

## Sin and Shin: Psalm 119:161-168

### Launch:

Have your class discuss times in their life where they have felt extremely stressed. This could be memories from their childhood, trouble at school or on the sports field, or just the craziness caused by a global pandemic.

After many examples have been discussed, have them describe what it felt like to finally feel relief from this stress. Let them reflect on the peace they felt at the end of a stressful situation or time in life.

Life is full of turmoil, stress, and even persecution. However, true peace can be found only in God and His Word. In this passage, the Psalmist joyfully declares the peace he has in the law of God. This same peace can be had for all believers who hold fast to the wonderful law of God.

**Highlight:** Which verse spoke to you this week?

### Explain:

Each of the next eight verses in Psalm 119 begins with the Hebrew letter Sin and Shin. The theme present throughout these eight stanzas of this great poem is a theme of peace. The Psalmist describes the discipline of peace in the first four verses, but this discipline of peace then leads in the direction of peace. The first thing one must understand before being able to have biblical peace is that the natural human state is one of conflict. Humans are sinful creatures that because of our fallen nature, are naturally in a state of conflict rather than peace. We see the Psalmist writing not from a state of peace, but rather from a state of conflict. He says in verse 161 that princes persecute him without cause. However, even in the midst of his suffering, the Psalmist is disciplined to seek after God. He rejoices at God's Word, he hates what is wrong, and he praises God every day. This discipline over time is something that has changed the Psalmist internally. He no longer desires the futility of the world, but rather, his desires are the desire of God, Himself. This discipline leads the Psalmist in the direction of peace. He says it very clearly in verse 165. "Great peace have those who love your law." The application of this passage is very simple and very practical. First, examine yourself and see yourself as you are: a fallen sinner who needs God. Second, partake in spiritual disciplines to allow God to change your heart. Most notably, read your Bible every day. You will watch God transform you.

**Apply:**

1. What is it like for a person to feel peace? Describe when you feel most at peace.
2. Verse 165 says there is great peace for those who love the law of God. How has the Psalmist experienced this? How have you seen this truth in your own life?
3. In verse 162, the Psalmist rejoices at God's Word like one who finds great spoil. What does this term great spoil really mean? How can God's Word be a great spoil in our spiritual battles?
4. Verse 168 says "for all my ways are before you." How does knowing all your ways are in full view of God and that He examines all your paths bring peace and not anxiety?
5. How will daily spiritual disciplines transform you. How can you participate in the discipline of peace in your own life?