

Psalm 119 Terms for the Word of God

In Psalm 119 there are several synonyms for God's Word in this text. In fact, only 6 verses in the psalm do not have a word for the Bible (vs. 84, 90-91, 121-122, 149); that is a mere 3% of the psalm! 97% of the verses in this psalm reference the activity of the Word of God.

1. **"Ways"** – This is the Hebrew word *dabar* and can be found in 32 verses. It is the most general of the 8 titles and refers simply to anything that comes from God's mouth. Anything that comes from His holy, perfect mouth is His "way" for mankind.
2. **"Testimonies"** – This is the Hebrew word *edot* and can be found in 23 verses. It is a word often used synonymously with the 10 Commandments. It is a word meaning "what God solemnly testifies to be His will;" it can also mean "to bear witness." For example, Israel was told to place the Law next to the Ark so it would be a witness against them (Deut 31:26).
3. **"Statutes"** – This is the Hebrew word *huqqim* and can be found in 22 verses. Its meaning is "to inscribe, to cut." It seems to speak of the permanence of Scripture as it is engraved on our hearts (Isa 30:8).
4. **"Word"** – This is the Hebrew word *imrah* and can be found in 43 verses. Its root word means "to promise." It refers to anything that God vows to do, how He judges, how He rewards, etc. for mankind.
5. **"Rules"** – This is the Hebrew word *mishpatim* and can be found in 24 verses. It means "what the Divine Judge has ruled to be right" or "ordinances." It refers to any divine legal issues. It looks at the judicial side of God's Word; it sees truth as something that is legally binding upon mankind.
6. **"Commandments"** – This is the Hebrew word *mitsvot* and can be found in 24 verses. Its root refers to teaching. The title means "what God has taught us to observe."
7. **"Precepts"** – This is the Hebrew word *piqqudim* and can be found in 21 verses. It means "what God has appointed to be done, like a covenant." It is synonymous with covenants. A precept is that aspect of truth that refers to anything God has covenanted with mankind over.
8. **"Law"** – This is the Hebrew word *torah* and can be found in 25 verses. This is the most common title for God's Word in the O.T. Its root meaning is "instruction." It refers to the totality of everything God teaches mankind.

Psalm 119 is an acrostic psalm in praise of the Word of God and its role in the life of the believer. An acrostic follows an alphabetic arrangement. In the original Hebrew each line in each of the 22 sections of this psalm begins with the same Hebrew letter.

Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible reader's companion (electronic ed.)* (376).
Wheaton: Victor Books & worldlysaints.wordpress.com

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