

August 20, 2017

“Beholding & Becoming Like God Through His Word”

Psalm 119:9-18

Intro

- In order to experience genuine change, we need to understand not only *what* we do but also *why* we do these things.
- In the Bible, the heart is the control-center for human activity. There are desires, ambitions, and cravings that we live out of.

“The only way to dispossess the heart of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one.”
-Thomas Chalmers

Encountering: Pursuing a God-Affected Heart (v. 9-11)

- This Psalm describes the marks of someone who has met with God.
- Engaging the Word of God should lead to an encounter with the God of the Word.
- Using Scripture to treasure God in our hearts is what turns us away from sin (v. 11).

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” (2 Cor. 3:18).

- When we behold God, His beauty and worth become to us more compelling than the counterfeits that have captured us.
- Joy in God fills us up so that we don't approach life feeling empty and looking to people and things to fulfill us.
- How do we behold the glory of the Lord?

*"For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. 15 Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. 16 But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed."
(2 Cor. 3:14-16)*

- The frightening reality is that we can stand before infinite beauty and be unaffected!

"All of us know what it is like to read without seeing 'wondrous things.' We have stared at the most glorious things without seeing them as glorious. We have seen marvels without marveling. We have put God's sweet kindness on the tongue of our soul without tasting sweetness. We have seen unspeakable love without feeling loved. We have seen the greatest power and felt no awe. We have seen immeasurable wisdom and felt no admiration. We have seen the holiness of wrath and felt no trembling. Which means we are 'seeing without seeing' (Matt 13:13). This is why we must continue to weave the thread of God-dependent prayer into our reading: 'Show me your glory' (Ex 33:18)."

-John Piper, *Reading the Bible Supernaturally*, 260

Savoring: Treasuring Truth through Meditation (v. 12-17)

“We ought to work the truths of Scripture into our affections until they shape our loves, hopes, and imagination.”

–**Timothy & Kathy Keller**, *The Songs of Jesus: A Year in the Psalms*, 305

“Remember that it is not hasty reading, but serious meditation on holy and heavenly truths, that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the mere touching of the flower by the bee that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time on the flower that draws out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most, that will prove to be the choicest, sweetest, wisest, and strongest Christian.”

–**Thomas Brooks**

- Through meditation we allow the passage to read *us*. We locate our lives in the text. We think carefully about the reality and significance of what it describes, and whether we are currently experiencing it.
- We ask the Spirit to show us what is competing with us living in the good this. We actively transfer our trust away from false hopes and toward what God says is true.
- Meditation helps to fix what we forget (v. 16). When you read a passage, ask yourself, “What happens to me when I forget that this is true?”
 - *What if we didn’t have adoption as sons and daughters?*
 - *What if we didn’t have the sovereignty of God?*
 - *What if we didn’t have eternity?*

Seeing: Fixing Opened Eyes on the Word (v. 18)

- Unless we've first read and understood the Bible, all we have are our own thoughts and culturally-shaped ideas to "meditate" on!
- We need to ask, "What does it mean to me?" only after we've asked, "What does it *mean*?" What has *God*, through human author, intended to communicate in this text?
- Seeing requires both God's opening of our eyes (v. 18) and our fixing our eyes on the Word (v. 15). We pray for God's insight while we pay careful attention to the words of Scripture.

➤ "Aggressive attentiveness"

"Every external pressure, social and technological, is pushing students in the other direction, toward immediacy, rapidity, and spontaneity. ...I want to give them the permission and the structures to slow down. ...The first thing I ask them to do in the research process is to spend a painfully long time looking at that object."

–**Jennifer Roberts**, "The Power of Patience: Teaching Students the Value of Deceleration and Immersive Attention." *Harvard* magazine (2013)

- If we give attention to Scripture in order to see "wonderful things," and we savor what we see so that we come away with an encounter with God—we will be changed.