

men back in history”. The word can simply mean “old men”. Men who have had equal opportunity to exposure of the same instruction available to himself. There is no place for finding them ‘dis-advantaged’ in this possible level of attainment. He still knows he has surpassed even the old men due to his source of might.

It is interesting to note the change on the second half of this verse. Before, he told us the excelling came about because of musing upon God’s testimonies. Here we are told his excelling came about with doing. Like the words of James tells us:

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. James 1:22

This knight excelled, because he both meditated and did.

101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

We do find a “way” mentioned here. We might consider this the negative side. Our knight has told us what he did to excel. That simply cannot be complete without there being that which he did not do.

The imagery of a path and feet draws to our minds this soldier traversing his straight path down the trail the King has commanded him to march. As he has journeyed, he has seen numerous diverting side paths. Maybe he could hear the refreshing sound of waterfalls down one, or some curious sight barely around the corner of another. As he crossed such tempting diversions, he was safeguarded because he held the King’s Words in constant musing, so dreaded the threat these temptations offered. Holding God’s Word constantly before him, he managed to not go down EVEN ONE side trail.

Look at the second half of this verse. Consider this soldier in training, hesitating at the mouth of some tempting divergent trail. He always held before him his commission to keep. He remembered the princess, back at the castle, promised to be his bride. He knew there was nothing, NOTHING, worth risking for that. He would not risk losing the reward of a valiant warrior. He would not risk the scorn of the King. He would OBEY the King’s Word. He was not to be a soldier of shame.

102 I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

The word translated “departed” also means “to

turn aside; to depart from way”. This also shows a Hebrew parallelism to verse 101. As he stood on the commanded path, and saw the diverting path, he held strong. He did not “depart from the way” he was commanded. Pay close attention folks. We are beholding a valiant knight who is able to give the testimony of remaining faithful. The victorious life is possible and provided for. He did not give the sickening testimony, I have heard some preachers excuse, of just growing slowly, sinning less and less. This knight would have been enraged at hearing such excuses for disobeying his King. He would have considered such as TREASON to his LORD’s direct commands! He would have seen such as being worthy of a court marshal! Fraternizing with the enemy is never excusable!

The second half also matches in the parallelism to the end of the previous verse. We can only “keep” His Word if we have been taught. He has faithfully provided for that teaching in giving us His “Torath”, to meditate upon. The “*hast taught me*” is the verb that “torath” comes from.

103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

The word translated as “sweet” means “to be smooth (agreeable, pleasant)”. For those who lack a sweet tooth, rest at peace. You don’t have to have one. This knight is commenting on the “pleasantness” that God has spoken to him.

Such a statement is revealing of this knight’s heart and a critical piece of information. As a disciplined soldier, we would expect him to be hardened to undertake harsh conditions as a matter of faithfulness in duty. Harsh or not, he would do what was right. Such is not the case of God’s Words. They are not something to “bite the bullet” on. They are the greatest pleasure, most savory dish, luxurious provision the King has provided. Even the great delicacies of the rich, in their honeyed specialty treats, can’t hold a match against God’s provided Word. We are not talking a “canteen” in the wilds that looks like provisions of luxury, to one managing in rough conditions. We are talking a provided, chandeliered ballroom, surrounded with delicacies, straight from the King to His soldier in the fields. Does God’s Word take our breath away? It does to the mighty knight!

104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

A literal reading would be, “From Your precepts I get understanding, upon this I hate all path lie (deception, falsity)”.

Our valiant knight summarizes this section with that focus on “*understanding*”. Understanding is critical. Knowledge without understanding profits very little. He has attained to his knighthood via God’s Word. He has gained his proficiency with that sword through many hours of devoted time. He has done more than book learning. He has meditated and obeyed. Having matured in this, he closes with the striking words of a great soldier. He no longer sees those side trails as “tempting”. His sees deeper and perceives them as coiled serpents, ready to spring. All these paths of deceit are truly the paths of “treason” to the King. As a loyal knight, he will deal with them according to the commands of the King. Whether the King gives orders for their immediate destruction, or orders to “let be” for the time, he will hate these snares of the King’s enemies. Such is the heart of God’s knight.

Psalm
119




Mem

Growing In Wisdom: Spiritual Maturity

13

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

מִהֲאֶהְבֵּתִי תוֹרָתְךָ	↓	97
כֹּל-הַיּוֹם הִיא שִׁיחָתִי:		
מֵאֵיבֵי תַחֲכֻמֵּי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ		98
כִּי לְעוֹלָם הִיא-לִי:		
מִכָּל-מַלְמְדֵי הַשִּׁפְלֹתַי		99
כִּי עֲדוּתֶיךָ שִׁיחָה לִּי:		
מִזְקֵנִים אֶתְבוֹנֵן		100
כִּי פִקּוּדֶיךָ נִצְרָתִי:		
מִכָּל-אֲרָחָה רַע פְּלֹאתִי רִגְלִי		101
לְמַעַן אֲשַׁמֵּר דְּבָרֶיךָ:		
מִמַּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לֹא-סָרְתִי		102
כִּי-אַתָּה הוֹרַתָּנִי:		
מִהֲנִמְלִצוֹ לַחֲכִי אֶמְרֶתְךָ מִדְּבַשׁ לִפִּי:		103
מִפִּקּוּדֶיךָ אֶתְבוֹנֵן		104
עַל-כֵּן שָׁנֵאתִי כָל-אֲרָחָה שָׁקֶר:		

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Reading from the King James Bible.
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 “Growing In Wisdom: Spiritual Maturity”

Psalm 119

Mem

97 O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

102 I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

This is the thirteenth 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. Mem is the thirteenth letter, so each verse, in the Hebrew, begins with a word starting with the letter Mem.

