

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CXIX. The Vast Value Of God’s Word
F. Handling Harmful Insults
(Psalm 119:41-48 [Waw])

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Harmful insults abound in today’s world, so we need to know how to handle them:

(1) Harmful insults occur at the international level: “The writer Ta-Nehisi Coates has” a “new book, “The Message,” which contains a blistering condemnation of Israel . . . Coates insists that he wants to tell the story of the victims – the oppressed Palestinians – not of their Israeli oppressors. That’s why he doesn’t mention the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks or really discuss terrorism or history at all . . . (But) (t)he terrorist organizations that Coates whitewashes or ignores openly and proudly insist that they want Israel destroyed . . .” (Jonah Goldberg, “Here’s what Ta-Nehisi Coates got right about Israel and Palestinians,” Republican-American, October 16, 2024, p. 6A)

(2) Harmful insults occur in our politics: (a) The Associated Press story, “Harris speaks to Republicans; Trump woos Latino voters” (Ibid., October 17, 2024, p. 9A), told how “Kamala Harris” said, ““Anyone who tramples on our democratic values as Donald Trump has, anyone who has called for the ‘termination’ of the Constitution of the United States as Donald Trump has, must never again stand behind the seal of the president of the United States.””

(b) However, a letter by Mark Godburn of Norfolk, Connecticut (Ibid., p. 8A) observed that “Kamala Harris was unexpectedly thrust into the presidential race by her own Democratic Party’s back-room strong-arming of their primary winner, President Biden,” sidestepping the will of the voters in the primary, itself a trampling on democratic values! (Ibid.) (c) On Mr. Trump being an alleged threat to democracy, “(h)e presided over the lowest unemployment rate in 50 years, a secure border, and a period of relative global peace” in his first term in great contrast to the Biden-Harris administration, hardly a threat to democracy! (“Mr. Trump for president,” Ibid., October 22, 2024, p. 8A)

(3) Harmful insults occur in the establishment media: On page 4B of the October 21, 2024, Republican-American, the Associated Press story, “Trump works the fry station and holds drive-thru news conference at Pennsylvania McDonald’s,” by Michelle L. Price and Marc Levy claimed, “Trump has long spread groundless claims about his opponents based on their personal history, particularly women and racial minorities.” Conversely, I have yet to see a single claim by the Associated Press that Kamala Harris has ever lied about any issue, but Mr. Trump and several conservative radio talk show hosts have often remarked about how she lies much of the time!

(4) Over the years, many believers in our church have expressed concern about harmful insults they have faced from associates, extended family members or at times even from fellow professing Christians.

Need: *So, we ask, “How does God want us to handle harmful insults?”*

I. Psalm 119:41-43 reveals that harmful insults need to be handled with Scripture BEFORE they occur:

- A. The psalmist asked God to deliver him by His loyal love in fulfillment of the promise of Scripture, v. 41.
- B. The deliverance he requested was God’s providing the psalmist with a fitting word to one who would “speak sharp insults, taunts” (*harap*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 357) against him, and the psalmist expected God to provide that fitting word in fulfillment of God’s Scriptural promise to him, v. 42.
- C. The psalmist asked God not to snatch this fitting response to the insult from his mouth, for he waited on the Lord to apply the application of God’s “verdict” (*mishpat*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1081; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 1048-1049) in His Word that applied to the insult event itself, Psalm 119:43.

II. The blessings resulting from USING Scripture to handle such harmful insults are abundant, v. 44-48:

- A. People who use Scripture to handle harmful insults as described in Psalm 119:41-43 gain such relief from pain in facing such insults that they consistently continue to observe God’s Word, Psalm 119:44.
- B. Second, using Scripture to handle harmful insults is emotionally and mentally liberating, what in verse 45 is likened to one’s walking in “a wide, roomy space” (*barhabah*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 932).
- C. A third blessing in handling harmful insults by applying Scripture is relief from feeling intimidated, which intimidation an insulter intends to level at the psalmist, and this deliverance is so great that the psalmist finds himself able to speak of God’s testimonies before kings without being ashamed, Psalm 119:46.
- D. The fourth blessing the psalmist finds in handling harmful insults through Scripture is his growing love for God’s Word that leads him to delight in its content and actually love its truth so that he nurtures his inner man by meditating on its content, Psalm 119:47-48.

Lesson: Harmful insults are to be handled by knowing Scripture truth so that one can rely on it to arm him with a fitting response that neutralizes an insult's harmful effect. The rewards for using Scripture this way are a growing consistency in using Scripture, liberating relief from the affliction caused by the insult, relief from intimidation by the insulting party and a growing delight and love for God's Word so that one meditates on it throughout life.

