

Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

1 Peter 2:1-3

LIVING BY HIS WORD

part
two



p SALM 119 IS A SUCCINCT, compact handbook outlining the value of God's word to a believer's life. It expresses poetically how utterly practical Scripture is to a life. More than that, it expresses the deep, abiding love we should have for His written word.

the sweetness

O how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.
How sweet are Your words to my taste!
Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalms 119:97,103

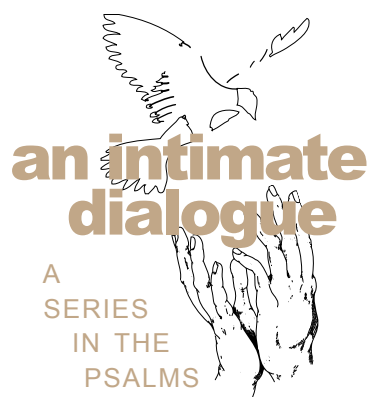
For most of us, spring is the sweet season—the season of the year in which the fresh air is fragrant with the presence of new grass, budding fruit trees, peonies, tulips, lilies of the valley, and lilacs. It is the time of revitalizing rains, cool days bathed in intense sunshine, and the sharp aroma of fresh-cut grass.

After the long and drab months of winter, spring is the time of newness, and explosive growth, when living things change from one day to the next as quickly as a young child changes in

the eyes of a doting auntie. Last year's acorns littering the land sprout and take root, on their way to becoming mature trees some day. Even the weather itself is young in the spring, moving quickly from sunshine to thunderstorm, then back again. If autumn is the time of old men and checkers, spring is the time of youth and baseball.

Just so, if the words of this age are acrid and bitter to the taste, God's words to man are gentle and sweet. Scripture is filled to overflowing with His goodness, His kindness and encouragement, His eternal promises. Like the taste of honey after biting into rotted fruit, so are God's holy words after the dark cynicism of this age.

How I love having Your instructions for my life. How I love living by them! I love Your law so much that even throughout the day I find myself thinking about it, pondering its meaning, embracing its truth. Your words, Lord, are sweet going in and going out. They are so pleasant to me, the more I ingest them, the more I wish to share them with others.



light of understanding

The unfolding of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple.
Make Your face shine upon Your servant,
And teach me Your statutes.

Psalms 119:130,135

God's glory does not change based on our perception of Him. The truth of God is that He is (in the true sense of the word) great—He is grand and glorious.

There are gods that wish us to remain blind to the truth about them. They reveal in deceit, and present themselves to us as angels of light when in truth they are vermin of darkness. They know that the more light they shed upon themselves, the more they will be revealed for the evil they are.

But the Lord God of heaven desires that our eyes be kept fully open. He has nothing to hide. He knows that the more we see Him as He is—the more fully we comprehend His truth—the closer will be our communion with Him. And that is His true desire.

O God, when I open Your book and Your words reveal the very wonder and depth of Your mind, I am left glowing—in awe of who You are and what You have said to me. In Your ways I am still young, inexperienced, but Your words teach me how to tell right from wrong. Because I belong to You, I look upward, for the light of Your face to be my beacon and guide. May it prod my complacency and illumine those things You have prescribed for my life.

loving

I rejoice at Your word,
As one who finds great spoil.
I hate and despise falsehood,
But I love Your law.
Those who love Your law have great peace,
And nothing causes them to stumble.
My soul keeps Your testimonies,
And I love them exceedingly.

Psalms 119:162-163,165,167

If we feel like a stranger on this earth, the remedy for our discomfort will not be found in anything of this earth. Our solace, our peace, will be found in the things of God—those things which not

only instruct and counsel, but envelop us in His love and protection.

God's word reminds us of His ongoing commitment to us, of His justice, grace and mercy. His word describes the righteousness and holiness of our heavenly Father, bringing conviction as well as comfort. His word will answer the questions that nag at us from those who have no portion of His grace. His word will enlighten, encourage, and strengthen.

To be truly filled with His righteousness, we must hunger for it.

When I open Your book of promises my day suddenly becomes brighter, and my heart fills with joy—just like someone who has discovered and laid hold of abundant treasure. I loathe deception and deceit, but, O God, I adore Your true and faithful law. Your law makes those who love it complete, and they are not easily tripped up by falsehood. With my whole being I guard Your testimonies, and my love for them is intense—complete.

living to praise

Let my lips utter praise,
For You teach me Your statutes.
Let my tongue sing of Your word,
For all Your commandments are righteousness.
Let my soul live that it may praise You,
And let Your ordinances help me.

Psalms 119:171-172,175

When the French explorer, filmmaker and environmentalist Jacques Cousteau died in 1997, the statement about his death from the Cousteau Foundation included, "Jacques-Yves Cousteau has rejoined the World of Silence," which is a reference to one of his most noted documentaries, "The Silent World".

That announcement from his foundation, well-meaning and poetic as it might have been, was a sharp reminder that, at least in the eyes of those who knew him, Cousteau is not enjoying the same eternity to which I look forward.

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with

a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshipped.

Revelation 5:11-14

As much as I enjoy the peace and quietude of life in our country home, I had better get used to some loud, foot stompin', window shattering, joyous worship and praise—because that is precisely how I will be spending eternity. Eternity with God will not be a sterile, hushed existence reminiscent of monks in their isolated cells. Frankly, I believe it will be more like a rock concert held in Yankee Stadium.

At the center of it all will be the Lord God sitting upon His throne, and surrounding that throne will be thousands and millions and billions of saints and angels lifting up their voices in loud adoration and praise:

"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

Revelation 4:11

Hallelujah! Amen!

The more I learn from Your prescriptions for living, the more my speech becomes a flowing river of praise to You, O Lord. Your Law, Your promises are right and true, and with my tongue I will sing their praise. Grant me a long life, O Lord, that I may spend it singing Your praise. May the rest of my life be lived according to the help of Your judgments.

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