

Gimel

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| <p>17) <u>Deal bountifully</u> with Your servant, That I may live and keep Your word.</p> <p>18) <u>Open</u> my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law.</p> <p>19) I am a <u>stranger</u> in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me.</p> <p>20) My soul <u>is crushed</u> with longing After Your ordinances at all times.</p> | <p>21) <u>You rebuke</u> the arrogant, the cursed, Who wander from Your commandments.</p> <p>22) <u>Take away</u> reproach and contempt from me, For I observe Your testimonies.</p> <p>23) <u>Even though</u> princes sit and talk against me, Your servant meditates on Your statutes.</p> <p>24) Your testimonies <u>also</u> are my delight; They are my counselors.</p> |
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We are in Psalm 119, a Psalm that is designed to magnify God's Word. It is a Psalm focused on the written Word of God and it is one that challenges God's people to keep their focus on the written Word of God in every situation of life. In fact, in some respects Psalm 119 is a manual as to how to keep your focus on the written Word of God.

Now if you love the Word of God you will find yourself at odds with many people in this world. You may discover some hate you; some speak against you and some hold you in contempt. In fact, if you stick to the Word of God some will make you out to be a reproach to everyone.

That apparently is what happened to the writer of this Psalm and he discusses that point in this third section. The writer was experiencing great emotional turmoil and what we learn here is this:

THE WORD OF GOD CAN COMFORT GODLY PEOPLE WHEN THEY ARE IN GREAT DIFFICULTY AND DISTRESS SO WHEN GODLY PEOPLE ARE EXPERIENCING GREAT EXTERNAL DIFFICULTIES, THEY NEED TO STAY FOCUSED ON THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD.

It is very clear from this section that the writer was a godly man who was under great verbal attack (**119:23**). People surrounding him were making life difficult and he found his greatest source of strength and encouragement in the Word of God.

This passage clearly teaches that the written Word of God is able to bring comfort during times of great difficulty and distress. It is no wonder that Paul, while living in a dungeon jail cell waiting to be executed, asked Timothy to bring him the books, "especially the parchments" (II Tim. 4:13).

There is much to see and much to learn from this part of the Psalm when we find ourselves under attack. This is a textbook study as to how to cope with the negatives. There are eight amazing points to see here about coping with negatives:

COPING POINT #1 – The one under attack asks God to deal in a bountiful way with His servant. **119:17**

Now it is quite clear that the one writing this Psalm is a servant of God. He identifies himself as one who was very loyal and very submissive to the Word of God and will of God. It is this one who is in a position to ask God to deal bountifully with him in the midst of storms.

The word “bountiful” is one that means he is asking God to do good to him in the sense of permitting him to ripen (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 175). This particular word was applied to ripening fruit, to a weaned child, to something that reaches a mature level.

So in the midst of his trouble, the writer is asking God to be merciful to him and permit him to ripen and mature to a level that he may live and remain focused on protecting and keeping the Word of God.

He does not ask God to be bountiful to him so he could live life his way and just drift along and do what he wanted to do; he wants God to be gracious to him so he can learn more of God’s Word and develop more into the person God would have him be.

The greatest passion this Psalmist had was to have fellowship with God as His servant through a focus on the written Word of God. His relationship with God is contingent upon His commitment to God’s Word.

This idea of asking God for the blessing of being able to understand God’s Word and gaining deep knowledge of God’s Word is not simply an O.T. idea. Paul prayed this very kind of prayer for the Ephesians (1:16-19) and the Colossians (1:9-10).

I find it fascinating that this writer is surrounded by personal trouble and his great desire is that God would deal bountifully with him and let him live and learn and grow deep in his knowledge of God’s Word.

COPING POINT #2 – The one under attack asks God to open his eyes to see wonderful things from His Word. **119:18**

Now keep in mind this guy is surrounded by trouble. There are three observations we want to make:

Observation #1 - The assumption is Divine assistance is absolutely needed for any true servant of God to understand God's Word.

In order for one to have a deep understanding of God's Word, God must open the eyes (Num. 22:31; 24:4, 16).

Observation #2 - It is not new revelation that is needed, what is needed is a supernatural ability from God to understand His written Word that is already revealed.

Grasping God's Word at a deep and wonderful level is not an automatic guarantee for every believer. God must open the eyes so that the Word of God comes to life. When that happens wonderful things are seen.

Observation #3 - Ever since the fall man's eyes have been blinded from beholding wonderful things from God's Word.

We have taught this point time and time again. In order to grasp wonderful things from the Word of God, we must ask God for this ability (Prov. 2:3).

