

Psalm 119: For The Love Of Scripture!

Psalm 119:113-120

Psalm 119:113

(KJV) SAMECH. I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.

(NIV) I hate double-minded people, but I love your law.

Samech. Letter fifteen of the Hebrew alphabet opens our next stanza of eight verses. While the book print version of this letter looks like a loosely drawn square with a curl at the top left-hand corner, the cursive version of this letter rounds out into a circle. As God has grafted each believer upon salvation into the mystery of the Holy Trinity - via the indwelling Holy Spirit - His *support and healing* are interwoven into our lives by faith. This circle of interdependence is a picture of *samech*, and best describes the Jewish mindset about God, as it does our own. This circle also is a word picture of God's eternity, His faithfulness to the Body and Bride of Christ His Church (symbolized as a wedding ring), and His omnipresent sustenance of all His creation - including you and I!

Hebrews 1:3

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

So as the psalmist provides context for these next eight verses, we have no choice but to approach God's Word in complete awe and wonder as He has revealed Himself through the letter *samech* as our eternal Healer and Support, grafted as we are into this circle of unbroken communion with God our Father.

Ecclesiastes 4:11-12

Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

If you now feel a sense of comfort, knowing Who God is and what He is like, this was God's desire all along - that through His Word, His creation would come to know Him and enjoy Him forever! Hallelujah!

I hate vain thoughts! Oh, and I hate the people that think those thoughts! Our psalmist employs the word *hate* here to contrast with the word *love*. In comparison with how much he *loves* God and His Word, he *hates* the carnally minded, the double-minded, and the foolish-minded. He hates his mockers because his mockers hate God. So this verse isn't so much about hating anyone as it is about loving God and His Word so much that the alternative seems repulsive.

Luke 14:25-27

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and

sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Psalm 119:114

(KJV) *Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.*

(NIV) *You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.*

Towards the end of my rebellious years outside of the Lord, I began to experience and feel the dreadful consequences of my crimes against God. And there seemed to be no more excuses, no more exit strategies. I was trapped and terrified and desperate. The only question that remained - the question I had avoided answering for most of my adult life - was "where do I turn?" Since all earthly options had expired, I either had to bear out the awful and inevitable consequences of my sin, end my own life, or call out to God. Thankfully, God had been tugging on my heart, so I cried out to Him, "Help me!" Looking back on those years of upheaval and avoidance, I don't know how I survived long-term under the chaos of my own choices. I don't know how *anyone* survives in perpetual desperation. We all need a hiding place - a place that is free of the deceit, degradation, and death of this world. And we need that hiding place even if these dark things were our own doing.

The psalmist here declares that his God is just that hiding place, that shield against evil, and God's Word - that the psalmist's loves - gives us constant assurance of His supernatural power and presence in our lives here on earth. And through His illuminating Word He enables us to navigate through the darkness of this world:

Psalm 119:105 *NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

*STUDY POINT: Carry out a word study in the Old and New Testaments of the word *refuge*, as it relates to God.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Since completing the word study above, what practical ways in your daily life do you see God being a *refuge* for you?

Psalm 119:115

(KJV) *Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.*

(NIV) *Away from me, you evildoers, that I may keep the commands of my God!*

We have to reference Psalm 1 here to understand the reoccurring contrast between the "evildoers" who do not acknowledge or obey God's Word, and the "blessed" spiritual man or woman who loves God's Word, meditates upon it day and night, and obeys it.

Psalm 1:1-6

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which

the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The contrast is presented in Psalm 1 in such a way that we can understand the place from which our psalmist in Psalm 119 is emoting. Very simply, he is crying out, "Get out of my sight and out of my life all you who seek to mock me and destroy my faith! Then I can return to keeping God's commands."

We know that it is the Evil One - through his own children - who disrupts and attempts to detour our walk with God.

Matthew 16:21-23

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Psalm 119:116

(KJV) Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

(NIV) Sustain me, my God, according to your promise, and I will live; do not let my hopes be dashed.

The raw reality of trusting in God and His Word comes to fruition in our every day lives, when we are living by faith in His promises, and expecting by faith that He will fulfill those promises. Ours is not a mystical, fairy-tale like existence that is subject to an invisible power that may or may not manifest action on our behalf when we need it most. No, God's Word defines, defends, and delivers power from the One True Living God Who never fails to fulfill every word that proceeds from His mouth.

Matthew 4:4

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

This is it, believer! His fulfillment. Our food.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Meditate further upon 2 Timothy 3:16-17. How do think these verses could motivate you to reprioritize the place God's Word holds in your life? What changes in your daily routine might you make to facilitate these changes?

Psalm 119:117

(KJV) Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

(NIV) Uphold me, and I will be delivered; I will always have regard for your decrees.

Notice the order of themes in this verse. First, God *sustains and delivers*. Second, our psalmist *trusts and obeys* in God and His Word. God always initiates! Isn't that good news, dear believer? All we need do is respond!

1John 4:19 *We love him, because he first loved us.*

Psalm 119:118

(KJV) Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.

(NIV) You reject all who stray from your decrees, for their delusions come to nothing.

The wisdom and ways of the world may seem clever, logical and right, especially when most of those people around you are saying so, and following those ways themselves. However, God's Word alone is true, and the second we wisely turn to it for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4), the foolishness and futility of the world's ways is exposed:

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

James 1:22-25

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

One of the greatest blessings of Psalm 119, and there are many, is how the psalmist straightforwardly states truth that resonates in our spirit and fortifies our faith. With him, in nearly every verse, we have cause to cry out, "Amen!"

Psalm 119:119

(KJV) Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.

(NIV) All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross; therefore I love your statutes.

When I first was meditating on this verse, I found it's two parts to be conflicting. Especially the word *therefore*, which often in a sentence leads to a conclusive statement of some kind. But to say that God is going to discard the wicked like refuse, and for that reason the psalmist loved God's Word - I struggled with that, folks! However, upon further thought and study, I realized this was yet another contrastive grammatical tool the psalmist utilized to show his alignment with God's sense of justice - which he gleaned from God's Word! How many times does the psalmist simply read what God's Word says, and agree. That's what is happening here.

STUDY POINT: Find three other instances in the Psalms where a psalm writer seems to advocate *revenge*. How would you Scripturally reconcile God's revenge with God's love?

Psalm 119:120

(KJV) *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.*

(NIV) *My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws.*

Two ways of saying the same thing? *I fear you. I'm in awe of you.* We could easily read these verses, in any translation, and conclude that the psalmist is either dreadfully fearful of God, reverently fearful of God, or both. One thing we can be sure of is that our flesh does not want to submit to a negative definition of fear as it relates to God, for *fear* that we may actually be accountable to God and His judgments. It's a place both believer and non-believer do not want to go. However, our psalmist here in Psalm 119:120 does not give us that option. So, it may be helpful to look at two other Scriptural uses of the word *fear*.

1John 4:18

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

FEAR = Greek *Phobos*= alarm, terror.

Proverbs 2:1

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

FEAR = Hebrew *Yirah* = reverence.

I love this! Proverbs 2:5...

Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord.

Beloved, I digress.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland