

(Mem)

- 97) O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.
- 98) Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine.
- 99) I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation.
- 100) I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed your precepts.
- 101) I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word.
- 102) I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, for You Yourself have taught me.
- 103) How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
- 104) From Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

We come now to the next letter section in the Hebrew alphabet, the letter “m.” This is letter number 13 in the Hebrew alphabet. In English the letter “m” is also letter number 13. In Greek the letter “m” is letter number 12.

Now the point of Psalm 119 is that God’s written Word is to be carefully studied and is to be systematically studied in the same way that one would systematically learn an alphabet.

One cannot read this 119th Psalm without realizing that the writer had a love and passion for the written Scriptures.

There is nothing better in this world than to love God’s Word. There is nothing in this world that will do as much for us as God’s Word. God’s Word is living and active and it has the power to minister to us in times of greatest disaster and it can develop us into having the greatest character.

The point of this section is this:

LOVING THE WORD OF GOD IS THE MOST VALUABLE AND BENEFICIAL LOVE WE CAN HAVE IN THIS WORLD.

This part of the Psalm is very unique because there is no petition here; just an outpouring of what was in his heart.

Now we want to observe how the section begins in **verse 97**—the writer “loved the word of God.”

Actually the Hebrew says he loved the “Torah,” which is the law of God. That makes this even more impressive because the law of God revealed the righteousness of God and the depravity and sinfulness of man. The law shows that we are guilty and condemned.

But it also shows the grace of God seen in the sacrifices. **This writer loved the Word of God even when it convicted him and reproved him and showed him to be a sinner.**

Now most people today own Bibles and people go to the Word of God for various reasons. Some go because they feel as if it is their duty to have their devotions. Some go to the Bible because they are intrigued by it or curious to see what is in it. Some go because they want their heart warmed. **This writer went to the Bible because he loved it.**

No matter what happened in life, nothing cooled his love for God's Word. It did not matter if he were facing pressures, problems, poverty, prosperity, prestige or promotion; nothing stopped his love for the Word of God.

The writer obviously read it and he studied it systematically and he meditated on it (v. 97). In fact, he thought about the Word of God "all the day." In other words, all throughout the day he would think about and reflect upon what the written Scriptures said. He had a love for God's Word that was at a very unusual level.

It is always a serious, systematic study of God's Word that will produce a love for God's Word.

People, who are not serious about systematically studying the Scriptures, will never develop a deep love for the Word of God. They may like religious stuff, but they will never develop a deep love for the Word of God.

Charles Spurgeon made an interesting observation about this opening of the Psalm. He said if most were surrounded by the things this writer was surrounded by, most would be totally preoccupied with all kinds of things. They would be preoccupied with their wife and children and family and friends and country; but this writer was preoccupied and in love with the Word of God (*Psalms*, p. 544).

Now because this writer loved the Word of God, there were eight results:

RESULT #1 – His love for God's Word made him wiser than his enemies. 119:98

Our enemies are boastful and arrogant. They are know-it-all's, who at times can be very intimidating. **Our best defense against all enemies is in knowing the Word of God.**

Again Mr. Spurgeon made an interesting observation about this when he said that this writer was a straightforward man and not some political diplomat. He knew God's Word made him wiser than his enemies and he said it in no uncertain terms.

People who love God's Word sometimes are out flanked and seemingly subordinate to powerful, highly educated, wealthy entrepreneurs and it can be intimidating. But let us remember what Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 9:23-24:

“Thus says the Lord, let not a wise man boast of his wisdom and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me...” The way we get to know God is through His Word.

There is a valuable principle to be learned here—when surrounded by hostile enemies—stay focused on God’s written Word. It will make you wiser than any enemy.

RESULT #2 – His love for God’s Word made him wiser than his educators. **119:99**

Truth is very few religious teachers love the Word of God like this writer did. Most educators love human wisdom and worldly wisdom. Just because one teaches does not automatically mean they are becoming wiser in the Word of God.

It is the Word that makes one wise and one who loves God’s Word and is serious about reading it, hearing it, studying it and learning it can end up far wiser than any teacher in any classroom, including supposed Biblical places of learning.

There is no higher education than grasping the Word of God. There is no greater love one may have than that of an understanding of the Word of God.

Now there were two reasons why this writer had more insight than any teacher who had ever taught him:

- 1) He continually meditated on the Scriptures.
- 2) He continually obeyed the Scriptures.

