

Psalm 19

Being Controlled by God

#0623

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 10, 1968

Let's turn to the 19th Psalm. We will read this responsively as a basis for our meditation this Sabbath morning worship hour.

As the shepherd boy, David had many opportunities to look up at the stars as he guarded his sheep on the hills of Bethlehem—those same hills where, a thousand years later, the angel appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus.

And so, he sang out of his experience his appreciation of the wonderful power and glory of God as revealed in the heavens. Then his mind turned to that same wonderful plan as revealed in human relationships—the relationship of man to God and man to his fellow man.

I'll read the first verse, and you read the second, and so on.

[Psalm 19:1–14 read responsively.]

[Elder Frazee] “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork” Psalm 19:1.

[Congregation] “Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge” Psalm 19:2.

[Elder Frazee] “There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard” Psalm 19:3.

[Congregation] “Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun” Psalm 19:4.

[Elder Frazee] “Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race” Psalm 19:5.

[Congregation] “His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof” Psalm 19:6.

[Elder Frazee] “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” Psalm 19:7.

[Congregation] “The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes” Psalm 19:8.

[Elder Frazee] “The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous all together” Psalm 19:9.

[Congregation] “More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” Psalm 19:10.

[Elder Frazee] “Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward” Psalm 19:11.

[Congregation] “Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults” Psalm 19:12.

[Elder Frazee] “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression” Psalm 19:13.

[Congregation] “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer” Psalm 19:14.

I see that some of our children know this Psalm by heart. That’s good. This is good for all of us to know.

Now, you notice, the first part of the Psalm deals with God’s law in the natural world, and I suppose that this law is no more wonderfully displayed than in the celestial bodies. As we think of the movements of the moon around the earth, the earth around the sun, the sun around the common center of gravity of this galaxy, and then, as *Great Controversy* so beautifully pictures it:

“...suns and stars and systems, all in their appointed order circling the throne of Deity” *Great Controversy*, page 677.

Can we imagine anything like that happening without the reign of law? Utterly impossible. Chaos in the universe—we can’t conceive how anything could long survive. But the sun is exactly where it belongs, the moon is exactly where it belongs, this earth is exactly where it belongs. Everything in the heavenly bodies is on time in its proper place.

What do we call a situation where everything is in its proper place and everything on time? Order. That’s what we see all through the universe. Do you like it that way? Do you really? Thank the Lord because that’s the way it is all through the universe, and pretty soon, we’re going to have the privilege of going from world to world and star to star on the most wonderful space trip of eternity.

“...These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth...” Revelation 14:7.

...it is written concerning the remnant. Won't that be wonderful? But wherever we go, we will find order, arrangement, everything fitting into its place, everything on time. Yes, if we learn to love that here, we shall love it there.

But you know, when we come to study the heavenly bodies, we find that one of the great laws of the universe is the law of gravitation. We're so used to this that we take it for granted. If I pick up something here and drop it, which way will it go? Are you all sure? It won't go out the window or start for the ceiling? Let's see [dropping item]. Sure enough, you were right. And so it is.

And this, of course, is because of the law of gravitation. Newton discovered it. He didn't invent it or make it. It was there a long time before. He observed it. And it's because of this that we can sit here in our seats this morning without being stuck to the seat and the seat being nailed to the floor. We're perfectly safe from wandering off somewhere—this law of gravitation. Do you like it?

And, mark you, this does not mean that everything that is on the ground must stay on the ground. A seed is on the ground, but it sprouts, rootlets go down into the soil, leaves begin to open toward heaven, and 100 years later, we come and gaze at a mighty oak. Did it break the law of gravitation? Oh, no. It worked with it and with other laws that God has established.

Again, we see a bird out here on the ground—a robin or meadowlark—but presently, it soars off in space. Is it breaking the law of gravitation? Not a bit of it. He's using it and other laws that God has established and flown about.

