

Psalm 119:73–80

73 Your hands have made me and fashioned me;
Give me understanding, that I may learn Your
commandments.

74 Those who fear You will be glad when they see me,
Because I have hoped in Your word.

75 I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are right, And
that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

76 Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my
comfort, According to Your word to Your servant.

77 Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live;
For Your law is my delight.

78 Let the proud be ashamed, For they treated me
wrongfully with falsehood; But I will meditate on Your
precepts.

79 Let those who fear You turn to me, Those who know
Your testimonies.

80 Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes,
That I may not be ashamed.

YODH (Ps 119:73–80)



Letter Name	Early Hebrew	Middle Hebrew	Late Hebrew	Modern Hebrew
YOD				

Pictograph:

Arm and closed hand

Meanings:

Work, Throw, Make, Praise

Sound:

Y, iy

“Growth Under Pressure Growth Encourages
Others Who Observe”

The psalmist desires that those who have respect for God will observe his faithfulness to God's Word in affliction and will rejoice (Psa 119:74) and be helped (Psa 119:79). The psalmist desires to be an example of loyalty to God's Word under any circumstance.

He knows that the LORD created him for a purpose and acknowledges that his affliction was part of God's loving plan for him, and therefore he prays for understanding to learn God's commandments, he prays for deliverance from the arrogant who have wronged him, and prays for a blameless heart so that he might not be put to shame (119:73–80).

I. The plan of the Creator is that we gain understanding to know his will (73)

Your hands have made me and fashioned me

Made עָשָׂה (asah) do, fashion, accomplish.

Your hands have made me

We begin with the fundamental truth that God made us. The verb is the common word “to do, make,” but takes on great significance when used for creation, particularly of human life (Pss. 95:6; 100:3, and 138:8).

The psalmist believed in a Creator-God. He did not view man as the end of a long evolutionary process. Recognition of a personal God who is apart from and above creation is a foundational truth. When this is rejected, gross evil proliferates.

and fashioned me : כּוּן (*kun*) *established,*
prepared, made ready,

The word “fashioned” gives the wrong impression. The word means to establish or to prepare. In 2 Chr 1:4 David prepared a place for the ark; In Josh 1:11 it means to prepare provisions for a journey. Here it recognizes that God, in creating us, has prepared everything that we need in order to accomplish His purposes.

The Work of God for Me in the Spiritual Realm

Psa 119:73

Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.

If God has provided our physical makeup, is it not logical that He would also provide for our spiritual needs? The psalmist is saying “You have made me, now I am asking You to instruct me so that I can fulfill your plan for me.”

give me understanding – cause me to understand.

This is a prayer for God to help him fulfill the purpose for which he was made.

God made us for a purpose, and to fulfill that purpose we need spiritual understanding to learn God's commandments. In the psalmist's mind, since God made him, God must instruct him.

that I may learn Your commandments

Why does he want understanding? Because he wants to live blamelessly even in the midst of the difficulties of life. (v. 80).

II. The plan of the creator includes testing us with affliction so that we seek comfort and deliverance in His faithful love (74–79)

A. Other believers will rejoice when our faith is vindicated Psa 119:74

Those who fear You will be glad when they see me, Because I have hoped in Your word.

Fearing the Lord means to revere and respect. It is used of the attitude of children toward their parents. Leviticus 19:3 God, 'Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father...'

It was used for the attitude one was to maintain toward the Tabernacle. Leviticus 26:2 'You shall keep My sabbaths and *revere* My sanctuary....' "

It was used of the attitude man is to have toward God (Psalm 119:74). To obey God's Word was to fear God (Deuteronomy 17:19).

FEAR OF THE LORD

Dr. Tod Kennedy defined fear of the Lord this way:
“The fear of the Lord is a learned, volitional, faith commitment to the Lord”.

1. Learned: intelligent and based upon revelation
2. Volitional: decisions are necessary
3. Faith: believe more than your sensory perception may encounter
4. Commitment: first priority for living

The fear of the Lord is based upon true learning about God, which requires positive faith decisions (Dt 17:18-20; Ps 34:11; Prov 2:1-5).

Man learns about God through what God creates and does, and through what God says=the Bible (Ex 14:26-31; Ps 19; 2 Tim 3:16).

The psalmist anticipated that those who fear the LORD will see him and rejoice.

Those who fear You will be glad when they see me

The word “glad” has a wide range of meanings in the Old Testament. Its most common use is to express the joy derived from God and His salvation (Psalm 5:11, 9:2, 32:11, 40:16).

Psa 5:11 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You.

Psa 32:11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!
Psa 40:16 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!"

This is what the psalmist hopes to do for those who observe him. We can have an effect on other believers by our relationship to the Word of God. Your attitude toward the Word has impact!

When they see me means to see him delivered from his affliction, for then they will rejoice.

People are watching you, whether you know it or not, whether you want them to or not. What do they see? Your trust in the Lord or your anxieties? Your faithfulness or your worry? What do you want them to see?

because I have hoped in your word gives the reason for this anticipated celebration: it is his faith. The deliverance of the afflicted is the result of faith in God's Word. To hope is to have confidence, to have faith.

I have hoped יָחַל (yachal) wait, hope. Expectation, which for the believer is closely linked with “faith and trust.” The sense of expectation is positive, i.e. hoping for good in the future – it is directed towards the Word of God.

In times of despair, the Psalmist encourages himself by saying, “Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, the help of His presence” (Ps 42:5; 42:11; 43:5).

There is no greater testimony to confident expectation than when Job cries out, “Though he slay me, I will hope in him...” (Job 13:15).

When those who fear God see the stability of the psalmist in his time of affliction, they will be strengthened.

We can influence others for good simply by our attitude toward the Word of God.

B. In our faith we recognize God's purpose in our afflictions (75)

**I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right,
And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.**

Right צֶדֶק (ṣedeq) justice, rightness.

He anticipates deliverance from the affliction God has brought upon him. He knows that God's decisions or rulings are "righteousness," meaning that all of God's acts of judgment, all His decisions are sure to be right. He is never wrong, never incomplete, never arbitrary.

The basic meaning of *righteous* or *right* is “not deviating from a standard”. The word denotes conformity to an absolute ethical or moral standard. God Himself is the standard by which absolute values are determined.

With this in mind the psalmist acknowledges, “in faithfulness you have afflicted me.”

The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and gracious in all His works (Psalm 145:17).

in **faithfulness** you have afflicted me אֱמוּנָה (emunah)
firmness, fidelity, steadiness.

The basic meaning of the word *faithfulness* is found in Exodus 17:12. Israel was in battle against the Amalekites, and we are told that Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands and "Thus his hands were **steady** until the sun set."

To be faithful is to be steady. God is the only constant—all else is fleeting and changing. This leaves little doubt where our confidence should lie. The works of God are faithful (Psalm 33:4), and the words of God are likewise (Psa 119:86).

You have afflicted me עָנָה (anah) to afflict, oppress, humble.

The affliction he has been experiencing came from God, even though it was through arrogant oppressors. The principle was laid down in the experience of Israel in the wilderness: God tested them to see if they would obey or not (Deut. 8:16).

God uses affliction to prompt repentance and promote trust in God; for example, the purpose of the wilderness wandering was to humble Israel (Deut 8:2).

This is a recurrent theme in Scripture. Will you trust God when things are bad?

God is therefore to be thanked for affliction. This is what we saw in verse 71:

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.

Those who understand the ways of God know that ultimately it is His plan to exalt the righteous and destroy the wicked, but that in His wisdom He often humbles the righteous before exalting them.

This affliction is therefore qualified by **“in your faithfulness.”**

See also Lamentations 3:22-24.

God has made it clear in Scripture that He uses suffering to develop faith and spiritual understanding.

As we face affliction we learn to evaluate the worth of God's Word.

**C. In faith we pray for God's love and mercy to
bring comfort and deliverance (76–80)**

THE PETITIONS MADE Psa 119:76-80

**Petition Concerning God's Faithful Love
Psa 119:76**

Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, According to Your word to Your servant.

“Merciful kindness” is usually translated “mercy.” It refers to God’s loyal love, His covenant love. חֶסֶד (chesed) kindness, lovingkindness, mercy, steadfast love, loyal love

Comfort נָחַם (nacham) be sorry, repent, regret, be comforted, comfort. The origin of the root seems to reflect the idea of “breathing deeply,” therefore, the physical display of one’s feelings, usually sorrow, compassion, or comfort.

Comfort

This Hebrew word was well known to every pious Jew living in exile as he recalled the words of Isaiah's, "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people*" (Isa 40:1).

The same word occurs in Psa 23:4, where David says of his Shepherd, "*Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.*" A mother might comfort her child (Isa 66:13) but it is God who comforts his people (Psa 71:21; Psa 86:17; Psa 119:82; Isa 12:1; Isa 49:13; Isa 52:9).

And yet, even though the faithful know that God has a purpose in our suffering, we still pray for comfort in the affliction and deliverance from it. The prayer for comfort is in verse 76: **“Let your loyal love be comfort to me.”**

He desires that God’s faithful, covenant love will serve to bring him comfort in his affliction. The word “loyal love” is figurative, signifying what God’s love does. He is praying for the manifestation of God’s love.

According to Your word to Your servant.

What God does to demonstrate His love will bring him comfort, and the demonstration of this love will be according to the promises of God.

The Word of God tells us what God in His love will do for His people, both during affliction and in ending it. Do you know what God has promised?

Petition Concerning God's Compassion Psa 119:77

**Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live;
For Your law is my delight.**

tender mercies רַחֲמִים (rachamim) tender mercy.

The word *tender mercies* is consistently used of a deep love. It is often rooted in some kind of natural bond, such as parent-child relationship. Psalm 103:13, “Just as a father has *compassion* on his children, so the LORD has *compassion* on those who fear Him.”

