

Elder Insight

Thy Word Is a Lamp

"I'm lost. Nothing seems to go right for me. Why is everyone against me? Why is every**thing** against me? My life is so dark. Why can't I see the light at the end of the tunnel? Why am I so discouraged, so depressed, without confidence, without hope, without joy, without peace?"

We may all have experienced some of these conditions at some point or another in our lives. It is certainly a situation for concern! In 1984, Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith encapsulated these emotions in their song "Thy Word". Here are the lyrics:

**Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*

When I feel afraid and I think I've lost my way. Still, You're there right beside me. Nothing will I fear as long as You are near. Please be near me to the end!

I will not forget Your love for me and yet, my heart forever is wandering. Jesus be my guide and hold me to Your side. I will love You to the end.

While these words can touch our heart and the song may be edifying to sing, the origin actually comes from the Bible in Psalm 119 vs. 105, where the writer (David, Ezra, or Daniel) states "*Your word (the Bible) is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path*". But how is it that we are able to attain this peace of mind, this joy, this confidence? The writer gives insight from verses 97 to 105. Consider the teaching:

"Psalm 119: 97 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. 98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. 99 I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. 100 I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. 101 I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. 102 I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. 103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" 104 I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. 105. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

To summarize this teaching:

- Love the law (God's word, the Bible)
- Mediate on it day and night
- Gain insight
- Obey
- Avoid evil
- Gain understanding
- Hate every wrong path

Verse 103 reveals the result of the teaching and study of God's Word - "*How sweet are your words*". Attaining this sweetness is the answer to having peace, joy, comfort, hope - LIGHT. Who of us wants to remain in darkness?!

The key to unlocking these blessings is in the Word. If the Word is a lamp that lights our way, then life without the Word is darkness, and the consequence of darkness is noted in the first paragraph above. To what degree do you want to be in the Light or remain in darkness? To what degree do you study the Word? Isaiah 8:20 calls the Word (the law) "light of dawn". *"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn"*. Once again, to come into the light, we must speak (act) according to the "law". We would say "the Law and Gospel", or God's word, the Bible. We include the Gospel because Jesus himself says, in Matthew 5:17, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them"*. We enter into this close relationship with the Lord through the study (not just reading) of His Word?

Each day of our lives, we are walking on a path and we come to a divide in the path with signs directing us down one path or the other. One sign says, "Gods' path is light, and is good". The other path says "Darkness and Gloom". Why would we choose darkness and gloom?! Embrace and study the Word of God as a lamp and a light of dawn.

Pray this prayer with us, as the family of Bethany: *"Lord, I have neglected the reading and study of Your Word. As a result, I have not received the blessing You offer me each and every day. Forgive me Lord and help me to embrace Your Word as a "Light to lighten my path" and bring me into full measure of Your love through the study of Your Word. Amen"*.

Submitted by Bethany Elders

* CCLI Song # 14301 Amy Grant | Michael W. Smith