Men, now, are traveling from time to time, clear around this globe, miles from this planet. Have they broken the law of gravitation? Not for a second, my friend. They are utilizing that law and other laws that God has established.

They hope to land a man on the moon pretty soon. If they do, I can tell you this. It won't be by breaking the laws of gravitation and the others that God has established—not a bit of it. It will be by the most careful study of every detail of those laws.

Scientists—real scientists—do not try to break any law of nature. They know that those laws are fixed, established. They try to study them and find out how they operate, and then work in harmony with them, use them to accomplish a good objective.

Now, God wants us to do that same thing in our human relationships, and so in the last part of the Psalm, David devotes the time to the law of God, the moral law, the statutes that God has established to govern our relationships as moral beings to Him and to one another.

And he starts in the seventh verse with that wonderful statement:

“The law of the LORD is perfect...” Psalm 19:7.

Do you believe it? Now, that which is perfect is not to be changed because if you change a perfect thing, it is no longer what? Perfect. Do you believe that? So, the power that thought himself able to change times and laws were merely thinking. He couldn't really do it. The man of sin could not modify or improve or in any way change the law of God. He could no more change the Ten Commandments than he could change the law of gravitation. Just as helpless in either case.

The practice of men may change, for God has given them power of choice, but just as when we break the law of gravitation, there are consequences, so when we break the moral law of God, there are consequences.

You notice that all through this Psalm, David is singing a song of joy. Notice, the picture in the fifth verse, speaking of the sun, he says:

"Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and *rejoiceth* as a strong man to run a race" Psalm 19:5.

That's the picture of nature. Now, in the eighth verse, the moral law:

"The statutes of the LORD are right..." Psalm 19:8.

What does it say?

"...rejoicing the heart..." Psalm 19:8.

And again, in the 10th verse, he says that these judgments are:

"More to be desired [are they] than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb"
Psalm 19:10.

The law of God brings joy and satisfaction. Do you really believe that? Does the law of God bring joy to you? What do you think about when you think about having a good time—keeping the law or breaking the law?

Do you know there are millions of people whose idea of a good time is that they have been good—or what they call being good—as long as they can stand, and now they want to steal away and really let down? That's having a good time. As if we could suspend the law of gravitation for Saturday night.

No. The law of gravitation works on Saturday night the same as it does on Friday night, right? And the great moral laws, my friend, as to what brings happiness—they're operating seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, and this is for our joy.

Wouldn't it be too bad if we weren't sure when we got up in the morning whether things were going to go up or down if we dropped them:

"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" Malachi 3:6.

I've been thinking about this matter of human relationships as governed by the law of God. You know, in His law, God sets up certain relationships in the family and in society. He's given parents the responsibility of rearing the children and guiding them in the ways of God, so He lays upon parents a great responsibility. He lays on children the responsibility to be obedient.

Let's repeat the Fifth Commandment together:

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth Thee"
Exodus 20:12.

Which commandment is this? The fifth. That's the first one of the second table—fundamental to all.

Now, do you know, there are hardly any children and youth—especially teenagers today—that believe that commandment. I suppose there are thousands that never even heard of it—never been taught the Bible. There's a generation growing up today, many of whom are ignorant of the law of God. But the reason we have these riots in the universities is the children were not taught to obey when they were little.

Paul said that in the last days perilous times would come and men would be lovers of their own selves and children would be what? Disobedient to parents. We've come to that time that's one of the signs of the times.

But, dear children, God wants *you* to be signs of the times in an entirely different way. He wants you to be the wonderful children who stand out from the crowd, like Joseph and Daniel, like Esther and Mary—children who are noted for their obedience instead of their rioting, children who are outstanding for their cooperation, in the home, in the school, and wherever God's providence leads them. This is the way to be happy. "Oh, no, no."

Well, you may try out other ways, but two and two are still four, and the law of gravitation still works. And this is something that God ordained from the beginning—the responsibility of parents to lead, direct, command; the responsibility of children to respond, to cooperate, to obey. Don't be afraid of that good old-fashioned word, obey.

