

judgments. I will keep thy statutes, O forsake me not utterly, for withal shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

With my whole heart have I sought Thee, O let me not wander from Thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes, witheth my lips have I declared all the judgments of my mouth.

I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies as much as in all riches. I will meditate in Thy precepts and have respect unto Thy ways. I will delight myself in Thy statutes.

I will not forget Thy word. And shall we look to the Lord again in a word of prayer. For our gracious, loving Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for another day of the sovereign grace of God.

We are so thankful that the word of God has gone out with free course this day. Thank Thee for the power of the word, and we pray that the Spirit of God has been able today to search hearts. We are thinking of all of those in the world today that are still lost and they haven't sensed or known the touch of God upon their lives.

They have not tasted of the goodness of the Lord. They have not entered into the joy of Thy great salvation. O our God, may the word of God, be it upon the printed page or over all the news media that is available through the preaching, the personal witness of believers to those that need the Savior.

Grant, we pray Thee, Lord, thy blessing. We remember so many of our own here that are not able to get out this evening. We think of Les Dobie, and we do remember Johnny Lou Guthrie, and we think of Robert Gianetta, and Ruth Pittman, and a host of others that come to mind, Lord.

These dear ones, we pray Thee, comfort them with special thoughts of Thyself, and bless them, and grant them that great, wonderful peace that can fill the heart and soul in trusting Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus, we ask this, amen. This is the longest of the psalms, 176 verses, as I mentioned.

Many people have read this psalm, and they have declared it to be a real source of blessing. I think the constant reminder as you read through this psalm, whether the word is referred to as precepts, or statutes, or commandments, the word, we are reminded of the value of God's word. And I sometimes, and I trust that all of us have this experience, have you ever taken the word of God up and opened it, and you are anticipating what God will say to you? Because we do hear the voice of God as we read the word of God.

He speaks to us. The Spirit of God is able to seal home to our hearts the value of what He has to say to us. The Spirit of God helps us to understand.

Some of these sayings are deep. They have deep significance, and they have meaning that is of such great value to us. And so we read the word of God, we meditate upon the word of God.

That little word, *selah*, that has been introduced into the pages of Scripture and many of the psalms you read, just simply means to stop and to meditate and give some special thought to what has been said. So this is described as being a holy alphabet. Out of these sections, there are 22 sections, 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, it is called the holy alphabet.

Some have said to read one section of this 119th psalm. Each day has been the goal in their life, and they attest strongly to the value of reading this psalm and the emphasis that is placed upon the word of God.

There can be a lot of good, positive results coming from reading the word of God.

And this one starts out with, Blessed are the undefiled in the way who walk in the law of the Lord. It sounds like Psalm 1. You know, men are defiled because of sin, and there is a strong reminder of just how defiling sin can be. You look at an individual that has sunk so low, all restraint over that life has just been cast aside, and you look at it and you say, What in the world could have happened in this life to reduce this individual to such a level of living in the world that we live today? I think it would be safe to say, just right over sin, sin has a way of producing the kind of depravity that you witness in a human life and remind you of the seriousness, remind each one of us of the seriousness of sin.

Look what it caused in the garden. And sin is a result of disobedience to the mind and the word of the living God. We can only be happy if we really do what He tells us to do.

So the defiling effect of sin upon a human life, to be happy, to remain undefiled, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the power of the evil one who would seduce us and draw us away and have us place no real value upon what God has said. We can enjoy that blessedness of obeying the word of God. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

You know, there are so many precious promises found in God's word. Delight thyself in the Lord and what he has said. We normally, when you think of an individual, you may think of what they look like, and a lot of times you think about what he thinks about life, and you think about words that he has said.

We were talking about the prayer life of different individuals, our Lord, not knowing exactly what his voice sounds like. But when people are gathered together and there is a prayer meeting, you learn to identify people by their words, what they say. And so often I have heard people say, I love to hear that person pray, just love to hear that person pray.

The words that come forth out of that heart and soul, they are indeed a blessing to me, and certainly the word of God is such a rich source of blessing for each one of us. It's like the Sermon on the Mount, blessed, it's a benediction. This psalm is like the Sermon on the Mount.

