

'THE B.I.B.L.E.'
(*'Yes, That's The BOOK For Me!*)

Studies in Psalm 119

Biblical Optometry

(Hermeneutics – Seeing the Scriptures Clearly)

Those of us who do not have natural 20/20 vision wear glasses because we need optometric help to see things the way they truly appear. If you have 20/20 vision, you see things clearly at 20 feet from them, as they truly *look* (*notice the distance next time you are seated in the eye doctor exam office, peering at projection*). But if you don't have 20/20 vision, you will need help to compensate for the blurriness with glasses, contacts, or lasik surgery. The ability to see spiritual truth in the Bible as it was intended to be understood is as essential to someone's eternal destiny, as one's optic vision is to their ability to function in the physical world.

Since all mankind is born spiritually *dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1, 5)*, our ability to comprehend the holy things of God, including His Word, the Bible, is drastically impaired and dysfunctional. Prior to our coming to Christ and receiving the Holy Spirit, we are easily misled with spiritual *optical illusions* and delusions of the enemy's false teachers and religious systems (*Ephesians 4:17-19*). And even after we are *born again* spiritually and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, Who has come to show us the new way to live (*John 16:12-15*), our finite, limited flesh needs help to discover and experience God's perfect will (*Romans 12:1-2*). We need spiritual glasses, divine lenses through which to clearly understand God's Word as He intended it to be understood. The *glasses* of biblical hermeneutics (*proper Bible study technique*) enable Spirit-filled believers to focus clearly when studying the Scriptures. The two lenses of hermeneutics are: **1) *what does the text mean?*** and **2) *what does the text matter to me?*** Together these two spiritual lenses enable 20/20 spiritual vision to the otherwise *vision challenged* student of Scripture.

In technical language **#1** above is known as *exegesis* (*'ex'* - out; *'gesis'* - to lead = *to lead out*). It is actually synonymous with *exposition* (*expose or reveal important details*); both words refer to the grammatical art of *bringing out important factors about Scripture*. This spiritual lens seeks to know what the verse or passage meant to the original writer and readers through the *grammatical literal, historical interpretation method* discussed previously. Exegesis, using reliable hermeneutical methods reiterated above is great, but *eisegesis* (*'eis'* - into; *'gesis'* - to lead = *to lead into or introduce*) is a horrendous Bible study practice! *Eisegesis* actually *'reads into a text'* the reader's personal, theological and cultural presuppositions, without employing any hermeneutical principles.

Exegesis is objective and open to the Spirit's teaching and alteration of the student's thoughts and opinions from careful examination of the passage. **Eisegesis** jumps into Bible study already set and determined to arrive at an interpretation of the passage that will agree with his/her presuppositions. In essence, *eisegesis* doesn't help the student change and be perfected, it alters the passage to agree with what a student has already predetermined to be the truth. Consequently, *eisegesis* Bible study is a deterrent to spiritual growth instead of expediting growth in grace in the heart and mind of a serious Bible student learning God's Word *exegetically*.

#2 above is, to coin a new word, *'me-to-Jesus'*, since the other lens of hermeneutics is how God wants to use a passage to draw me closer to Jesus and transform me more into Jesus' likeness (*2 Corinthians 3:17-18*). Instead of manipulating the passage to conform with what I already believe and insist that it say what I want it to say (*eisegesis*), I must yield to the Holy Spirit and let Him use whatever the passage originally meant (*exegesis*), transform me into the image of Jesus (*and if I'm teaching, those others listening*).

We all need the miraculous insight of the great Optometrist, the Holy Spirit. Only He, Who wrote the holy Scriptures through godly instruments, truly knows what it means theologically and how it needs to matter to me personally. Both lenses are necessary for a 20/20 vision of God's will for our lives in this life as we proceed toward the hereafter. When we study God's Word this way He gives us insight, hindsight, and foresight about what He's done in the past and His 20/20 visionary plan for you now and in the future.

PtL

The ‘Prop Me Up, Lord!’ Psalm (When your soul is shaken and weary in life)

Psalm 119:113-120

Hebrew letter section ‘saw-mak’ (‘s’ sound) / word means to prop up, brace, uphold, strengthen

Probable incident in David’s life/ 2 Samuel 3 & 4, where treachery abounded with Joab’s murder of Abner (*general of the northern region of Israel*), assassination of Ishbosheth (*Saul’s son, king of the northern region*), and execution of the assassins Rechab & Baanah. Unification of the nation did finally take place after 7½ years, but all the deceit, treachery, and betrayal seems to have plunged David into dismay about people and put his own weary mind into emotional distress. Now 37 years old, David earnestly pursued personal time with the Lord for spiritual restoration and stability from God’s presence and His Word.

The ‘Propping Up’ Place

*“I hate the **double-minded**, but I love Your law.*

You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your Word.

Depart from me, you evildoers, for I will keep the commandments of my God!” Vs 113-115

‘Double-minded’ is a Hebrew word (*say-afe*) meaning ‘divided, detached, separated’ such as *James 1:8* in the NT – This verse may refer to a fluctuating, indecisive state of mind in others and/or oneself.

- Do you have thoughts that contradict each other sometimes?
- What kinds of circumstances get you this way?

David ‘hated’ double-mindedness’ in himself & others, but still loved God’s Word.

- Why is this instability so harmful to a believer feeling this way, or being around ‘unpredictable people’?
- Discuss the love/hate dilemma of line 1. (*see Romans 7:15-16 / the carnal mind problem*).
- How can we follow David’s example of getting to the hiding place to refocus on God and His Word?
- How do you do this (*Psalm 32:6-7, Matt. 6:6*) when you need to *get your head & heart right* with God?

The 3rd line reminds me of the ‘*big bad wolf and 3 little pigs*’ story –

- Who are the evildoers that the writer forbids entry?
- Why is important to protect ‘*the hiding place*’ from bad influences?
- What are the evildoers?

A ‘Propping Up’ Petition

“Uphold me according to Your Word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope.

Hold me up and I shall be safe and I shall observe Your statutes continually.” Vs 116-117

- What exactly does David want God to do about the unstableness in his mind and heart?
- What is David’s part to do, if he expects God to *prop* him up mentally, spiritually and emotionally?
- Do you pray like this when you need spiritual *propping up*?
- What other things do some Christians do to prop up their faith, instead of this *hiding place* approach?
- Why don’t other *props* work (or do they)?

The ‘Propped Up’ Position

*“You **reject all those who stray from Your statutes**, for their deceit is falsehood.*

*You **put away all the wicked of the earth like dross**; therefore I love Your testimonies.*

My flesh trembles for fear of You, and I am afraid of Your judgments.” Vs 118-120

- What are the specific things that God has made clear to *propped up* David in the hiding place?
- How is *double mindedness* like *dross* (*corrosive rust*) to the believer’s relationship with God?
- Discuss David’s awesome reverence for God’s Person and God’s Word.
- How does a healthy ‘*fear of the Lord*’ help you stay *propped up* when you have to leave your hiding place?