

The Disciplines of a Godly Life: Meditation

Psalm 119: Part 10

The Blessing of Affliction – We Get Focused on Our Teacher

Two old men sat down and wrote their summary of life.
One was the father, the other his son.

Both wrote under the inspiration of God's Spirit.
Both had suffered through many afflictions.
Both knew the Lord in an unusual way.

For one his summary is almost bitter, speaking of the emptiness or vanity of life.
His name was Solomon, son of David.
His summary is a Book called Ecclesiastes.

The other one summarized life hopefully, speaking of a life long growth in experiencing God.
His name was David, father of Solomon.
His summary is a chapter called Psalm 71.

When life winds down, strength gets exhausted, and the end is in sight for you – which summary will fit your life?
Will life looked back on be Bitterness, Vanity, and Emptiness or
Hopefulness, Life long growth, and experiencing God?

The choice is completely yours this morning – you are writing the script that will be your life's summary!

Please turn with me David's summary. Psalm 71 is an old man – David, sharing his responses to afflictions in the many forms he had experienced.
Stand – read – pray.

- If you have ever been in a car accident – you probably pay close attention when you get into your car and buckle your seat belt, right?
- If you have ever had heart problems – you probably pay close attention when you eat and watch what you eat, right?
- If someone dear to you has ever died – you probably pay close attention to loved ones and treasure those close to you, right?
- If your home has ever burned – you probably pay close attention to your fire policy and check insurance coverages, right?

And on and on through life it goes. Traumatic and painful experiences actually help us be more aware and apart of the world around us. This morning we find in Psalm 119

that when troubles come, and we experience affliction it makes us pay close attention to our teacher.

We are on the 5th point in our outline of the Seven Blessings of Affliction.

AFFLICTION is used by God because it --

1. PUSHES US INTO GOD'S WORD: Psalm 119:50
2. PULLS US BACK ONTO THE PATH: Psalm 119:67
3. CHISELS GOD'S PLAN INTO OUR LIFE: Psalm 119:71
4. TEACHES US THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL: Psalm 119:75
5. **KEEPS US FOCUSED ON OUR TEACHER: Psalm 119:92**
6. FORCES US TO TEST HIS PROMISES: Psalm 119:107
7. BRINGS GOD TO OUR DOORSTEP: Psalm 119:153

AFFLICTION: is described in Psalm 119 by two words; the first *onee* (6040) seems to portray an emotional state of misery as an affliction; the second word *anah* (6031) seems to portray a physical affliction of being bowed down or squished beneath a physical load.

1. **PUSHES US INTO GOD'S WORD:** Only God's Word can really help us in afflictions – cards, visits, gifts, activities all can only offer temporary relief through distraction or amusement. Psalm 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction (6040 emotional), for **YOUR WORD (Reading Divine Word to find and follow God's Will for my life 565)** has given me life.
 - *Life often dulls or deadens us to spiritual things, so when God sends afflictions our way God's Word quickens us or "has given life".*
2. **PULLS US BACK ONTO THE PATH:** A consistent life is built by afflictions. God uses afflictions to pull us back and keep us on His path for our lives. Often we only call when we need something – so He gives us reason to call. Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted (6031 physical) I went astray, But now I keep **YOUR WORD (Reading Divine Word to find and follow God's Will for my life 565)**.
 - *Affliction can stop us from straying away from God, so "now I keep".*
 - *Have you ever been driving late at night and slowly drifted to the side of the road? Remember when you hit those rumble strips and the way you jerked the wheel -- so that you got back on the road quickly? Afflictions are the rumble strips God uses to make us jerk our wheel of life to get us back on the road and to keep us from heading into the ditch!*
3. **CHISELS GOD'S PLAN INTO OUR LIFE:** There are truths and lessons we only can learn in the furnace of trouble. And remember in the fiery furnace of Daniel 3, only the things that kept them from walking properly were burned away! So affliction scrapes away what is not part of God's plans for our lives – people, possessions, positions, and securities... Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I have

been afflicted (6031 physical), That I may learn **YOUR STATUTES** (Following the Divine Plans to build Life the way God intends it to be).

- *Afflictions can remind us in a life long way of God's Hand, His plans for us. Some of our greatest moments we will always remember were forged in the furnaces of affliction.*

4. **TEACHES US THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL:** God's unchanging faithfulness is learned best in affliction. Afflictions remind us that everything the Lord does is good, right, and the best thing there could be for us. Psalm 119:75 I know, O Lord, that Your judgments (Building Life upon God's Unchanging Decisions) are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted (6031 physical) me.

