

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CXIX. The Vast Value Of God’s Word
M. God’s Path To Edifying Insight
(Psalm 119:97-104 [Mem])

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

One of the greatest needs we face in today’s world is the need to gain edifying insight:

(1) To illustrate, Vincent Vurchio of Cherry Valley, N. Y., a former resident of Waterbury, in a letter to the Waterbury Republican-American (January 17, 2025, p. 6A), reported that the newspaper “is due to be sold to a major conglomerate,” and that the “new owners have an obligation to the community to support and continue the integrity of this paper” that “has . . . an honest voice,” that “silencing or altering that voice would be criminal.” Mr. Vurchio explained his concern, reporting that “past episodes of similar takeovers have shown . . . a homogenization occurs, and, like Star Trek’s Borg, assimilation leads to elimination. Let us all hope that doesn’t happen here.”

(2) Mr. Vurchio’s concern is a valid one, for (a) a letter to the paper by George Lampron of Watertown lamented, “I’m so confused . . . Over these last eight years, hourly, maybe by the minute I hear and read things from (Washington) D. C. that I know are lies . . . Normally I can speak facts and truth without an issue. Currently, my facts and truth are called lies – am I a victim of the age we live in or age itself? . . . Something is wrong and I can’t put my finger on it . . .” (Ibid., January 11, 2025, p. 6A) (b) In response to Mr. Lampron’s letter, Jim LaBrecque of Cheshire wrote that “the United States is essentially split in half with alternate views of the truth . . . Mr. Lampron alludes to Democrat lies. I believe that Donald Trump lies.” (Ibid., January 15, 2025, p. 9A)

(3) To demonstrate this contrast in views, we cite the article, “Why Javier Milei is important” by David Harsanyi (Ibid., p. 8A) who noted, “In the days leading up to the November 2023 presidential election in Argentina, a hundred ‘leading’ economists from around the world . . . published an open letter warning that ‘radical right-wing economist’ Javier Milei would inflict ‘devastation’ and social chaos on his country.” Argentina had faced “decades of . . . a toxic melding of fascism, socialism and unionism – the nation bankrupted its central bank, and the peso was depreciating at warp speed . . . (but) (a)fter Milei’s unlikely victory,” in “(s)even months . . . Argentina was out of the recession that had set in before Melei’s victory. The chainsaw-wielding economist . . . followed through on his promise of ‘shock therapy,’ prioritizing taming inflation by cutting spending and deregulating the economy . . . By May 2024, Argentina recorded its first quarterly budget surplus since 2008. Inflation, still high, dropped from a debilitating 25% at the end of 2023 to 2.4% by the end of 2024. Per capita salary, having plunged, is now also recovering . . . (Accordingly, Melei’s) success . . . is no miracle. Free markets work.”

(4) The need for edifying insight is great in the religious realm, too: “Nearly 400 million people – more than the population of the United States – are expected to participate” in “the largest religious congregation on earth,” the “Maha Kumbh festival . . . for a series of ritual baths at the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati rivers. Hindu faithful believe the holy dip will cleanse them of their past sins and release their souls from the cycles of birth and death.” (“India gathers world’s largest religious festival,” Ibid., January 14, 2025, p. 7A)

Need: So, we ask, “*How is one in today’s world able to gain edifying insight?*”

I. In Psalm 119:98-100, the psalmist told how he had gained more edifying insight than others around him:

- A. He had become aligned with God’s fixed moral order by heeding God’s Scriptural commands so that he enjoyed success and blessing in life in contrast to his foes who tried to combat those blessings for him, v. 98:
1. Through God’s commandments, the Lord had made the psalmist “wiser” (v. 98a KJV) than his enemies.
 2. The word “wiser” translates the Hebrew verb *hakam*, what is usually rendered simply as “make wise.”
 3. However, Bruce K. Waltke’s article, “The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature” (Bib. Sac. 136:543, p. 221-238) reports how Ancient Near Eastern peoples held “wisdom” to be alignment to “a fixed moral order to which a righteous man submits himself” for success. Scripture’s writers knew that God is the Author of that fixed moral order, that when people submit to it, they enjoy God’s success and blessing.
 4. Thus, the psalmist had submitted to God’s Word where his foes had not, what gave him the advantage of enjoying God’s blessing and success where his foes faced relentless failure in opposing him, v. 98b.
- B. Also, by meditating on Scripture, the psalmist had gained more “understanding” (v. 99a KJV) than his teachers, the Hebrew word behind “understanding” being *sakal*, the “intelligent knowledge of the reason” behind a fact (Psalm 119:99; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. II, p. 877).

