

### 3-Gods Wonderous Word 17-24.docx

Psalm 119:17-24

#### To know Him and Make Him Known

This section reveals to us the God who intervenes in our lives through His Word (CIT). In these eight verses our psalmist pleads as God's servant and pilgrim, who increasingly finds himself to be a stranger in enemy occupied territory. Devotion to God's Word marks the Lord's servant, but it alienates him from the arrogant (v. 21) of the world.

We need help in order to live as God has commanded us. God's blessing comes upon us in order that we may know Him and obey Him in a fallen world. In order to do this, however, He must open up our insight through His Wondrous Word (v. 18). For apart from His light we are too blind to see. [Williams, Donald. The Preacher's Commentary Series, Vol 14 : Psalms 73-150. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1989, S. 347]

So the psalmist asked God to open his eyes so that he could see the marvelous blessings of God in the Word (17-18). He based his plea on the fact that he hungered for God's Word (vv. 19-20). Because God curses the wicked who disobey Him, he prayed that the Lord would remove those who reproached him. For in contrast to them, he meditated on and delighted in God's Law (vv. 21-24). [Walvoord, John & Zuck, Roy The Bible Knowledge Commentary. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983, S. 880]

#### 1. OPENNESS [OBEDIENCE] TO THE WORD—vs. 17-20.

- a. [Gimel, the third letter in the Hebrew alphabet.]
- b. Verse 17 is a prayer for the empowering of fruitful life. "Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live and keep Your Word."
- c. The prayer is for the bestowal of that blessing which brings spiritual life.
- d. It is an undeserved blessing of grace which brings with it God's enabling.
- e. [For without abundant mercy and grace the servant could not live spiritually much less obediently.]
- f. That is why this life of and in the Spirit comes before obeying.
- g. Spiritual life comes from God's bountiful dealings.
- h. Life is imparted to the soul in the new birth through our belief in Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:23), but that life is fed by spiritually abiding in God's Word (John 15:1-11).
- i. The Lord's servants cannot serve Him in their own strength, for without Him they can do nothing of eternal value (Jn. 15:5).
- j. The divine bounty which the servant receives not only gives spiritual life but sustains his spiritual life, which, in turn, allows him to obey God or keep His Word.
- k. Obedience is the natural out-come of gratitude for God's care and blessings and the enabling of God's care and blessings.
- l. We need to know and keep the Word of God if we are the servants of God (vv. 17, 23, 38, 49, 65, 76, 84, 122, 124, 125, 135, 140, 176).
- m. For in His Word our Lord give us direction for the work He wants us to do.
- n. How can fallen beings understand God's Word?
- o. The answer, found in verse 18, is only by divine illumination. "Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law."

- p. The Word of God is not revealed to natural man [for it is foolishness to him] (1 Cor. 2:14).
- q. Uncover or open denotes divine communication.
- r. Wonderful things are ascribed to God's creation and His redemptive acts.
- s. They include God's signs and wonders such as those He displayed against Egypt and His supernatural provision during the wilderness journey.
- t. These mighty acts, however, can only be rightly understood as the manifestations of God's kingdom power as He opens our eyes.
- u. **ILL--GEORGE spent his early years shuffled between foster homes till one day Maria Watkins, a childless washerwoman, found him asleep in her barn. But she didn't just take him in, she took him to church and introduced him to Jesus. When eventually he left her home, he took with him the Bible she'd given him. Maria left her mark on his life - and George Washington Carver left his mark on the world. This father of modern agriculture was a friend to 3 Presidents as well as Henry Ford and Gandhi. He's credited with over 300 inventions! And the remarkable thing is, despite his early disadvantages this orphaned boy never became bitter or made excuses. Instead he went into his lab each morning and prayed Ps 119:18; "Lord, open my eyes that I may see." How could God fail to bless someone with that attitude?**
- v. The MOST FREQUENT MIRACLE Jesus performed was opening blinded eyes.
- w. In one case He touched a blind man who exclaimed, "I see men as trees, walking" (Mk 8:24). In other, words, "I'm better than I was. I can see something but I can't quite discern what it is."
- x. So Jesus touched him again, clearing his perceptions, removing his limitations, setting him free to become the man God called him to be.
- y. There's a lesson here for you.
- z. Without God's touching your vision you'll stumble through life, blind not only to who God is, and what He can do; but also to who you are, and what you can accomplish in His strength.
- aa. **ILL--Edison saw incandescent light before the first bulb ever glowed. Bill Gates saw a PC in every office and home even while experts were announcing "Not in our lifetime." Forty years before the Israelites ever set foot in the Promised Land, Moses saw it (See Heb 11:27).**
- bb. God can be doing all sorts of things around you, yet you don't see them because you're spiritually blind.
- cc. Remember the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus?
- dd. It was only after Jesus had walked with them for 7 miles, explaining the Scriptures to them, that we read: "Their eyes were opened and they recognized Him" (Lk 24:31).
- ee. How does God reveal Himself to us?
- ff. In cathedrals and conferences?
- gg. Sometimes.
- hh. But mostly He opens His Word and our understanding, and we begin to see Him at work in a way we never have before.
- ii. So take a moment each day and pray, "Lord, open my eyes that I may see."