When used of God’s love for man, it is freely and unconditionally bestowed. Exodus 33:19 says, the LORD will show *compassion* on whom He will show *compassion*.

When used in relationship to Israel it is an abiding love even if He has brought discipline on His people.

Lamentations 3:32 Though He causes grief, Yet He will show compassion According to the multitude of His mercies.

Isa 54:7 For a mere moment I have forsaken you, But with great mercies I will gather you.

Here the psalmist is asking God to demonstrate His tender mercies in such a way that he can live to please the Lord.

That I may live is not simply a prayer for continued physical life, but for a full life, which is the reward of those who take delight in God's Word.

Life is significant only to the extent that we fulfill the plan of God. **Psa 119:17**. Deal bountifully with Your servant, *That* I may live and keep Your word.

The basis for his prayer is that the law is his delight. Even in affliction the psalmist delights in God's law—the divine test has proven his faith, and so now he is saying that it is time for relief.

For Your law *is* my delight שֵׁשׁוּעַ sha`shua`-- to
take great pleasure in something

You pray for God's mercies in time of trouble. Why?
For your comfort?

D. In faith we pray for righteousness to prevail over evil (78)

Petition Concerning the Arrogant Psa 119:78

Let the proud be ashamed, For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood; But I will meditate on Your precepts

The other side of the prayer for relief is for God to deal with those who have caused his suffering. He prays that they be put to shame, meaning soundly destroyed.

Proud -- frequently used to refer to three specific aspects of pride.

1. presumption. Because a person is proud he presumes too much in his favor, especially in the sense of authority.
2. rebellion or disobedience. Because the person is proud he asserts his own will to the point of rebelling against those in authority over him
3. willful decision without regard for the damage to others.

Let the proud be ashamed be ashamed, בּוֹשׁ (*bosh*)

The primary meaning of this root is “to fall into disgrace, normally through failure, either of self or of an object of trust.”

This has a meaning different from the English “to be ashamed,” in that the English stresses the inner attitude, the state of mind, while the Hebrew means “to come to shame” and stresses the sense of public disgrace, a physical state.

Let the proud be ashamed, For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood; But I will meditate on Your precepts

The word *falsehood* looks back to verse 69 where the same word is used. In each case, the word means *without cause*. The psalmist is being slandered.

In verse 69 he focused on the Word when slandered; in verse 78 he focuses on prayer. There is a dialog: God speaks to us in His Word; we speak back to Him in prayer.

For they treated me wrongfully עִוָּת ('awat) bend, make crooked, pervert. In Amos 8:5 this word pertains to dishonest business transactions, where scales are falsified.

The psalmist appeals to God because his rights were subverted by the godless (Ps 119:78).

with falsehood שֶׁקֶר (*sheqer*) *lie*. It is used of the breaking of a promise, being false to a treaty or commitment, hence an empty promise.

But I will meditate on Your precepts

Meditate שִׁיחַ (*siah*)

The basic meaning of this verb seems to be “rehearse,” or “go over a matter in one’s mind.” This meditation or contemplation may be done either inwardly or outwardly.

It is used of silent reflection on God’s works (Ps 77:8; 9:12), and God’s Word (Ps 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 148).

It is used of rehearsing aloud God’s works (I Chr 16:9; Ps 105:2; 145:5).

If the subject is painful, it is translated “to complain” (Ps 55:17; Job 7:11).

The psalmist is thinking about what God has revealed in His Word and he uses Scripture in his prayers.

**E. In faith we pray for other believers to unite
with us in the faith (79)**

Concerning The God-fearers Psa 119:79

**Let those who fear You turn to me, Those who
know Your testimonies.**

Let those who fear You turn to me, Those who know Your testimonies.

The psalmist prays for other believers to turn, or return, to him. It may be that they were deceived by the arrogant into thinking the psalmist was at fault.

But when they see the deliverance of the LORD they will turn back.

But he is asking here for spiritual support from others who fear the Lord. We should not be afraid of sharing our fears or needs with other believers so that they can pray for us or encourage us.

Petition Concerning Himself Psa 119:80

**Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes,
That I may not be ashamed.**

The embarrassment that comes from ignoring God's Word can be avoided only if we obey it diligently. Any shame we might have for failure to live according to God's Word can be averted by obedience to it.

This applies to our life in time as well as at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

1 John 2:28 ¶ And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

The prayer is that his heart would be blameless, that is, in all his decisions and thinking he would be solid in his adherence to God's Word.

To be "blameless" means that he could not be justly accused of living contrary to the Word of God.

The reason for this petition is that he not be put to shame. He knows that if he is not loyal to God's Word, God might not deliver him. He may put his faith in the LORD's promises, but that faith must be demonstrated by a blameless walk.

The shame may come in the form of divine discipline because we have not trusted or obeyed the Lord.

Or the shame may be that the affliction continues without deliverance. In which case the Lord is not glorified in your life.

Therefore we make it our aim....to be well pleasing to Him. (2 Cor 5:9)