

see us. They should hear His words come from our mouths.

This verse clearly pictures confession as something that has already been done. In the New Testament, confession comes at the start of our journey:

9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* 10 *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Romans 10:9,10

14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

This Psalmist declares the joy of what he has beheld. In the New Testament, we rejoice in the path of life we entered in Christ. This is something that must be our confession before we are prepared for the journey of purity.

This “way” is the original word for “way” used in the first section. It is that road or highway. Remember, the “testimonies” are those laws that witness to God’s character. It is the road that Christ trod that declared the character of God through His life in the flesh. *We must know this way now!* It cannot be something to be put off for the future. It is the joy we have entered into at our new birth in Christ. That is our rejoicing!

The Hebrew for the final phrase is more literally, “as upon (over) all riches”. From this we can see that the value of what he has gained is GREATER THAN all riches. There is no comparison as being equal to any riches to be gained on this earth. What we have in Christ blows this world’s riches out of the water!

15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

These final two verses take us forward into the Psalmist’s commitment. To meditate is to muse and think upon. This takes time and consideration of their principles. Unless we take this time and meditate upon God’s Words, we will not come to understand the principles.

I must sadly say it has been my observation that very few people meditate upon God’s Words. What I have seen is that people get into some denomination and get the package deal of instruction in the denomination’s positions. They are pressured to stand to all their views, or be silent or driven out. What happens in the mind is an almost cultic mental shutdown. They are given the pat responses

to verses that clash with their teaching, and are expected to spout those when needed. They are criticized for questioning. To live at peace in the particular church, most people just go along. Eventually those people are no longer even able to clearly think about such verses. They seem to reach a state of inability to actively read scripture and dig in it for what it is saying. The most basic of analytical ability just seems to vaporize. They become afraid to ask questions and, even if they could, they can’t ask without first tying all the issues into their prestructured decided form.

I will give one simple illustration here: Back in my youth I mentioned to my Sunday School teacher that I didn’t see tithing taught in the New Testament. The principal of giving graciously and abundantly is definitely taught, but not the actual 10% law of the Old Testament. Wow, did he get mad! I didn’t dare even question that. The even better question is, “Why did he get mad?”. A simple honest look at scripture could have set me straight, if indeed I was wrong. The principle of, “don’t rock the boat, don’t question the official teaching, don’t even look” was obviously well-founded in that teacher’s heart. We should never tolerate being “shamed down” from honestly meditating on God’s precepts! Maybe Psalm 119:78 applies to such.

The respect needs to be to God’s ways, not some denomination’s ways. Here, again we find the same Hebrew word for “ways” of verse 9. The answer to the youth’s pure steps being in taking heed to walk in God’s outlined steps. The learning, the meditating and the commitment to examine all by His Word.

16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

The word for “I will delight myself” also indicates “sporting”. I think that the idea is that the Psalmist considers it not just duty, but as recreation to study God’s Word. Those of the world dream about their recreation. They can hardly wait to get out on that snowmobile, or go bowling, or the like. Maybe its a trip to the movies or watching “the game”. They do their necessary work to be able to recreate. For the Christian, the heart that is completely given to God should take pleasure in recreating in God’s Word. If it is simply considered a labor that duty requires, but no heart is there, something is wrong. What’s more, such a person is bound to fail to walk in the clean way

the Psalmist is seeking. Now I am not saying it is wrong to look forward to a day out snowmobiling, but it is not the source of our life, neither should it be more desirable than God’s Word.

We saw the “ways” of the first verse of this section brought to a close in the 15th verse. Now we see the “word” of the first verse, likewise brought to a close in this 16th verse. The “way” was addressed first, then the “word”. So each is addressed in the matching order.

The commitment to not forget God’s Word seems simple enough, but remember Jesus parable of the sower. Satan snatched God’s Word sown on the wrong ground. There is always that danger. The protection lies in the right “whole heart” seeking of God. Any commitment without the right heart is going to be futile. These closing words also serve to remind us the choice is ours.