- C. Since the psalmist observed the precepts of God's Word, he testified, "I understand more than the ancients" (v. 100 KJV), and "understand" (KJV) translates the Hebrew verb *bin* in the Hithpael stem that means to "show oneself to have discernment" (B. D. B., *A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T.*, p. 106-107; *Ibid.*, H. A. W.)
- II. Consequently, the psalmist expressed how he loved God's Word, that all day long it was the object of his meditation, giving him insight and its resulting success over his foes, teachers and aged wise men, v. 97.**
- III. After this report, the psalmist testified how gaining God's insight had enriched his life, *Psa. 119:101-104*:**
- A. Having seen God bless him in his life because he heeded Scripture, the psalmist had decided to avoid sin and obey God's Word for his own continued welfare, Psalm 119:101.
- B. The psalmist had kept himself from going down paths in life that might lead to evil so that he might insure that he kept on obeying Scripture for God's continued blessing, Psalm 119:102.
- C. Furthermore, the psalmist had found that focusing on God's Word wholesomely edified his inner man, for God's words were innately appealing to his heart's needs, Psalm 119:103.
- D. In spiritually growing in his level of spiritual "discernment" (*bin* in the Hithpael again, cf. v. 100; *Ibid.*, B. D. B.; *Ibid.*, H. A. W.) by meditating on and applying Scripture, the psalmist had come to hate every fraudulent path in life, meaning that he had grown in holiness, or separation from sin, Psalm 119:104.

Lesson: *By meditating on Scripture, the psalmist aligned with God's fixed moral order for blessing in contrast to his foes who in futility disregarded Scripture, and he even gained more insight and discernment to his blessing than his teachers and the elderly wise men in his community. Thus, the psalmist was all the more motivated to keep focusing on Scripture, what God used to disciple him into a maturing, holy, godly 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) For fulfilling success and blessing opposite the efforts of our enemies to keep us from success and blessing, for a more intelligent knowledge of facts than even our teachers, for greater discernment than even elderly wise people and to mature in godliness, may we meditate on God's Word.*

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

We apply Psalm 119:97-104 and other Scriptures for needed insight regarding the issues of our introduction:

(1) As for Vincent Vurchio's concern about the Republican-American's future sale to a major conglomerate, that the "honest voice" of the paper might potentially be compromised in "homogenization" with dishonest journalism, (a) Psalm 119:98 promises that meditating on God's Word will equip us to be aligned with God's fixed moral order, giving us an advantage of being successful and blessed over parties in the media who want to feed us errant, manipulative views! (b) In addition, 2 Timothy 3:13-17 and John 17:13-17 tell us that God's Word is truth, that it equips us for every good work until the Lord's return! Regardless what happens to the Waterbury Republican-American, God can and will use His Word to guide us in the truth!

(2) As for the concern expressed in the letters to the editor by George Lampron and Jim LaBrecque, though both men have opposite views of who is telling the truth, the Democrats or President Donald Trump, Scripture at Psalm 119:98 with 2 Timothy 3:13-17 and John 17:13-17 promises that we possess and that we can know the truth by means of Scripture. Also, (b) Romans 3:4 claims that every man is a liar to one degree or another, so we need to rely on Scripture and not make either the Democrats or President Donald Trump our God of truth! (c) Regardless who is in power politically, we have often noted that Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 teach that we face a mini-Great Tribulation that involves troublesome rulers, so God wants us to focus on Bible exposition and the discipling of others.

(3) As for David Harsanyi's piece on Argentina's President Javier Milei's economic reforms that are working in his nation regardless of past warnings to the contrary by many progressive economists, Harsanyi's summary, "Free markets work" is also a Biblically correct summary: In Christ's future reign, Micah 4:4 predicts His subjects will sit every man under his vine and his fig tree, implying private property ownership and free markets. Marxist ideology where private ownership is replaced by state ownership and heavy government regulation defies God's order!

(4) As for the largest religious congregation on earth in the current Hindu Maha Kumbh festival in India, Romans 1:18-23 teaches that God has revealed His invisible attributes, eternal power and divine nature in creation so that even pagan people in Hinduism are without excuse. If Hindus want to know the Creator, He will reveal Himself to them, for God is not far from every pagan man on earth according to Acts 17:27. The Creator's Holy Spirit is also very active in the world urging people worldwide to come to faith in Christ (Revelation 22:17 with John 16:7-11).

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. For fulfilling insight, success, and blessing, may we meditate on God's Word as a way of life!