

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
CXIX. The Vast Value Of God's Word
Q. Overcoming Evil Mind Manipulation
(Psalm 119:129-136 [Pe])

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We need help today in overcoming efforts by parties to manipulate our thinking to their own evil ends:

(1) It happens at the international level and in the media: (a) On the one hand, Matt K. Lewis in the Los Angeles Times wrote that the February 28 meeting of Ukraine's President Zelensky and President Trump was an "attack on Zelensky" by President Trump and Vice President J. D. Vance, that Vance "called Zelensky 'disrespectful' and said he should be more thankful to Trump," that the "clash . . . was a calculated act of degradation, reinforcing the message that under Trump, Ukraine is expected to grovel for every bullet." (Matt K. Lewis, "Ditching friends now official policy," Hartford Courant, March 6, 2025, Section 4, p. 6) (b) However, Miranda Devine of The New York Post (March 3, 2025, p. 13) gave a contrasting view of the meeting, claiming that President Zelensky "contradicted, interrupted and insulted Trump," and at "the end of the meeting, when he'd blown up the whole (minerals-for-aid) deal, Zelensky smirked and gave the thumbs up to someone off camera among the press" as "his ambassador was sitting a few feet away watching the debacle unfold with her head in her hands . . . (President Trump had told President Zelensky) 'Don't tell us what we're going to feel, because you're in no position to dictate that . . . Zelensky ambushed Trump. He just got more than he bargained for' even though Ukraine "can't survive without America."

(2) It occurs in many American institutions: George Leef's article, "Can the US Withstand the Socialist Left's Assault?" (The Epoch Times, February 19-25, 2025, p. B2), noted, "(T)he socialist left's . . . influence would not exist without deception," for "(g)iven the horrific record of Marxist nations, you wouldn't think there could be any doubt about that . . . so Marxists took over (many American) institutions in an attempt to fool the masses."

(3) It occurs at the personal level: (a) Last Tuesday, Daniel Checoves, the former house director of the Thomaston Opera House, was sentenced for controlling and violently sexually assaulting teen girls who had worked in the theater and who had tried to further their careers by pleasing him. (Brigitte Ruthman, "Opera House director sentenced," Republican-American, March 12, 2025, p. 1A) (b) Then, in one of the worst mind controlling cases in our state's history, a "32-year-old man who had been held captive in a Waterbury home for more than two decades set fire to his room" on February 17th "because he wanted his freedom, according to court documents. 'The facts in this case, quite frankly . . . are something out of a horror movie. That's without exaggeration,' Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney Don Therkildsen said." (Bruno Matarazzo Jr., "'Out of a horror movie,'" Ibid., March 13, 2025, p. 1A) "The man . . . was extremely emaciated, his hair matted and unkept and he was dirty and his teeth appeared to be rotted, according to a warrant" for his alleged captor's arrest (Ibid.).

Need: So, we ask, "What does God direct that we do to overcome evil mind manipulation?"

I. In Psalm 119:129-136, the psalmist faced the problem of evil mind manipulators (as follows):

- A. The psalmist sought God's relief from the "oppression, extortion" ('*osheq*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 799) of man (v. 134) that by implication left the psalmist "simple" (v. 130b KJV), that is, "simple-minded" or naïve (*peti*, H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. II, p. 743)!
- B. One form of extortion is what psychologists term emotional blackmail where the oppressor uses false guilt, shame, emotional intimidation, etc. to control the thinking of his victim in order to control him.
- C. In essence, what the psalmist faced is what we today call evil mind manipulation, a sad but common evil.

II. God's deliverance from evil mind manipulation is one's application of Scripture truth, v. 129-136:

- A. The psalmist offered great praise to the Lord for His written Word, for it ministered to his inner man, v. 129.
- B. Specifically, the psalmist appreciated how well Scripture releases naïve people from evil manipulators, v. 130:
 1. The "doorway" (*petah*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 1085; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 836) or "entrance" KJV of Scripture gives light and "discerning understanding" (*bin*, Ibid., p. 106-107) to the naïve (*peti*, cf. "I,A" above).
 2. If the mere doorway of Scripture equips naïve people to discern and understand, Scripture equips them to discern enough to identify evil mind manipulation that they might withstand efforts by evil manipulators!
- C. The psalmist explained how this worked in his life in Psalm 119:131-135:
 1. He longed for Scripture's liberating and edifying insight to overcome oppressive manipulators like an animal that pants for air, Psalm 119:131.

