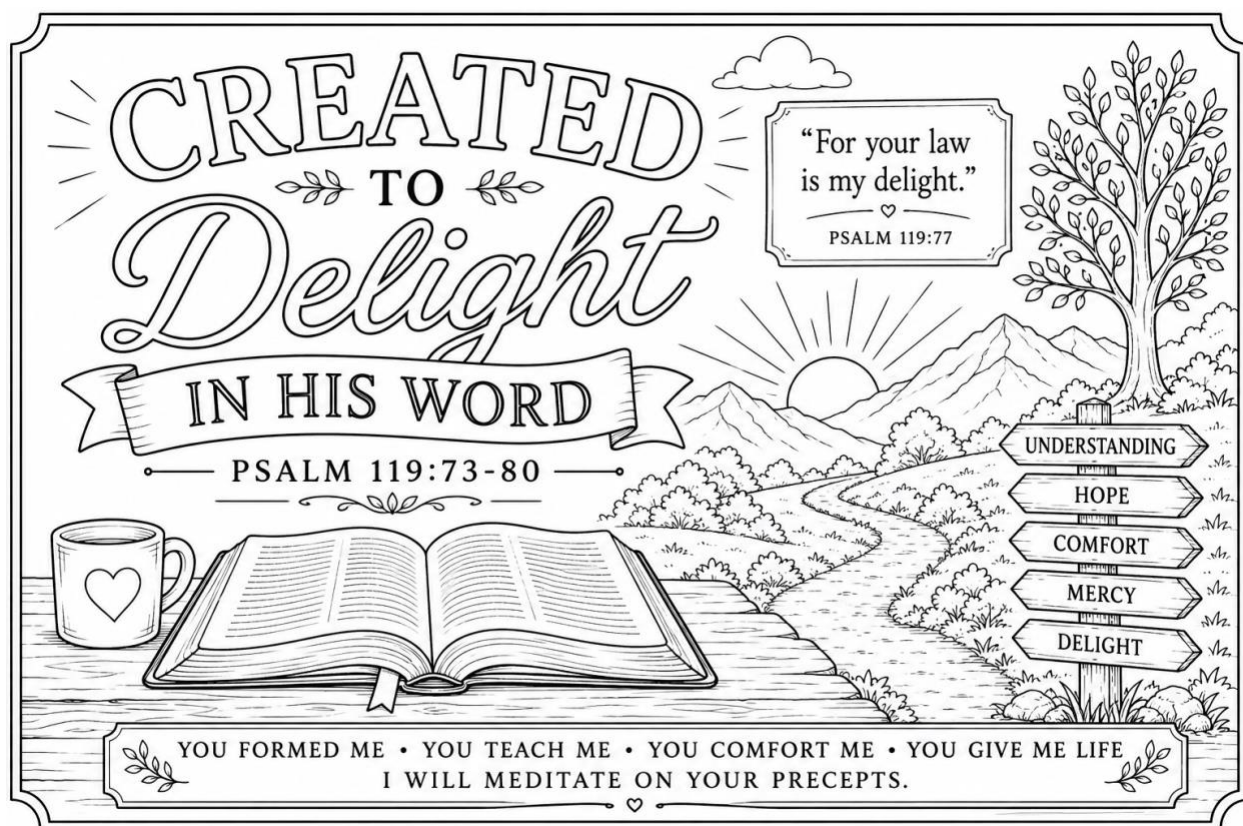




Created to Delight in His Word
Psalm 119:73-80
Yodh

Intro: In Hebrew, *Yod* (י) is the smallest letter of the alphabet, yet Jewish tradition often views it as profoundly significant. Jesus even refers to it in the Sermon on the Mount, “*Until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law...*” (Matthew 5:18, ESV)

As we've discovered throughout Psalm 119, each stanza is another step on the pilgrim's journey into the blessed life. The psalmist is not simply giving us a collection of truths about God's Word. He is taking us somewhere.

This week, he takes us from the hands of our Creator to the prayer of a blameless heart. The God who fashioned us has never stopped working on us. His creative work becomes His sanctifying work. Through His Word, His providence, His people, and even His discipline, He is shaping us into the people He created us to be.

Big Idea: The God who lovingly created us faithfully continues His work of shaping us through His Word and His providence.