In was this very verse that caused J. Vernon McGee to begin his now famous "Thru the Bible" ministry in which he expounded all 66 books of the Scripture.

One who can see and understand the deep things of God is one being bountifully blessed by God regardless of the circumstances.

COPING POINT #3 – The one under attack admits his position on earth and asks God to reveal His truth. **119:19**

Now the writer acknowledges that he is a stranger in the earth. The New English Translation translates the Hebrew this way: "I am like a foreigner in this land." If you are a believer who loves God's Word, you will be a stranger in this earth. In fact, if you go to most churches with a love to be carefully and systematically taught God's Word, you will be a stranger in the church.

Now the realization that he was a stranger in this earth meant that he sensed more and more of the need for God to reveal to him an understanding of His precious Word. The first clause is key because if a believer is in love with this world and is committed to earthly things and worldly things more than godly things, this petition will never be answered (Heb. 5:11-6:3).

God has the ability to open up the Scriptures so that nothing is hidden. Now most people who open up a Bible think there are many things that are hidden. In fact, it is possible for one to pick up a Bible and read it and have no real sense of what the text is even talking about. God must open the door of one's heart and mind to be able to understand His Word and He will do that for one who loves Him, not the world.

COPING POINT #4- The one under attack confesses the longing of his soul. **119:20**

The soul of this man longed to understand God’s written Word “at all times.” The idea of the soul longing for something is the idea of the soul languishing over a desire to know God’s Word at all times. No matter what this man was facing, he truly had a passion to know God’s Word.

The humble longing of this man’s soul was to know God’s Word and to have fellowship with God.

It is more than just a coincidence that one that is in a position to have God grant this kind of deep knowledge is one who comes to Him with a crushed soul, not a cocky soul. No person who is proud will ever grow deep in their understanding of God’s Word. That becomes the primary point of the next verse.

COPING POINT #5 – The one under attack knows that God rebukes the proud. **119:21**

Those who wander away from the Word of God will be rebuked and cursed by God, not blessed.

The word “curse” means that God will target those who think lightly of His Word for His judgment. As the New English Translation reads: “Those who stray from your commands are doomed.”

When you are brought low because of proud and arrogant people, it is good to remember that God’s written Word promises they will go down. Proud and arrogant people are heading to God’s judgment and one of the ways you spot them is that they do not have a deep desire to carefully and accurately understand God’s Word. In fact, they make a deliberate choice to walk away from the commandments of God.

The arrogant hear the Word of God and then walk away and do just the opposite. God says you can know that they will be judged, although not immediately; it will come definitely.

COPING POINT #6 – The one under attack asks God to remove the reproach and contempt. **119:22**

It is clear that there were proud and arrogant people who were saying and doing some serious negative things against the writer of this Psalm. In fact, when we glance down through this 119th Psalm, it is quite evident that people had tried to ruin his reputation by spreading gossip and lies (v. 23, 53, 61, 69-70, 78, 85-87, 95, 110, 115, 119, 122, 134, 155, 157-158, 161).

There were those who were on a vendetta to destroy the reputation of this faithful servant. His name was a reproach to many. So what the writer did is he went to God, the highest judge of all, and he asked God to come to his defense and “take away” his reproach and contempt.

The word means to roll it away. He asks God to roll away the heavy burden he was carrying (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 172).

Now at the end of **verse 22**, he says one reason why he could ask God to do this is because of his obedience. This was a man who obeyed and observed the Word of God. This was a man who sought to understand all of the Word of God and apply it to his life.

COPING POINT #7 – The one under attack contrasts what he does versus what the arrogant do. **119:23**

The proud and the arrogant gather and they discuss the faithful servant of God. They talk against him. They talk over their evil plans and plots and they slander the faithful servant of God.

Meanwhile, while they are doing that, the faithful servant of God is not sweating them; he is meditating on the Word of God.

I love this. Even though these people, some of whom were people of position and prestige (“princes”), are speaking against him, the Psalmist quietly studies and meditates on God’s Word. There was a lot of activity against him and every day he was studying the Word and meditating on the Word and learning and growing.

No matter what we face in life, we must always keep our focus on God’s Word. It is the key to coping with everything.

COPING POINT #8 – The one under attack states where he found his great delight. **119:24**

He found his great delight in the Word of God.

The best comforting book in the world and the best counseling book in the world is the Word of God.

When I was in school there were certain teachers who tried to convince us that we had to have this or that counseling course. We needed to study psychology and psychiatry. I always thought that was foolish.

We have the inspired Word of God in our hands, why would we need some counseling course. What we really need is knowledge of every book of the Bible. That is the best counseling course there is and that is exactly what this part of the 119th Psalm teaches.