It begins with a benediction, the act of blessing. When you think about your first encounter with the word of God, I tried to recall in my own memory the first time that I ever read the Bible, and I was well on in life, thirty years old, and I read the Bible, the word of God. I don't know if someone else had told me this, made me aware of this, but I was aware this is God's word.

And it stopped me, it sobered me up. It caused something to happen in my soul that was very special, because I began to attach such deep meaning to what I was reading. If this is what God is saying, this is God's word, I want to listen very carefully.

Sometimes when people talk, you don't pay much attention to what they're saying. I have a lady that sometimes when she's talking, I may be reading something, and she says, don't read that and listen to me. I tell her I can do both at the same time, because she doesn't say very much, and she just goes on and on and on talking.

It's not that way with God's word. You need an undivided mind. You need your attention focused upon this.

I'm reading this word, and Lord, this is such a blessing to me. And you know, anything that comes forth from God for you and me, that's a real blessing. We want to get all of it we can.

Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with a whole heart. And this is mentioned twice over in this same passage, where there's a reminder that God loves wholeheartedness. Can you tell when someone is taking what you say or what you're engaged in in a rather flippant or lighthearted manner? A lot of times you don't appreciate that, because it may be something that is of real value to you, and you want them to take it just as seriously as you do.

And certainly reading and meditation upon the word of God, happy are they that keep his testimonies. Obedient children are happy children. Maybe that was why I was so unhappy as a child.

Maybe we look back and we think, man, if I had obeyed and did all that my parents required of me and asked me to do, I would have been a happy child. The world today seems to be filled with children that are not too happy. Disturbed children.

All kinds of things have developed in life. It's given vent to the rise of medicine, psychiatrists and psychologists and sociologists and all these people that are making a big business out of dealing with people that are having problems. They're unhappy.

They're unhappy. They're not happy with themselves nor anything else that seems to revolve around them. But happy are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with a whole heart.

One thing to be reminded of, the Lord knows all about this, and he doesn't want me looking at television and listening to the radio and a host of other things when I am supposed to be devoting myself to have him speak to me from the word. I don't think I possess that kind of intelligence in that as powerful and as deep and searching as the word of God is that I can be involved in other things. You may be able to listen to two or three different things, people talking and so forth, and not miss anything because there's not the same meaning and the value attached to what they're saying that should be attached to the word of God.

That whole heart that loves the word. One time while I was in business, there was an inspector, a government inspector that was there, and he was a wonderful Christian gentleman. He was living up in New York State, and he was an inspector for a large meatpacking corporation there, and he didn't have a whole lot of this world's goods, and he had to ride daily back and forth on the subway to his job.

He always carried the word of God with him. He had gone through the Schofield Bible study course, and he was a serious student of the word of God. One day, a man sitting beside him said, Why is it that you always carry that Bible with you? He recognized it as a Bible, and he said, You seem to devote all the time you're here on the train riding to work or wherever you go, reading that Bible.

Sometimes your eyes are closed, and you seem to be in deep thought. His response to him was, I love it. I love the word of God, and I do believe he did.

He was a godly man, and when he spoke and when he acted, I could tell that the word of God had had a great impact upon his life. That was a good testimony with his whole heart and his whole life. It had such a sanctifying effect upon him, and the word of God does that.

It's the cure for so many things that would brighten up your life and my life. That sanctifying effect, that setting apart us as individuals that belong to God, and we value what he has to say to us, can be a great deterrent to sin making inroads into our lives. That's so important, too.

We want to keep these testimonies. They are perfect. That word is ideal.

You say, I was reading the scriptures this morning, and the Lord brought to my attention something that I needed, I sorely needed, that thought, that truth for my life. It met a need in my life, how important all of this is. You know, when I read the 23rd Psalm, and he put our feet upon the pathway of righteousness for his namesake, he clearly identifies that reason why we should be walking upon that pathway of righteousness.

Walking not in this world, walking not among those that sometimes their very presence can be such a defiling, have a defiling effect upon you, or how important it is to know that God puts great value upon how we handle and accept the word of God. And obedience to it keeps coming back to me as I read this. You could read and read and read and study the word of God and still not obey it.

People read a lot of things. I know people that, I know a man that's been in prison, and he told me, he said, I never had any interest in law or anything like that until I was incarcerated. And I began to read the law.