2. While reading Scripture and heeding it, the oppressed psalmist witnessed God bless him by making sovereign judgments in his favor in life, Psalm 119:132.
 3. As the psalmist read God's Word, the Lord gave him step-by-step guidance to escape the mind control efforts of evil mind manipulators, Psalm 119:133a.
 4. As the psalmist read and applied Scripture in his life, he had no sin ruling over him so that the oppressive mind manipulator could not use false guilt effectively to manipulate his thinking, Psalm 119:133b.
 5. In time, God rescued the psalmist from the control of mind manipulators who tried to hold him hostage to their will for their own interests, Psalm 119:134.
 6. Thus, the psalmist found that through reading and applying Scripture in his life, he enjoyed God's blessing expressed in the figurative expression of God's face shining upon him (Psalm 119:135 with Numbers 6:25) opposite the sadness and lack of blessing of being under the control of evil mind manipulators.
- D. The psalmist then expressed his grief over those who suffered great mental pain as victims of evil mind manipulation because they did not read and heed Scripture, Psalm 119:136.

Lesson: *Though facing evil mind manipulation by a self-serving party, the psalmist found that reading and applying Scripture provided him full relief from the trial, eliciting his great praise to the Lord.*

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 escape or to avoid hurtful, unedifying, evil mind manipulation, may we read and apply Scripture as a continual way of life.*

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

Scripture provides us insight for handling the issues of concern in our sermon introduction, equipping us to avoid being misled and controlled by evil mind manipulators in each case (as follows):

(1) As for discerning the truth to avoid being manipulated with the contrasting news reports on the February 28th Oval Office meeting between President Trump and Ukraine's President Zelensky, (a) Proverbs 20:12 NIV asserts, "Ears that hear and eyes that see – the Lord has made them both." God gave us ears, eyes and minds to discern a lot of realities, and in doing so, we note that Matt K. Lewis's Los Angeles Times report does ***not explain why*** Vice President Vance in that meeting would call Ukraine's President "disrespectful" and tell him to be more thankful of President Trump. Conversely, Miranda Devine's report in The New York Post of President Zelensky's smirking and gesturing thumbs up to a member of the press while his own ambassador to the U. S. sat nearby with her head in her hands readily explains Vice President Vance's claim that President Zelensky was being "disrespectful." (b) Also, Proverbs 16:30 NIV asserts, "He who winks with his eye is plotting diversity; he who purses his lips is bent on evil." Excess body language as exhibited by President Zelensky exposes perverse motives. (c) President Zelensky has since changed his political position since the February 28th meeting, but acting as he did in that Oval Office meeting, he revealed a divisive and perverted character like Titus 3:10-11 describes. (d) In addition, we conclude that Matt K. Lewis' report was biased against President Trump and Vice President Vance because he failed to mention the obvious character deficiency in President Zelensky where Miranda Devine's report was more balanced and objective.

(2) On the left's having to deceive the American public by taking over many of the nation's institutions due to the obvious historical failure of Marxist ideology in many nations, (a) Proverbs 17:12 NIV states: "Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly." Marxists are relentlessly, foolishly destructive as this verse describes! Also, (b) Proverbs 17:20 NIV states, "A man of perverse heart does not prosper; he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble." Marxists for generations have tried to deflect attention from the destructiveness of their ideology in many nations since they function with a perverse morality that can never prosper or bring happiness to any people group! Marxism's track record alone should warn all people everywhere to reject its ideology.

(3) On evil mind manipulators at the personal level, (a) 2 Timothy 3:1-2a, 6 NIV warns that some people in the latter days of Church History will "worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires." (b) To handle this evil, 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 claims that a spiritual believer discerns all things where an ungodly person who functions by his sinful nature does not discern the spiritual state of other people. So, to avoid controlling manipulation by evil people, a believer must first rely on the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16) for discernment. (c) Once that believer discerns someone to be an evil mind manipulator, 2 Timothy 3:5 directs the believer to withdraw from that evil manipulator for his own personal welfare.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. Then, to escape or avoid evil mind manipulation, may we always read and apply God's Word.