First: The Creator Shapes His Children (v. 73)

"Your hands have made and fashioned me..."

a) God's hands intentionally created us.

Psalm 139:13-16 - *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.*

This is an incredible thought.

- David reminds us that life is never accidental.
- It is always intentional and purposeful.
- God formed us in the womb.
- God knew us before anyone else could know us.
- And before we ever lived a single day,
- He had already written every one of our days in His book.
- Nothing about our lives is hidden from God or accidental.
- Our lives are the product of God's intentional creation, perfect knowledge, and sovereign purpose.

What an amazing thought: God created you and placed you on the earth, overseeing every aspect of your life for His purposes.

Notice that the psalmist begins with worship, not anthropology in the words,

"Made" and "fashioned," which emphasize God's personal involvement.

What does that mean? It means,

- He does not belong to chance.
- He belongs to God.

III –I want to encourage you to read Stephen Mansfield's *The Search for God and Guinness*. It is the remarkable story of how God took the ordinary life of one man and, through countless providential circumstances, used him and his business as a platform for a powerful gospel witness amid the many extraordinary good works he and his family did throughout their lives.

As you read it, I hope you'll ask, "*What platform(s) has God given me for His glory and the good of others?*" You may say, "But I don't own a business." Oh, but you are God's business. You are God's start-up." And accountable to God for His business in your life.

- b) And then, God's Creator-right becomes God's Teacher-right – *"give me understanding..."*

Because God made us, He has the right to instruct us. Because God made us, we *want* God to instruct us.

- Creation establishes His authority.
 - Instruction expresses His love.
- c) God's creatorial work is not finished – *"that I may learn your commandments."*

The God who formed our bodies now forms our minds. This means,

- Understanding is not merely intellectual.
- It is moral and spiritual. It is forming...the life of Jesus in us.

The psalmist longs to think God's thoughts after Him. That amounts to the blessed life.

APP: This is so important. Our greatest need is not self-expression. We don't need to 'find ourselves.' God has created us, and he has created us for a divine purpose. Our greatest need is divine transformation into that person God intends us to be. And...

Only the One who made us knows what we were created to become. This leads to...

Second: The Redeemed Become an Encouragement to Others (v. 74)

"Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice, because I have hoped in your word."

- A) Biblical hope is visible – *Those who fear you shall see me*

Hope cannot remain hidden. Others see it.

- b) That faithfulness strengthens the people of God – *and rejoice*

God never sanctifies us merely for ourselves. One believer's perseverance encourages another believer's perseverance.

- c) That hope points others to God – *because I have hoped in your word.*

The rejoicing is not ultimately because of the psalmist. It is because God's Word has proven trustworthy.

APP: You know that someone, some people, are watching your life. Your confidence in God's promises is an encouragement to other believers. This makes CGs and small groups so important.

Transition: Everyone needs this encouragement because all of us are going to face difficulty of one kind or another.

Third: The Afflicted Learn to Trust God's Faithfulness (vv. 75–77)

I know, O LORD, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.

⁷⁶ Let your steadfast love comfort me according to your promise to your servant. ⁷⁷ Let your mercy come to me, that I may live; for your law is my delight.

- a) Affliction must be interpreted. But, as we learned last week,
 - The question is never merely, "*Why am I suffering?*"
 - The deeper question is, "*What is my good God doing?*"

We don't necessarily come to this understanding naturally or privately. We need others to help us see it, and often, it is the example of another sufferer's life that best encourages us.

But this we know -

- b) God's faithfulness governs His discipline.

IMP: The psalmist does not deny the pain. He reinterprets it. God's faithfulness explains his suffering. His suffering never contradicts God's goodness.

- c) God's steadfast love sustains His servant.
 - Discipline is never separated from covenant love.
 - The Father's heart is seen in all of it.

APP: As we discussed last week. Do not interpret God's character through your circumstances. Interpret your circumstances through God's character.

Transition: Often, we need others to help us do this, so -

Fourth: The Godly Find Their Identity Among God's People (vv. 78–79)

*Let the insolent be put to shame, because they have wronged me with falsehood;
as for me, I will meditate on your precepts.*

Let those who fear you turn to me, that they may know your testimonies.

IMP: This is a real warning to unbelievers and believers alike.

- a) The arrogant oppose God's servant.