This man was totally and completely dedicated to accurately understanding God’s Word and that kind of focus will bring about great insight.

RESULT #3 – His love for the Word of God made him wiser than his elders. **119:100**

Aged leaders are supposed to be wise leaders; but their wisdom is only determined by their love for God’s Word. Just because one ages, does not automatically mean that he is becoming wiser in the Word of God.

One of the great examples in church history is what happened to Ambrose and Augustine. Ambrose was pastor of a church in Milan and it was in part through his ministry that Augustine was converted. When Augustine was converted, he fell in love with the Scriptures and he began to carefully study the Bible. In fact, he is heralded as one of the greatest theologians in the history of the church. It was not his mentor Ambrose, but Augustine.

Now there could be several explanations for this. Certainly God gives different and greater and lesser gifts to His church. But one thing is for certain, Augustine loved the Word of God at a very unusual level and he ended up wiser than all of his teachers and aged elders.

RESULT #4 – His love for God’s Word restrained him from every evil way. **119:101**

He did not walk down any evil path because he loved the Word and wanted to obey the Word. Now by virtue of the fact that he says he had “restrained” his feet, what we learn is that his feet did want to walk down evil paths. His feet were tempted to cross lines into evil ways.

When this writer thought of that, he decided to walk down Biblical paths because of his love for God and His Word.

Now many suspect that this Psalm was written by David and if that is true, David was certainly not a perfect man. He did have failures and flaws. But he fell in love with the Scriptures and he did not walk down evil paths again.

One thing is clear from this text, obeying God’s Word and walking on evil paths is an either or proposition. We cannot do both. We either love the Word and obey it or we walk down evil paths.

RESULT #5 – His love for God’s Word kept him from turning aside from God’s Word. **119:102**

Now I want us to look carefully at the staggering implications found in the latter part of this verse. God, Himself, teaches us through serious study of His Word. The ability to see God’s Word and grasp God’s Word and have it come to life is in fact a wonderful work of God.

The Word of God is not a “do it yourself manual.” God’s Spirit works in harmony with the written Word and in accurate teaching of that Word to actually teach His people.

God does not do this for everyone. But for one who loves His Word and seeks to obey it and apply it, He does Personal and Private things for him. The moment anyone turns away from God’s Word, God stops teaching.

No one will ever reach a level of wisdom by walking away from God’s Word. Wisdom is found in the Word of God.

Arthur Clarke, in his commentary on Psalms, made an interesting observation. He said that he observed that in countries that publicly promoted the Bible, noticeable gains in other intellectual areas were obvious.

In other words, the more God’s Word was honored, the more blessed and successful the country. Taking God’s Word out of any society is a very foolish thing to do and it is not the path of wisdom.

RESULT #6 – His love for God’s Word made it sweet to him. **119:103**

The Word of God is sweet to those who love God and to those who are wise. Now the Word of God features positives and negatives. The Word of God brings conviction and speaks of judgment. The Word of God reproves and rebukes. It shows people where they are wrong and instructs them as to how to get back on track.

For one who loves God, the Word of God is sweet in its entirety.

I again want to remind us that much of what this writer is discussing pertains to the O.T. law. That O.T. law is filled with all kinds of negative things that include death warnings. But the writer loved the Word. It was all sweet to him.

RESULT #7 – His love for God’s Word gave him understanding. **119:104a**

Real true accurate understanding of anything comes from the Word of God. If it isn’t from the Word, it is just phantom smoke.

RESULT #8 – His love for God’s Word caused him to hate every false way. **119:104b**

One time I was in a discussion with a believer who was actually almost defending Mormons. This person was sharing how nice they were and that they were basically Christians. When it was my turn to speak, I said, “I hate Mormonism and everything they stand for.” They are religious liars who mock Jesus Christ. They demean Him and they reject Him.

It is not that I dislike Mormonism and Islam and Jehovah’s Witness and Buddhism and Shintoism and Taoism; I hate these religions. People are being led to hell by these false religions that are presenting false systems of faith.

If you have a proper love for God’s Word, you will have a proper hatred for that which is false.

The Bible will teach you to love right and hate evil. It will teach you to love the right things and hate the evil things.

No wonder this writer loved God’s Word. It did so much for him and can do so much for us.