In Hebrew, unlike English, each letter was originally also a word. We do not know the meaning of every letter today, but we do know most. Mem means, “Water”. 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 do not see any direct reference to water. There is the definite outline of what a faithful servant of God is like. This could be the reflection of water, in that water is a basic needed for life. Like Jesus is the water of life, the Samaritan woman was told about, so God’s Word is seen in that same manner throughout this section. I could not see the build on a word that began with Mem.

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 has been encountered, in the previous sections. I would recommend going there to find those expansions. I will cover additional words as we come across them.

Behold the Knight!

97 O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

In this section, we have taken a clear stand on an even higher level in spiritual life. Psalm 119 has taken us on an upward path in discipleship. It started with basic principals, covering a number of foundations for key pillars in the structure. It has progressed through life and death commitment. Here we stand at a great level of spiritual maturity. We will notice the growth level as we see verses like 99 and 100. Such are the statements of an individual who has matured in his walk with God.

This section presents the words of a warrior, trained and equipped for battle. We need to notice we do not find the name of God, or His title, in this section. I believe the reason lies in the focus of the

mighty warrior. Previously, we have had many dealings in issues of training and consecration. Issues of the personal relationship with God and the brethren. To illustrate in older terms, Mem gives us a cameo of the well trained, valiant knight. He has undergone much to now stand ready to fight the King’s battles. Since that should be the goal of every servant of Christ, we need to take a look at this well equipped and well trained warrior.

Looking at verse 97 we behold, “Rejoice! Rejoice!” Imagine that knight in shining armor, prepared for war. We look at him admiringly, seeing that disciplined face of the dedicated warrior through the lifted visor. We wonder, “What is such like?” “What sort of things does he think about?” We are given the answer. Before we look more closely, I want you to realize that a knight must be dedicated to the destruction of the enemy. There is no place for “Everybody is wonderful, I embrace all who are sincere in their beliefs.” Such will never be able to be a trusted knight about the King’s business. This section demonstrates the true trusted knight’s position. This starts with love, in verse 97, and ends with hate, in verse 104. To love the one, must be to hate the other. To please God, one must possess the heart of a Phinehas (Numbers 25:7-11).

This knight’s word, we hear him utter, is the ultimate salute to the King’s flag and banner. The “*law*” being “*torath*”. That which shows all God’s directions for our lives. He is committed in love to every last bit. He does not simply defend part of the kingdom, he is committed to the defense of all the kingdom. He also is not just a mercenary soldier for profit. His commitment is from the heart. Look at this warrior. He doesn’t just say, “I love Your law”. The first half is actually phrased as a semi-question. It is as if he couldn’t think of words to adequately express such a deep love. Such being the case, he simply poses that love as a question. His love is literally beyond words! It comes out as an expression of “Rejoice! Rejoice, in my love!”

What more is there to behold? What is constantly on this soldier’s mind, but his love? He cannot help but think and dream about his love all day. Like the princess, waiting for the knight’s hand in marriage back at the castle, so this knight cannot help but dream about the treasure, whose rightful place is in the castle.

98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

A good soldier is noted as one who obeys commands. This knight acknowledges that his victory, in the battle strategy, is accredited to his strict adherence to the King’s commands. His trust in battle is not in personal skills. He accredits superior wisdom over his enemies as residing, not in himself, but in the superior weaponry.

The second half literally reads, “For to eternity they are to me.” The actual wording shows us the eternal consecration of this soldier. Look at the love story that would have the man saying to some woman, “I love always having you around”. That is a far cry from the marriage vow of, “til death do us part”. For this glorious knight, come what may, he will die with that sword firmly in his hand. He will not pitch it and run when the battle rages hot.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

It is notable he refers to “*understanding*” here. He does not refer to “*knowledge*”. His teachers may very well have had a great deal more knowledge. To ever make such a claim may be very hard to validate. There would have to be extensive testing. His teachers, being older, and having studied for many years, may also be very difficult to excel. It should also be considered, that only the most talented could ever have hope to excel in such a case. God’s grace has never been that way. His glory is shown in the weakness of men. The mighty of this earth usually are unable to even enter the race:

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemp-

tion: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

We are not told that the teachers, he is referring to, are necessarily wicked. In fact, if he has set them before him as teachers, I would contend the teachers are teaching him truth. What we are told is that the knight excelled them in understanding. Understanding is the spirit of wisdom. It is the knowledge with a principal of life behind it. It involves discretion and discernment. It is knowledge applied. A student may know $2 + 2 = 4$, but that doesn’t mean he understands why this is so. He may simply repeat the taught fact. Understanding means there is the grasping of the mathematics in a tangible, workable usage.

This knight has attained to a superior level. That level is not based upon a natural superior skill level, for the second half of the verse tells how he attained to a higher level. We find the term, “*testimonies*”. They are those laws which show God’s character. They directly testify as to the nature and character of God. To hold these before us and “*meditate*” or “*muse*” upon them, is to keep a constant remembrance of what God is like. His teachers had a knowledge they could distribute, but since they didn’t continually meditate upon what God has revealed of Himself, they stayed at “*knowledge*” level. The superior knight is such because of actively musing upon what God has shown us of Himself.

This knight is not displaying arrogance or self confidence. This verse is simply the statement that can only come from an “*understanding*” mind. The only way to excel is to meditate on God’s Word!

100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

This verse, in couple with verse 99, presents the poetic Hebrew doubling. It restates, in parallel, with a slight variation of words. In such repeats, the words are usually changed with synonyms. We should pay attention to the fact that he did not switch out “*understand*”. There is no word that can properly be replaced for that. He would not dare to claim greater “*knowledge*” than the very old.

The word translated “*ancients*”, does not necessarily mean something like “*philosophers or wise*