- jj. [Today in the Word] Wonderful things are found in God's Word (119:129), if we only have eyes to see.
- kk. Verse 19 asks for directions that cannot be found in the world. "I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me."
- ll. The psalmist says that he is a "stranger on earth," and in need guidance.
- mm. Apart from divine illumination by the Creator, he will not understand the world that we are passing through.
- nn. So he pleads, "Do not hide Your commandments from me."
- oo. Almost any long trip requires a map or guide. As we travel through life, the Bible should be our road map, pointing out safe routes, obstacles to avoid, and our final destination. We must recognize ourselves as pilgrims, traveling here on earth who need to study God's map to learn the way. God's Word would guide us to and cheer us in our heavenly journey. [We ignore it to our own peril.]
- pp. Have you ever noticed Nothing decent is on TV any more. I sometimes feeling we don't belong."
- qq. That echos the words of this psalmist, who said, "I am a stranger in the earth."
- rr. The psalmist knew something of this experience of not belonging.
- ss. His circumstances were not pleasant.
- tt. He was surrounded by wicked people who hated him.
- uu. He wasn't despondent though, wanting God to take him on to heaven.
- vv. On the contrary, he prayed that God would give him life.
- ww. He desired that he might walk obediently, that his is mind might be attuned to God's Word, and that his heart might be filled with longing for fellowship with his Lord.
- xx. If you're a sensitive Christian, you'll be conscious of your pilgrim status on earth.
- yy. You're aware of the differences between your view of life and that held by the majority of people around you.
- zz. But this will not be depressing if you keep in touch with the Lord by reading His Word, praying, attending church faithfully and obeying His commands.
- aaa. You'll be a stranger in this world, but you'll also enjoy life as your walk with the Lord gives you hope and peace.
- bbb. The true Christian can be right-side-up in an upside-down world because of God's Word.
- ccc. For centuries many Christians were not permitted to read God's Word in their own language.
- ddd. Instead, they were encouraged to attend Latin services that few could understand.
- eee. Having God's Word in our own language allows us to experience the joy of meditating on it each and every day [Jeremiah 15:16].
- fff. Verse 20 expresses the souls intense desire for renewal through the Word. "My soul is crushed with longing after Your ordinances at all times."
- ggg. The term longing means "fervent desire."
- hhh. True godliness lies in one's continual desire for it.
- iii. Those who over the long haul allow God's Word to crush and rebuild them find themselves transformed and matured in Christ (Mt. 21:44).

- jjj. Great challenge requires great maturity, so God takes the time necessary to develop our character to match the assignment [be it here or there-in heaven].
- kkk. After telling Abraham, "I will. . . make your name great," it took 25 more years of testing before God finally entrusted him with a son to establish the Jewish nation.
- lll. So, if you're still waiting for God's timing could it be that your character needs more work?
- mmm. That the task God has in mind for you requires a bigger person than you are right now?

