

THE VICTORY LIFE

in

PSALM 119

by

S. Franklin Logsdon

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

LOVE'S ENDURING OBJECT

MEM

**“O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.
Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are
ever with me.**

**I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.
I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.
I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.
I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.**

**How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way”
(Psalms 119:97-104)**

“O how love I thy law!” (Psalm 119:97)

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET of untold trials, plagued by many a tempter, conspired against by the proud, almost consumed in the crucible of suffering, yet the psalmist stands as a permanent exhibit of the protecting grace of God. He attributes his every deliverance to the Word of Truth. That he should so love the Book of God and so declare that love for the encouragement of all succeeding generations is the salient feature of the Psalm.

As he grows with the Bible, the Bible grows with him. It grows into his life, into his attitudes, and into his actions. It grows into his heart, into his love, and into his praise. When he speaks, the Scriptures are invariably involved in his statements.

- He speaks as though it were a vital something and it is!
- He relies upon it as though it were indispensable, and it is!
- He refers to it as though it were final in its pronouncements, and it is!

If you require documentary evidence for an affirmation, if you desire logical reasons for an assertion, here is one who is ready to oblige you copiously. His is not a hit-and-run kind of testimony. He stands by with convincing, substantiating facts. When he makes a claim, he seems eager for the opportunity of explaining why he makes it. When he delivers a statement, he wants to be reasonably sure it has registered.

The one who has the answers is always a person of poise, conviction and confidence. Personal testimony is difficult to refute. If a sane and honest individual declares he was at a given place, surely a past master in the field of polemics could not convince him that he was elsewhere. But why does the psalmist display such affection for the Bible?

“Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies” (v. 98) is but one explanation from his own lips.

He did not seek to match wits with his persecutors. He did not attempt to pit his strength against his oppressors. He had learned through the Scriptures the folly of such procedure.

When the enemy opened fire, he did not return a blow for a blow, a shell for a shell, or a bomb for a bomb. That is not tactically correct in spiritual warfare. **“When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh. even his enemies to be at peace with him,”** and this veteran of many a battle is now content to let God deal with his enemies while he himself delves into the revelation of Truth, to test his ways. When enemy fire ceases, he knows he is back in line with the pleasure of God.

There is a sense, of course, in which an offensive must be waged. We are specifically commanded to **“resist the Devil.”** But we should be wise enough to know that our weapon is the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of Truth. It works! It will ever work!

When the Saviour was in the arena of satanic attack — in the garden of temptation — it is beautiful to observe how effectively he wielded the weapon of Scripture. Each time the enemy made his thrust, Jesus countered, **“It is written.”** There was never any question as to which way the battle would go. There should be no question today.

This man was wiser than his enemies. He knew the way of life. The Apostle Paul assured Timothy that the Scriptures are able to make one wise unto salvation, and if one ever gets wise to the glorious fact, it must be through the Scriptures.

In another important sense he was wiser than his oppressors. Through Bible meditation, he had gained an unshatterable confidence in the promises of God. Even as Paul shouted to the terror-stricken sailors in the Mediterranean tempest, **“It shall be even as it was told me!”** so also this young servant of God believes every promise from Heaven will be minutely fulfilled. Whether a sinner needing salvation, a saint needing counsel and comfort, a servant needing guidance and strength, the Lord has promised full satisfaction.

One who is inspired with such sustaining faith is wiser than an unbeliever.

Having now affirmed the blessing of wisdom derived from revealed truth, he moves on to declare, “**I have more understanding than all my teachers**” (v. 99).

Egotism? No! Boastfulness? No! Simply a suggestion that since he has appropriated the testimonies of the Lord, he has a type of knowledge and wisdom that his human teachers had not acquired. He is not comparing ability; he is contrasting authority and value. In this sense, an unschooled Mountaineer may conceivably be wiser than an Einstein. Some of us have had schoolmasters who, though resourceful in the wisdom of the world, were destitute of the wisdom of God.

The story of a bugle boy in Civil War days comes to mind. A distinguished military leader, critically ill, knew that this was his last battle, and that it was with grim, despicable death. He knew he was losing the battle. He expressed his desire for a chaplain, but none was available. Reference was made to the unusual faith of the bugle boy. The general requested him. They bypassed all the trained staff members in order to reach this lone lad who was wise in the knowledge of the message of life. Blessed indeed is that individual who invests time and study and prayer in procuring this superior, supernatural wisdom.

That was not all. The psalmist’s understanding of the Scriptures not only exceeded that of some of his former schoolmasters, but he added, “**I understand more than the ancients**” (v. 100).

