

## **Psalm 119:97-120**

### **Part 4**

What is there in this world that we can read every day, and not get tired of reading it? I can only read a newspaper once. I am not interested in reading a history book more than once. The psalmist absolutely loves God's word. He not only reads it every day; but he reads it throughout each day.

We talked about how the bible is a living document. It is a life compass. It is a self-diagnosis instrument. It is a portal to heaven.

### **Read Psalm 119:97-104:**

#### **Meditating on God's Word**

The psalmist meditates on God's word throughout his day. This is nothing like eastern mysticism or transcendental meditation at all.

We do not try to empty our mind like the TM meditation prescribes. We focus on God. We do not mindlessly repeat mantras or phrases. Even the LORD's Prayer can become a mindless mantra.

*Do not be rash with your mouth And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few. (Ecclesiastes 5:2)*

We do not burn candles or create moods. We want a very real conversation; not imagined. We do not practice yoga as part of our prayers either.

If biblical meditation is none of the previously mentioned things, then what is it? The word used here is H 7881 (to deeply contemplate, ponder and roll it over and over in your mind). We are to be like miners examining each nugget of truth like it is gold. We are also told to rightly divide the word of God into its components.

*...not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings (2 Timothy 2:14-15)*

We are not argumentative about scripture; nor are we to become philosophical about its implications. We treat it like an accurate map to where we want to get to. It must be studied carefully. A failure to take it seriously can land you in a place that you do not want to be.

The Old Testament usage of meditation on God's word is the same word used to ruminate. Sheep and cattle are called ruminants because they have four stomachs. They chew their food, burp it up, and chew it more finely, and burp it up and chew it even more finely. That is a perfect visual image of contemplating and praying over scriptural revelation. We have to break it down into its essential components first. The scriptures are not intended to be a super-sophisticated code book to break. It is designed for the simple and the wise to be equally fed by it.

*...we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:19-21)*

*At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. (Matthew 11:25-27)*

My own personal bible studies have transformed over the years. I find it valuable to have my quiet time each morning, before I rush out the door. I also listen to teachings on the radio and on tape. I like to listen to bible studies as I drive or jog as well. I had a two-hour commute many years ago. During that time, I would listen to sports talk radio. I heard one of Dr. David Jeremiah's messages about the book of Revelation, entitled Escape the Coming Night. I purchased the whole series; which lasted me a month or so. Then I did the same thing with Pastor Chuck Smith, John Courson, Alister Begg, Chris Swanson, etc... I have been able to listen to chapter by chapter bible teachings for many years now; and it has been a blessing.

### Obtaining Wisdom

The psalmist tells us that meditating on God's results in an increase in his wisdom. Wisdom is not the same as more information or knowledge. Today our society has the benefit of more information than those who have gone before us. At the same time, many feel that we are exercising the least wisdom of any recent generation as well. George Washington would probably classify much of what is common in our political world as treasonous. We are destroying our own nation with imaginary and damaging agendas. One simple example is global warming. The

planetary temperature has only increased .1%; and that is due to ongoing paving and urban development of land and its heat-absorbing surface features. Our solution is to shut down our advantageous energy sources and their revenue as well as crippling various industries. Stewardship and improved technology are always good, but outlawing internal combustion cars in California, with our dependent power grid seems like a plot from our enemy.

Wisdom is the proper and resourceful application of known information in a circumspect and meaningful way. The city of San Francisco has areas in downtown where drugs and street people have overrun the local community. Sidewalks are power washed daily; and open sewer holes are placed in the middle of the sidewalks; allowing anyone to take a public squat instead of using a public restroom. Now the locals have stooped to pulling over their cars to do the same. The city has always embraced the outcasts is at our technological center; and yet they have people leaving the city in droves as it morally implodes.

