

# The Influence of Personal Experience or When All Else Fails – Read the Directions

*Psalm 119:73-80*

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Introduction: We come tonight to the 10<sup>th</sup> section of Psalm 119, which I have doubly entitled: “The influence of personal experience or When all else fails – read the directions.” Each of these 8 verses begins with the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet: “Jod.” The N.T. English translation renders it “jot” in Matthew 5:18. There Christ refers to fulfilment of Scripture as He says, “*For verily I say unto you, Till heaven & earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*” The word “tittle” in this verse refers to the smallest distinction between 2 Hebrew letters, illustrated by verses 33/57 & 41/49. We have all probably heard the adage: “When all else fails, read the directions (or instructions).” You may also have heard or seen the word “Bible” defined by an acrostic: “Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.” I see 3 areas of directions (or instructions) in this section of Psalm 119 > God’s Word gives directions concerning our creation (:73); concerning our companions (:74, 79); & concerning our afflictions (:75-78). Along with that breakdown of these verses note also the influence of personal experience demonstrated by the psalmist.

## I. God’s Word gives directions concerning our creation (:73)

### A. The creativity of God:

#### 1. Man is “made” by God >

a. Genesis 1:26-27 & 2:7, 22.

b. Matthew 19:4, “*Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male & female.*”

#### 2. Man is “fashioned” by God >

a. Psalm 139:13-16.

b. Job 10:8-9, “*Thine hands have made me & fashioned me together round about...*”

Summary: That which is denied by evolution (see McLachlan quote).

### B. The accountability of man:

1. Created for God’s **glory** > “*Even every one that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him*” (Isaiah 43:7).

2. Created unto God’s **purpose** > “*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*” (Ephesians 2:10).

Summary: Romans 14:11-12, “*For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, & every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*” Compare also Isaiah 45:23 with Philipians 2:10-11.

## II. God’s Word gives directions concerning our companions (:74, 79)

### A. The basis for fellowship (:74):

1. The “fear of the LORD” (see :63).

2. “Let them rejoice when they see in me an example of the reward of trustful patience” (Kirkpatrick).

Summary: “Are people happy to see us arrive or are they happier when we leave” (Wiersbe).

B. The blessing of fellowship (:79):

1. Those that fear God & know His word (“*testimonies*”).
2. “*Turn unto me...*” – “When our friends & acquaintances have burdens, do they turn to us for help, or do we add to their burdens?” (Wiersbe). See Galatians 6:1-5.

III. God’s Word gives directions concerning our afflictions (:75-78, 80)

A. The faithfulness of God in our afflictions (:75):

1. “*Faithfulness*” > The truth & fidelity of God with the believer in a covenant relationship.
2. “*Afflicted*” > It can also be rendered “humbled” or “troubled” (see verse 67).  
Summary: “Life is difficult & we must accept from the hand of God both the pleasant experiences & the unpleasant (Job 2:1-10; Philippians 4:10-13)” (Wiersbe).

B. The comfort of God in our afflictions (:76-77):

1. The psalmist does not ask for the affliction to be removed, but for comfort under it.
2. “*Merciful kindness*” > lovingkindness (“*hesed*”) – loyal, steadfast, covenant love. “The words ‘*merciful kindness*’ are a happy combination, & express exactly what we need in affliction: mercy to forgive the sin, & kindness to sustain under the sorrow” (Spurgeon).
3. “*Tender mercies*” > From the verb, to have compassion, be merciful, pity.
4. “*Delight*” > “To delight in the Word when it rebukes us is proof that we are profiting under it” (Spurgeon).

C. The meditation upon God in our afflictions (:78, 80):

1. “*The proud... dealt perversely with me...*” > “The opposition to him was wrongful, based in a lie & prosecuted with lying” (Plumer).
2. “*Meditation*” > – 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”); it is likened to a cow chewing its cud.
3. “*Sound*” > translated “*undefiled*” in 119:1; elsewhere translated “sincere, upright, perfect.”
4. “*Ashamed*” > confounded; put to shame. “His dread of the consequences of hypocrisy ...shame is the portion of hypocrites, either here, if it be repented of, or hereafter, if it be not” (Henry). Compare I Corinthians 9:27, “*castaway.*”

Conclusion: A good commentary on verse 73 would be Psalm 100:3. Man’s denial of God as Creator, leaving man as simply an animal, is evidenced in our world today by mass shootings, rampant immorality, & perverted thinking (consider LGBTQ+ & see Isaiah 5:20). Yet, “He who made us to live must make us to learn” (Spurgeon). Matthew Henry suggests, “Those that delight in the law of God may depend upon the favor of God, for it shall certainly make them happy.” Recall the opening words of the psalmist in 1:2, “*But his delight is in the law of the LORD; & in his law doth he meditate day & night.*” Are we careful not to wait until “all else fails,” but seek daily those “Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth”? Consider also the influence of our personal experiences upon others, particularly upon those who also fear the Lord & can be encouraged by our testimony in times of affliction. How about you tonight?