

A child of God is to spend their time in daily devotions. And how your daily devotions can shape the way your final destination would look like. At the end of the day, can you be filled with prayer of true devotion? Can you pray without going to your petitions? But actually just praying purely and thanksgiving for what God has done in Christ. Have you ever prayed where it was simply expressing your love for God and His word without a single petition? Petitions are important. I am not saying anything that is wrong, but have you ever just spent time praying without even laying before a petition? Most of us, if we are honest, spend our weeks filling our minds with information, whether that will be in your workplace or in school or even in your home, and then going beyond to that and exploring different types of things online, whether it is a podcast or something on YouTube.

And again, nothing is wrong with those specific platforms, but we can get very easily saturated with information that does not really solve our difficult personal problems. Despite the unprecedented volume of information of today, many people still find themselves caught off guard by unexpected temptation, confusion, and unresolved conflict. See, gathering information is not the same thing as gaining wisdom. And without a reliable standard, namely God's word, even our best decisions can lead us down paths we never intended to walk. Think of Pilgrim's Progress. It is a picture of every child of God who can get pulled and distracted off of their God-given path. And it can be because of a lack of wisdom. And we have access to more data than any other generation in human history. But yet, many people today lack practical discernment to navigate life, let alone spiritual life. Think about it. The same truth of God's word helped our forefathers in the faith. More information then is not the solution. They had the same book.

They gained the same wisdom. So, information is not the thing that we should look after or look for. How much do we intentionally go first to the scriptures and apply the word of God to our own lives? Believers frequently leave it unread or treat it solely as when an emergency happens, or even in their prayers when an emergency happens during these crises, rather than actually just enjoying spending time with God. The daily life, the mundane things of life, and treating God's word as the highlight of the day. Yeah, even in the morning and the evening and in the afternoon. You see, we live in an age of speed as well. And we can very treat that and with the word of God and rush through a passage of scripture in the morning because you got to get to work or you got to get to school without intentionally contemplating and letting the word of God soak deep into your soul in the very recesses of where you need his help. And instead leaving your heart unprepared by rushing you miss the opportunity for God to cultivate his love. Love is never to be rushed. It is supposed to be intentionally spent unrushed.

That's how we are to treat God's word because our very daily walk with the Lord depends upon having that kind of cultivating of our hearts. Psalm 119 passages of 97 and 104, we are going to touch on this very thing tonight. The psalmist will unlock for us these great truths that as believers we must always go back to and remind us of what daily devotion looks like. See, real wisdom does not require any form of degree. Whether that's a PhD degree or decades of trial and error. No real wisdom requires daily nourishment of God's truth. The psalmist points us away from superficial type of advice and shows us where true wisdom originates. Your daily

devotion shapes your final destination. Let us look at the early church showing us what devotion looks like in daily actions. If you would look at Acts chapter 2 beginning at verse 41 all the way to 47, what you see there are these points. They study the teachings of the apostles daily. They shared in fellowship and encouragement daily. They break bread daily and they prayed constantly. Consider then this. In Psalm 119:98-100 where the psalmist asserts that God's commandments make him wiser than his enemies, gives him more insight than his teachers, and grants him more understanding than the age. I want you to underline the more in those passages as we go into it. You see in ancient culture, age and even academic position were considered primary markers of authority. Yet the psalmist explains that spiritual understanding does not come automatic by years lived or degrees earned. Ultimately, the child of God gains true insight, true understanding from humbling himself or herself before God under his authority.

And to be obedient to his instructions, and then leaving the results ultimately to him. The key to this depth of wisdom is found in verse 97 where the psalmist confesses, "Oh, how I love your law. It is my meditation all the day." This is not formal or sporadic reading that we see here, but a practice of bringing God's principles into practical decisions throughout the day with emphasis there on meditation. Verse 103 describes this relationship by stating that God's words are sweeter than honey to the mouth. And in ancient world, honey was prized for both its taste and giving energy. Sustained energy. It was the energy bar, as it were, of the day. Showing that scripture provides actual nourishment. It is a picture of the soul, rather than just mere intellectual instruction and ascent. So, let us go into the text by you standing, please, along with me.

