

Youth Teaching Resources

September 6, 2020



A Prayer List for Today

Psalm 119:33-40—"Teach Me, Lord"

Psalm 103:1-13—"Forgive Me, Lord"

Psalm 78:1-7, 34-38—"Convict Me, Lord"

Psalm 25:1-9—"Deliver Me, Lord"

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“Teach Me, Lord”

Psalm 119:33-40

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGE

What are five attributes that you want in your life? Choose one person that represents each attribute and post them to your social media throughout the week.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Begin your session by showing the clip “Life is a Box of Chocolates” from *Forrest Gump*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What was Forrest’s mom’s destiny?
- 2) Do you agree that you make your own destiny? Explain.
- 3) Why does Forrest want to know his destiny?
- 4) If you got to choose, what kind of life would you want?
- 5) What role does our faith play in how our life turns out?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading Psalm 119.33-40. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony’s commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) How personal is this psalm for the psalmist?
- 2) What is the difference in memorizing versus understanding something? How does this apply to things that you learn in life?
- 3) How is faith more than a list of rules to follow?
- 4) How can we be selfish in life? How can we be guided back to living a life in community?
- 5) What promise does the psalmist want God to make with them?
- 6) Do we still live under the covenants that God made in the Old Testament? Explain.

Information *continued*

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the “Digging Deeper” portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) How do law and teaching relate to each other?
- 2) How does God give you life?

You may also want your group to discuss “The Hardest Question” if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as “The Hardest Question”: How does alliteration work?

Transformation

Conclude your session by introducing the Social Media Challenge for the week:

What are five attributes that you want in your life? Choose one person that represents each attribute and post them to your social media throughout the week.

After doing so, have the students begin to brainstorm some of the attributes they want in their life. Encourage them to think of some of the attributes that were mentioned during this session.

Close with a prayer thanking God for joining us on this journey and being there when we return from going off on our own.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Alefbet—The English word “alphabet” is derived from the first two letters of the Greek alphabet: *alpha* and *beta*. The Hebrew collection of letters begins with *alef* and *bet*, so we call it the “*alefbet*.” Although Hebrew and Greek are very different languages, many of their composite letters descend from the same roots. Both Hebrew and Greek begin with corresponding letters that make the sounds for a, b, g, and d before the order diverges (*alef, bet, gimel, dalet* in Hebrew, *alpha, beta, gamma, delta* in Greek).

Synonyms for “law” or “teaching”—The psalmist populated Psalm 119 with eight thematic terms describing God’s teaching, repeating them again and again: most of them appear in each of the 22 sections. These eight terms are generally translated as “law” (*torah*, used 25 times), “decrees/covenant terms” (*edût*, 23 times), “statutes/laws” (*choq*, 22 times), “commandments/commands” (*mizwah* 21 times), “ordinances” (*mishpat*, 22 times), “word” (*dabar*, 24 times), “precepts/charges” (*piqûd*, 20 times), and “promise/saying” (*imrah*, 20 times). Occasionally he uses terms such as God’s “paths” or “ways” to get across the same ideas.

James Luther Mays described the effect of the acrostic structure and repetitive lexicon of stock words in this way: “So he used the alphabet to signal completeness and the whole vocabulary to represent comprehensiveness. . . . Within the control of the formal structure, the same thing is said in 167 different ways, in a progression that moves through the alphabet without ever moving from its single subject” (*Psalms, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, [Westminster John Knox Press, 2011], 381-382)).

Give me life—The closing line of v. 40, translated “in your righteousness give me life” in the NRSV, is subject to varying translations. In Hebrew it consists of two words that require multiple words to express in English: “in your righteousness” (*betzîdgateka*) and “give me life” (*chayēnî*). The basic stem of the verb used means “to live” or “to have life.” Here it appears in the emphatic *pi’el* form, so that it means “let live,” “give life,” “revive,” or “refresh.”

Thus, NIV 11 has “preserve my life,” while NASB 95 and NET have “revive me.” Though the nuances may differ, the central thought is the same: the psalmist wants to experience the best life possible, which he believes is found in following God’s way.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

How does the alliteration work in vv. 33-40?

For those who might be interested in more insight to the poet's craft, here are the verbs that introduce vv. 33-39. We note that they are all in what is called the *hifil* form, which gives them a causative sense. This allowed the poet a great deal of freedom: he could use almost any verb he wanted, because the causative form would add a *hē* prefix.

Verse 33 begins with *hōrēnî*, from the verb *yārāh*. The suffix *-nî* is the first person pronoun, "me." The meaning of the verbal root is "to cast" or "to shoot." In the causative form it was used to mean "to teach" or "to show." Indeed, it is the same verb that gave rise to the noun form *torah*, which is often translated as "law" but really refers to the wide range of divine teachings. Here *hōrēnî* means "teach me" or "instruct me."

Verse 34 begins with *hebînî*, the causative form of *bîn*, "to understand" with the first-person suffix: "cause me to understand" or "give me understanding."

Verse 35 begins with *hedrîkēnî*, from *darak*, which means "to walk." The causative form with the first-person suffix means "cause me to walk," or more elegantly, "lead me."

Verse 36 begins with *hat-lebî*. The verb is *hat* (sometimes transliterated as *hath* to distinguish the letter *tet* from *tav*, which has a sharper sound). It comes from the root *nātāh*, which means "to incline" or "to bend." In the *hifil* form the initial *nun* and the final *hē* both disappear, leaving the imperative *hat*, which can mean "stretch out," "turn," or "incline" when used with an object. In this case, the object is *lebî*, "my heart." The psalmist wants God to incline or turn his heart toward God's teachings.

Verse 37 begins with *h'avēr*, the *hifil* form of *āvar*, which means "to pass over" or "pass by." In the causative form it can mean "cause to pass over" or "cause to pass by." In this case, the psalmist wants God to cause his eyes to pass over or turn away "from looking at vanities."

Verse 38 begins with *haqēm*, from the verb *qûm*, which means "to arise" or "to stand." The *hifil* form means, as we might expect, "to cause to stand," or "to raise." The idea of "causing to stand" can carry the idea of "establish" or "confirm," and that is the sense here, where the psalmists prays for God to confirm or establish God's words/sayings, translated by the NRSV as "promise."

Verse 39 begins with the same verb as v. 37: *h'avēr*. Here, instead of praying for God to turn the psalmist's eyes away from vanities, it has the sense of asking God to "cause to pass by" or "turn away" any disgrace or reproach from the psalmist.

Verse 40 concludes the section, though with a different beginning. Here the first word is *hinēh*, an interjection that means something like "behold" or "see."