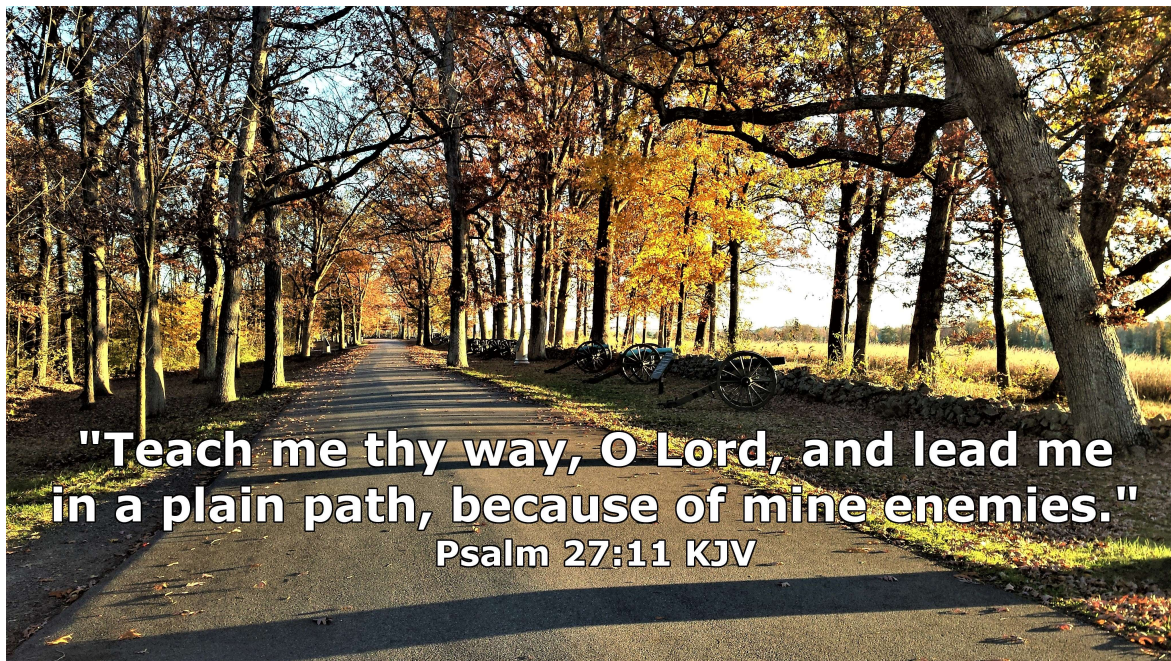


“Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord – Hymn Story and Scriptures”

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by Whitney V. Myers



**"Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me
in a plain path, because of mine enemies."
Psalm 27:11 KJV**

Gettysburg National Military Park – October Morning – Psalm 27:11
– Photo by Whitney V. Myers

"Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies." (Psalm 27:11)

Today's lesson explores the Bible verses behind the excellent hymn, "Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord."

(continued next page)



Benjamin Mansell Ramsey
(Ref. 2)

Hymn Author and Composer

Benjamin Mansell Ramsey wrote the text for "Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord" based on [Psalm 27:11](#) and several additional Scripture verses. Mr. Ramsey also composed the tune, "Camacha," which we use today when singing this hymn.

Benjamin Mansell Ramsey (1849 - 1923) was an English organist and amateur composer ([Ref. 1](#)). He also was a well-known music teacher near Bournemouth, England. Mr. Ramsey composed songs, piano pieces, and carols. He also wrote works on music theory ([Ref. 2](#)).

Wikipedia reports that Mr. Ramsey also conducted an amateur orchestra in the 1880s, and was involved in establishing the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra in 1893 ([Ref. 1](#)). He is best known for his hymn tune, "Camacha," and the text he wrote for "Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord" in 1919.

For those of you who are interested in geography, Bournemouth is located on the south coast of England (see map, [Ref. 3](#)).

Scripture Allusions

I suggest that you refer to the attached [hymn sheet music](#) for the following discussion of the Scripture verses and the hymn text ([Ref. 4](#)).

"Teach me Thy way." Mr. Ramsey skillfully wrote this hymn around the Biblical phrase, "Teach me Thy way." He included the phrase, "Teach me Thy way," 13 times in verses one through four. In the Old Testament, the Way of the Lord referred to keeping God's commandments ([Deuteronomy 5:33](#), [Ref. 5](#)). In Joseph Benson's Commentary, the phrase "Teach me Thy way, O Lord" means *"What course I shall take to please thee, and to discharge my duty, and to save myself from ruin"* ([Ref. 6](#)).