I wanted to know what the law said. He said, I was amazed how many times I'd broken the law. They didn't catch me for half of what I had broken.

I broke a lot of them. Maybe I broke all of them. But indeed, to read this word, these facts, and to be reminded that it is important to obey what we read.

You expect, if you're a parent, you expect your child to obey what you say, don't you? I know you do. And you are terribly disappointed when they don't. I know that some people have told me all my dad or my mother had to do was look at me.

Just one look. I knew what they meant. They didn't have to say anything.

But indeed, to be directed and controlled in such a way that you value the instructions that come from that person. Well, God is speaking to us through his word. Isn't it tragic that we don't read it, take it seriously and obey what he asks us to do? So often we discover that we have been disobedient.

And I trust that when that happens, we will be driven to our knees and say, Lord, forgive me. I am confessing that I have taken the reading of the word. And what I know, what I know in my heart is true.

And I've disobeyed you. You know, that's not easy to say. But it's so important for each one of us to keep that in mind.

You know, God would have his people to obey what he has to say. He works in them to do his will. And you know, you read the life and you read what happened in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and you can't help but focus upon the fact that he said, my will is to do the will of him that sent me.

Isn't it wonderful to know that there was someone that walked this earthly pathway? He never deviated one time from doing the will of God. He obeyed perfectly everything that was designed for him. Wednesday night we were talking about God has a plan for our lives.

And so often we submit to the Lord, well, Lord, here's my plan. My plan. Oh, to recognize that sovereignly God wants to control our lives, what we're doing.

Our plans should be according to his will. This is all important for you and me as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. True obedience.

True obedience. Not just the casual kind. I'll pick and choose what I want to believe.

You've heard that. No, it has to be something that's absolute. I have resolved that reading the Word of God, having the Spirit of God so jealously guarding over you and me as a believer, and he does that, beloved.

The Spirit of God jealously guards over us. We belong to God and he knows it. We're sealed with the Spirit of God.

We're divine property. We're not our own. We were purchased with a price.

He wants us to obey and do the will of God and not say, well, I'll obey in this area. I'm doing this much, after all. I'm not as bad as someone else.

And begin to compare ourselves with others, which is so tragic. No, I want to be truly obedient to what God asked me to do. What a testimony for God that that Word would impact me and I would count it as being of such value and importance.

I must obey the Word of God. I can't be happy. I can't rejoice in my soul knowing that I'm walking not along the pathway of righteousness and extolling and glorifying God in my life, and I'm a disobedient child of God.

Well, that's what it means when we don't do what he asked us to do. And that, indeed, is tragic. I delight in your statutes.

You know, some people that I've talked to, they think that those that are Christians, if you are bold and you're a witness for the Lord and that you say, He meets my every need, I'm happy in the Lord, I accept His will for my life. They think you just have maybe about half of your mind. You're a little bit funny.

I said this morning that peculiar people, I'll tell you, it's time for God's people to get peculiar and let people identify you as being different. Let people identify you as being someone that is loyal and true to the God that has saved us, done something for us that we could not do for ourselves. He's the only one that could do it.

Aren't we so thankful that He had a divine plan that He put into place for saving the world? He has a divine plan for coming and catching His people away, carrying us to our eternal home. This world is not my home. The old song says, I'm just passing through.

Isn't it wonderful to know that there's a prepared place for a prepared people, the people of God. Oh, how merciful, how good our God is to us. How He values.

How He values the value we place upon the Word of God. You'd have to put it this way. Do I really value what God says? Is it important? You know, I've mentioned people, and people do a lot of talking, and sometimes you don't put a lot of value upon what they say.

He doesn't know what he's talking about. I have to say this because I thought it while I was sitting on the bench, but when the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there. But in the 2nd verse of that hymn, that guy said, I think his name is Dark, was it? What is it, Dark? He said, On that bright and cloudless morning.

How did he know that on a bright and cloudless morning that the rapture will take place and God will come and get us? Nobody knows when. But he introduced those words, you see. Maybe that's what he believed, and it made good words for that hymn.

But we don't know whether it will be a bright and cloudless morning or not. God knows. God knows.