Now, human philosophy, human wisdom have studied many different substitutes for this. Today, in various courses in schools and extension courses and parent/teacher associations, fathers and mothers are devoting thousands of precious hours to learn how to deal with the problem—I was going to say of adjusting to their children. But the law of the Lord is perfect. It's perfect, and all the human substitutes for the simple wonderful plan that God gave the patriarchs. All those human substitutes are cheap, inefficient and ineffectual, my friends.

Now, it's true, of course, that in God's great plan, love is the basis of the law. It is in *His* law. It must be in the home. The laws that father and mother give the children are to be the laws of *love*, but they are *laws*. They may be expressed—they should be expressed—in gentle, loving tones, but they should be treated by the

children not as suggestions. “Maybe, if you *could* arrange to drop your playing, son, mother would like you to do this or that” No. The word of the parent is to be law, as the Word of God is to be law.

Don’t misunderstand me. There’s a place in the home for simple requests which are nothing but requests, but I’m talking now about the directive that keeps the home moving smoothly. The child is to respond instantly, and my dear friends, delayed obedience may be disobedience.

In the natural world, the movement of the moon around the earth, the earth around the sun—if those movements were delayed, it would introduce what into the universe? Chaos, anarchy.

Several years ago, my mother was in a supermarket getting some groceries. She observed just ahead of her a young mother with a little fellow at her side. She was filling up her basket with groceries, and among others, she selected one item from the shelf. For some unknown reason, the little fellow objected. He took it out of the basket and put it back on the shelf.

The mother very sweetly and courteously took it from the shelf and put it back in the basket, and just as self-willed, he took it out of the basket and put it back on the shelf. And at that, she surrendered and said, Very well, we won’t get it, and then his royal highness took it from the shelf and put it in the basket and said, Oh, well, you can have it.

No, don’t laugh, friends. It’s to weep over. You know where that fellow is headed for? He’s headed for the rioting in the university. He’s headed for the riots in the street. He’s headed for the penitentiary if he doesn’t die from some policeman’s bullet beforehand. Obedience is the great lesson of life. True, I repeat, it’s to be through love, but the law is to be administered.

And may I address you young people in your teens and twenties. Do not think that growing up is simply a matter of the calendar turning over so many times, and do not think that having arrived at a certain age, you can forget these principles. These principles are as long as life shall last. The truth of the matter is the reason the child must learn obedience is that he’s to practice it all his life.

Childhood and adolescence are not two consecutive penitentiary terms that once you serve, you can march out having paid your debt to society and do as you please the rest of your life. No. Childhood and adolescence are two consecutive educational periods in which we are to thoroughly master the obedience of love. We are to become so acquainted with the law of obedience, so experienced in it, so satisfied with it, that we follow it forever after.

Ah, but somebody says, don’t people have to be adults someday? Yes. You know what an adult is? An adult is one who has established an understanding and meaningful relationship with God and his fellow men by obedience to these laws. That’s what an adult is. And there are a great many 20 and 30 and 40 and 50, yes, 60, 70 and 80-year-old people running around who really are still immature, childish, in their attitude toward law.

Now, says one, Brother Frazee, I hear what you're saying, but my heart doesn't feel this way. I know what you mean. I was born with one of the most stubborn, self-willed dispositions that ever came in a baby. I can blame that on heredity, can't I? Yes. But I thank the Lord that my father and mother believed in the principles that I'm studying with you this morning. And in various ways, for it takes various ways, they taught me the rule of law.

The rule of love, yes, but the *rule* of love. Entreaty? Yes, but more than entreaty—command. Request? Yes, but more than request—directives which were to be obeyed.

I was no model child. If I had a nickel for every whipping I received, I think I could match all you're doing in investments each year. I'm not proud of that. I simply state it as a fact. I was a hard customer.

