

Psalms 119:144

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

Analysis

The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting—This repeats the theme of v. 142, emphasizing the eternal validity of God's covenant stipulations. **Give me understanding, and I shall live** (הַבִּינֵנִי וְאֶחְיֶה, havineni ve-echyeh)—True life depends on understanding (binah, discernment, insight) God's testimonies. The petition recognizes that mere intellectual knowledge is insufficient; spiritual illumination is necessary.

Proverbs 4:13 declares, "Keep instruction... for she is thy life." Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word... of God" (Luke 4:4). The life spoken of is not merely biological existence but covenant life, fullness of relationship with God. John 17:3 defines eternal life as knowing God—and knowing requires His gift of understanding. The Spirit must illuminate what Scripture reveals (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Historical Context

In wisdom literature, understanding (binah) was the highest goal of education. But the psalmist recognizes that understanding God's eternal testimonies requires divine enablement—a gift, not merely human achievement.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What is the connection between understanding God's Word and experiencing true spiritual life?
2. How do you actively seek God's gift of understanding rather than relying solely on your own study and intellect?

Interlinear Text

צְדָקָה	עֲדוּתְךָ יְיָ	לְעוֹלָם	הַבִּינֵי נִי
The righteousness	of thy testimonies	is everlasting	give me understanding
H6664	H5715	H5769	H995

וְאֶחְיֶה:
and I shall live
H2421

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:22 (Parallel theme): For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

2 Corinthians 4:6 (Parallel theme): For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Daniel 12:10 (Parallel theme): Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

Isaiah 27:11 (Parallel theme): When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

Psalms 119:169 (Parallel theme): Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.

Proverbs 10:21 (Righteousness): The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

Psalms 119:66 (Parallel theme): Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.

Psalms 119:138 (Righteousness): Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.

Psalms 119:152 (Parallel theme): Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.

Psalms 19:9 (Righteousness): The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.