

Psalms 119:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

Analysis

Achalai yikkonu drakhay lishmor chuqekha (Oh that my ways were directed/established to keep Your statutes!). Achalai (Oh that/would that) expresses earnest longing. Kun (be established/fixed/directed) indicates firm resolve and consistent course. Derek (way/path) represents conduct, lifestyle. Chok (statute) means engraved decree, fixed law. The psalmist longs for internal transformation enabling consistent obedience. This isn't proud confidence ("I will obey") but humble petition ("Oh that I could obey!"), acknowledging need for divine help to establish wavering ways. Anticipates new covenant promise: "I will put my laws into their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10).

Historical Context

Israel's history revealed pattern: zealous commitment followed by gradual drift. At Sinai they eagerly pledged obedience (Exodus 19:8, 24:3, 7), yet within weeks worshiped golden calf (Exodus 32). Joshua's generation served God, but next generation forsook Him (Judges 2:10-12). Josiah's reform brought revival, but his sons returned to idolatry (2 Kings 22-23, 2 Chronicles 36). Paul described similar struggle: "the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:19). Only divine enablement establishes unstable human ways.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Do you long for established ways (consistent obedience) or feel satisfied with inconsistent spiritual life?
2. What internal transformation needs to occur for your ways to be firmly directed toward God's statutes?
3. How does recognizing your need for God's help (rather than self-sufficient resolve) change your approach to holiness?

Interlinear Text

אֵלֵּי	יָכֹנוּ	דְּרָכַי	לִשְׁמֹר	חֻקֶּיךָ:
O that	were directed	my ways	to keep	thy statutes
H305	H3559	H1870	H8104	H2706

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 51:10 (Parallel theme): Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

2 Thessalonians 3:5 (Parallel theme): And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

Hebrews 13:21 (Parallel theme): Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Jeremiah 31:33 (Parallel theme): But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Psalms 119:36 (Parallel theme): Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

Psalms 119:32 (Parallel theme): I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

Psalms 119:173 (Parallel theme): Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

Psalms 119:159 (Parallel theme): Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.

Psalms 119:131 (Parallel theme): I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

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