David, the Psalmist, asked God to teach him God's way in Psalm 27:11 and Psalm 86:11. Psalm 25:4-5 is similar. David's request to God, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord," is an excellent example for us to follow (Ref. 5).

"Thy guiding grace afford" (hymn, verse 1). These words call to my mind Jesus' promise in John 16:13, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth." Jesus promised us as believers that the Holy Spirit will guide us. The Greek word for *guide* in John 16:13 is *hodégeó*, which literally means "to show the way" (Ref. 7, Ref. 8). Now we can see the close connection between the prayerful hymn words in verse 1, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord" and "Thy guiding grace afford." As believers in Christ, we need the Holy Spirit's guidance to teach us God's way and truth in each of our life's circumstances.

"Help me to walk aright, more by faith, less by sight" (hymn, verse 1). This hymn phrase likely refers to Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

"Make Thou my pathway plain" (hymn, verse 3). Psalm 27:11 begins with the words, "Teach me thy way, O Lord" and ends with the words, "and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies" (KJV translation). The transliteration of the Hebrew word for *plain* is *mishor* (Ref. 9). In Psalm 27:11, *mishor* means literally *a level place (free from obstacles)* and figuratively, *a place of safety, comfort, prosperity* (Ref. 9). In the literal sense, a *plain* is a *level area or plateau* as compared to a mountainous area, for example, 1 Kings 20:22-25. In the figurative sense, David's prayer to make his pathway *plain* (Psalm 27:11) was to request that *God would make his way safe* (Ref. 10).

Mr. Ramsey wrote in verse 3 of the hymn, "Shine through the cloud and rain, through sorrow, toil, and pain; Make Thou my pathway plain, teach me Thy way!" With these words, we pray that God *will make our way safe* and that God *will comfort us* through these difficult times.

"Until the race is won" and "Until the crown is won" (hymn, verse 4). Mr. Ramsey likely drew inspiration from 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 which alludes to both of these phrases. "Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything.

However, they do it to receive a crown that will fade away, but we a crown that will never fade away."

Let us resolve to run the race with endurance that God has given us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Listen. I suggest that you listen to one or both of the following Youtube videos to hear examples of how the hymn can be sung.

Traditional hymn in 3/4 time - The Metropolitan Tabernacle, London congregation singing "Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord" - [Click here](#).

This contemporary, 4/4 time solo arrangement of "Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord" in 4/4 time will uplift you. [Click here](#).

Apply. In what aspect of your life today do you need God to remove obstacles and to make your pathway plain or safe? Pray and ask God to teach you his way and to give you his guidance.

References

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._Mansell_Ramsey
2. http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/r/a/m/ramsey_bm.htm
3. <https://www.worldatlas.com/eu/gb/eng/where-is-bournemouth.html>
4. https://library.timelesstruths.org/music/Teach_Me_Thy_Way_O_Lord/
5. <http://www.scriptureway.com/home/the-way-of-the-lord-old-testament>
6. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/benson/psalms/27.htm>
7. <https://biblehub.com/greek/3594.htm>
8. <http://www.scriptureway.com/home/the-spirit-of-truth>
9. <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/4334.htm>
10. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/psalms/27.htm>

Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord

Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Psa. 27:11

Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. 86:11



1. Teach me Thy way, O Lord, teach me Thy way! Thy guid - ing grace af - ford,
2. When I am sad at heart, teach me Thy way! When earth - ly joys de - part,
3. When doubts and fears a - rise, teach me Thy way! When storms o'er - spread the skies,
4. Long as my life shall last, teach me Thy way! Wher - e'er my lot be cast,



teach me Thy way! Help me to walk a - right, more by faith,
teach me Thy way! In hours of lone - li - ness, in times of
teach me Thy way! Shine through the cloud and rain, through sor - row,
teach me Thy way! Un - til the race is run, un - til the



less by sight; Lead me with heav'n - ly light, teach me Thy way!
dire dis - tress, In fail - ure or suc - cess, teach me Thy way!
toil, and pain; Make Thou my path - way plain, teach me Thy way!
jour - ney's done, Un - til the crown is won, teach me Thy way!

WORDS and MUSIC: "Camacha"; Benjamin M. Ramsey, 1919. Public Domain.