## **2. OPPOSITION TO THE WORD—vs. 21-24.**

- a. Verse 21 indicates that God will rebuke those who do not live in accordance to His Word. "You rebuke the arrogant, the cursed, who wander from Your commandments."
- b. The arrogant are those who are a law unto themselves, meaning they decide for themselves what their own personal law should be (Ps. 10:2-11).
- c. Presumption can deceive and corrupt anyone.
- d. Because of his zeal for God and His Word, David suffered much from arrogant men's hostility.
- e. Cursed indicates they are ripe for God's judgment.
- f. Verse 22 is a prayer to take away the reproach and contempt the arrogant have heaped on him. "Take away reproach and contempt from me, For I observe Your testimonies."
- g. Because they reject God's Word they reproachfully reject God's people.
- h. There is scorn, reproach and contempt for those who observe God's testimonies instead of the designs of the proud.
- i. The petitioner wants God to remove their criticism and disrespect.
- j. Innocence may justly ask God to be cleared from man's reproach.
- k. He bases his request on the fact that he observes God's Word.
- l. Before we meet any challenge or seek the Lord's blessing on our lives, we should look first in His Book for His direction and guidance.
- m. When we neglect to heed the Bible we risk getting involved in relationships that He cannot bless and in activities that God does not approve.
- n. Verse 23 indicates that he does not follow the worldly counsel of the rulers but seeks God's Word instead. "Even though princes sit and talk against me, Your servant meditates on Your statutes."
- o. [The word princes can include the heads of families or tribes or soldiers and officials of the court.]
- p. He lives in an evil time, but he remains God's servant.
- q. When principle men plotted and united against him, his refuge was in God's Word.
- r. He meditated or reflected upon God's statutes.
- s. Statutes are regarded as unchangeable or unalterable decrees.
- t. Frequently in this psalm he referred to the wicked and those who oppressed him (vv. 23, 53, 61, 69-70, 78, 85-87, 95, 110, 115, 119, 122, 134, 155, 157-158, 161)
- u. When the world takes up unjust opinion of us we must meditate on God's unchanging Word.

- v. **ILL--WILLIAM WILBERFORCE (1759-1833) was a clever debater, a shrewd politician, and a popular socialite. At 21, he became a Member of Parliament in England. It was a time of terrible moral and spiritual decline. The rich were making a mockery of marriage, the poor were downtrodden, and the slave trade was booming. For a time, Wilberforce went along with these evils, thinking only of his personal ambitions. But when he was 25, he traveled to France with one of his former teachers, Isaac Milner. During this trip, Wilberforce read and studied the Bible with Milner. Before long he surrendered his life to Christ and was transformed. The parties he once enjoyed now seemed indecent. The plight of the poor now troubled him and he soon became the leader in the battle against slavery, which was abolished in England in 1833; primarily due to his efforts. Wilberforce was transformed because he read and then obeyed the Bible. Do you want to know God and do His will? Then read the Bible and take its message seriously. If you are not yet a member of God's family, it will show you how to become one of His children. And if you are a Christian, reading and obeying God's Word will bring radiance and victory into your life. For the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to change the people of God.**
- w. He delights in God's Word and makes them his counselors in verse 24. "Your testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors."
- x. The writer needed wisdom to know how to handle these difficult situations so he turned to the counsel of God's Word.
- y. Instead of listening to the reproach of the world it is best to meditate of God's Word.
- z. The words of God were his delight.
- aa. They were his full and complete (plural) enjoyment and happiness or blessing.
- bb. Many people will spare no expense for a half hour of counseling—but yet the greatest counsel we can ever receive is found in the pages of Scripture.
- cc. There is no better counsel than the Spirit of God speaking through the Word of God.
- dd. In his book Hints to Young Christians, O. T. Gifford made the following comment: "If you're getting lazy, read James. If your faith is below par, read Paul. If you're impatient, consider the book of Job. If you're a little strong-headed, go and see Moses. If you're weak-kneed, have a look at Elijah. If there is no song in your heart, listen to David. If you feel spiritually chilly, get the beloved disciple John to put his arms around you. And if you're losing sight of the future; climb to Revelation and get a glimpse of heaven!"
- ee. Friend, as you face life today with its many demands, let the Bible be your counselor. Look in the Book first!

#### IN CLOSING,

[In the darkness of our world, God shines His light. He opens our eyes so that we can see His wonders (v. 18). Since we are strangers here, it is He who reveals His commandments to us (v. 19). In this our longing for His word is satisfied (v. 20), and His word becomes our counselor (v. 24). Not human reason or inspiration but divine revelation satisfies our souls (v. 20). It is the Word of God that reveals wondrous things. [Williams, S. 347]

Craig Randall drove his garbage truck to WENDY'S restaurant to pick up their trash and drove away \$200,000 richer. The previous week when he stopped at Wendy's, he rummaged through the garbage and pulled a contest sticker off a cup. That time he won a free, chicken sandwich. This time he found a cup and figured; "Hey, I'd like to get some free fries to go with it."

When he pulled the sticker off, it read: "Congratulations! You have won \$200,000." Someone who had eaten in the restaurant hadn't taken the time to pull off the sticker before throwing it away. To one person it was trash. To another, treasure.

The riches of God's Word are available to all who will take the time to read it. But first you must recognize its value. [KentCrockett's Sermon Illustrations, [www.kentcrockett.com](http://www.kentcrockett.com)]

Grant us grace, Almighty Lord, to live according to Your Word. May we never ignore our daily time in Thy Word.