

DAVID'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD OF GOD

Last Sunday, I began the message by having you turn in *your hymnal* to the song "Holy Bible, Book Divine." Why did I have you do that? To see for yourselves that *a songwriter* referred to the Bible as a *precious treasure*. But more important than what *a songwriter says* about the Word of God is what the *Scripture writers* themselves said about the Word of God!

So last week we looked at *Job's attitude* toward the Word of God. What was Job's attitude?

Job 23:12 "...I have esteemed the words of His [God's] mouth more than *my necessary* food."

--*Not*, more than *harmful things* like alcohol...or cigarettes...or drugs

--And *not* more than *unnecessary things* like candy...or cake...or cookies...or ice cream...

--Job treasured God's Word more than the food that was necessary to keep *him alive*!

Why did he say such a thing? Because he understood this *very important* Bible truth: "There is more to *this* life than this life!" Stated another way, there is a life *that follows this one*—and it is *much more important* than this one!

How do we know? Because Jesus said so!

Mt 16:26 "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

There's a lot packed into this verse, but the main point is unmistakably this: It *does you no good to gain everything* there is to gain *in this life* if you lose your soul and spend eternity in hell in *the next life!* And that is why our priority should be *preparation for the next life*—not the *pursuit of pleasure in this life!*

Although I maybe didn't stress this last week, I believe we would all agree that *treasuring* God's Word implies we will do at least two things: *know what* it says—and *do what* it says! What happens when we do that? What will be the results? Here are the three I mentioned last week:

- 1) We will be prepared to meet God
- 2) We will have peace in trials
- 3) And we will be provided opportunities to be a blessing to others

This morning, we are going to look at the *attitude that David had* toward the Word of God. Much is written *about* David—and much was written *by* David! In fact, he is called "the sweet Psalmist of Israel" (II Sam 23:1).

Did he write all 150 Psalms? No; he actually only wrote about half! But from those—especially Psalm 19 and 119—David shares the thoughts he had toward God's Word. God obviously wants us to *read and ponder* those thoughts—that's why He included them in the Bible! I believe God also wants us to use *David's* attitude as a measuring stick for *our attitude* toward the Word of God.

Take your Bibles and turn to Psalm 119. Before we look at David's attitudes, I want to consider the *Structure and Content* of this Psalm. With 176 verses, it is by far the longest chapter in the Bible. Although the author is not named, David is the *presumed author* and the psalm was probably written over a period of time.

The *structure* of this Psalm is unique in that it is divided into 22 sections of 8 verses. Each of the 22 sections is designated *by a letter* of the Hebrew alphabet, and each line in that section *begins* with that letter.

To help you visualize this a little better, think of it like this in English: the first section would have a sub-title of A—and all 8 verses in that section would begin with the letter "A." The second section would have the sub-title "B"—and all 8 verses would begin with the letter "B" and so on.

Psalm 119 is also unique *in its content*—specifically *how often* it refers to God's Word. A group of Jewish scholars (between the 6th and 10th centuries AD) said that the Word of God is referred to in *every verse* except 122. (<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-119/>). Others suggest there are two verses where it is not mentioned (122 and 132); still others suggest as *many as five*. Even if it is five, the Word of God—by various designations—is referred to in at least 171 out of the 176 verses!

Now that we know a little bit about the structure and content, let's look at **David's attitudes** toward God's Word as found in this Psalm. There are several. We are going to look at 2 this morning and 1 this afternoon.

1. David's awe for the Word of God

Look at vs 161 "Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in **awe** of thy word."

The word "awe" carries a couple of different meanings. It can mean **to be afraid**...to dread...to tremble...to have a reverence or a godly fear. David had been **persecuted by Saul** on numerous occasions—and by his son Absalom once—and David probably has them in mind when he refers to "princes" that have persecuted him.

So, the idea very well could be: 'In spite of being hunted down by mighty men when I didn't deserve to be, I'm still going to **fear God and what He says** more than what princes do or say.'

Does God want us to have a reverence—a godly fear—of His Word? Yes, He does! How do we know? Because He told us through the prophet Isaiah! **Is 66:2b** "...but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, **and trembleth at my word.**"

But there is a **second meaning** of "awe" that I believe could also fit here. It is the idea of **amazement and wonder**—like seeing millions of stars on a clear night or seeing the Grand Canyon for the very first time!