Out of respect for God's word, follow along in your Bible as I read from verse 97 to verse 104. "Oh, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments has made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments for thou has taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste? Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding. Therefore, I hate every false way." May God bless the reading of God's word to our hearts. You may be seated. I want us to examine verse 97 to 100. The stanza is based on the Hebrew alphabet letter mem which carries this pictograph of water of waves actually. So, think of waves of water. And just as physical water is essential to life sustaining life as well as cleansing and we know this from Ephesians 5:26 that says this that he Jesus Christ might sanctify and cleanse it the church with washing of water by the word. The word of God has a cleansing effect upon our soul. It also spiritually sustains the soul as well. And if you look at verse 97, this is the heart of devotion.

He says, "Oh how love I thy law. It is my meditation all the day." The psalmist expresses here a deep sincere present tense devotion to God's instructions. Continuously contemplating how to apply scripture throughout his waking hours. Think about how much you will gain in wisdom if you just simply remembered the words of God instead of inundating yourself with information after information after information. That's what the psalmist is doing. This is what devotion looks like. His pure word. And then in verse 98, we see that he shows that wisdom produces ability to

be wiser than your enemies. He says, "Thou through thy commandments has made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me." The world typically operates in a way to be cunning, to be strategic, by scheming ways to make money, and many times deceit. But the believer who stands on scripture possesses unchanging truth. You do not need to work around to people to gain to the truth. No, the truth should be direct. God's word is direct, and it is sharper than any two-edged sword. And it gets right to the soul. See, Jesus Christ repeatedly countered every lie by hearing strictly to written scripture. We see this found in Matthew chapter 4, beginning of verse 1 through 11. Each temptation that Jesus confronted is refused by the word of God. The point was not to just simply quote scripture. That's not the point. But not compromising the truth with Satan's lie. That's the part of it. Ephesians 6:14 says, "Stand therefore having your loins or belt girded about with truth." See, truth is the first piece of spiritual armor for daily defense. Do you actually think about what you are saying to divert yourself from the temptations? And that's what wisdom looks like. You're wiser than any of your enemies. Then we see that you not only have more wisdom and more what being more wiser than your enemies, but in verse 99, you have more insight than your teachers. Let's look at that. He says, "I have more understanding than all my teachers." This is not intellectual arrogance by no means. He's not saying this from arrogance. Because if he if it is arrogance, he would say he knows more. But notice he says he understands more. See, understanding more is insight. Insight and information are not the same. Understanding comes from God.

That's why it is not coming from a place of arrogance. It is God showed him this understanding. Who am I to say otherwise if God is speaking directly to a person with his own word? We see understanding in Peter when Jesus speaks to him in Matthew 16:15-17. He said unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven." That's understanding from God. I want you to also notice he uses Simon bar Jonah. Why does he say his name like that? Often times you would see him just call him Simon or Simon Peter later on. But it is exactly the context he's saying is for flesh and blood has not revealed this. Meaning it was not your human intellect nor was it your lineages because why do you say bar Jonah?

Because he was saying it was not your family lineage. Nobody in your history brought you this understanding. It was directly from God. That's what it means. Now let's look at verse 100. Now we see that he has more understanding than the ancients or the aged. He says in the whether in the text just to understand the context in the near East in ancient times, age was assumed to bring wisdom. But gray hair does not guarantee godliness. True wisdom is measured not how many verses you memorize or how many years you lived on this earth, but by personal obedience. Personal obedience. That's what you can see here. I kept thy precepts. That's personal obedience to God's precepts. True spiritual maturity is measured by consistent obedience to God's commandments rather than accumulated years. You can live forever how long, but if you just stay within the first years times whatever you are right now, that's not maturity, is it? Maturity only happens when you go from one, 2, 3, 4, and so on. So, what he's saying in this text is he's saying you can be 25 years, but you've just been living 25 years in just year one. Repeating year one over and over and over again. See, that's why he says, "I kept thy

