

A Light in the Valley

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Attitude Toward God's Word

by: Kris Brewer

In the current religious environment, many people have very little respect for the word of God. They want to declare how much they love God (and how much He loves them), but they have no intention of heeding His instructions. Some are so bold as to declare that they do not care what the scriptures say because they “know in their hearts” that the Lord loves them just the way they are. They, of course, mean that they believe God must accept them just as they are, even if they are acting contrary (and in rebellion to) His declared will.

To gather a better view of how we should consider the word of the Lord, we can consider some of the writings of the psalmist in Psalm 119. This is, of course, the longest single chapter of the Bible, so we cannot and will not examine all the psalmist has to say. However, we can learn from this psalm how a true follower of God will regard His word.

Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the

whole heart! (Psalm 119:2)

One who is a true follower of the Lord will seek to keep the testimonies of the Lord. One interesting observation throughout this psalm is the many different words that the author uses to convey the idea of the word of God and that the people of God must heed His word. Here, the psalmist declares that those who keep the testimonies of the Lord are the ones whom He will bless. But, not only that, he addresses the manner in which they keep these testimonies. He declares that they are to “seek Him with the whole heart!” Far too many people today are only interested in God's word when it already confirms what they want to do, or at least does not make them alter their desired behavior too drastically. In contrast, the psalmist shows that the true follower of God will dedicate his whole heart to the Lord's testimonies!

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to

Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! (Psalm 119:9-10)

God's word is the only source of information that can show sinful man how to "cleanse his way" before the Lord. The psalmist here says that one must take "heed according to [God's] word." So, it is not just a matter of knowing what the word of the Lord is, but actually putting it into practice. By "taking heed" to the word of the Lord, one knows what God wants and acts upon it, doing what God wants done.

This idea is emphasized in the second part of these connected verses. Verse 10 returns the reader to the idea of keeping the Lord's word with one's "whole heart." The result of doing so will be to keep the Lord's follower from wandering away from his commandments. The natural conclusion is that when we do wander away from the instruction of the Lord, we are showing that we are not concerned with following the Lord with our "whole heart." Some may think that such a departure is not a big deal. They believe that God is somehow happy with any little bit of attention we might give to Him and His word. However, Jesus Himself provides, through His word, what His expectation is:

Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40)

We cannot claim that we love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and mind, and then ignore His instructions! Saying that we love Him means nothing if we are not obedient to His word:

If you love Me, keep My commandments. (John 14:15)

Like the psalmist, we need to have the attitude that we will devote our whole heart to the word of the Lord, and commit ourselves to dedicated obedience!

Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law. (Psalm 119:18)

There are many people who read God's word today with an eye toward all the things they are restrained from doing. They view God as the oppressive parent who wants to take away all the fun things of life. They are convinced that the word of God is nothing more than a book full of "thou shall NOTs," so even if they think they want to be obedient, it becomes a resentful obedience.

In reality, if we have the right attitude toward the word of God, we will see the “wondrous things” that God has provided for us. The mere existence of His revelation is marvelous in and of itself. He has provided the manner of salvation, the way that we can be reconciled to Him. Beyond that, within the pages of His word, are any number of wonderful and awesome messages that convey to us the mind of God Himself. This is why, no matter how much time a person spends studying the Bible, he can always find something new to learn from it!

Let Your mercies come also to me, O LORD— Your salvation according to Your word. So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches me, For I trust in Your word. (Psalm 119:41–42)

Here, the psalmist appeals to the mercies of the Lord; mercies that were enumerated for him through the word of the Lord. But, God’s word also provided a way for him to give an answer to those who would reproach him. God’s word is the source for all the answers that pertain to life and godliness. It is the source to which we, too, must appeal if we are to give answer for our faith:

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; (1 Peter 3:15)

Only by hearing the word of God can we have faith (Romans 10:17), and only by spending a significant amount of time with that word can we be prepared to give an answer for the hope that we have in Christ Jesus!

I thought about my ways, And turned my feet to Your testimonies. I made haste, and did not delay To keep Your commandments. (Psalm 119:59–60)

In this part of his psalm, the author addressed the urgency that he had to be obedient to the law of the Lord. He was not going to wait to put what God instructed him to do into practice.

This is yet another area in which people today stray away from God’s expectation. Rather than seeking to

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman
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Everyone Welcome!

hurry and do the will of the Lord, many people go to great lengths to figure out how they can avoid doing His will. They have developed a plethora of excuses that they believe relieve them of any obligation toward God. If we are going to be true servants of God, we need to have the same attitude that the psalmist had. We need to decide that we will hurry to do the will of the Lord, no matter what it is that he requires of us. We cannot pick and choose what we like. We cannot only abide by the instructions that are easy for us to fulfill. We cannot drag our feet on all the commands that require us to make changes to be holy before the Lord! It is our responsibility to make haste, and not delay when it comes to obeying the instructions of God.

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. (Psalm 119:97)

In this verse, the psalmist again addresses the kind of attitude those who love the Lord will have toward His word. Not only does he address that attitude, but he shows what the result of that attitude will be. Those who love the law of the Lord will spend time with it. They will study it. They will spend time thinking about it, contemplating its meanings and applications. They will truly meditate on God's word!

I am small and despised, Yet I do not forget Your precepts. Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth. (Psalm 119:141-142)

The law of God is truth. The world we live in is heavily influenced by a world view that declares that there is no such thing as absolute truth. The idea of "truth" changes from person to person, and therefore there is no code of morality, no standard of right or wrong. We have arrived at an almost completely arbitrary set of societal rules and laws that define what is acceptable and unacceptable. Any attempt to impose an idea of morality is met with disdain. In such a degenerative society, it is comforting to know that God has, and always will, define that which is "truth." We can either accept His truth and be a part of His "everlasting righteousness," or we can squander away all sense of morality (such as is seen in our wicked world) and suffer the consequences of his "everlasting righteousness." His truth provides for eternal salvation, but it also provides for eternal damnation!

