Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

What the Bible Says About Itself
Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 19; Psalm 119
Code: QA175

What the Bible Says About Itself

John's explanation of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 in his series *The Transforming Power of Scripture* is really helping me understand the importance of knowing God's Word. Are there other passages that spotlight directly on Scripture?

There certainly are--Psalms 19 and 119 come immediately to mind. John has preached a sermon on Psalm 19 (80-19), which we trust will benefit you, so let's focus here on Psalm 119, a psalm wholly dedicated to God's Word and its role in the believer's life.

When you carefully read through Psalm 119, the first thing likely to catch your eye will be a number of strange symbols interspersed throughout. Ever wonder what those are? Well, they're the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, arranged in order in twenty-two sections of eight lines each.

If you could look at the psalm in a Hebrew Bible, you would observe that each line in the twenty-two sections begins with the same Hebrew letter. The first section begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the second section with the second letter, and so on. That pattern continues through the psalm until all twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet have been used in order.

Psalm 119 is one of several psalms that follows an acrostic or alphabetical arrangement (cf. Psalms 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 145). The arrangement wasn't designed to outline the psalm's thought, but was crafted as a memory device to implant the psalm's lyrics in the mind.

As you read through the text, take notice of the recurring terms. Eight different words repeat throughout the psalm and refer to Scripture: law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, word, and ordinances. Nearly every verse in the psalm contains one or more of those terms, making Psalm 119 a thesaurus of terms for the Word of God.

Here is a sample of affirmations Psalm 119 makes about Scripture:

- God's Word reflects the character of God. Notice these attributes of God ascribed to Scripture:
  - 1. Righteousness (vv. 7, 62, 75, 106, 123, 138, 144, 160, 164, 172)
  - 2. Trustworthy (v. 42)
  - 3. True (vv. 43, 142, 151, 160)

- 4. Faithful (v. 86)
- 5. Unchangeable (v. 89)
- 6. Eternal (vv. 90,152)
- 7. Light (v. 105)
- 8. Pure (v. 140)

- The chief way you can obtain spiritual counsel is through the application of God's Word by God's Spirit to your heart (cf. vv. 98-100).
- God's Word provides illumination to walk without stumbling (v. 105).
- Like silver refined seven times (cf. Ps. 12:6), the Word is pure, inerrant in all it declares (v. 140).
- Scripture clearly reveals the way of salvation (v. 155).

When you read through Psalm 119, you will soon realize it is no dry, dusty treatise. In fact, it is entirely a psalm of prayer to God from a heart exercised by sin and enlightened by grace to love God and His Word. By following the example of the psalmist's prayer, you can learn to rightly respond to God's Word:

- The supreme prayer the psalmist breathed is a confession of his inadequacy and God's sufficiency (cf. vv. 18, 98, 99, 105, 130).
- The psalmist passionately desired to obey God's Word (cf. vv. 4, 8, 30-32, 44, 45, 51, 55, 57, 59-61, 63, 67, 68, 74, 83, 87, 101, 102, 106, 110, 112, 129, 141, 157, 167, 168).
- The psalmist asked for help to turn from vain activities and to desire things of greatest value, including God's Word (cf. vv. 14, 72, 127).

We trust you'll derive life-long benefit from this golden alphabet of praise for the Word of God.
But should sin seek to dull your appetite to read the Word, be sure to join your voice with the psalmist in the prayer he offered in the last stanza of Psalm 119:

Let my cry come before You, O LORD; give me understanding according to Your word. Let my supplication come before You; deliver me according to Your word. Let my lips utter praise, for You teach me Your statutes. Let my tongue sing of Your word, for all Your commandments are righteousness. Let Your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen Your precepts. I long for Your salvation, O LORD, and Your law is my delight. Let my soul live that it may praise You, and let Your ordinances help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments. (vv. 169-176)

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