The gauntlet of discipleship has been laid before us. We have been shown the needed heart condition. We have been shown how we must start and the commitment that must follow. May we each commit ourselves to the might of an honest confession of: “12 Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.”

Psalm
119

ב

Beth

How To Walk In A Clean Path

2

Hebrew reads from right to left. Notice the “Beth” that precedes each verse:

9 בְּמָה יִנְכַּח-נַעַר אֶת-אָרְחוֹ לְשֹׁמֵר כְּדַרְכֶּיךָ:	10 בְּכָל-לִבִּי דִרְשָׁתִיךָ
11 אֶל-תִּשְׁגֵּנִי מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ: לִמְעַן לֹא אֶחָטָא-לְךָ:	12 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה בְּשִׁפְתַי סִפְרָתִי
13 כָּל מִשְׁפָּטֶי-פִּידֶיךָ: לִמְדַנִּי חֻקֶּיךָ:	14 בְּדַרְכֶּךָ עֲדוּתֶיךָ שִׁשְׁתִּי
15 וְאֲבִיטָה אֲרָחֹתֶיךָ: לֹא אֶשְׁכַּח דְּבָרֶיךָ:	16 בְּחֻקֶּיךָ אֶשְׁתַּעֲשַׂע

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Reading from the King James Bible.

To find this article on-line go to www.basedintheword.org

entitled “How To Walk In A Clean Path”

Psalm 119

Beth

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

12 Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.

13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches.

15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

This is the second section of Psalm 119. Having covered a more detailed overview of the Psalm, it is my intention to go more thoroughly through each section. Briefly, each section is according to the letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each letter contains 8 verses that begin with that specific letter. Beth is the second letter, so each verse, in the Hebrew, begins with a word starting with the letter Beth.

In Hebrew, unlike English, each letter originally was also a word. We do not know the meaning of every letter today, but we do know most. Beth means, “a house; a tent”. Since the Psalmist built the Psalm based on the letters, it is likely the meaning of each letter played in his thoughts as he composed each section. In this section, we can perceive the place of our dwelling. To continue on the journey begun in Aleph, a person's heart must abide in the right place. In this, we can see a reflecting of this letter's meaning. In a similar comparison, we can see the work begun by the Apostle Peter. His work was likened to a sheet in gathering in of every sort. He preached the first sermon in the Acts, and he was the first to lead the Gentiles to Christ. His was a starting work. Paul, on the other hand, did the work of growth and development. He penned such works as Ephesians, where the outline of the church was well expounded, and Romans where the basics of Christianity were greatly expounded as well. Paul's income supplying work was that of making tents. The making of the tents is the taking of the sheet and forming it into the dwelling. The place of abode is the next step in coming to God.

This Psalm is also based upon the usage of a host of words that are “legal” terms in the Hebrew. I have gone into a more thorough definition of each word, as it was encountered, in the first section of Aleph. I would recommend you go to that section to find the expansion there, if you haven't already seen that article. I will cover any additional words as we come across them.

The Foundational Question & Answer

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

This section starts with a question. I believe we can safely conclude the rest of this section is the process of answering that question. Of all the possible questions, this shows the primary question

everyone should be concerned with who turns to God, is the one dealing with a holy life.

It would indeed be interesting to see what a modern youth group's questions would be if you had an open forum. Would this question be voiced in some fashion by the modern youth? Would it be their first concern? Would it be a concern at all?

The question is a query as to how we are to make it, day by day, in a purity of life.

We find the “way” brought up again here, only here the Hebrew word is different to the previous section. This is something to consider. In looking up this word, it appears to be almost identical to the previous word. The concept contained in this word, though, may be leaning more to the following point: “the word represents the ‘course’ one follows between his departure and arrival conceived in terms of small units, almost step by step.” - from *Vine's Expository Dictionary*. The other word possibly being more indicative of something like a road or highway. With this consideration, we can see the important lesson of a youth walking a clean path being done with the view of one step at a time. Much like the words of Jesus:

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Matthew 6:34

The question for guidance, is seeking detailed direction to purity in every step we take. The question being posed by a youth is also indicative of our living for God should start from our youth. The teaching of “*sow your wild oats*” as a youth is pure DEVIL'S DOCTRINE.

