

THE VICTORY LIFE

in

PSALM 119

by

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE FLOODLIGHTED PATHWAY

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

THE INTERESTING INDIVIDUAL of Psalm 119 gave the most extensive, the most coordinated, and the most sustained testimony regarding the authority, value and permanence of the Scriptures to be found in the whole of the Bible. And no single utterance which fell from his lips contains more beauty and meaning than this: **“Thy testimonies are wonderful . . . the entrance of thy words giveth light”** (vv. 129, 130).

Since our Lord is wonderful, His Word must be wonderful, for it issues from Him. If it gains entrance, it will give light. This is its inherent character. The Word delighted this young man’s soul and dissipated his doubts. But while one may assent to its glorious properties in theory, one will never rejoice over its wonders until its power is proved in practice.

It was by no means a meticulous, methodical, chess-like consideration on his part which maneuvered the psalmist’s feet around the snares and over the rough places, and brought him so luminously into the pages of God’s Who’s Who. Decidedly not! At every turn, in every victory, he gladly attributes the praise entirely to the sustaining and guiding power of the Scriptures. How very important it is that each of us should find the blueprint for his life in the unerring revelation of God, then to build accordingly by the grace which it superabundantly makes available.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet” (v. 105), he joyfully points out.

He has discovered the practical value of this wonderful Volume which many of us esteem so lightly. And this is no mean discovery. It is a must in the advancement of devotion. The psalmist required illumination, and here it is. Surely the man of God is fully furnished. Nothing he needs is overlooked.

There are perils in the darkness. Any unlighted path presents the sandaled Easterner with many difficulties if he attempts to pick his way along the uneven terrain. He is fortunate indeed who has a lamp at his feet when necessity forces a night journey.

Each succeeding step can be taken with certainty. The analogy is clear.

What serious perils there are for those who walk in spiritual darkness! This is the reason for the sad stumbling on the part of the multitudes. This is the cause for so many precipitous plunges into moral debacles. This is the unquestionable answer to most of life's sorrows. Jesus said, **"Men love darkness because their deeds are evil."**

The psalmist looked upon the Scriptures, not only as a lamp unto his feet, but as a light unto his path. In other words, the Bible not only assists one in making one's daily decisions, but it illumines the whole course. It not only shows one where to step, but to where those steps will lead. This is the thought expressed by Solomon when he said, **"The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."**

Jeremiah recognized the need for the guiding potential of the Word of God when he said, **"It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."** He also concurred with the psalmist regarding the sweetness of the divine testimonies; **"Thy words were found, and I did eat them,"** he reveals, **"and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."**

German youth found the words of *Mein Kampf* and began eating them. In due course, the false philosophy which incited their minds with such unprecedented fanaticism draped sorrow around the shoulders of this sick old world and plunged their Fatherland into bondage and ruin.

The people of Russia found the words of the protocols and the Marxian precepts and ate them. Today, the whole of the human race stands in jeopardy because this godless plague has been foisted upon more than half of the earth's population. History will never record that the testimonies of Marx, Lenin and Hitler were wonderful, or that they brought light. Nor will their words ever become sweet to the taste. Multitudes who have imbibed this diabolical curse are already crying in blighted lands, and all other infected peoples are destined to cry with the prophet of old, **"There is death in the pot!"**

When the psalmist declared, **"The entrance of thy words giveth light,"** he was not expressing an opinion. He was stating a fact. He was proving it in his own experience.

But in our day, people go to great pains to shut out that light. They all but ignore the exhortation to study the Scriptures. They abstain from church attendance with little or no compunction. An athletic contest attracts people more readily than a Bible conference. Many who have religious inclinations are described as people who spurn wholesome instruction and heap unto themselves teachers to merely tickle their ears.

"Order my steps in thy word" (v. 133), the psalmist requests resolutely, like a soldier seeking assignment.

Here is one who is not concerned about having his ears tickled. He wants his heart blessed. He wants the Lord to tell him which way he should take.

Paul's attitude was of like nature. "**What wilt thou have me to do?**" he asked of his newfound Lord. How important it is to keep in touch with headquarters, and to get directions from above! God wants to order the steps of His people — to lead them in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

"I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments" (v. 131), this soul-searching individual reminds the Lord.

What kind of gasping is this? What kind of intensive longing? The mouth is open, but inarticulate. Whether figurative or actual, what does it symbolize?

As the Word of Truth was esteemed more highly than his necessary food by Job of old, even so here the same heavenly Revelation is regarded more essential than the air the psalmist breathes. This is spiritual devotion in a dramatic display. His heart is panting after God.

Such soul desire is almost foreign to the knowledge and experience of our generation. In a flight of the imagination, step into Robert Murray McCheyne's study on a Saturday night as he is preparing his heart for the Lord's Day worship. Christ is his breath, his life, his all! He is engaged in self-condemnation. His outbursts of confession, his display of contrition, expressed partly in Latin and partly in English, prove conclusively his hatred of sin and his passionate desire to honor and to glorify his Lord.

"Unreasonable!" one cries. "Too emotional!" another maintains. "Fanatical!" others charge. But this dear servant of Christ, "**being dead, yet speaketh.**" It is now two hundred years since his voice was heard, but his printed words are pregnant with power; his testimony is still charged with challenge, and his diary of dealings with God can send any conscientious Christian to his knees.

McCheyne would not have castigated Patrick Henry for giving vent to his patriotic emotions in crying, "Give me liberty or give me death!" He would not have chided Abraham Lincoln regarding his passionate plea for emancipation. Neither would he have criticized enthusiastic college cheerleaders for their antics, acrobatics and hilarity at a football game. He who espouses a cause should put himself into it heart and soul. By the same token, Robert Murray McCheyne deemed the cause of Christ worthy of his all. The psalmist is a person of like mind in his pursuit of life on a higher plane.

If we do not mean to find God in our spiritual experiences, what then is our aim? Our plan is purposeless; our efforts are vain; our profession is mockery. We play at something which is holy, depreciate eternal values, and hold Truth in unrighteousness.

God's wrath is said to be revealed from Heaven against such violations of His most holy designs. We need to be made over. With Paul, we need to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. Then life will become an adventure of praise and gratitude. God will be real, and our hearts will know the blessedness of tracing the movements of the Holy Spirit upon our souls. We will be doing business with Him and for Him — daily. There will be fruitfulness, joyfulness and victory.

Any attempt to convince the psalmist that his day lacked many of the factors which now militate against a strong, consistent Christian testimony would meet with immediate failure. It would not be agreeable to him or helpful to us. God is superior to any age or period. As the need abounds, His grace superabounds, and this is what makes people godly. **“I am what I am by the grace of God,”** was Paul’s ever humble explanation.

This young man can tabulate an impressive list of trying situations. He only alludes to them in terse comments here and there, and they are mostly contained in his fervent prayers. He does not have to explain to One who is omniscient. The Lord knows the details. Doubtless the pits which were dugged and the snares which were set involved immorality of some types and worldliness of many kinds.

“Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me” (v. 143), he frankly states.

Yes, he had his problems, but he cleaves to the Scriptures relentlessly. One never can sink with a lifesaver such as this.

And so, with the Book in heart and hand, the psalmist moves onward.

~ end of chapter 14 ~

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