precepts." Meaning it is continual. That's what spiritual maturity looks like. Think of the Lord Jesus Christ while he was on earth when he was just 12 years old. Jesus displayed greater understanding in the temple than the established teachers of that day. Because he perfectly embodied God's truth. We see that in Luke chapter 2:46-47. Of course, he is the perfect son of God. But it is an idea of a sense that it was his daily walk with God the Father in perfect obedience, following perfectly his instructions. Now, we cannot follow perfectly, but we can be close to that by his strength and by his power and by his love. So, what do we get up to this point? If you're a believer in Christ in this room, it is our reliance on the clear instructions of scripture rather than listening to human advice. However good that may be, however the outcome may be of good sorts, nothing is more important than keeping the precepts of God. Nothing. No opinion is more important than God's precepts. Whenever you're making a critical decision in your life, you go to the word of God and in prayer. True spiritual discernment comes when you daily meditate on and obey his word. Now, if you will, let's look down at verse 101. Now, we're going to a different scenario. We're going to now where he's obedient to God's word and how it guards him from sin.

How obedience protects him from sin. Verse 101, I have refrained my feet from every evil way that I might keep thy word. The psalmist recognizes that the battle for holiness begins with disciplined feet. Notice the word refrained my feet. You see, left to our own natural inclinations, our feet will naturally run toward evil. Proverbs 6:18 says, "An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that will be swift in running to mischief." Because a heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it? Only God knows. But our hearts, again, we must not trust it. You can be in the mountain top experience, as it were, blocking out the whole world. As long as you have your own heart, you will see evil even though it is not coming from external. And our feet are constantly wandering because of our hearts. See, because human nature is prone to wander, the believer must intentionally guard where his steps lead. The opening of Psalm 1 shows this, contrasting the path of the righteous with the path of the wicked. The feet either go towards that which is righteous or that which is wicked. I mean, you cannot physically walk north and south at the same time. And so your spiritual condition will determine where you are pulled toward one destination or another. And so to progress down one path, you must then completely abandon the other. And that is what daily devotion does to shape a believer's life of your final destination. You can be assured or have assurance of where your destination is how you are walking with the Lord day unto day. How we are sustained by God's instructions. I have not departed from thy judgments for thou hast taught me. The psalmist avoids a life that's backslidden because God himself is his teacher. Job 36:22 makes this clear.

Behold, God exalted by his power, who teacheth like him. Perseverance in godliness occurs because God himself acts as a primary instructor of the believer's life. He's constantly putting before us what we're supposed to follow and what we're not supposed to follow. And when we realize that drifting from scripture is rejecting the personal instruction of our heavenly Father, our desire then is to stay on course deepens. You see, when you understand who's giving the instructions, it will be very hard to deviate to the other direction. The Christian life is a steady lifelong journey then of faithfully following our Lord Jesus until the end of your life by his

strength, by his grace and his mercy. And he uses his words rather than experiencing a spiritual high through emotions or a instantaneous fix in your circumstances. No, the way he works in our lives is how we are instructed by his word primarily of active obedience will produce then daily actions that are pleasing to him. You see when you're in a place of active obedience to God's word your actions will reveal it. You cannot play around with harmless sins.

There is no such thing as harmless sins and expect to walk in the power of God's word. Good intentions require disciplined steps. And it starts with cultivating our hearts in the word. In order to guard where your feet take, rather in all types of areas such as the internet or in your relationships active obedience requires guarding your habits and your relationships and thoughts and refusing to tolerate even any subtle compromises that erodes your integrity. That's what we see captured here in these two verses. How he guards his heart from sin is by his daily obedience to God's word. Next, let's look at verse 103 to 104. The meditation of his heart deepens here and truth imparts or we're going to see a soul that is satisfied and full of joy in meditating in God's word. Look at verse 103. How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Again, in ancient times, honey represented the highest standard of sweetness, and it brought personal satisfaction to the person who was receiving it. And he gives a picture of this and how we receive the satisfaction derived from absorbing scripture. And if you look at Psalm 19:10, for example, it explains the sweetness of God's word there as well, but it is more in a more objective truth. Here, what we see in Psalm 119, we see that it is a personal subjective experience.

