**MEM – STANZA #13: PSALM 119:97-104**

**The Psalm of the Bible**

Today our study takes us into the 13th stanza entitled “Mem”, which corresponds to the Hebrew letter “m”. In today’s study, we will see the great love that the psalmist had for God’s Word, as well as the many benefits that he enjoyed from it. We will also see more statements of accomplishment in this stanza as evidenced by the words, “I have”. We begin with:

1. **The psalmist’s intense love for the Bible – Psalm 119:97 -.** The psalmist begins with a statement of intense love for the Word of God. This statement has the idea of great wonder over the magnitude of his love. He was amazed that he loved the Bible so much. I could only imagine how much joy this psalmist would have had, if he had his own copy of a completed Bible that we hold in our hands. The psalmist would have only heard portions of the OT. He certainly did not have his own copy. Many people today have several Bibles in their homes, and show no love for this divine book. Many Bibles are being utilized as paper weights, or table ornaments. Most Christians have never read their Bible through from cover to cover. Our interaction with the Bible shows how much love we have for it. The psalmist proclaimed with joy, “O how I love thy law”. He ends the verse by stating that the Word of God was his “meditation all the day”. In our day, it may be difficult to meditate upon the Bible all day, but it should be deeply entrenched enough in our hearts, so as to allow us to use it throughout the day. Your love for the Bible will be evident by how much time you spend with it. If the only Bible you get is on Sunday, then your love for the Bible is very weak. Spend time in and with your Bible.
2. **The Bible makes us wiser than our enemies –** **vs. 98 -.** In this verse, the psalmist credits God and His Word for making him wiser than his enemies. The Bible didn’t make him smarter, it made him wiser. The wisdom spoken of here is the wisdom of God. The psalmist reacted to his enemies with the wisdom of God. Rather than exacting revenge, the psalmist left that to God. The enemies of the psalmist, devoid of God’s wisdom, persecuted the child of God, and would face the wrath of God. Whenever a person chooses against the Word of the God, they lack wisdom, and will face the consequences. The psalmist ends the verse by stating, “For they (the Word of God) are ever with me.” The psalmist had stored up the Word of God in his heart, and when he needed wisdom, he simply made a withdraw, and utilized it. The only way to have the wisdom of God is to study the Word of God. Without study you will be without wisdom.
3. **The psalmist had understanding because of experience –** **vs. 99-100 -.** While these verses could have several meanings, I want to express what I see in the text. The psalmist is telling us in these two verses that he has more understanding than his teachers, and the ancients or aged men of his time. This accomplishment would be real hard to obtain if that is the meaning of the text. It is my opinion that the psalmist is referring to his greater understanding, as a result of real life experience with the Word of God. It could be that the psalmist is making a distinction between “book smarts”, and real world experience. I formulate this opinion based on his reasons in both verses. In verses 99, he had more understanding than his teachers because, “thy testimonies are my meditation”. The psalmist took the Bible a step further than just knowledge for the head; he made it nourishment for his heart. In verse 100, we see that he had more understanding than the ancients, “because I keep thy precepts”. Perhaps the aged men had a lot of Bible knowledge, but no Bible practice.I do not believe that the psalmist is boasting about how smart he was biblically, but rather he was expounding on the importance of having a real working relationship with the Bible, rather than just having the facts of the Bible stored in his head. You can have more understanding of the Bible by living it, than the unsaved religionist with a dozen collegiate degrees to his credit. The difference is our experience over his knowledge.
4. **Sin will keep us from the Bible – vs. 101 -.** The key to this verse is the end goal of the psalmist. His goal was to “keep thy word”. How was he going to accomplish that? The answer is, “I have refrained (restrained) my feet from every evil way”. The psalmist understood that the greatest hindrance to doing right is doing wrong. He knew that he could not have it both ways. He also understood that in order to live that which is right, he must forsake living that which is wrong. Many people are confused by this principle. Unsaved people will proclaim how good they are, without dealing with how bad they are. They believe that their good is all that matters. They fail to understand, that in reality, it is their evil which disqualifies every so called good that they do. At the Judgment, God will only focus on the wrong. God’s people too must understand this. A life that is acceptable to God cannot be lived where evil and good, try to co-exist. If we want to practice a godly life, we must first crucify the flesh with its lust. We won’t be perfect but our practice of good must match this principle.
5. **Following the Word because of its Source – vs. 102 -.** The psalmist gives another great reason for following the Word of God. That reason is its Source. The Source of course is God. The psalmist states that he has not departed from God’s Word, because it is God that taught him. I think it makes great sense to follow God’s blueprint for living in His Creation for no other reason, than it is God who gave it to us. How foolish is unsaved man, when he rejects the Creator’s advice about how to live in His Creation. Most people seek out the advice of an expert in some field, to help them to better understand how to do something. But when it comes to God, most people reject His counsel for their own. If you were going to sky dive for the first time, would you get the advice of the expert in the plane, or jump with no guidance except the voice in your own head? The answer is clear, but that same principle is not followed with God. The psalmist would not depart from God’s Word because he had complete confidence in the Creator and Teacher of those words.
6. **God’s Word is sweet – vs. 103 -.** The psalmist now likens the Word of God to a food that is sweet and enjoyable to his taste. To get an idea of how he viewed the Word of God, it is a good idea to review some of the qualities of sweet food. Sweet food can be addictive. It is also highly desirable. Sweet food can be eaten slowly, so as to enjoy every bite. You can never grow tired with the taste of a sweet food that you enjoy. Sweet food can provide a burst of energy. From those characteristics it is easy to see how sweetness compares to the Word of God.
7. **The Word of God reveals every false way – vs. 104 -.** The getting of understanding from the Word of God is the vehicle by which we learn what every false way is. Notice that the psalmist hated every false way. That should be our perspective as well. We should love those caught up in false ways, but hate the false way itself. Any person who believes that “all roads lead to heaven” and all faiths are valid just different, need to understand this verse. The very fact that there are false ways, show us that there is a right way. A good gauge for determining false ways is to see how that way lines up with God’s Word. If a religious teaching or movement disagrees with the Bible, then we disagree with them. We should also never try to get along with false ways, or try to find something agreeable in false ways. We should also never shy away from exposing false ways. We should be specific, forceful and loving in our exposure of false ways. Learn what the false ways are through the Bible, and hate them as God does.