

## Devotionals Oct 8 – Nov 7, 2021: Loving the Law

Abby Van Solkema

Do you love God's law? The Psalms (especially Psalm 119) are full of expressions of love and delight for the law of God. The psalmist in Psalm 119:97 writes, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." David writes in Psalm 40:8, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." We live in an age where rules and restrictions are seen as a negative thing. It is very countercultural to proclaim love for a long list of regulations for our daily lives. Most people like to come up with their own personal moral law to live by, and it usually contradicts God's law in some way. This attitude of disregard for the law can easily creep into the church as well. Even God's people may sometimes wonder how we can love something that seems to restrict our freedom.

In order to understand why we must love God's law, we must first understand what it is. God's law is his perfect way and will for our lives that is revealed to us in Scripture. Although the ten commandments are probably what comes to mind first when you think about the law, the law of God is actually revealed throughout all of his written word. Even before the ten commandments were given, the basic principles of the law were already in place. From the initial commands that he gave to Adam and Eve about how to live a blessed life in the Garden of Eden, to the giving of the ten commandments on Mount Sinai, to Jesus' summary of the law during his earthly ministry, and everything in between, God clearly reveals to his people how he desires them to live as pilgrims on this earth.

Since this law was given to us by our heavenly Father, it reflects the various facets of his character. This is the first reason why we must love God's law. A child of God cannot confess love for God without also confessing love for the law that he has given us. When we deviate from what God's law commands, we are showing hatred of God. The commands of the law show God's will for our life based on the many aspects of the lawgiver's character, such as his sovereignty, omnipresence, mercy, justice, holiness, authority, faithfulness, and truth. The law as a whole reveals that God is a God of love. The law was given in love, and it can be summed up by two basic commands—love God and love your neighbor. Just as we can be confident that the character of our heavenly Father does not change, we can also be confident that his law does not change. His love for us is eternal, and his perfect way for our life is the same as it was when the ten commandments were written in stone by his finger at Sinai.

We also love the law of God because when viewed through the eyes of faith, it shows us our sin and need for a savior. It is impossible for an unbeliever to love the law of God. This cannot happen apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. We must also keep in mind that the law itself does not save us. It has no power on its own but functions as a means of grace to bring us to Christ. When we hear the ten commandments and all of God's word explained by our pastor each week, it becomes very evident that apart from God, we do not have the ability to keep any part of the law. This realization points us to the gospel—the good news that although we cannot keep the law perfectly, Jesus did on our behalf! He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our inability to keep the law. This knowledge of our misery guides us to repent and seek forgiveness. When believers meditate on the law, they are not led to despair, but to thankfulness for the forgiveness that they have in Christ.

Finally, we love the law of God because not only does it show us our sin, but it also serves as a teacher to guide us in the way of a thankful life enabled by grace. As we are reminded in Psalm 119:105, God's word is the lamp that lights our path to heaven. Following the law of God sets us apart from the world. The law shows us what is right and wrong and how to live in a way that is pleasing to him. It is only when we follow the instruction that God gives us in his word that we will be able to live a blessed life in relationship with him and our neighbor. But just as we must not have contempt for God's law as an antinomian would, we must also not self-righteously place our trust in an outward ability to follow the law. We are commanded to keep the law, not as a way of earning our salvation, but as a way of

showing thanksgiving to the one who freed us from the law. We will never be able to keep the law perfectly on this side of heaven, but by the power of the Spirit in us we can show some fruits of obedience. However, the only way that the law of God can be our guide is if we are reading and studying it regularly so that it is on our minds and written in our hearts. Meditating on the word of God is the only way to gain the true wisdom required for life in this sinful world. Pray that God will give you the strength to love and meditate on his law so that you are filled with the knowledge of his will and able to increasingly walk worthy of the Lord in your daily life on this earth.