He experiences the taste. He shares in how it is sweet to his taste. Subjective. And the psalmist is not just speaking about just okay, it is truth and I know it is true. No, he has tasted the truth. Just like in 1 Peter 2:3, if so be you have tasted that the Lord Jesus is gracious. It is an actual effect in the person's life. And as human beings, the highest level of customer satisfaction is when someone says, "Satisfaction guaranteed." We desire that, do not we? That we will be satisfied and that it will be guaranteed. Even the world and all of its best marketing puts that stamp of approval. Because they know if we can satisfy you, you can keep being a loyal customer. But I speak now of what true satisfaction is for us as believers in Christ. Nothing in the world can ever say satisfaction truly guaranteed. Only the word of God can bring true satisfaction to the soul. And that's what we see in verse 103. And then we conclude with verse 104. We see a truly righteous believer having hatred for all that is false. He says, "Through thy precepts I get understanding. Therefore, in conclusion, I hate every false way." That's the conclusion.

That's the conclusion of a heart that is fully experiencing God's love, active obedience, and true joy and satisfaction in the word of God. That you can see what is all that is false. See, understanding God's truth produces an aversion to deceit and sin. Human beings are not naturally born with a love for absolute truth. We know that because of the fall. We see in Genesis 3. Or we do not have a true hatred for falsehood, again, because of the fall. So, our default human nature actually prefers what is easy, what is comfortable, what is self-serving, even if it is dishonest or false. T

his is how deceptive our hearts can be. And so, truth can often be painful, and challenging, and humbling, which makes our initial reaction resist God's word in the flesh. If you know yourself, that will be true. But the more a believer, a true believer in Christ, feasts upon God's truth day in and day out, the more bitter the taste of the world is and its lies and its sin. It You need to start developing, as it were, spiritual taste buds through continuous engagement with God's word. What once felt uncomfortable, the truth, becomes now lovely. It becomes joyful experience, satisfying deeply in your soul. And now the lies, on the other hand, what once felt easy to believe a lie, becomes now repulsive, disgusting, a bitter taste in your mouth. It is about the change God does in your believer, your inner life. He has changed you from the inside out and that includes your own desires. And you should thank God. Thank you, God, for not only changing my heart, but the desires of my heart, that I do not trust my heart, but I trust in you. And you want true understanding from his word until you experience his genuine love for you and what is good for you and you find the disgust of what evil produces. You see, just hating the consequences is not enough. We must go deeper than that. We should not just be okay with Oh, you know what? I do not like that sin because of its consequences. That should never be true satisfaction. That should not be enough. Rather, it should be to the place where you say you hate every false way. You hate it. You do not even have to think about the consequences. You just hate every false way. That's where we want to be in our devotion with God. We want to be as close to God's heart as possible. And this is what a heart that is close to God can be like. You see a child raised in today's age with all of its artificialness, let's just take for example artificial sugar. I personally hate it. I go for the raw sugar. Amen. But just picture for a moment artificial sugar is like worldly happiness. Worldly happiness that you would initially reject because a true child would not actually want to eat artificial sugar. Try giving a child artificial sugar and see what they do. But here's what happens. As we get older, we began to somehow have a taste for artificial sugar. Why is there artificial sugar every at every restaurant and every grocery store? Because people like it. But it is not good for you, is it? But that's what can happen when you get too close to the world's satisfaction. The artificialness. Instead, we should be wholly dissatisfied with anything artificial, especially artificial intelligence. Yeah, you know I was going to get there. We should not be satisfied with what it can do. We should not be satisfied with anything artificial. I mean, it will be crazy if we get to the the where we have artificial love. That would just totally not define love. But we're getting there. People are literally seeking AI for relationship.

And all of these young people today are going there. The percentage is increasing by the day. I am looking at the numbers and I am praying, "God, please do not do that to our young people." It is disgusting. It is not the way God designed us to enjoy artificial anything, but to enjoy the pureness, the holiness of God's word, and enjoy him purely as well. That's what happens when we immerse ourselves in scripture. It is the most purest thing in the whole world because he created the world. He created everything. You're going to the source. And so you get his wisdom. You get his love. You get his understanding. You have his victory because of what Christ has done in our lives and continues to do in our lives. That's where we need to go. May scripture bring us to a place where we are never at a place of rushing, but that we when we have when we make the time because we can always make the time. We can always wake up a

little bit earlier. We can always go to bed a little bit later. We can always squeeze in some time during our lunch break. There's always time.