--**Our head**—our mind; our thinking—should **be amazed over the fact** that God chose to communicate with us! **Amos 4:13** "For, lo, He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is His thought..." Let that sink in...**God declared His thoughts**—His truth—to men and had them **write it down** so we would have what God wants us to know! That should **bring an awe**—an amazement and a wonder—that God would give to us such an incredible gift as **His thoughts** in a book!

Back to our verse. It doesn't say David's **head**—his mind—stood in awe of God's Word, though, does it?

What does it say? It says, "...my **heart** standeth in awe of thy word." Maybe I'm making too much of this, but David's awe and amazement over God's word was **more than intellectual**—it affected more than his **head**. It affected **his heart**...his emotions ...his feelings!

We get a glimpse of that in some other Psalms of David.

Psalm 8:3-4 "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

--'When I consider the fact that creating the heavens—the moon and the stars—is like child's play to you; it's the work of your fingers—that's mind-boggling!'

--'But then I consider that although you are **that** great, you still choose to **think about me!** And when I consider that, **my heart is humbled**—and stands in awe of your Word!' Here are a couple more:

Ps 139:17-18 "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! ¹⁸ If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee."

Ps 113:5-6 "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, ⁶ **Who humbleth Himself** to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!"

Does your **head**—and heart—stand in awe of God's Word? If not, maybe it's because you don't stand **in awe of God** the way you should!

Next, let's consider... **2. David's delight in—and love for—the Word of God**

I decided to "lump" these two together because there isn't all that much difference between "delighting in" something and "loving" it—at least in my simple mind! Besides, David seems to use the two words interchangeably in 47: "And I will **delight myself** in thy commandments, **which I have loved.**"

David declares **nine different times** in this Psalm that God's Word is **his delight**—here in vs 47 and in verses 16,24,35,70,77,92,143, and 174.

And David declares **ten times** in this Psalm that he **loved** God's Word—here in vs 47 and in verses 48,97,113,119,127,140,159,163, and 167.

So how do we “tackle” 19 verses about David’s delight in—and love for—the Word of God?

--To read/explain each of the 19 verses would take the rest of the day—if not longer—so that isn’t an option.

--To just **read them to you** without explanation would be somewhat helpful, but you could go home and do that on your own. You can still do that—that’s why I gave you all the references there on your outline 😊!

Instead of doing either of those, we are going to narrow it down. As mentioned earlier, David refers to God’s Word—His written revelation—at least 171 times in these 176 verses. What I didn’t mention, though, was that David referred to God’s Word in this Psalm using 8 **different** words. We are going to look at just two—one of which we have in verses 47 and 48. What is David calling God’s Word here? **Commandments**

A. David delighted in—and loved—God’s commandments

We see David’s **delight** in God’s commandments in vs 35, here in vs 47, and in vs 143.

And we see David’s **love** for God’s commandments here in verses 47 and 48, as well as in vs 127 where David says he loves God’s commandments **more than gold!**

What is a commandment? Derek Kidner wrote: “This word emphasizes the straight authority of what is said...the right to give orders.” (<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-119/>)

In its simplest form, then, a commandment is **an order from God**. What was **David’s attitude** toward orders from God? He **delighted** in them—and **loved** them!

Let’s not miss the significance of what David is saying!

--‘I love to be ordered around’

--‘I delight in hearing “Do this”—and “Don’t do that!”’

--‘I long to hear your commands for me, God. In fact, your commands—being told what to do by You—is better than having gold!’

Is that **really what** David is saying? If not, how else would you explain **delighting in** and **loving** God’s commandments—His orders?

So how could David **love** being told what to do? How could he **delight in** receiving orders from God? “Piece of cake,” right? We’re **all like David**, aren’t we? We all **naturally have this attitude**, don’t we?

--Imagine **your children** greeting you in the morning with a smile and saying, ‘Good morning, Mom! What would you like me to do for you today. Your wish is my command!’

--Or **getting to work** and seeing everyone lined up at the boss’s door, eagerly waiting for him or her to give out the task list for the day.

--Or—I’m meddling now—**everyone that attends church** here coming up to me and saying, ‘Hey Pastor; tell me what God wants me to do and I’ll do it right away—no questions asked!’

No—we don’t **naturally** have this attitude and, no—most of the time we are **not like** David. So again I ask, how could David **delight in and love** being commanded by God? The reason David could think that way was because there were attitudes—and beliefs—that were **underneath** David’s love for God’s commandments.

--He knew he was created by God (Ps 139:13-14)—so God had the right to tell him what to do!

--He knew he would be judged by and asked God to search him (Psalm 139:23-24).