I know to be caught away and to be introduced personally to Him, face-to-face with the Lord Jesus Christ, that's going to be a reality, and that's going to be wonderful. True obedience. Not pick and choose what I want to do, what appeals to me.

And you know, if you're not loyal to this Word, I'll tell you something, beloved brother and sister in Christ, other people know whether you take it seriously or not. The world we live in today, and you've heard this so often, I've never met an unsaved person yet that couldn't tell a Christian how to live. So often they know or seem to know what we're supposed to be doing.

They know when we're disloyal and we don't obey the Word of God. They seem to know. They detect that we're not wholeheartedly in love with the Word of God, as my dear friend was.

Love the Word of God. Able to witness and to be able to present the truth of the Word as something that you truly mean in your heart and soul. Not just words, know that what you are presenting, when you point a person to the salvation that God has provided, you are able to say, I have experienced this.

Experientially, I know that this is true. He can truly change your whole life. He can bring into your life a whole new dimension of living.

I know it's true. I have experienced it. And He lives within my heart.

You know, that's the pure, unadulterated grace of God working in your heart and my heart. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, entertaining in our hearts and souls things that indeed are not promoting the kind of holiness within our own soul. You know, God's, the worship of God, it stems so often from what we know about the Word of God.

God is spirit. We must worship Him in spirit and according to the truth. And people, because sometimes they can't, they can't accept the reality of that truth, they will produce an image or they'll produce something that they learn to identify with.

Identify with the Word of God. You don't need an idol. Perhaps idolatry springs forth from all of this.

I must have some reality about what I say I believe. The reality is, thus saith the Word of God. That's all important.

Worship and obedience, they have to be linked together. And it's based upon our knowledge of the Word of God. And it should be a product in each one of our lives, something that it produces.

And I know that prayer does play an important part. When you are devoted to examining a truth in the Word of God, stay close to the Lord and remind Him that He promised that the Spirit of God that indwells us will give us enlightenment. You say, but I've got all of those books laying there, and I'm making constant reference to what somebody else said.

You know, sometimes you realize, close them all up. Push them all aside and say, Lord, speak to me. Lord, speak to me.

This is your Word. And the Spirit of God can teach me anything in this book that I'm willing to devote myself to. And with the right attitude of heart and mind, I can be blessed by having you provide enlightenment.

You know, in this psalm, I will keep thy statutes, O forsake me not. You know, that's a good resolve. Can you imagine what it would be like for someone to come and say, you know, I found something in the Word of God that no one else had ever discovered? What is it? It's a passage of Scripture that's been hidden, but it says that the Lord will forsake us.

He will forsake us. He will leave us. Where in the world did you find it? Oh, it was hidden.

It was hidden. I'm so thankful that I can say, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. How many times some dear, poor saint that was indeed going through circumstances that were so trying, and they just grabbed hold, I will never leave you nor forsake you.

The truth of God's Word, I believe it. I will never, never, never leave you nor forsake you. And that's comforting, and we like the thought of that.

And we get down to some verses that young people down through the ages, when they go to youth rallies and so forth, Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way, By taking heed thereto according to thy word. You know, it starts out with a question, and it's a weighty question, I think. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? I think God does a satisfactory answer to that question.

And let every young person, old person, and all in between be reminded that with the grace in our hearts, we learn that indeed according to the Word of God. What has God said? How can cleansing come? Nothing but the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ can cleanse us from that defilement that touches our lives. That's the Word of God.

Again, with my whole heart have I sought thee, O let me not wander from thy commandments. Can you imagine if David or someone else, one of the persons that penned these words in the Psalms, and that was the desire of his heart. I don't want to wander away from the truth of the Word of God, but you know, and I know, and sometimes we know it in a very personal way, I have wandered away from the Word.

Not reading the Word like I used to. Not a part of my daily living. I don't have those private times anymore when I draw aside and take the Word of God and with that kind of expectancy we've been talking about, I want to hear you speak to me, Lord, through the Word.

The reality of all that God wants the Word to mean to us, its impact upon us, how important it is. It is important. So important.

By word have I hid in my heart that I might sin against thee. I doubt if there's a person in this room tonight, as a believer, and you've been saved any length of time, that you cannot look back in your life and had this come to your mind, if it had not been for the Word of God coming to my mind, I would have done something that would have been shameful and harmful to me. I believe that every one of us has had that experience.