Falsehood, pride, and shame have always characterized those who oppose God.

- b) The righteous gather around God's truth.

Notice the contrast.

- The arrogant scatter.
- Those who fear the Lord gather.

God gives His people to one another.

- c) Our identity is shaped by the community we belong to.

We need one another. The church is one of God's instruments of sanctification.

APP: Ask yourself: Who is shaping your thinking? The proud or those who fear the Lord?

Transition: The ultimate goal is, of course,

Fifth: The Pilgrim Longs to Finish Well (v. 80)

"May my heart be blameless in your statutes, that I may not be put to shame!"

- a) The destination is wholehearted devotion.
 - *Blameless* does not mean sinless perfection.
 - It means integrity.
 - It means an undivided heart.
- b) The psalmist longs for that kind of consistency.

He wants the inward man and outward life to agree. This is where spiritual disciplines, like those on the *Discipleship Wheel*, come into play. (See the DW at after the CG questions).

- c) The prayer returns to the beginning.

Verse 73 - *"Your hands made me."*

Verse 80 - *"Now shape my heart."*

The stanza comes full circle.

APP: The greatest evidence of God's workmanship is not perfection. None of us are. But, it is a growing desire to be wholly His.

Sixth: And This Is Where the Gospel Meets Us

The psalmist

- began by confessing that God's hands had made him and
- ended by praying that God would finish His work within him.

Left to ourselves, none of us could pray that prayer with confidence, because sin has distorted both our hearts and our obedience.

But what the psalmist longed for, Christ secured. Hallelujah!

- Jesus is the perfect Man whose heart was always blameless before His Father.
- He delighted perfectly in God's law, trusted His Father through suffering, loved His people, and finished the work He was given to do.
- Now, through the power of His death and resurrection, the Father is continuing that same work in all who belong to Jesus.
- By His Spirit, He is conforming us to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29), and
- He has promised that the good work He began in us will one day be complete (Phil. 1:6).
- The hands that created us are the hands that redeemed us, and they will not cease their work until we stand complete in Christ and hear the Father say, "*Well done.*"

APP: Now, what good work will you do this week that illustrates the Gospel and encourages someone else?

Conclusion :

- Psalm 119 begins with a God who places His hands upon us - "Your hands have made and fashioned me."
- And it ends with a man asking God to place His hands upon his heart - "May my heart be blameless in your statutes."

That, friends, is the Christian life.

- The God who made you has never stopped working on you.
- He is shaping you through His Word.
- He is shaping you through His providence.
- He is shaping you through suffering.
- He is shaping you through His people.
- And every day, by His Spirit, He is making you a little more like His Son.

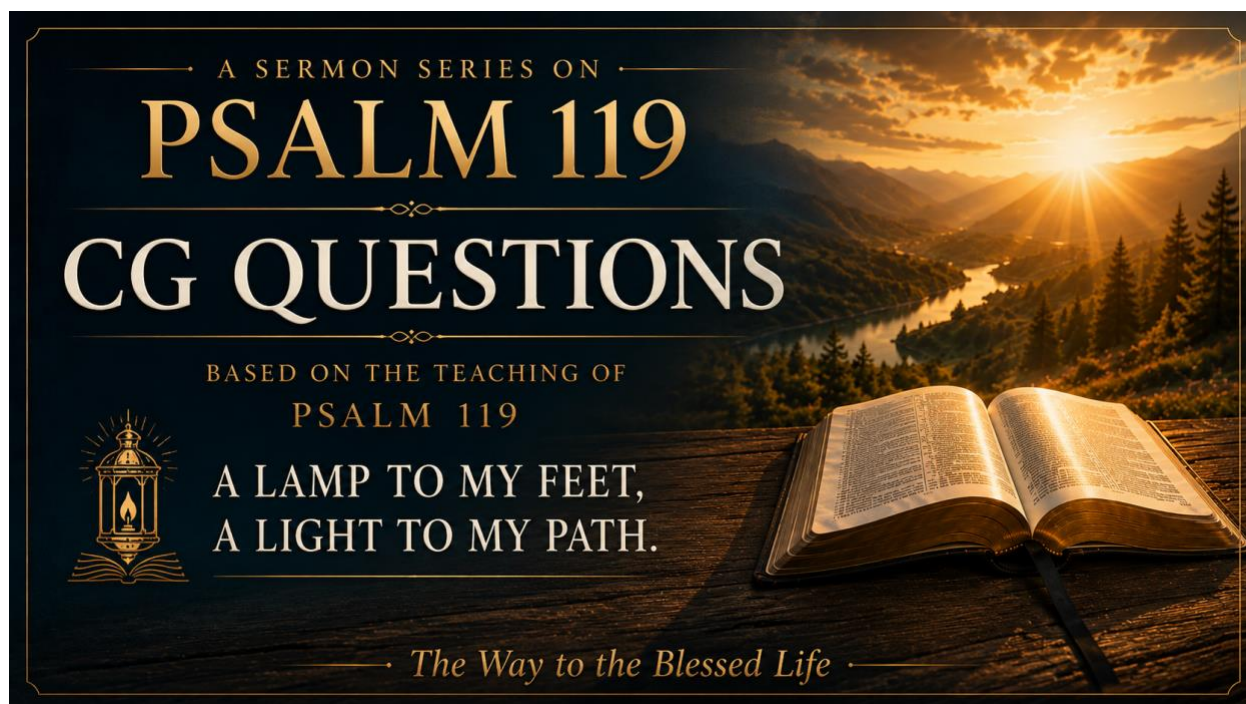
Perhaps some of you have wondered why God has allowed certain disappointments, certain hardships, or certain delays into your life. This psalm reminds us that the Sculptor has never laid down His tools.

