

Women's Bible Study

Psalm 119:163-165

Looking back at the beginning of this section in Psalm 119, we read David's description of God's word.

- God's word is true in its entirety
- God's word will last forever
- God's word is to be revered
- God's word produces joy

When we contemplate the deep love our Psalmist has for God's word, it is reasonable and even expected that he would hate everything that is opposite of the Truth. Strong adjectives are used in verse 163 as David describes his thoughts regarding lies. He uses the word falsehood as a description of that which deviates or perverts the truth – which is the law, God's law.

Ps 119:163 I hate and despise falsehood, [But] I love Thy law.

Hate <sane> to hate personally; enemy, foe, odious, to hate utterly

The words above are intense and full of aversion towards sin. Sin is regarded as the enemy or the foe, in direct opposition to truth. There is a personal element to this hatred. When what we love and consider beautiful and important is shattered and maligned, it causes a feeling of personal assault. The word odious is a bit more uncommon and strengthens the emotion of hate. It means unequivocally detestable according to WordWeb. The adjectives abominable and detestable are close synonyms.

Rarely, do we use the word despise in accordance with our likes and dislikes. Here in Psalm 119:163, hate and despise are used together to describe lying. Despising something is to loathe it, to morally detest it. These emotions are extremely negative and paint for us a strong picture of David's feelings. **What can we gather from the first part of Psalm 119:163? How are we to respond to sin? Primarily, how are we to think of lies and attacks and misrepresentation of the Truth?**

It is often easier for us to focus on others behavior rather than our own. Rather than initiating a pointed finger outward, we would do well to first look within. David personally hates his own sin. This is the place for us to begin. The feelings our Psalmist has toward sin begins in his own heart, with his own transgression. Earlier in this Psalm, David addresses the need for his own sin to be removed and replaced with Truth. He recognizes that unfaithfulness to God is wrong and cannot be a part of life that honors the Word.

Ps 119:29 Remove the false way from me, and graciously grant me Thy law.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible says David "had a rooted antipathy to sin; he could not endure to think of it ... Hypocrisy is lying; false doctrine is lying; breach of faith is lying... Every man hates to have a lie told him; but we should more hate telling a lie because by the former we only receive an affront from men, by the latter we give an affront to God".

The feelings we have toward deceit is directly proportional to the sensitivity we have for God's Word. If we are apathetic towards the Word, we will not be careful about lying. If we love God's Word, lying will cause us deep personal feelings of grief because

we offend God. As we grow in our love and knowledge of God, lying will cease from our lives.

Deceit is not just apparent in words we might use but also in actions. When our actions do not line up with our words this is called hypocrisy. Think of insincerity – pretending to have qualities or beliefs that you do not really have; in other words, falsehood. Especially in Psalm 119:163 sin is related to going against what is believed and worshipped.

Look again at the Psalmist's personal struggle with sin and sorrow addressed in verses 25-29 of this same chapter. He recognized a need to ask God to clean up his own heart, to keep his soul from sin. Always, God is the one transforming us. I can desire to separate from sin but I am unable to peel away its hold on me without God's grace.

Ps 119:25-29 My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Thy word. ²⁶ I have told of my ways, and Thou hast answered me; teach me Thy statutes. ²⁷ Make me understand the way of Thy precepts, so I will meditate on Thy wonders. ²⁸ My soul weeps because of grief; strengthen me according to Thy word. ²⁹ **Remove the false way from me, and graciously grant me Thy law.**

As we learn to focus more on the truths in God's word, our understanding of God's direction for us will increase. As our understanding increases, our recognition of sin is magnified. And our hate of falsehood strengthens.

Ps 119:104 From Thy precepts I get understanding; **therefore I hate every false way.**

Ps 119:113 I **hate those who are double-minded**, but I love Thy law.

Think back several years ago to when God first opened your eyes to His Truth. It is likely that what you believed acceptable then is no longer seen as profitable in your life now. As I read and study God's Word, He shows me areas of incorrect thinking. Sin is brought to the forefront of my mind and He allows me to recognize where I am struggling. I hate sin because God hates sin. I desire to address it rather than accept it in my life. God is at work in each of His children. **Do we recognize His care for us?** Following are several more scriptures that address sin.

Pr 6:16-19 There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, **a lying tongue**, And hands that shed innocent blood, Pr 6:18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, **A false witness [who] utters lies**, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

Ro 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. **Abhor what is evil**; cling to what is good.

Ps 36:1-4 (For the choir director. [A Psalm] of David the servant of the LORD.) **Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart**; there is no fear of God before his eyes. For it flatters him in his [own] eyes, concerning the discovery of his iniquity [and] the hatred [of it.] The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; He has ceased to be wise [and] to do good. He plans wickedness upon his bed; He sets himself on a path that is not good; **He does not despise evil.**

Ps 97:10 **Hate evil, you who love the LORD**, Who preserves the souls of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

Zec 8:16 'These are the things which you should do: **speak the truth to one another**; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates.