The bible calls geniuses (or anyone else) who reject God's obvious truths as fools. A fool originally was meant to apply to a person going against God; not to describe a mere simple-minded person. This applies equally to the down and out as the up and out. To obtain wealth without using it to help the needy is a complete misunderstanding or misapplication of how to use God's resources. Whatever we squirrel away just for ourselves will unravel and corrode over time. God is looking for open conduits to flow his blessings out from us...not just into us. God can make a person of modest IQ into a wise man.

*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11)*

*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." (1 Corinthians 1:18-19)*

Wisdom is to take the obvious action based on all of the intel. To procrastinate is to demonstrate that we do not take it seriously; or that you do not care. Noah was considered to be wise, not because he understood mechanical engineering and hydraulics. It is because he picked up an axe and saw and string line as soon as he received his blueprints from God on the ark. I have seen this in my own life. I frequently will not know what to do in a given day. I have discovered that if I do the obvious and small task before me; that my mind will be opened further as to what comes next. We are called to take *steps of faith*...not only to further contemplate truths.

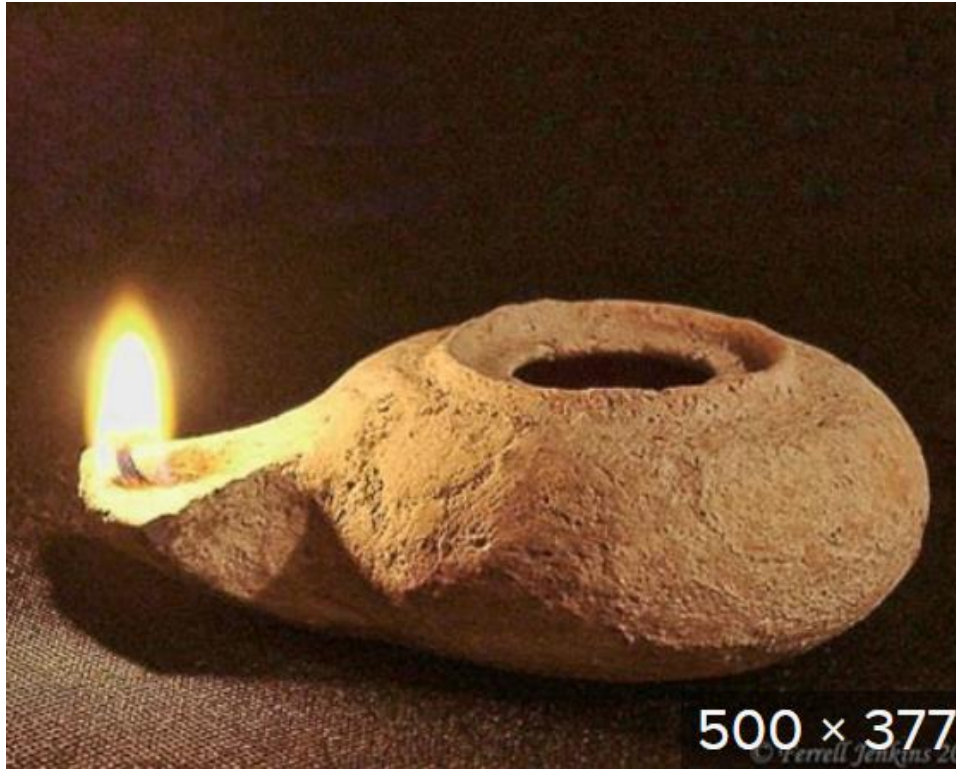
*....shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. (2 Timothy 2:16)*

The scriptures tell us that the students of scripture who put their new-found knowledge into play quickly are the ones who get the lightning-fast downloads from heaven. We are not to use new information to show off or just for public debates and *sword fights*. God is not going to hand us a saw if we ignored his instructions regarding the hammer. His instructions are simple and easy to apply.

**Read Psalm 119:105-112:**

### God's Word is a Lamp

The psalmist is comparing God's word as a lamp in front of his feet. In those days, lamps were tiny, oil burning objects.