He gives everyone the same time, the same grace, the same mercy. But how do you take those time and steward it well for his glory and for his honor. May you consume and be returned to daily reading until delight in God's word is destroyed. Take that picture. If you've been spending time in artificial anything, think of like taste buds. It takes time to acquire back just a taste of raw vegetables, as it were. Has anybody ever tried that? And then when now the broccoli, just raw broccoli, tastes good. When the raw carrot just taste good. It takes time. But when you get there, and when you're delighting, that's where God wants you to be. And then may you feast then wholeheartedly in that love, pure joy, pure satisfaction, and pure understanding. This is what Christ offered us. He's given us this opportunity. He's given us a new life in him to be pleasing unto God. He's changed our hearts. He's changed the direction of our lives. He's changed our eternal destination. And it looks differently than day unto day in our devotion to God. You see, left to our own strength, none of us can keep our feet from every evil way. Our natural inclination, again, is to wander off the path. We cannot generate a deep love for God's law with our hearts. We must distrust our own hearts and realize it is only because of the Holy Spirit that lives in us. Not our spirit, not our hearts, but because he's given us the Holy Spirit.

And this is why we need to remind ourselves of what Jesus Christ truly did for us on the cross. Yes, he saved us from our sins, but is he continuing to save you subjectively in your life? Is it really happening to you where you can see it in your life and the desires of your life? You know your own desires. You know your own besetting sins. You know when he has put to death those sins and you see it as repulsive. And your desire has changed where now loving the things that God loves and hating the things that God hates. That's the true reality of a Christ does in one's heart and continues to do. The word made flesh. Jesus is the only one who walked this earth perfectly, so look to him. His feet always walked in the paths of straight. He lived a life in complete obedience to the Father. He resisted every temptation of the enemy through the scriptures. And he delighted in the Father's law perfectly. Yet he took the penalty for our false ways upon himself at the cross. He bore the penalty for our sinful choices upon the cross that we might be forgiven. I just love that we are forgiven. Have you tried asking for forgiveness in your own strength?

Does not work. But once God in Christ has forgiven you, he's given you the strength and power to forgive others. It is a wonderful thing to always go back to what Christ again has given to you. This is what loving God in Christ does actively in your life. Shifting from a just a mere satisfaction of okay head knowledge to actually know that's not okay. I need to be deeply satisfied in the soul. And I need his protection in my life of my enemies that I might listen to his precepts so that I would gain more wisdom than my enemies, more understanding than teachers that I would be able to conduct myself according to God's will. True spiritual wisdom and personal holiness and lasting satisfactions are found when a when a believer daily meditates upon and obeys God's word. We want to be a people not of information without application. We want to be a people that are constantly transformed by God's word with application.

A faith built on the solid rock of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit living in us leads us to a place where we're wanting true satisfaction in our souls and will not be satisfied until we do. And when you internalize daily God's word, you develop this kind of spiritual discernment that keeps your feet from those wrong choices, clarifies the truth when you're confused in any situation and ultimately gives you that lasting peace in your heart. May God work in this in our lives more richly and find more satisfaction in his word so that God's people can truly live a life in abundance as Christ promised. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this time that we get to spend hearing of your word and truly how life transforming your word is. Thank you for what Christ has done for us on the cross. That we have a eternal home. That we have been reconciled to thee, oh Father, by our great mediator, Jesus Christ. We thank you, Father, that you've changed our hearts to now where we love the things that you love and hate the things that you hate. And may we grow closer to this place where we are daily soaking in your word to understand you more in a deeper and more satisfying way. Father, please bless your people in this way, and I pray that anyone that is outside of Christ, I pray that they will come to a place where they come to the end of themselves and see that it is only Jesus Christ whom they can receive salvation for their souls. And that they can truly receive a life that is pleasing to you. Father, please bless to that end, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.