But oh, I'm so thankful, my dear friends, that my parents kept at it. They kept loving me, but they kept restraining me, and when I finally came to the teenage years—14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19—there was many a time through those years that I felt if I could only get loose and get out and do some things that I wanted to do, oh, how thankful I would be.

But, my dear friends, I thank the Lord with all my heart, that by that time, God had already, as the result of my training and the influence of His Spirit, put within my heart enough, shall I say, gravitational pull toward my home and my parents, that I could not bear the thought of disappointing them and breaking their hearts.

And that was what kept me through those turbulent years of the teens, and I say to every parent, your great job when the children are little in your arms, when they're toddling, walking around, and as they get older, through the years of childhood and early adolescence, is to so establish two things that those children shall be held—one is the rule of law, the other is the rule of love, and the two are twins, identical twins. They belong together.

Either one alone will not work, my friends. Parents are to love their children. Parents are to direct their children. Children are to love their parents. Children are to obey their parents.

And so, it wasn't very long after I got beyond the teens till I was engaged in evangelistic work. Well, I found that I was still under direction. For many years, I was in conference work. I couldn't just come and go as I please. Committees had to meet. Officers had to direct where I would hold meetings and what I would do.

And now, in the years that I've been in the self-supporting work, I find that it is very much a rule of law and order. I find that I, here too, must look to committees and boards for directive. And brethren and sisters, the longer I live, the more I agree with the psalmist in our verse this morning that the law of the Lord is perfect, that His commandments are sweeter than honey, and I want to live forever in a program where everything is in its place and everything on time. What do you say?

Now, let me deal with this practical problem that I mentioned a few moments ago. What if I'm a young person or older, and I find in my heart a rising up against

these principles—what can it do about it? I'll tell you what you can do about it. I've had to do it many a time, my dear friends—when I was a boy and since I've been a man. I've had to go by myself and get down on my knees and pray to God to give me a willing, obedient spirit. That's right. Go to the closet or to the hills, out under a tree or by my bed in my room, and ask God, for Jesus' sake, to convert my wayward heart, to subdue my rebellious heart, and to give me a heart that loves Him and will keep His commandments. I can do that, and every one of us can do that, my dear friends.

And whether it's in the home or the institution or the church, we must all learn this lesson of obedience, of respecting authority, and of loving to do it—loving to do it.

Oh friends, if you're having a battle in your house, if there's something that makes you restless, dissatisfied, may I tell you, Jesus can change your heart. Jesus can give you peace instead of unrest. Jesus can give you joy instead of rebellion. Jesus can give you a pleasure in cooperating instead of feeling like a slave or a prisoner. He can do it. I know He can. He's done it for me again and again. I know He can do it for you.

Why not seek Him. Why not say, Lord, I know this is what I need. I need to be converted. I need to have a change of heart so that I love to obey, love to cooperate. Ah, my friend, it is not natural for the unconverted human heart, not at all, but God can work the miracle. He can put a new heart in you. He can put a new spirit in you.

As we behold Him obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, a longing desire comes into our heart to not disappoint a love like that. Ah friends, if He died that you might have this opportunity, must it not be something worth infinitely more than any self-willed program in this world. Wonderful Jesus—wonderful Jesus. He gave His all for us. Let's make Him happy. What do you say, dear friends? What do you say?

May we bow our heads. Precious Lord, write Thy holy law in our hearts, and just now help each one to feel the gentle knock of Jesus at the door, and may we let Thee in to rule forevermore. Forbid that self-will should bar the door. Grant, rather, that Thy good Spirit shall enable us to throw open wide the door and let Jesus in, to make Him happy forever. For His sake, amen.

I wish we might sing, All to Jesus I Surrender, as we close this service.

All to Jesus, I surrender,
All to Him, I freely give.

Hymn #573, and as we stand and sing, I want to give an invitation. If there's somebody here this morning that realizes that you need some help on things we've studied this morning, and you want to pray to God that He'll help you and you want us to pray for and with you, I want you to come forward as we sing this hymn, and as you seek God, God will work a miracle in your life.

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