

Tunnel Vision

Psalm 119:9-11, 105

Dr. Paul Cannings

A. Overcoming the Effects of the Tunnel (vs. 9-10):

1. Keep – To keep God’s Word is to not allow our emotions, past experiences, or various ways of thinking stop us from remembering what His Word says or from obeying Him.
 - a) The Word of God is the agent the Spirit of God uses to regenerate the hearts of all those who are saved (Eph. 5:25–27), and He continues to use that same cleansing power in our lives. By that Word, the Holy Spirit shows us what pleases God and what doesn’t and, in so doing, calls us away from sin and into purity of life.^[1]
2. The way – When the Psalmist mentions “way,” he is referring to a lifestyle that is like a well-trodden path through a forest (life challenges) or a garden clearly defining whether we are people of integrity, upright or godly. This is why the question is “how can a young man keep his way pure?” In other words, in the course of doing those things, the young man repeatedly does what is best for that young man to maintain his integrity, uprightness or godly living in a world that is totally contrary to all of it.
 - a) The word rendered “his way” (Heb. *orach*) signifies a track or a rut, such as would have been made by the wheel of a cart. A young sinner has not beaten a broad path, but rather has transgressed repeatedly in the same manner, creating a sinful rut. How shall he escape? By taking heed to Your Word.^[2]
3. Pure - To remain consistently morally healthy can be a challenge, especially for a young man. This is critical to the young man living consistently righteous. Preserving this type of focus when there are passions and constant distractions is a challenge in a world that is morally lawless.
 - a) David uses the word “keep” meaning not just to know, but to also do! David knew taking Bathsheba and killing her husband was wrong (he was quick to respond when Nathan confronted him) but he did not “keep”. He allowed his passions to run wild.

- It is with “all my heart” – it takes complete surrender.
 - He is seeking the Lord with “all my heart”. His passions have to be like Paul told Timothy; *“Flee youthful lust, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace with those who call on the Lord with a pure heart.”* (2 Timothy 2:22).
 - It must be treasured in the heart (vs. 105). It is priceless and must be preserved, which in turns creates the need to keep it.
4. Keeping it – The young man must hold to God’s Word when everything else internally and externally says to do otherwise.
 5. Your Word – The young man must see the Lord’s Word as divine truth that comes directly from God so that to obey the Word is to submit to the sovereign authority of the Lord in all his ways. (Proverbs 3:5-6).
 - a) The Word of God must become a way of life (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23) because it allows us to sense what is good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).
 6. With all my heart – With the totality of our innermost feelings, wisdom and understanding we must in every respect put every effort into experiencing the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. This, and only this, will enable us to keep ourselves morally sound based on the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:23).
 7. I sought thee – We must be completely surrendered to inquiring of the Lord, seeking to learn about Him, and to surrender our mind or emotions to His will. This is because the flesh is totally contrary to the Spirit of God’s influence on our spirit (Galatians 5:16-18). It takes a determinative effort to put off the old man (Ephesians 4:17-21).
 8. Do not let me wander – Seeking the Lord with every intention should be countered with a request to the Lord that we do not function without purpose in a lifestyle that is contrary to what He is requiring of us (2 Timothy 2:22). “Wander” means to intentionally go in the wrong direction even if what we decide to do has no purpose or it misleads others to do what is wrong.
 - a) In the former it means to obey. In the latter “*keep me from*” means “do not let me” or “prevent me from”; therefore “do not let me disobey your commands.” The negative request “*let me not wander*”, that is, depart from, abandon, or disregard, can be expressed in a positive way, “keep me true (or, faithful) to your commandments.”^[3]
 - b) “*For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable,*

and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.” (Heb 2:2-4; NASB)

9. Your commandments – We should not live purposelessly when God has provided us ‘clear cut directives’ of His divine will. These must be viewed as orders from the Lord.
10. Your commandments – Because we live in sinful flesh and can repeatedly sin (Romans 8:14-21), we must seek the Lord so that, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, He can remind us of His Word (John 14:26), which convicts us when we do wrong (John 16:7-11); therefore, strengthening us so that we do not aimlessly live disrespecting His authority by forsaking His moral will.