There is much more we could examine in this psalm concerning God's word. This psalm should help us to understand what type of attitude God expects us to have toward His word. It should also help us to understand just how important God's word is, to us and to the whole world! May we strive to consider His law with the same diligence as the psalmist!

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the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation..." (verses 11-12). It's normal to become burned out and discouraged. That is why Paul encourages us in the midst of it all to not trail behind, have patience and rejoice in the hope that has been given to us.

I am patient and persistent with the training of my children because I have hope it will produce godly young adults. I am patient and forgiving in my marriage because I have hope that it will produce a lifelong, joyful union. I serve and love my fellow saints because I have hope in our eternal life together. I am patient with this life and all its tribulations because I know that if I endure, my hope of a resurrected body and life with Christ are sure.

Let me encourage you in the season of life you find yourself in. If you're in the single season, don't let your hands be idle; there is so much work to do. You may be patiently waiting for a husband and children, but as you wait, work for the Lord and serve His children. As a young mother there may be days you don't get out of the house, let alone get fully dressed. That's ok. You have little hearts you are rocking, feeding and training for God's kingdom. Your work is important - be patient and endure. If your nest is empty, please don't be overcome with loneliness. You have been given a season to see the fruits of your labor and enjoy them. Now you're available to care for the saints in ways others can't. Continue to be patient because you are well aware of the rewards of endurance. If you're in the midst of internal struggle and turmoil, take courage because you are not alone and this will pass. It's hard to be patient when you're in the midst of trials and suffering, but there is hope and it will see you through. A brother who is much wiser than me once said, "Patience is persistent endurance." How true!

Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." (Hebrews 10:35-39)

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

In whatever circumstance you find yourself in, please, do not shrink back and be destroyed. There is satisfaction in completing our work. There is growth and joy when we persevere and find ourselves on the other side of our struggles. More than all of that, the Lord is preparing a great reward for our faithfulness.

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:9)

Patience is Persistent Endurance

Ladies Corner

by: Amy Drake

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:10-12)

There are many aspects and seasons of our lives where daily tasks could become routine and mundane making us feel sluggish. There may be circumstances that test and try, leaving us ragged and worn out. We all have internal battles and temptations that never seem to ease, struggles that often seem to have no end. Whether it be the single woman struggling to be accountable to herself, the new mother sleep deprived from 3 AM feedings, the daughter now caring for her elderly mother with dementia, being diagnosed with a serious disease, or the wife who struggles to submit her will and show her husband respect. We all deal with circumstances and internal situations that test our resolve and our patience.

My oldest daughter is 4 and is already proving her patience to be thin (as with just about any other 4 year old). I'm teaching her to fold clothes, but not only that, to be happy to help Mommy fold clothes. She is quick to fling herself to the floor and melt into a puddle of fussy tears if the pants are not completely flat before she begins to fold them or if she has no idea how to fold the hood on her shirt. She insists that it's too hard, it takes too long, she cannot figure it out, and she can't do it just like Momma. She is not patient with herself to practice and be persistent in learning. I will admit these fits of frustration on her part kindle my own internal fits. Why can't she stay calm and let me explain and help if needed? But I do my best to be patient with her because she is 4 and is learning, and be persistent in teaching her to help in our home. The better part of me knows that this training will yield a child ready and able to help one day, and later on a servant in the kingdom.

Sometimes as adults, we throw ourselves onto the proverbial floor of life, tears flowing, ready to give up because the things of our life are taking longer than we think they should or are not going the way we expect them to, and it's just too hard to go on. How often do we need patience with ourselves? Many times we just need some endurance to see us through the struggle. I fully admit that there are situations and seasons of life that are much more difficult and trying than a 4 year old learning to fold clothes, but God desires us to be diligent, patient, and trusting in His promises in everything we face. James 5:7-8 says,

“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

There are times we may feel our work is lowly and repetitious. When we feel undervalued we often become discouraged in our efforts, which creates tribulation within ourselves - but to God our lives and work as women are anything but menial. When we serve our family, home, and fellow saints, we honor the roles God has given us. Even the smallest tasks have worth when done faithfully because it is the work the Lord has given you to do. Romans 2:6-7 tells us that God “‘will render to each one according to his deeds’: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality...”

So when life feels like chore, when our work seems insignificant, when suffering seems to come without end - what do we do? How do we endure?

Hope. We carry on because of hope.

Romans 8:24 ...but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

Hope is key to being patient in this life. I can endure anything Satan throws at me because I have hope in God’s promises and His justice. Patience and hope go hand in hand. We patiently endure because we have persistent hope. Romans 5:3 says, “And not only that, but 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 12:9-18 is a wonderful bullet list-type passage that lays out the characteristics of a Christian life. As women we can see direct application to each point in the context of our service.

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

In the middle of this passage Paul writes, “ ...not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving

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Daily Bible Reading

July 2016

July 1	Psalms 1-6	July 18	Psalms 39-42
July 4	Psalms 7-10	July 19	Psalms 43-45
July 5	Psalms 11-16	July 20	Psalms 46-49
July 6	Psalms 17-18	July 21	Psalms 50-52
July 7	Psalms 19-21	July 22	Psalms 53-57
July 8	Psalms 22-24	July 25	Psalms 58-60
July 11	Psalms 25-27	July 26	Psalms 61-65
July 12	Psalms 28-31	July 27	Psalms 66-68
July 13	Psalms 32-34	July 28	Psalms 69-70
July 14	Psalms 35-36	July 29	Psalms 71-72
July 15	Psalms 37-38		

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