

The Effects of Bible Meditation

Psalm 119:97-104

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Introduction: Tonight's section of Psalm 119:97-104 has no petitions (like verses 161-168). Each verse begins with words starting with "mem." We saw last week "God's Word & work are sure & settled." Tonight I have entitled this section "The effects of Bible meditation." Kirkpatrick calls this section: "The sweetness & profitableness of the study of God's law" while Wiersbe refers it to: "Beyond Bible Study." We have heard the saying, "Familiarity breeds contempt." But Spurgeon comments that it is not so with God's Word: "Familiarity with the Word of God breeds affection, & affection seeks yet greater familiarity." What are the effects of the study of & meditation upon the Word of God? Here we see the psalmist's love for God's Word, his obedience to God's Word, & his enjoyment of God's Word.

I. The psalmist's love for God's Word (:97-99)

A. The declaration of his love for the Word of God (:97) >

1. "Love" -

- a. The verb is in the "preterite" meaning what he has been doing & what he continues in habit of mind.
- b. It speaks of sincere & undoubted friendship (cf. its use elsewhere in this Psalm: 113, 119, 127, 140, 159, 163, & 167).

2. "Meditation" -

- a. It comes from the Hebrew word "to mutter"; it suggests reading aloud & talking to oneself about it; it is examining from every angle (cf. "worry").
- b. "It means that our minds & hearts are so yielded to the Spirit that He can remind us of the Word when we need it & give us fresh understanding in the new challenges we face" (Wiersbe).

Application: "He meditated in God's Word because he loved it, & then loved it the more because he meditated in it" (Spurgeon).

B. The determination of his love for the Word of God (:98-99) >

1. He was wiser than his enemies (:98) -

- a. He was wise unto salvation (Psalm 19:7).
- b. He was wise unto sustainment; "...for *they* (commandments) *are ever with me.*"

2. He was wiser than his teachers (:99) -

- a. Compare the Word of God with the Library of Congress. This speaks of "the superiority of the law to all other sources of instruction as a fountain of wisdom & prudence & discernment" (Kirkpatrick).
- b. "I am better *instructed* & have more spiritual *wisdom* & heavenly *prudence* than all my teachers" (Plumer).

Illustration: Playing chess in High School & College.

II. The psalmist's obedience to God's Word (:100-102)

A. I keep Thy precepts (:100) >

1. "Ancients" - not those in past ages but those older who have lived long & gained wisdom.
2. "Precepts" - God's Word as *prescribed* to us, suggesting "to take notice; to attend; & to have respect for."

B. I am kept from evil (:101-102) >

1. If we would *keep* the Word of God we must *let go* the evil ways of sin.
 - a. Avoiding the **actions** of evil (cf. Galatians 5:16-21).
 - b. Avoiding the **appearance** of evil (cf. I Thessalonians 5:22).
2. “They are well taught whom God teaches” (Spurgeon). “God Himself has been his teacher, not men: therefore he has been enabled to keep in the path of right” (Kirkpatrick).

Summary: Every *departure* from God’s Word is an error, which without the interposition of divine grace will be fatal. But we will be sure to *turn aside* unless in His mercy God shall *teach us*” (Plumer).

III. The psalmist’s enjoyment of God’s Word (:103-104)

A. The sweetness of God’s Word (:103) >

1. “*How sweet*” – hard to adequately express, he uses the sweetest thing he could taste.
2. “*Taste*” – savoring the Word in his mouth; speaking the Word from his mouth.

B. The satisfaction from God’s Word (:104) >

1. “*Understanding*” – speaks of discernment:
 - a. See Proverbs 1:7 & 9:10.
 - b. Compare James 3:13, 17-18.
2. “*Hate every false way*” –
 - a. Psalm 97:10, “*Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: He preserveth the souls of His saints; He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*”
 - b. “They hate the way of self-will (selfishness), self-righteousness, worldliness, pride, unbelief, & hypocrisy. May we reach this state of discrimination & determination so that we may glorify God” (Spurgeon).

Conclusion: “The Word of God is unlike any other book; we must be on good terms with the Author if we are to learn from what He has written. Our relationship to the Lord is determined by our relationship to His will, & that is determined by how we relate to His Word” (Wiersbe). How is your relationship to the Author of this Book? How about your relationship to His will? It has been said, “We know the will of God by the Word of God.” And though it has been said, “Familiarity breeds contempt,” Spurgeon pointed out, “Familiarity with the Word of God breeds affection, & affection seeks yet greater familiarity.” Therefore I might ask, “How familiar are you with God’s Word?” Could verse 97 of our text be your testimony, “*O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day*”? Could you be identified with the psalmist who had a love for the Word of God, an obedience to the Word of God, & an enjoyment in the Word of God? How about you tonight?