

A Love Hate Relationship

Psalm 119:97-104



“El Ojo (lit. ‘The Eye’) is an uninhabited circular rotating floating island located within a slightly larger circular lake in...Argentina. The island is unique among floating islands as its shape is almost perfectly circular. As the island is constantly rotating on its own axis due to the flow of the river beneath it, shearing occurs around its outer edge, eroding the island into its circular shape, similar to ice disks.” [READ MORE](#)

We can feel we are spinning-out spiritually! That is why we need mooring in God’s Word! The current of our culture is strong! So we need a **love-hate relationship**. Regarding the way of the Lord, we need to love and yearn for it. With respect to the way of the world, we need to reject and turn away from it.

Our series is selected sections of Psalm 119, “**All In: Living with loyalty to the way of the Lord**”. Today our focus is on the term **piqqud** which is translated “precept” – this occurs in verses 100 and 104. Derek Kidner tells us that **piqqud** is a “word drawn from the sphere of an officer or overseer, a man who is responsible to look closely into a situation and take action...So the word points to the particular instructions of the Lord, as of one who cares about detail.” (**TOTC: Psalms**, IVP, 1973, 418)

Piqqud is one of eight synonyms for the Word of God found in Psalm 119. As an **alphabetical acrostic**, this psalm has twenty-two strophes of eight verses, each beginning with the same letter. Our text for today is under the alphabet title **mem**. Let’s read Psalm 119:97-104. Do you observe how passionate and personal this section of Psalm 119 is – note all the “I” statements. In our text we find **four actions** that God’s Word brings to bear upon the life of the believer. As a result, there are **four benefits** to be experienced by the follower of God and His Word.

Torah	<i>zayin</i> vv. 49-56	Law, instruction from revelation of God
Dabar	<i>daleth</i> vv. 25-32	Word , matter, thing, speech, command
Mishpat	<i>tsadhe</i> vv. 137-144	Judgement, justice, law , ordinance, right
Edot	<i>gimel</i> vv. 17-24	Witness, testimony , ordinance
Mitsvah	<i>vav</i> vv. 41-48	Commandment
Huqqim	<i>samekh</i> vv. 113-120	Statute, decree , law, ordinance
Piqqud	<i>mem</i> vv. 97-104	Precept , statute, commandment
Imrah	<i>resh</i> vv. 153-160	Word, saying, command, promise

[A] CONTINUING – believers are grounded in God’s ways – vv. 97-98

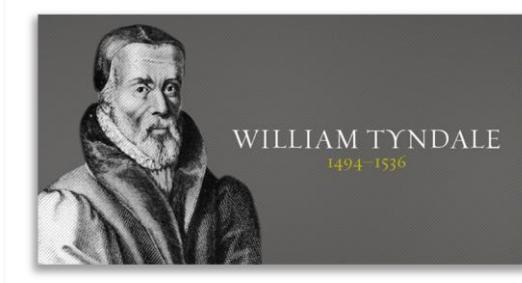
The first verse expresses deep **love** for God’s law (**torah**, “instruction”). Kevin DeYoung suggests that an appropriate response to Psalm 119 is, “*I love this psalm because it gives voice to the song in my soul....No one who truly delights in God’s word will be indifferent to the disregarding of it.*” (**Taking God at His Word**, Kevin DeYoung, Crossway, 2014, 20). This is a “continuing love” for God’s instruction.

The ongoing nature of love for God’s Word causes the believer to **linger** in it. This is an ongoing engagement or **meditation** which is “all the day” (v.97; see also vv.15,23,27,148). God’s Words are “ever mine” (v.98). Is this reading Scripture 24-hours a day? Obviously, this is not feasible. Rather, we let the Word of God set the course of our lives – we are **grounded** in Him! This is the continuing impact of God’s Word. The **mitzvah** or “commandments” of God brings wisdom that eclipses enemies (v.98)!

[B] EXPANDING – Believers are guided in God’s ways – vv. 99-100

The growing Christian has an expanding engagement with God’s Word. This results in having “*more insight than all my teachers*” (v.99) and one will “*understand more than those who are old*” (v.100). This is God’s **guidance** for our lives! How is this realized? It occurs when we are involved in “*meditation*” (v.99) or **contemplation** of God’s “*testimonies*” (**edot**, v.99).

