



A Clean Life With A Hidden Deposit

Psalms 119:9-16 KJV BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word. [10] With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. [11] Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. [12] Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. [13] With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. [14] I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches. [15] I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. [16] I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

I. INTRODUCTION—BAT 21

Every Monday night, when I was not sacking groceries at the Piggly Wiggly, we would go to the library in Dothan. One Monday evening, I “accidentally” found a paperback copy of William C. Anderson’s book, BAT-21. It was a story about Icael “Gene” Hambleton, a U.S. Air Force navigator who became the focus of the largest rescue operation for one man in Air Force history after his plane was shot down behind enemy lines during the Vietnam War. I discovered that Hambleton has since died in 2004 from complications of lung cancer. He was 85 when he passed away.

I found a Los Angeles Times obituary written by Dennis McLellan telling his harrowing story. Assigned to an air base in Thailand, Hambleton was on his 63rd combat mission over Vietnam when his EB-66, an unarmed electronic jamming aircraft, was hit by a surface-to-air missile at 30,000 feet on April 2, 1972. The only member of the six-man crew able to eject, the 53-year-old navigator spent the next 11 1/2 days evading capture.

He parachuted into Quang Tri province, just south of the demilitarized zone separating North and South Vietnam -- a particularly dangerous region at the time. The previously massive American ground combat presence in South Vietnam was gone, the North Vietnamese Army had just launched a major offensive against the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam and more than 30,000 North Vietnamese troops equipped with tanks and heavy artillery were moving through the area.

A forward air controller pilot involved in the major U.S. air campaign in support of the beleaguered South Vietnamese forces monitored Hambleton's descent, talking to him via his small emergency radio as he dropped into a dry rice paddy and took cover.

Hambleton, wounded by shrapnel when the rear of his plane exploded, kept in touch with U.S. forces with his emergency radio and directed numerous air strikes against enemy supply lines. A Rossville, Illinois, native, he had served in the Army Air Forces during World War II without seeing combat, but he had flown 43 combat missions in a B-29 bomber during the Korean War.

After the failed air-rescue attempts, it was decided that Navy SEAL Lt. Thomas R. Norris and a small team would infiltrate enemy lines and attempt to pick up Hambleton and another rescuer who had gone down in a search and rescue mission at the nearby Cam Lo River. Aware that North Vietnamese radio monitors understood English, the radio message from a forward air controller in the area told them: "Get to the Snake, make like Esther Williams and float to Boston" -- go to the river and swim east. Esther Williams was an American competitive swimmer.

Hambleton, however, was much farther from the river than Clark and would have to maneuver around enemy-occupied villages and gun emplacements. Rescue planners, who had discovered that Hambleton was one of the best golfers in the Air Force and had a vivid memory of the courses he had played, came up with a novel idea: guiding him to the river via a series of specific golf-course holes that had been provided by his golfing buddies.

As Hambleton recalled in a 2001 interview with *Golf Digest*, the planners told him, "You're going to play 18 holes and you're going to get in the Suwannee and make like Esther Williams and Charlie the Tuna. The round starts on No. 1 at

Tucson National."

Hambleton said it took him awhile to figure out they were giving him distance and direction: "No. 1 at Tucson National is 408 yards running southeast. They wanted me to move southeast 400 yards. The 'course' would lead me to water."

On the night of his eighth day in hiding, Hambleton began walking the imaginary fairways that had been mapped out for him. "Playing" hole No. 4 of the Abilene Country Club on the ninth day -- 195 yards due east -- took him through the outskirts of a village.

As recounted in William C. Anderson's 1980 book "Bat-21," whose title derives from the call sign for Hambleton's aircraft, Hambleton passed a seemingly deserted hooch when a rooster suddenly emerged from the doorway -- "food!" thought Hambleton, who lost 45 pounds during his ordeal.

But when he made a lunge for the bird in the darkness someone emerged from the hooch and slashed him in his left shoulder with a knife. In the ensuing tussle, Hambleton used his own knife to stab his Vietnamese assailant to death.

Later, while suffering from dehydration, Hambleton was told to "play" hole No. 4 at Corona de Tucson -- a short par three -- where he'd find a "refreshment stand." What they meant by that was that there was a banana plantation and he was able to cut a hole in the trunks of the stalks and drink water from it. During this foray, he got lost and fell off of a cliff and broke his arm in the process. But it was his familiarity with the golf courses and his memory that he was able to follow the instructions to get away from the enemy and ultimately be brought back home.

-That story has some very strong implications as to why we should get the Word of God deep down into our heart. All of us who are living for the Lord are finding that we are navigating through enemy territory. The only way we will get out is to know the directions!

II. PSALM 119

-The shortest Psalm in the Bible is 117 which contain two verses and five lines. Psalm 119 is not only the longest psalm but also the longest chapter in the Bible. It contains 176 verses and 315 lines. There has been a lot of preaching coming from this chapter in the Bible.

· **Charles Spurgeon's** three-volume set called The Treasury of David, which is a commentary on the Psalms, devoted 349 pages to Psalm 119.