### Loving the Law Reading Plan

Date	Read	Study Question	Sing or Pray
Oct 8	Genesis 2:4–17	Why did God have the right to issue this very first command to Adam and Eve? Why does he also have the right to issue commands to you?	Psalter #405
Oct 9	Deuteronomy 5:1–21	Why is verse 6 a necessary and important preface to the giving of the law?	Psalter #111
Oct 10	Deuteronomy 5:22–33	How does following the law of God bring blessing to your life?	Psalter #1
Oct 11	Matthew 22:34–40; Romans 13:8–10; 1 John 5:1–3	How are loving God and loving your neighbor connected?	Psalter #2
Oct 12	Romans 3:9–20	What does the phrase “for by the law is the knowledge of sin” mean?	Psalter #23
Oct 13	Romans 3:21–31	How does Christ’s righteousness satisfy the justice that God demands for your sin?	Psalter #263
Oct 14	Romans 7:1–6	What does verse 6 mean when it says that we are delivered from the law?	Psalter #108
Oct 15	Romans 7:7–13	How has God’s law helped you personally recognize your need for a Savior?	Psalter #109
Oct 16	Romans 7:14–25	How is it possible for a believer to delight in God’s law and still sin?	Psalter #110
Oct 17	Psalms 119:1–8	What would it look like for you to seek God with your whole heart?	Psalter #321
Oct 18	Psalms 119:9–16	Do you regularly hide God’s word in your heart through Scripture memory? How can you improve in this area?	Psalter #322
Oct 19	Psalms 119:17–24	Is the word of God your primary source of counsel? Do you seek advice from those who will point you to Scripture?	Psalter #323
Oct 20	Psalms 119:25–32	Can you think of a time when your soul felt heavy? What specific passage from God’s word gave you strength at this time?	Psalter #324
Oct 21	Psalms 119:33–40	How does “beholding vanity” deter you from following the way of the Lord? What kinds of vanity are you most susceptible to?	Psalter #325
Oct 22	Psalms 119:41–48	Do you speak unashamedly about God’s word to others? How can you improve in this area?	Psalter #326

Oct 23	Psalms 119:49–56	How has remembering the word of God brought comfort to you in times of affliction?	Psalter #327
Oct 24	Psalms 119:57–64	What earthly things are you tempted to find satisfaction in? Pray that God will work contentment in your heart so you may confess, “Thou art my portion, O LORD”!	Psalter #328
Oct 25	Psalms 119:65–72	How have you seen the goodness of God in your life even while you were experiencing trials?	Psalter #329
Oct 26	Psalms 119:73–80	How is acknowledging your role as a humble creature who is subject to your Creator comforting rather than constraining?	Psalter #330
Oct 27	Psalms 119:81–88	How does trusting in God and his word lead you to be grateful for your own weakness instead of resenting it?	Psalter #331
Oct 28	Psalms 119:89–96	Why can we be confident that God’s law and word do not change?	Psalter #332
Oct 29	Psalms 119:97–104	How can you cultivate a love for God’s law?	Psalter #333
Oct 30	Psalms 119:105–112	Do your attitudes and actions make it evident to those around you that you love to follow God’s commands?	Psalter #334
Oct 31	Psalms 119:113–120	What is godly fear and why is it important for you to have it?	Psalter #335
Nov 1	Psalms 119:121–128	Do you make sure to pray for understanding before you read God’s word? Why is this prayer necessary?	Psalter #336
Nov 2	Psalms 119:129–136	Are you grieved by those who disregard God’s law? What should your response be?	Psalter #337
Nov 3	Psalms 119:137–144	What aspects of God’s character and word are revealed in this section of verses?	Psalter #338
Nov 4	Psalms 119:145–152	What are some practices you can put into place to help you meditate on God’s word throughout your day?	Psalter #339
Nov 5	Psalms 119:153–160	Have you ever been persecuted for following God’s law? How did you handle it?	Psalter #340
Nov 6	Psalms 119:161–168	How does loving God’s law bring peace to your life?	Psalter #341
Nov 7	Psalms 119:169–176	Take time to reflect on all of Psalm 119. Is there a verse or section of verses that you would like to commit to memory?	Psalter #342

Originally published October 2021, Vol 80 No 10