B. Gaining Light Through the Tunnel (vs. 11; 105):

1. Your Word – When we are taught the Word of God, we must do our best to understand it, so that we can retain it in our minds and hearts. It should not be just something we come and listen to because it is a Sunday or Bible study.
2. I have treasured - The commandments of the Lord, and the teaching of the Lord must become priceless in value so that we determinatively seek to store it up in our minds, with the help of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26); so that it guides, directs, and rules our lives. When we do so, it demonstrates how much we value the Word of God.
3. In my heart – The Word must be of significant value because our deepest innermost emotions can cause us to neglect what the Lord is saying, especially when things are stressful. The Word must be more than just information. It needs to become our passion.
4. I may not sin – We must purpose in our hearts to treasure God’s Word in our hearts so that we do not continuously violate the Word of God to the point it becomes our normal course of life. Paul tells us not to become slaves to sin (Romans 6:12-14 – we cannot present the members of our bodies to sin – eyes – Matthew 6:23; mind – Romans 12:2; tongue – James 3:1-12; hands – 1 Timothy 2:8) since our old self has been crucified in Christ (Romans 6:6-7; we are His workmanship – Ephesians 2:8-10) with the Holy Spirit living in us (Ephesians 3:16) providing us strength to obey the Word so that we “work out our salvation in fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12-13).
5. Your Word – When we are taught the Word of God, we must do our best to understand

it so that we can retain it in our minds and hearts. It should not be just something we come and listen to on Sunday or during Bible study. It must be stored up for the purpose of guiding and directing our lives.

6. Is a lamp – Because Jesus is the light (John 1:5-7), in the New Testament we can view Him as the lamp that keeps burning so that we can “walk in the light as He is in the light”, He becomes the lamp; He never goes out, constantly guiding us through the darkness of the world.
 - a) In Old Testament times, lamps were made of clay in the shape of a shallow cup or saucer pinched on one edge to support a wick. They were not carried outside for travel lest oil might spill out of the open top; rather, they were used indoors or in a cave where neither sunlight nor moonlight illumined the darkness.^[4]
 - b) We live in a dark, perplexing world that offers us many paths. If we are careless about the paths we choose, we invite misery and ruin. The Word of God provides the direction we need. It is like a light shining in a dark place (2 Peter 1:19).^[5]
7. A light – The Lord providing wisdom, discernment or understanding (light) in the midst of temptation and the many distractions on social media, blesses us to experience the working out of our salvation, prosperity, and direction (light) rather than the negative effects of a sinful life.
 - a) Recognizing that God's Word was his light to direct him (cf. v. 130; Prov 6:23) the psalmist vowed to follow it (Ps. 119:105-106). In his distress (vv. 107-110) he called for help and affirmed that he would joyfully follow God's statutes and decrees (vv. 111-112). (From Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries; All rights reserved.)
8. My path – Everyone’s manner of living is unique and particular to their way of life. Their passions, ambitions, academic pursuits, and family life may be quite different. No matter how different they maybe it should all be influenced and directed by the Word of God. When the Word directs us, no matter what trouble we may encounter or decisions we may make, the Word would be the light all the way through the tunnel, thereby blessing us to be successful (Joshua 1:5-9). This in turn becomes the believer’s lifestyle pattern.

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- ^[1] Ellsworth, R. (2006). [*Opening up Psalms*](#) (pp. 24–25). Leominster: Day One Publications.
- ^[2] Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). [*Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary*](#) (p. 727). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.
- ^[3] Bratcher, R. G., & Reyburn, W. D. (1991). [*A translator's handbook on the book of Psalms*](#) (p. 1000). New York: United Bible Societies.
- ^[4] Walton, J. H. (2009). [*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary \(Old Testament\): The Minor Prophets, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*](#) (Vol. 5, p. 423). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- ^[5] Ellsworth, R. (2006). [*Opening up Psalms*](#) (p. 25). Leominster: Day One Publications.