· **Charles Bridges**, a pastor in Great Britain in the last century, wrote 481 pages about it. His book contains a sermon for each of the twenty-two stanzas of the Psalm.

· **Thomas Manton** is probably the most prolific when it comes to this Psalm. The old Puritan preacher wrote 190 sermons on the 176 verses. It is contained in a three-volume work of 1,677 pages.

-These men were quite serious about getting into the Word of God and then preaching it to those whom they were called to shepherd. I have to admit that I am quite personally motivated by the works of these men to do the same thing.

2 Timothy 2:15 KJV Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

-Anytime that we give ourselves to disciplined study of the Word of God it will always be of great benefit to us.

A. The Layout of Psalm 119

-This psalm is laid out in an acrostic pattern. This means that when you see the words, *aleph* and *beth* and so on, these are the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each letter has eight verses that follow it until all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are covered.

-The closest thing that takes place elsewhere in Scripture is in the book of Lamentations. When Jeremiah penned chapter 3 he followed the same pattern but only with three verses for a total of 66 verses.

-One of the most powerful aspects of Psalm 119 is that every Scripture refers to the Word of God, the Bible with only a handful of exceptions. Verses 84, 90, 121, 122, and 132 are the verses but when you read these verses there seems to be an underlying tone that exalts the Word of God.

B. The Synonyms of Scripture

-We also discover that throughout this chapter that there are eight synonyms that are prevalent throughout the Psalm.

- **Law**—Torah—Appears some 25 times.
- **Word**—Dabar—Some 24 times.
- **Rulings/Ordinances**--Mispatim—Appears 23 times.
- **Testimonies**—Hedot—Appears 23 times.
- **Commandments**—Miswoth—Appears 22 times.
- **Decrees/Statutes**—Huqqim—Appears 21 times.
- **Precepts/Charges**—Piqqudim—Appears 21 times.
- **Sayings/Promise**—Imra—Appears 19 times.

-Just from this one Psalm we can see how intricate and compelling that the Word of God is. It is not just an ancient book of antiquity! It is literally a Book that has been God-breathed!

2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: [17] That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

-I am not going to let you rest until you read it, meditate on it, pray it, digest it, preach it, discuss it, teach it, and grasp it. It will not come in one opportunity but it will come little by little to you but as that little by little that comes to you, you will find your mind being transformed into something that God can powerfully use.

Ephesians 4:22-24 KJV That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; [23] And *be renewed in the spirit of your mind*; [24] And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

C. An Incredible Accomplishment—Scripture Memorization

-Scripture memorization is a great challenge to a modern day saints. But in the old days, many of the saints of God would memorize large portions of Scripture because they were devoted to God.

-One such man was John Ruskin. He lived in the nineteenth century in Great Britain and was raised by a mother who was unsparing of herself and others. One of the things she made him do was memorize Scripture. He memorized Psalms 23, 32, 90, 91, 103, 112, 119, and 139.

-Later in his life when he was writing some about some of his life experiences, he wrote, “It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was, to my childish mind, chiefly repulsive—the 119th Psalm—has now become of all the most precious to me in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the Law of God.”

-Another man was William Wilberforce who fought slavery in London and was largely responsible for its downfall wrote in his diary in the year of 1819: “Walked today from Hyde Park Corner, repeating the 119th Psalm in great comfort.”

-Henry Martyn, a missionary to India, memorized Psalm 119 as an adult in 1804. He had an extremely laborious life but he wrote that it was the Bible alone that gave him the strength to keep on going. He died of exhaustion in 1812.

-David Livingstone, the pioneer missionary to Africa, won a Bible from his Sunday school teacher by repeating Psalm 119 by heart when he was nine years old.

-One Irish pastor out of the Keswick convention said that God did not call him to ministry but his mother did. I don't recommend this kind of calling but he said that his mother told him on her death-bed, “Derrick, my boy, you have the gift of gab. But you don't know the Word. If you'd learn the Word, the Lord might be able to use you.” He took what

she had to say to heart, determined to study the Bible, and within three weeks of his mother's death was preaching!

D. Word Is Worship!

-Know this. . . reading the Bible, meditating on it, memorizing it, teaching it, preaching it, and even listening to it being preached and taught all fall in the confines of worship. We are worshiping God when we give our hearts and minds to the Word!

1 Timothy 4:13 KJV Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

Joshua 1:8 KJV This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Psalms 119:97-104 KJV MEM. O how love I thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day. [98]Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they *are* ever with me. [99] I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation. [100] I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.[101] I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. [102] I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. [103] How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth! [104] Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

Proverbs 2:4-5 KJV If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; [5] Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

John 5:39 KJV Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Acts 17:11 KJV These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

1 Timothy 4:16 KJV Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

-But the challenge of our generation is that we allow ourselves to be taken into captivity by the patterns of this world and we fill our heads with the passing, mindless, idle pleasures and fantasies of it all.

III. HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

-Now we come to our text in Psalm 119. Specifically verse 11 speaks clearly to us.