By “**ancients**” we believe he is referring to the aged who should be wise by long experience, but have, not become acquainted with God. The thought is sad, but true in numerous cases.

Everywhere, you may find people who are growing old without acquiring a workable, beneficial grasp of the Bible. To our young readers, in particular, we must put this question: Do you intend to advance, in years without growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord?

In an interview with the beloved Dr. Peter W. Philpott, who was at the time eighty-six years of age, he reflected, “I have never found it a hardship to grow old with God.”

Years cannot be retarded. They must come and go, and with their passing we are being carried irresistibly to maturity, to middle age, to the sunset of life, to the end of the journey. In the meanwhile, we must become wise in heavenly matters. Nothing now can begin to approximate its importance. We must cherish the opportunity and make full use of the privilege. We must encourage our hearts “**to know Him and the power of His resurrection.**”

“**I have refrained my feet from every evil way**” (v. 101), the psalmist’s testimony continues.

How? Simply by adhering to the law of the Lord.

It can be applied to every phase of one’s life. It commands us:

- To bridle our tongues,
- To set a seal on our lips,

- To restrain our feet,
- To lift up our eyes,
- To wash our hearts,
- To cleanse our hands.

Like an antiseptic it goes to work to destroy the bacteria of evil thoughts and ungodly desires.

Like a magnet, it draws our affections to Him who is altogether lovely.

No one with any perceptible appreciation of the divine Record could very comfortably step into an evil way or engage in a wicked enterprise with his Bible in his hand. If the printed Volume openly displayed can prove a deterrent from evil actions, how much more will the engrafted Truth curb the evil emotions which give rise to the unbecoming moves.

Nothing is impossible with God, and since God is in His Book, the Scriptures have a power to accomplish wonders in the life of a human being. It begins with the new birth, leads in the new way, and brings us to a new house eternal in the heavens. Give it a chance; let it prove its victory power; then give God the praise.

Why don't we allow God to use His great power in our lives? Why aren't we eager to see our great God doing great things? How can we be content to say that the God of Elijah still lives when the axe doesn't swim and the sun doesn't stand still? That is to say, how can we get any honest satisfaction out of stating that God is powerful — omnipotent — and yet never witnessing His great power in our daily lives?

We believe He can restrain wayward feet, else we would long since have perished from the realm of testimony, but we are all plagued with the fearful lack of evidence in our lives that God is **“able to do exceeding abundantly.”**

“I have not departed from thy judgments” (v. 102) is the wholesome confession which follows these notable statements.

None but the most foolish individual would make such a departure.

Who, for one moment, would entertain the least thought of forsaking that which has been the source and the channel of such indescribable blessings? Where would one turn? **“To whom shall we go?”** asked Peter. **“Thou hast the words of eternal life.”**

Those who would forsake the law of the Lord are those who have never penetrated very far into the treasure house where may be found things both old and new.

- Are we going to allow ourselves to be duped into the acceptance of worthless substitutes in this godless age?
- Are we going to sell our birthright for a mess of pottage?
- Are we going to let our feet lead into some evil way?

Never forget it, we all have a proneness to do so. Our hearts are more deceitful than we believe.

“I hate every false way” (v. 104), the psalmist vowed with emphasis. Do you?

An illiterate mother in the mountains of the eastern part of our country had an incorrigible son. One day, this recalcitrant told his mother that he would like to trade a brand new crisp dollar bill for a worn, soiled bill which he had seen in her possession. She was ignorant of the fact that she was exchanging a worn “five” for a crisp “one.” Beware of the crisp or shiny outer appearance. You may barter away a good testimony or a soulwinner’s crown for some deceptive counterfeit.

It is no wonder that the psalmist abhorred everything of a false, deceptive character.

The stanza before us opens with a positive declaration of affection for, and an attachment to, the Word of God. As the same stanza comes to a close, there is a magnificent characterization of the Scriptures and a beautifully stated delight in them.

“How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (v. 103).

This expression is in every sense a heart appreciation. He had tasted the Truth. It was sweet to his taste. It satisfied his appetite. Isaiah spoke of the cleansing blood of the Lamb washing whiter than the snow. The psalmist states that the Word of the Lord is sweeter than honey. There is always want of a satisfactory comparative when divine matters are being evaluated.

Surely our hearts should be allured into a deeper hunger and a stronger thirst for the Word which is ever the enduring object of a believer’s true love.

~ end of chapter 13 ~

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