



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Final Thoughts on Treasuring God's Word

PSALM 119:10

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We have just come through a heated election season. It is striking to consider how deeply many of the candidates desired their offices. The huge amount of time, effort and energy expended; the large sum of money spent; the personal attacks endured; all required a tremendous aspiration to emerge victorious on November 2nd. This might give us pause to consider what each of us most desires in life. The answer to this question is important as it will largely determine the direction of our lives and even points to our eternal destiny. Psalm 119 was written by one whose greatest desire was to know and follow God and consequently loved and treasured God's Word. As we conclude our series on this great Psalm, let's review what it has to say about our desire to know and follow God by treasuring His Word. Before we proceed with our final study of Psalm 119, we will again read the next section of this great chapter:

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*¹²⁹Your testimonies are wonderful;
Therefore my soul observes them.*

*¹³⁰The unfolding of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple.*

*¹³¹I opened my mouth wide and panted,
For I longed for Your commandments.*

*¹³²Turn to me and be gracious to me,
After Your manner with those who love Your name.*

*¹³³Establish my footsteps in Your word,
And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.*

*¹³⁴Redeem me from the oppression of man,
That I may keep Your precepts.*

*¹³⁵Make Your face shine upon Your servant,
And teach me Your statutes.*

*¹³⁶My eyes shed streams of water,
Because they do not keep Your law.*

As we have mentioned throughout this series, Psalm 119 is a unique chapter dedicated to expressing a tremendous love

for the Scriptures. It is in fact a prayer full of praises for God's Word, proclamations regarding God's Word, and prayers for God's help to know, understand, and apply His Word to daily life. While it is difficult to nail down a "key verse" for this chapter, I believe we find one statement in verse 10 which points us to the real secret of treasuring God's Word as we should:

¹⁰With all my heart I have sought You;

Do not let me wander from Your commandments.

The writer exclaims how he seeks after God with all his heart, and for that reason he never wants to wander from the commandments found in His Word. Seeking God with all our heart is the secret to treasuring God's Word. It is only when we treasure ***God Himself*** that we will love and pursue His Word as we should.

This love and desire to seek after God is a sign that one has true saving faith in Christ. It is what preachers of old called the "religious affections". These desires or affections are the motivations of our heart, ultimately determining everything we are and do. They are the "strong inclinations of our heart that are demonstrated in our thinking, feeling, and acting". This is what the Bible often refers to as the "heart".

Let us recall just a few of the verses in Psalm 119 that speak of these affections: "Your Word have I ***treasured*** in my heart..." (vs. 11); "I have ***rejoiced*** in the way of Your testimonies..." (vs. 14); "I shall ***delight*** in Your statutes..." (vs. 16); "My soul is ***crushed with longing*** after Your ordinances..." (vs. 20); "O how I ***love*** Your law..." (vs. 97); "Your testimonies are the ***joy*** of my heart..." (vs. 111). These speak of positive affections but we see a negative aspect as well: "I ***hate*** every false way..." (vs. 104); "My flesh ***trembles*** for fear of You..." (vs. 120); "My eyes ***shed streams of water***, because they do not keep Your law..." (vs. 136). Our writer speaks vividly about a deep seated desire for God's Word, a desire that certainly affected his thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Such desire and affection for God and His Word is a sign and evidence of genuine

BIBLE STUDIES

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faith in Christ. We also find that such affection and love for God is the only thing that can replace our love for worldly things.

AFFECTION FOR GOD AND HIS WORD IS AN EVIDENCE OF TRUE SAVING FAITH

Deuteronomy 6:5 lays out what Jesus called the Great Commandment: “**You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**” (See Matthew 22:35-40; Mark 12:28-30; Luke 10:25-27). We take note that verse six connects this love for God to a love for His Word: “**These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart**”.

Peter writes of how we should long for the Word of God like a newborn baby longs for milk (1 Peter 2:2). He immediately points out that we do so because we have “**tasted the kindness of the Lord**” (vs. 3). When we truly understand and have experienced the kindness and grace of God, then we will naturally hunger to know Him better through His Word. This love and desire for Him and His Word is an evidence of spiritual life, just as hunger for milk is a sign of life for a newborn infant. We must ask ourselves, do we have a love for God and a desire and affection for His Word, such as we have seen demonstrated through our studies in Psalm 119?

IT IS ONLY GODLY AFFECTIONS THAT WILL REPLACE OUR WORLDLY AFFECTIONS

Our love for God is constantly challenged by our love for the things of this world. As a matter of fact, the Bible teaches us that both cannot exist together:

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Matthew 6:24

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 2:15

We cannot supplant our love for the things of this world by merely considering how bad they are. We give those things up when we gain a love of something else, something of even greater beauty and value. When we truly begin to grasp

Who God is and what He has done for us, our love and desire for Him far outweighs anything this world has to offer.

SO HOW DO WE BEGIN TO TREASURE GOD AND HIS WORD MORE DEEPLY?

How can we begin to treasure God and love Him more deeply? We can do so simply by looking at the cross of Christ. It is at the cross we see God's absolute holiness and hatred of sin. It is at the cross we are reminded of our own wretched sinfulness and the fact that there Jesus was bearing the wrath and punishment for our sin. In so doing we cannot help but grow in love and affection for Him. Consider the words of Jonathan Edwards:

“The glory and beauty of the blessed Savior, which is most worthy in itself, to be the object of our admiration and love, is there exhibited in the most affecting manner that can be conceived of, as it appears, shining in all its luster, in the face of an incarnate, infinitely loving, meek, compassionate, dying Redeemer. All the virtues of the Lamb of God, his humility, patience, meekness, submission, obedience, love and compassion, are exhibited to our view... And there we have the most affecting manifestation of God's hatred of sin, and his wrath and justice in punishing it; as we see his justice in the strictness and inflexibility of it; and his wrath in its terribleness, in so dreadfully punishing our sins, in one who was infinitely dear to him, and loving to us.

“How can we sit and hear of the infinite height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of God in Christ Jesus, of his giving his infinitely dear Son, to be offered up a sacrifice for the sins of men, and of the unparalleled love of the innocent, and holy, and tender Lamb of God, manifested in his dying agonies, his bloody sweat, his loud and bitter cries, and bleeding heart, and all this for enemies, to redeem them from deserved, eternal burnings, and to bring to unspeakable and everlasting joy and glory; and yet be cold, and heavy, insensible, and regardless?”¹

- **ARE YOU GROWING IN YOUR LOVE AND AFFECTION FOR GOD AND HIS WORD? TO DO SO WE MUST SIMPLY LOOK TO CHRIST AND HIS CROSS AND BE REMINDED OF ALL HE HAS DONE FOR US!**

¹ Edwards, Jonathan. Religious Affections. P. 25.