--He knew he was forgiven by God (Ps 32:5) and felt indebted to Him.

--And he knew that someday, He would behold God’s face and awake in His likeness (Ps 17:15).

These same things are true of us, aren’t they?

--We were created by God—so God has the right to tell us what to do!

--We will be rewarded for our obedience and faithfulness—another reason to do what He tells us!

--If you are a believer, you have been forgiven much—and been rescued from hell—and ought to feel a great debt to Him.

--And you too—if you are a believer—will be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (I John 3:2)! I believe if **we have these** underlying attitudes, we will **also delight in and love** God’s commandments.

I John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.” And let’s not forget what Jesus Himself said: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)

There's a second thing David delighted in and loved; we see that in verse 70: "Their heart is as fat as grease; but I **delight in thy law.**"

B. David delighted in—and loved—God's law

Delight in God's law is seen in verses 70,77,92,174; **love for God's law** is seen in verses 97,113, and 163.

What is the difference between **commandment** and **law**? The Hebrew word that "law" is formed from is a verb that means to "aim, direct, guide, and teach." It carries the idea of a "rule of conduct;" **the way we ought to live**. It lines up nicely with Art's acrostic for **B-I-B-L-E**—Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth!

Here, instead of David **delighting in** and **loving getting orders** from God, David delighted in and loved **getting direction and guidance** from God. He wanted to know what pleased God so he could **do it**—and what displeased God so he could **avoid it!** And—similar to what we looked at regarding the **commandments**—I believe there were attitudes **underneath this** attitude that led David to **want** direction & guidance from God.

So what might these attitudes be—besides the ones we already looked at?

Certainly, **humility** would be one of them. We see David's humility throughout this Psalm in his **teachable spirit**. Vs 64 "...teach me thy statutes." Vs 66 "Teach me good judgment and knowledge..."

Question: Does the person who thinks **they have** good judgment and knowledge **ask God** to teach them? Obviously not! **The proud** don't seek teaching from God—but the humble do!

David's humility is also seen in his **desire for correction**.

Vs 71 "It is good for me that **I have been afflicted...**" Vs 75 "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou **in faithfulness hast afflicted me.**" In essence, David is saying, 'Your faithfulness to me—your love for me—has led you to afflict me; to chasten me—and that is good!'

Do you delight in—and love—**God's law; His teachings** on how to live the way David did? If not, one possible reason is that you **are proud**. Instead of **asking God** for good judgment and knowledge like David did—and looking in God's Word to find it—**you trust your own judgment...**and knowledge...and wisdom.

I'm afraid too many of us are **BINO's**. You know what a BINO is? A Believer In Name Only! We claim to **use the Bible as our sole authority** for faith (meaning doctrine) and practice (how to live), but I'm afraid we are way better at **knowing what to believe** than we are **practicing what it says!**

There's a **second reason** that you may not delight in—and love—God's commandments and laws and it is this: you haven't been **born again!** Jesus said in John 3:3 "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus said in Mt 18:3 "...Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

--If you aren't converted, you don't have the Holy Spirit in you.

--And if you don't have the Holy Spirit in you, you don't have a **desire** to please God—you only want to please you!

--But when you **are born again**—when you are converted—the Holy Spirit immediately indwells you. You are now a **new** creature—a new creation—with **new desires**. We see that in **Phil 2:13** "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

--God the Holy Spirit works in you "**to will**"—meaning give you **the desire**—to do what pleases God.

--And God the Holy Spirit works in you "**to do**"—meaning to **carry out**—what pleases God.

Do you have a **desire to please God**—or is your mindset "No one has the right to tell me what to do—not even God!" If that's you, you need to be born again!

What is your attitude towards the Word of God?

Do you delight in it and love it because of **Who it is from**? Do you want to **know** what it says and **do what it says** because you want to please the One who loved you and gave Himself for you?

Job's attitude was "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." David's attitude was "O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day." (vs 97)

What about you? What is your attitude toward the Word of God?

So what would God have us do in light of His Word?

I believe God wants us to evaluate our attitude toward the Word of God with David's.

--Do we stand in awe of it?

--Do we delight in it and love it?

If not, why not?

--Maybe it's because you are proud...and self-satisfied...and dependent on your judgment and knowledge?

--Or maybe it's because you have no desire to do what God says because you haven't been born again!

In just a moment, we are going to sing: "Search Me, O God."

--Are you just going to sing the words and go through the motions—or do you really want God to search you?