The second part of the phrase gives the answer. I love it, it is so simple. More literally, “To keep (observe, guard) as Your word”. We can picture that young man holding an open Bible so close as if it were the greatest treasure. Risk of loss or theft cannot be tolerated. We cannot observe and guard God's word if we do not know it! Our life must literally flow from His word.

The Hebrew translated “word” there is simply that, “word”. We have the written Word and we have the living Word - the Lord Jesus Christ! Our place of abode must be in the written Word and in the living Word.

The Prayer of Proper Response

10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

It is to be noted the response to the question and answer cannot be a living, reality unless it is activated in a life of prayer. Simply studying cannot do it. One must read prayerfully and apply prayerfully.

Again, we see the necessity of the commitment of the whole heart. Anything less will not do. Jesus mentioned this as well:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

Mark 12:30

Now pay attention to the second part of this verse. The request begins, but you may have noticed that the request DID NOT BEGIN UNTIL the declaration of seeking God through His Word, with his whole heart, was in operation. Now the request for God's help proceeds.

You will see that grace is the power of life this writer is counting on. Seeking God with the whole heart is not the work for salvation. The Psalmist is hungering after God. That hungering results in seeking to know God through His Word. His Word contains His commandments. The Psalmist is crying for God's mercy to empower him to live that life of purity they call for. This is not works folks, this is pure grace!

11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

We have a new word for “word” here. This one means “word” as well “speech”. It is also in the plural. You might consider that speech is the active word. It is the word come alive.

This verse is also a poetic parallel of the preceding. It restates it with variation of style. We can see the whole heart involvement of the preceding. Here we see complete heart-searching resulted in his eagerly committing that Word to the core of his being. The second part shows the goal of purity the young man sought after. He posed the question, then in true and complete commitment of heart, worked for the solution. He knew the answer meant complete consecration to searching God's Word. A query for how to walk in purity that won't put legs on it, to study God's Word, is a query of only partial heart concern.

I remember the AWANA's group at a church we attended. They operate on the principal of memorizing scripture. Everyone was sure that if this was done, you couldn't go wrong. I have seen that youth will very easily memorize Bible verses, and grow up to live like the devil. They

would memorize the verses with motivations like badges (like the scouts) which works on pride - fatal to spiritual life, prize tokens or games. Do the verses fail? I believe one of the primary reasons for lack of godly fruit in scripture memorization has to do with the motivation. This verse tells us the profitable motivation for scripture memory. Look carefully. The reason has to be so that the one who is doing the memorizing, is doing it for what? Games, tokens, badges, Christian school requirement? No. The motivation must be for purity of life. More specifically, so that we do not sin against God!

12 Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.

At the heart of this section we find praise of Yahweh. Like the previous section, this is the only time God is referred to by name in this section. The heart seeking purity will have this core of praise.

The praise is followed by a request for discipleship. Until now, there has not been the direct and specific “request” for teaching. There has been confession of what one must do, and what he will do, but this is a definite change. The heart for God will first be in praise. If it is a true praise, and not just some emotionalism, then hungering for Him to teach us will follow. If the desire to learn is absent, most likely the true heart of praise is absent as well. The two will accompany each other.

The Confession of Commitment

13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

Verses 13 and 14 go together as a declaration of what he *has done* in this pursuit. The remaining two verses blaze into what he *will do*.

Verse 13 joins the noticeable comparison of lips and mouth. The Psalmist takes upon him the verbal declaration of God's wisdom in execution of His law. He openly testifies to God's glory and God's righteousness in the judgments He has proclaimed in His Word. What comes from the mouth of God has become the utterance of this disciple. That is the kind of transformation that should flow from every disciple of Christ. We should declare His glory and testify of the teachings and judgments He has revealed to us. His life should naturally become the life that flows from us. It is this way that people see Christ, when they