- Every cut has a purpose.
- Every stroke serves His design.

The stone cannot yet see what the Artist sees.

- One day, however, His work will be finished.
- One day, faith will become sight.
- One day, struggle will give way to glory.
- One day, the hands that formed you in your mother's womb, the hands that were pierced for your redemption, will present you complete before the Father.

Until then, let us gladly place ourselves in the hands of our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier, praying every day, "*Lord, continue Your work in me.*"



Observation
(What does the text say?)

1. What repeated actions of God do you see throughout verses 73-80? What do they reveal about His relationship with His people?
2. How does the stanza move from God's work ("Your hands have made me...") to the psalmist's final prayer ("May my heart be blameless...")?
3. According to this passage, what are the different ways God continues shaping His people after creating them?
4. What contrasts do you see between the arrogant and those who fear the Lord (vv. 78-79)?
5. Which word or phrase in this stanza most encourages or challenges you? Why?

Interpretation
(What does the text mean?)

6. Why does the psalmist connect God's role as Creator with his desire to learn God's commandments (v. 73)?
7. Verse 74 says other believers rejoice because they see the psalmist's hope. What does this teach us about the effect our faith can have on other Christians?
8. In verses 75-77, how does the psalmist reinterpret his affliction? What does he believe about God's purposes in suffering?
9. Why is belonging to God's people an essential part of spiritual growth, according to verses 78-79?
10. What does the psalmist mean when he prays for a "blameless" heart in verse 80? How is that different from claiming sinless perfection?

Correlation
(Where else in the Bible do I see this text?)

11. Psalm 139 teaches that God intentionally formed us before birth. How does that truth deepen your understanding of verse 73?
12. Philippians 1:6 promises that God will complete the work He began in us. How does that promise help explain this entire stanza?
13. Romans 8:29 says God is conforming believers to the image of Christ. Where do you see that process reflected throughout Psalm 119:73-80?
14. Hebrews 12 teaches that God's discipline is an expression of His fatherly love. How does that passage help us understand verses 75-77?
15. Jesus perfectly delighted in His Father's will and remained blameless. How does Christ fulfill the longing expressed in verse 80?

Application
(How can God use this text to form me?)

16. The sermon reminded us that we are not accidents but God's workmanship. How does that truth change the way you think about your purpose, your gifts, or your current season of life?
17. Who has encouraged your faith simply by the way they trusted God through difficult circumstances? How might your own hope encourage someone else this week?
18. Is there a current hardship in your life that you need to begin viewing through God's faithfulness rather than through your circumstances? What would that look like?
19. Who is shaping your thinking most right now? Are those voices drawing you closer to Christ and His people or pulling you away from them?
20. The stanza begins with God's hands creating us and ends with a prayer for God to shape our hearts. In what area of your life do you most need to pray, "Lord, continue Your work in me"?