Psalms 119:11 KJV Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

-If you write in your Bible, I want to give you an outline of that verse:

- **The Best Possession**—Thy Word.
- **The Best Plan**—Have I hid.
- **The Best Place**—In my heart.
- **The Best Purpose**—That I might not sin against Thee.

-The Hebrew letter *beth* also has the meaning of house. The underlying thought in this stanza of Scripture is that we make our heart a home for the Word of God.

-If Lieutenant Colonel Hambleton was so proficient with golfing and golf courses that it saved his life, we ought to have proficiency with the Word of God to know it is going to save us for more than just life but for eternity.

Alexander Maclaren—The world is a great deal fuller of inducements to do wrong than of inducements to do right. . . a great many bad things that have a deceptive appearance of pleasure, a great many circumstances in which it seems far easier to follow the worse than to follow the better course. And so unless a man has learned the great art of saying, 'No!' 'So did not I because of the fear of the Lord,' he will come to rack and ruin without a doubt.

-So dust off your Bible, bring it to church, read it again, pull out your index cards and write the Scriptures on them and

work toward memorizing again. Read your Bible through this year! It will lead to a clean life!

-How can I do this? The answers are actually found in the passage of Scripture that we read from.

A. I Declare—Psalm 119:13

Psalms 119:13 KJV With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

-One of the best ways to let the Word dwell down deeply in you is to start declaring it to others. It is amazing the rich content of fellowship that can take place over the Word of God.

I will never forget a time sometime in the mid-90's when Brother Griffin came through Dothan one week. We went in Brother Patterson's office and since there was only one desk at the time, Brother Griffin sat down in the desk and me, my brother-in-law, my brother, and Neal Williams sat in folding chairs and on the floor while Brother Griffin opened up his wide-margin Bible and begin to walk through it with us. I distinctly remember him going through a listing of Twelve Bible Brides and how that all of these women represented different aspects of the Church.

-Anytime we find something in the Word we need to share it with others and don't let it just go dead in our hearts. Some people try to speak truth and it is not in them, others have it in them but don't speak it. I pray that God gives us the ability to speak the things that His Word amplifies in our heart.

B. I Rejoice—Psalm 119:14

Psalms 119:14 KJV I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches.

-If we can declare it, we need to rejoice in it. God built our minds in such a way that with the passage of time forget the difficult and challenging times of life. That is a blessing from the Lord to be able to do that.

-On the other hand, the Lord gives us the ability to remember the good moments of life when found strength, an oasis, and refreshment from various experiences of life. Rejoicing in the Word of the Lord can be done in a variety of ways—private devotional times and moments of fellowship over the Word.

-However, there can be times when we can sing the Word by reverting to songs that are Scripture saturated. Some old.
. . . .

- At The Cross
- There's Power In the Blood
- When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder
- Leaning On the Everlasting Arms
- The Old Account Settled
- Blessed Assurance
- Some new. . .
- Lead Me to the Cross
- Revelation Song
- Better Is One Day
- Blessed Be the Name of the Lord
- Open the Eyes of My Heart

-When you get into an atmosphere of worship with other saints, much can happen as we rejoice with the Word.

C. I Meditate—Psalm 119:15

Psalms 119:15 KJV I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

-You can declare. . . You can rejoice. . . You can meditate. . .

-Meditation takes place when we recall from our memory the Scriptures:

- The great scenes from Scripture.
- The great men and women from Scripture.
- The great miracles from Scripture.
- The great recoveries of Scripture.
- The great doctrines of Scripture.
- The great prayers of Scripture.
- The great promises of Scripture.
- The great names and titles of God in Scripture.
- The great parables of Scripture.

-Recalling those things becomes fuel for a godly soul!

Thomas Manton—Meditation on Scripture supplies us in prayer. Barrenness and leanness of soul is a very great defect, which God's children often complain of. One great reason is because the Word of God doth not dwell plenteously in them, so that in every prayer we are to seek. If the heart were often exercised in the Word, the promises would hold up our hearts in prayer, enlarge our affections, and we should be better able to pour out our spirits before Him. . . when the heart is full, the tongue will be loosed and speak freely. What is the reason we are so dumb and tongue-tied in prayer? Because our heart is so barren. When the spring is dry, there will be little water in the stream: Ephesians 6:17, 'Take the sword of the Spirit, that is the word of God;' then presently, 'praying with all manner of supplication.' When we have a good store of them word of God it will burst out in prayer.

D. I Delight—Psalm 119:16

Psalms 119:16 KJV I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

-I can declare. . . I can rejoice. . . I can meditate. . . and I can delight. . . all four of these things help me to get the Word into my heart.

-The word here "delight" is used in the context of a settled pleasure that is based on principle. You find it being lived out in the life of David when he refused to kill Saul even though he had the opportunity to do so.

-What may look like an open door according to circumstances can actually be a closed door according to Scripture. When you delight in the Law of the Lord you won't forget His Word and it will lead you to a higher life.

-The Bible is full of principles and we have to prove them out in the daily aspect of our lives.