Introduction: ... [T]he threat to running in the Lord's way (32) is not here a hostile environment (Gimel, vv. 17-24) nor the difficulties of life (Daleth, vv. 25-32) but the wayward heart which wants to obey (34) but can so easily be drawn away to selfish ends (36) and follow the enticements of the eyes (37). (Alec Motyer) There are nine imperatives/requests in these 8 verses.

1) I need to desire personal transformation—119:33-36

- a) I need to know the Word in order to obey it—v. 33 ³³ *Teach me* [Hiph. impv. yarah], *O LORD, the way* [derek] *of your statutes* [hoq]; (cf. 119:12, 26, 33, 64, 68, 124, 135)
 - i) *and I will keep* [natsar] *it to the end.*
 - ii) This is not mere curiosity but commitment.
- b) I need to understand the Word in order to keep it with my whole heart—v. 34 ³⁴ *Give me understanding* [Hiph. impv. bin], (a request found 6X in this psalm)
 - i) *that I may keep* [natsar] *your law* [torah]
 - ii) *and observe* [shamar] *it (your law) with my whole heart.*
- c) I need gracious guidance to obey the Word—v. 35 ³⁵ *Lead me* [Hiph. impv. darak] *in the path* [natib] *of your commandments* [mitsvah],
 - i) Why? *for I delight* [haphets] *in it.*
 - (1) Not so much the pleasurable emotion but a favorable disposition.
 - ii) What a refreshing contrast to insisting on autonomy.
- d) I need grace to be changed inside—v. 36 ³⁶ *Incline* [Hiph. impv. natah] *my heart* (i.e. make me willing)
 - i) Positive: *to your testimonies* [‘eduth] ,
 - ii) Negative: *and not to selfish* (dishonest, unjust) *gain* [betsa]!
 - (1) Which is our default mode.
 - iii) William MacDonald reminds us: It is ... grace that takes the love of money from a man and replaces it with a love for the Bible.
 - iv) I want my life directed by what the Lord directs and values. (Daniel Estes)

2) I need to desire to avoid sin—119:37-40

- a) I need to devote myself to avoid unworthy pursuits—v. 37
 - i) External influences: ³⁷ *Turn* [Hiph. impv. ‘abar] *my eyes from looking at worthless things* [shawe];
 - (1) Where one looks becomes one's focus, and it shapes how one lives. We are prone to set our sights on what is empty.
 - ii) Dependence for transformation: *and give me life* [Piel impv. hayah] *in your ways* [derek].

- (1) The challenge between watching the product of someone's imagination or focusing on God's reality.
- b) I desire God to fulfill the promises of His Word—v. 38 ³⁸ *Confirm* [**Hiph. impv. gum**] *to your servant* [**ebed**] *your promise* [**imrah**],
- i) Fulfill Your promise found in Your Word.
- (1) Each fulfilled promise brings further encouragement. (Allan Harman)
- ii) Why? *that you may be feared*/held in awe [**yir'ah**].
- (1) This is a practical purpose of God's Word. (Derek Kidner)
- (2) The Lord's word was intended to be a funnel for fear. (George Zemek)
- c) I desire God to save me from disgrace—v. 39 ³⁹ *Turn away* [**Hiph. impv. 'abar**] *the reproach* [**herpah**] (from God for disobedience) *that I dread* [**yagor**],
- i) Why? *for your rules* [**mishpat**] *are good* [**tob**].
- ii) Keep me from anything that would bring shame or dishonor on the name of the Lord Jesus. (Wm. MacDonald)
- d) I desire God to renew my heart—v. 40 ⁴⁰ *Behold, I long* [**ta'ab**] *for your precepts* [**piqudim**];
- i) *in your righteousness* [**tsedaqah**] *give me life* [**Piel impv. hayah**]!
- (1) I may be struggling, but by God's grace I know where to turn for help.

3) Things I need to remember: (Allan Ross)

- a) Increased knowledge and understanding of God's revelation leads to obedience.
- b) Greater obedience leads to disdain for the wicked and worthless ways of the world.
- c) Greater awareness of the world leads to the desire for God to confirm his promises.