- *Afflictions are very personal "me".*

5. **KEEPS US FOCUSED ON OUR TEACHER:** The onset of troubles marks the beginning of a personal tutorial with our Divine Teacher. Affliction is an opportunity to "delight" () in Him or for us to "perish () in our troubles. Psalm 119:92 Unless YOUR LAW (Receiving Divine Instruction from the Divine Teacher that is perfect). had been my delight; I would then have perished in my affliction (6040 emotional).

- *Affliction "perishes" us or squishes our lives under its weight.*

Lessons on Ending Well by Making the Right Choices Now!

Psalm 71:1-24

David had learned to flee to the Lord instead of living in confusion. Psalm 71:1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.

David had learned to cry to the Lord before giving up to troubles. Psalm 71:2 Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; Incline Your ear to me, and save me.

David had learned to resist fear by running into God's Refuge – thus trusting God's Word more than his fears. Psalm 71:3 Be my strong refuge, To which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, For You are my rock and my fortress.

David had learned to ask for God's help before he became bitter. Psalm 71:4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

David had learned to keep remembering the faithfulness of God. Psalm 71:5 For You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth.

David had learned to remember to praise God that He had a plan for his life. Psalm 71:6 By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You.

David had learned to let his life be a testimony for the Lord. Psalm 71:7 I have become as a wonder to many, But You are my strong refuge.

David had learned to praise God so much -- no time was left for complaints. Psalm 71:8 Let **my mouth be filled with Your praise** And with Your glory all the day.

David had learned he could trust God to the end of life. Psalm 71:9 Do not cast me off in **the time of old age**; Do not forsake me when **my strength fails**.

David had learned to take his fears to God in prayer ("do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer. In His arms He'll tend and shield thee – thou shalt find a solace there!) Psalm 71:10 For my enemies speak against me; And those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, 11 Saying, "God has forsaken him; Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him." 12 **O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!"** In a modern sense David trusted God as much as in 911!

David had learned to never give up – even when alone, neglected, sick, ignored, rejected, maligned, and forgotten by everyone in the world ----- EXCEPT GOD! Psalm 71:13 Let them be confounded and consumed Who are adversaries of my life; Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor Who seek my hurt. 14 But I will **hope continually**, And will **praise You yet more** and more.

David had learned to never stop finding ways to bring God into the conversation. Psalm 71:15 **My mouth shall tell of Your** righteousness And Your salvation all the day, For I do not know their limits. **(When is the last time you brought up the subject of the things of God – into a conversation?)**

David had learned to humbly depend on the Lord. Psalm 71:16 I will **go in the strength of the Lord God**; I will make mention of **Your righteousness, of Yours only**.

David had learned to have a lifetime commitment to the Lord! Psalm 71:17 O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works.

David had learned to serve God even when he was out of season, past his prime, and old and gray – by finding young people to invest his life into. Psalm 71:18 Now also **when I am old and gray headed**, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength **to this generation**, Your power to **everyone** who is to come. **(Just like Bill Eddy!)**

David had learned to never stop experiencing God daily. Psalm 71:19 Also Your righteousness, O God, is **very high**, You who have done **great things**; O God, who is like You? **(Just like Howard Smith)**

David had learned to see affliction as a blessing. Psalm 71:20 **You**, who **have shown me** great and severe **troubles**, Shall revive me again, And bring me up again from the depths of the earth. **(Just like Ezra, Job, Joni Erikson Tada, Phillip Yancey, and many sweet saints suffering this morning!)**

David had learned to let the Lord be in charge of his life. Psalm 71:21 **You shall increase my greatness, And comfort me** on every side.

David had learned to break from the crowd and stay musical in personal worship. Psalm 71:22 Also with **the lute** I will **praise You**— And Your faithfulness, O my God! **To You I will sing with the harp**, O Holy One of Israel.

David had learned to stay enthusiastic for the Lord. Psalm 71:23 My lips shall **greatly rejoice** when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed.

David had learned to let God invade all of his life. Psalm 71:24 My tongue also shall talk (hagah = meditate) of Your righteousness all the day long; For they are confounded, For they are brought to shame Who seek my hurt.