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) To handle harmful insults, (a) may we learn Scripture truth so that we have God's authoritative, edifying answers to insults. (b) If we face a harmful insult for which we do not have sufficient Biblical insight to handle, may we obtain counsel from fellow knowledgeable believers!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

Scripture gives edifying insight into the issues of concern mentioned in our sermon introduction (as follows):

(1) Regarding Ta-Nehisi Coates' new book that has a blistering condemnation of Israel, (a) Daniel 9:25 with Luke 23:26-31 and Leviticus 26:36-39 reveal that since Israel rejected her Messiah Jesus Christ at His first coming, Israel is facing war and desolations as divine discipline. (b) However, God's Abrahamic Covenant is yet to be fulfilled in its fullest form (Genesis 12:1-3 with Romans 11:25-29), so God's Genesis 12:3 promise to bless those who bless Abraham's seed and to curse those who curse them still applies. Thus, we must be protective of the Hebrew people and treat them well even though as a people they are still estranged from the Lord (1 Peter 2:17a)!

(2) Regarding harmful insults in politics, (a) Satan is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), so we should not be surprised at the presence of harmful insults in politics that reflect the influence of Satan! (b) To discern the truth from what is false in political insults, (i) Scripture gives us discernment on statements and issues (2 Timothy 3:13-17), (ii) relying on the Holy Spirit provides us discernment between people who are controlled by the sin nature or by those who rely on the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:12-16) and (iii) relying on the Holy Spirit and using Scripture in life's experiences over time equips us to discern escalating levels of righteousness from unrighteousness (Hebrews 5:11-14). On this last point, if we cannot discern between truth and error in a political issue, we can gain counsel from mature believers whose knowledge of Scripture and use of it over time gives them valued insight for our benefit.

(3) Regarding harmful insults in the establishment media, (i) Proverbs 6:19, 14:5 and 19:5, 9 mention that false witnesses "breath out lies," that they have a tendency for their deceit to abound, becoming obvious to everyone. If such "breathing out" of lies occurs with an outlet, we can be sure that it is untrustworthy in its journalistic practices. (ii) Proverbs 12:17 indicates that a false witness utters deceit, and when we note that a journalist has slanted the truth about what we know has occurred to the contrary, we should be guarded against his statements! (iii) Proverbs 25:18 reveals that a false witness is like a war club, a sword, or a sharp arrow because of the great damage they inflict with their words. If we note that the way a story is written is unusually hurtful, we can be sure that it is a false or biased story! (iv) Proverbs 21:28 indicates that a false witness will perish in contrast to the word of a man who listens. Credible reporters and journalists pay close attention to what people not only **say**, but to what they **mean** by **what** they **say**, where false reporters and journalists will take what they hear, pull it out of context and put their own twist to its meaning and present their stories with such obvious bias that they eventually lose credibility. A media outlet for which such writers work will begin to lose credibility before the general public, a sure sign of a problem in that outlet.

(4) Regarding harmful insults that believers have often faced with associates, extended family members or even from professing Christians, (i) a believer is not what other people think of him, nor is he what he thinks of himself, but he is what **God** thinks and says of him in **Scripture!** Thus, one is wise to get to know the 33 positional truths that **God** thinks of every believer the instant he accepts Christ as his Savior, which truths are **graciously** true about him from that point into eternity regardless if he lives a godly or a sinful life! (See our lessons on "Positional Truths" on our website. They are in the Prayer Meeting section of lessons that were produced from 12/17/2003 to 07/07/2004. [Some of these Positional Truths include A Child of God, Adopted, Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, Justified, Delivered from the Power of Darkness, Translated into the Kingdom of the Son of God's Love, On the Rock Christ Jesus, Of the Family and Household of God, Having Access to God, Within the Much More Care of God, Glorified, Complete in Christ, and Possessing Every Spiritual Blessing.]) (ii) A believer must stick to the calling and spiritual gifting that God gave him to succeed in ministry, 1 Timothy 4:14-16; 2 Timothy 1:6-7. In so doing, God will bless him before other believers, helping to discredit unjust insults! (iii) We should avoid a worldly value system that is geared to fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life, 1 John 2:15-16. Those who insult have worldly values, so they insult in sin, but a believer who does **not** have worldly values is **immune** to **insult harm!**

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we heed Psalm 119:41-48 to handle harmful insults.