The idea is that you cannot see the whole room; or very far away from yourself. This kind of lamp only illuminates enough for your next steps. Likewise; God does not tell us about everything in front of us. He sees it clearly; but we do not. We only need to see our next step and take it. God puts a premium on trust over knowledge.

*“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:28-34)*

### Saints Being Afflicted

The psalmist tells us that he is *afflicted*. The word used here for affliction is the mental uneasiness and browbeating that comes from making a mistake. We beat

ourselves up over not thinking our decisions through. We find ourselves in frequent predicaments that seem to have been avoidable. Jesus spoke about this.

*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)*

I used to believe that Jesus was just warning us that we live in a fallen world; and bad things are happening all around us. This is true; but I see now there is more to it. When Adam and Eve abandoned God’s guidelines in the Garden of Eden; they became very self-aware and they felt guilty. In fact they hid from God for the first time. I believe that God has shown me that the breakdowns and slips and trap doors of daily life are not random. They are prescriptive, just for us. The scriptures tell us that every single encounter and discovery and incident in our lives is just right for our spiritual development.

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)*

Spiritual warfare is about getting stuck. It is about second guessing ourselves unto condemnation. “*I procrastinated too long*”. “*I was too hasty*”. “*I should have turned left*”. “*I should have turned right*”. “*I should have told her that I love her*.” “*Why did I have to blurt that out*”? There is only an apparent after-the-fact right answer. The important thing to remember that if we take everything to God and lay it down at his feet in advance; there are no strategic issues to beat ourselves up about. We have no idea what is around the next corner.

*As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:13-14)*

I have discovered that I can make the clearly wrong decision, and God will often make a paradigm shift and turn it into the right decision! This is either happening to me more and more; or I am just becoming aware of it. That is one reason that we will not feel worthy in heaven. After a while you realize that you are really not driving anymore.

*For he who fears God will escape them all. (Ecclesiastes 7:18)*

Our job is to sit at the feet of Jesus each morning. We cannot see the future; and we have limited insight. The way that things turn out from there are all on God.

**Read Psalm 119:113-120:**

## Half-Heartedness

The psalmist sees a problem with the person who professes to trust God; and yet he does not take the related steps that go with a firm commitment and trust in God. Persecution is a common way to separate those who *talk a good game*, verses those who are all in.

The word for double-minded here is H 5588, and also means to be ambivalent, skeptical, pluralistic or half-hearted. Our society is trying to do away with absolute truth; and promotes relativity. We cannot claim to be people of the truth, but be influenced by circumstances.

*...be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)*

*Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (James 2:18-20)*

Being spiritually alive is going to come with some evidence. If I have strong convictions, they will play out in my life. The Jews abandoned God; and they put their hope in the wealthy and powerful nations. Ultimately these nations abused them and took advantage of them.

## Keeping Your Thoughts Pure

Once we see how good that God's ways are; we become more offended at things that are contrary. In a sense you become *ruined for this world*; and you grow weary of the meaningless and harmful things that people do. It is interesting that people do not really say much about my faith; but they will stop themselves from saying something that is going to morally offend me. Somehow that message gets out there, without me saying anything. They learn that I do not want to go to the strip club, or join them for drinks, or discuss unclean things.

## Becoming a Poster Child



Once your faith is out there you become very aware that your life is now a platform for the gospel. Any insensitive thing that I do might prevent someone from seriously considering the merits in following Jesus. I do not want to fail; and thus contribute to a person's pre-disposition to believe that Christianity is just a crutch. People around me may not want to discuss scripture; but they are watching my every move with that in mind.

### Purifying the Saints

God is applying heat and pressure to our lives to bring the hidden things in our hearts and minds to the surface. We are like tea bags that display what we have within us when we get into hot water. Do we lash out or accuse others? The process of testing is to reveal to us what is inside of us. God already knows. Pushing through our doubts and fears produces a person; more equipped to follow God.

*...we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5: 3-5)*