It was the Word of God reminding me of what a dreadful thing sin is, what a dreadful thing it would be for me to disobey the Word and dishonor God in defying Him by an act of disobedience to something that is so clearly taught in the Word of God. Walking in a manner that is well pleasing to Him because we belong to Him, and He delights in hearing you and hearing me, and I say that indeed. But for the grace of God and what the Word that was thrown away in my mind, that's why it's so valuable to memorize the Word of God, have it there.

The Lord Jesus Christ reminded the devil when he sought to tempt and test him, it is written, it is written, and I trust that every one of us, when we are brought face to face, when there are opportunities to engage in things and to think things and to do things that are dishonoring to the Lord, it's written, it's written. And it's written that I should not engage in that activity. You know, if you want blanket coverage, be not conformed to the ways of this world.

Man, this world is reaching out. The tentacles are like some giant octopus, and the allurements of the world and the pleasures of sin, they are so great. But we found a source of joy and peace and satisfaction for the soul, you can't find it anywhere else, because the pleasures of sin are just for a season, it doesn't last very long.

Blessed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy statutes, O Lord. Prayer and praise, that's a part of my life. I will lift up my voice to God, and I'll praise and worship Him.

And I delight to engage in that activity, not for a show, but because I know He loves me and I love Him. I love Him, and I do appreciate all that He has done for me. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

You know, we have an opportunity. Let the redeemed of the Lord, let them speak forth boldly with authority. What authority? The Word of God.

Man, you want to be saved? Yes, I want to be saved. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be saved. You know, one time we went on a little evangelistic get-together in which a lot of thoughts were being exchanged.

Brother Jim Redling had launched out into a ministry of evangelization. He loved to preach the gospel, and he said, You know, brethren, there's something I've learned that I didn't use to do this, but if someone wanted to be saved, I tried to give him the whole Bible at one time. He said, I sometimes start in Genesis and just go on and on.

And finally, an older brother one time heard me, and he drew me aside sometime later, and he reminded me, The man just wants to be saved, Jim. Tell him how to be saved. He said, Give me a verse.

He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son hath not life. He said, That's all.

That's all he needs. That's all he needs. He needs Jesus Christ, the Son of God as his Savior.

Isn't it simple? I don't have to be a theologian. I don't have to be someone that has memorized every portion of the Word of God. If God saved your soul, you know how you got saved.

You know a verse of Scripture, perhaps. Romans 10 and 9 is a favorite verse of mine. And you may say John 3.16. You may say some other verse, but rejoice in having the opportunity of sharing with someone

else this life-giving Word.

I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes. Child of God, learn to have a wonderful experience in having your soul filled with joy like you never had before by reading the Word of God and meditating upon it and saying, Lord, I'm your child.

What do you want me to know that I don't know? Is there something here that I need to be enlightened to? Help me, Lord. Help me. You're my heavenly Father.

I search your Word. I want that truth to come into my mind and heart so that I can obey it and follow your will for my life. What the heart delights in, listen to this, what the heart delights in, memory retains.

You believe that? Some pleasurable experience, some experience in your life, maybe it's your love for someone else, maybe it's something very special, but you delight in that and you retain that. Maybe you keep some love letters that someone wrote you. You like to still read them, little things like that.

It's in your memory and you want to keep it there, don't you? You don't want to forget it. That woman doesn't want me to forget I love her and I tell her I love her and she still likes to hear that. Don't you think God likes to hear us say, Lord, I love you? Now love your Word.

It's meant so much to me. It's to help me to grow spiritually. I'm more mature now than I was the day I was saved, and God knows we're supposed to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, all according to the Word.

Delight thyself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Our Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the psalms. Thank thee for this, the Word of God.

Mage one of us solemnly in our own hearts and souls now, Lord, in that very private manner in which we sometimes dedicate ourselves afresh. We dedicate ourselves to a more careful walk with thee. We are approving our love and our appreciation for your presence with us as we read the Word of God, as we hear your voice speak to us.

Bless us to the end that our lives will be enriched to the point that joy, peace, worship and praise shall be ascribed to you and the Lord and Savior of our souls, Jesus Christ. In his name we pray, amen.

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