David loves God's Word and hates man's deceit. The Word and deceit do not agree with each other; truth and lies, and love and hate are not compatible. Look around. **Is the world in harmony?**

"Falsehood in doctrine, in life, or in speech, falsehood in any form or shape, had become utterly detestable to the Psalmist....He does not, however, alone refer to falsehood in conversation; he evidently intends perversity in faith and teaching. He set down all opposition to the God of truth as lying, and then he turned his whole soul against it in the most intense form of indignation. Godly men should detest false doctrine even as they abhor a lie." *Treasury of David*

Ps 119:164 Seven times a day I praise Thee, Because of Thy righteous ordinances.

The verse above describes action taken by our Psalmist and the affect God's Word has on his life. David often and regularly offers praise to God because He is righteous. Adam Clarke's Commentary says that seven was a number expressing perfection and completion in the Hebrew culture. It was "often used to signify many, or an indefinite number". The idea is we can never praise God enough! Every day and often during each day, our sights should be on God's goodness – who He is, what He has done and what He will do. The word praise in Psalm 119:164 means to boast, to celebrate, or to give glory to God.

Ps 119:47-48 And I shall delight in Thy commandments, which I love. And I shall lift up my hands to Thy commandments, which I love; and I will meditate on Thy statutes.

Ps 34:1-2 ([A Psalm] of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him) (away and he departed.) I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear it and rejoice.

Consider the people or things we love. **How often do we take notice of them?** Those we are especially affectionate toward permeate our thoughts. **Do we frequent praise upon God as we should?** This isn't a 'check-the-box' seven times a day exercise. It is a lifestyle of praise.

Do we boast about God? Are we excited to speak of His promises? Do we share what He is doing in our life?

A celebration is something filled with joy. **Do we celebrate who we are in Christ? Do we celebrate the gift we have been given and the future promised?**

How are we bringing glory to God this very moment? How can we give glory to God throughout our day?

Look again at **Psalm 119:164**. Our Psalmist writes that he praises God "**because of Thy righteous ordinances**". God is naturally right, morally right and legally right in His very manner and in all His deeds. Even when circumstances are difficult or unclear, we should persevere in our gratitude and praise of God. Then, in the midst of hardship, we will find joy – just as David's example reads. God often uses affliction to strengthen our trust in Him.

Moving on to the next verse in Psalm 119, we see that it is a privilege and honor to rest in the hands of a living God! In addition to the blessing of peace through all of life's challenges, we are assured that nothing will become a stumbling block to us, neither will we become a stumbling block to others.

Ps 119:165 Those who love Thy law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble.

Consider this: when we lose your patience, get discouraged, or seem frazzled, it is always because we have allowed circumstances or individuals to become a larger focus than God's truth. When our focus is re-centered where it belongs, our actions are appropriate and pleasing to God. We easily forget who is in control as we try on our own to make things happen or convince someone of the truth.

Picture this: As our love for God's word grows, we have peace available to us even as we walk down a path full of potholes. It is as if the dips in the road have been highlighted for us so that we don't step in them and stumble. Fear is replaced by courage and sorrow turns into hope. When we do misstep and turn an ankle – as inevitably we will – God is always right there to carry us as we continue.

When a child is learning to ride a two-wheel bike, or roller-skates are put on for the first time, what scene do you picture? Typically, a parent or caring adult is by their side, giving them support and encouragement. A helmet and knee guards may afford extra protection. Take away this support, encouragement and protection and we are left exposed and in danger as fear paralyzes us. God's word says nothing will cause those who love His law to stumble. Nothing!

There will be no stumbling block for us and our actions will not become a stumbling block for others. But, we do fail. We do stumble. Is it because the truths in the Word are insufficient or intermittent? No, we are. The solution is to love God's Word; to look to Him for strength, to look to Him for comfort, and to trust in His plan and protection.

The Word says there is peace in pursuing righteousness.

Isa 32:17 And the work of righteousness will be peace, and the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.

Joh 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Php 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Stumbling blocks can appear in different forms. Perhaps there are outside temptations that draw our focus from God. When others disapprove of our beliefs we may feel attacked. We may be convicted of sin on the inside and choose to walk away from the truth. God's love takes into consideration every stumbling block in our path and He will clear our course to honor Himself.

We cannot be perfect! Notice Psalm 119:165 does not address those who perfectly keep the law. Rather, it addresses those who love the law. We are to neither give offense to others nor take offense from others. We are to take care to not offend God's law. We are to take delight in the peace afforded by God's love.

Ps 119:163-165 I hate and despise falsehood, [But] I love Thy law. Seven times a day I praise Thee, Because of Thy righteous ordinances. Those who love Thy law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble.

How will you apply this section of scripture to your personal life?