In the next verse is the first of two occurrences of **piqqud** which refers to the “*precepts*” of God. This is the second step in an expanding experience in God’s precepts: *obedience* or **compliance** (v.100). It is not just enough to contemplate; we must act in obedience to God’s Word. Do we consider *and* comply with the precepts found in the Scripture? Or perhaps we have come to take the Scriptures for granted?



William Tyndale was born in 1494 and educated at Oxford and Cambridge. He mastered Latin, Greek, German, French, Hebrew, Spanish, Italian, and English. In 1521 he came to faith in Christ, influenced by Erasmus’ Greek NT and Martin Luther’s ideas. Tyndale’s burning desire was to translate the Bible into English. But there was a problem...it was illegal. Tyndale was told it was better to have such Papal rules than the law of God. He answered,

“I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God should spare my life for many years, I will cause a boy that drives the plow to know more of the Scriptures than you do.” He was exiled from England in 1524, never to return. But in 1526, he completed translating the NT and smuggled copies into England in bundles of cloth. These were discovered and burned at St Paul’s Cathedral. Tyndale persisted. He was ready to lay down his life for God’s Word and faith in Jesus. In the fall of 1536, on the outskirts of Brussels, Tyndale was led from his prison cell, chained to a stake, strangled and burned. He had once prayed, “*Lord, open the king of England’s eyes.*” God answered through His Word!

Tyndale translated the first English NT! His wording is evident in the 1611 KJV. It was Tyndale who gave the English-speaking world such Biblical phrases as: *in the beginning was the Word; shepherds abiding in the field; blessed are they that mourn; our Father, which art in heaven; let there be light.* John Piper notes, “*this was not merely a literary achievement; it was a spiritual explosion...Tyndale’s Bible and his writings were the kindling that set off the Reformation in England.*” [Listen to more in John Piper’s message [“William Tyndale: A Life Transformed by God’s Word”](#)]

[C] RESTRICTING – Believers are guarded in God’s ways – vv. 101-102

At this point in the passage, we are faced with the fact that God’s Word **restricts** believers from that which is not for God’s glory and not for our own good. Notice the flow of the argument in these two verses. Consider that the restriction from evil is coupled with the way in which God’s Word **guards** us.

- **Verse 101** – restriction that results in obedience: “*I have restrained my feet from every evil way...so that I may keep Your word.*”
- **Verse 102** – instruction that results in faithfulness: “*I have not turned aside from Your judgments...for You Yourself have taught me.*”

What kind of restrictions did you experience in your youth? How do they differ from the restrictions you imposed upon your children? It may feel like a punishment to be restricted from some desire. But our Heavenly Father knows what is best for us! And we discover His best wisdom revealed in His Word.



[D] Satisfying...we are gifted in God's ways – vv. 103-104

Here is where we come to the **love-hate reality**. As we grow in God's grace two things should occur:

- **Verse 103** – believers love Scripture – the term here is *imrah* or “promises” (we will explore next week). *How sweet are Your words to my taste!*” (see Psalm 19:7-11) Satisfaction in God is a **gift!**
- **Verse 104** – believers hate sinfulness – this is where we see the second of two occurrences of *piqqud* – God’s “precepts” (v.104). It is in the following of God’s precepts that we gain discernment and understanding to live freely and fully in Christ – see Proverbs 4:18-19. As a result of experiencing this true, abundant life, we come to “*hate every false way*” – see II Timothy 4:2-4.

Conclusion

How was your Valentine's Day?

Did you sing a love song?



Many years ago Maranatha music produced a couple of love songs for God's Word, based on Psalm 119:97. Listen to [O How I Love Thy Law](#) and [I Will Delight](#)...the lyrics can help you evaluate your love for Scripture.



Are you developing a **love relationship** with the Word of God? Are you growing in a **holy hatred** for the wicked ways of the world? The apostle Paul addressed the tension between two paths – the spirit or wisdom of the world compared to our new life in Christ. Our love for God's Word is love for our Saviour, Jesus.

Read **I Corinthians 2:1-5** and consider the wisdom and truth of God, in Christ, that offers new spiritual life to the follower of God.