

# Milk & Honey

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*Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ*

## A Psalm For Young Persons

(Psalm 119:9-12)

C. H. Spurgeon

Psalm 119 is called the “Alphabet of Divine Love” because it is divided into twenty-two sections, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The one theme is the Word of the Lord. This secret ode is a little Bible. In the midst of a London season, in the stir and turmoil of a political crisis, William Wilberforce writes in his diary: “Walked from Hyde Park Corner repeating the One Hundred Nineteenth Psalm in great comfort”.

The second part (verses 9 to 16) is assigned to the young person. It is meet that it should be so. Youth is the season of impression and improvement. Young people are the future prop of society, and the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, must begin in youth.

*How shall a young man make a clean way, a pure line of conduct, through this defiling world?* The very inquiry shows that his heart is not in a corrupt state. Desire is present; direction is required.

*By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word.* Young man, the Bible - must be your chart, and you must exercise great watchfulness that your way may be according to its directions. You must take heed to your daily life as well as study your Bible, and you must study your Bible that you may take heed to your daily life. With the greatest care a man will go astray if his map misleads him; but with the most accurate map he will still lose his road if he does not take heed to it. A captain may watch from his deck all night; but if he knows nothing of the coast, and has no pilot on board, he may be carefully hastening on to shipwreck. It is not enough to desire to be right; for ignorance may make us think that we are doing God service when we are provoking Him, and the fact of our ignorance will not reverse the character of our action, however much it may mitigate its criminality.

*With my whole heart have I sought Thee.* The surest mode of cleansing the way of our life is to seek after God Himself, and to endeavor to abide in fellowship with Him.

*O let me not wander from Thy commandments.* We are to be such wholehearted seekers that we have neither time nor will to be wanderers, and yet with all our whole-heartedness, we are to cultivate a jealous fear lest even then we should wander from the path of holiness. Two things may be very alike and yet altogether different. Saints are “strangers”, but they are not “wanderers”. They are passing through an enemy’s country, but their route is direct. They are seeking their Lord while they traverse this foreign land. Their way is hidden from men, but yet they have not lost their way.

*Thy Word have I hid in my heart.* He did not wear a text ON his heart as a charm, but he hid it IN his heart as a rule. “This saying, to hide, importeth that David studied not to be ambitious to set forth himself and to make glorious show before men; but that he had God for a witness of that secret desire which was within him” (John Calvin).

*That I might not sin against Thee.* Here was the object aimed at. As one has well said: Here is the best thing - “Thy Word”; hidden in the best place - “in my heart”; for the best of purposes - “that I might not sin against Thee”.

*Blessed art Thou, O Lord. Teach me Thy statutes.* No sooner is the Word in the heart than a desire arises to mark and learn it. When food is eaten, the next thing is to digest it; and when the Word is received into the soul, the first prayer is - “Lord, teach me its meaning”. Thou art so blessed that I am sure Thou wilt delight in blessing others, and this boon I crave of Thee that I may be instructed in Thy commands. Happy men usually rejoice to make others happy, and surely the happy God will willingly impart the holiness which is the fountain of happiness. Faith prompted this prayer and based it, not upon anything in the praying man, but solely upon the perfection of the God to Whom he made supplication. \*

# I Have Learned To Be Content

(From the Journals of David Brainerd)

*Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. (Phil. 4:11).*

By the gracious training of God, David Brainerd became a living example of the above verse. Born in 1718, he gave himself to be a missionary to the North American Indians. He took the good news of the Gospel of Christ to the Indians living in western Massachusetts and later to tribes living along the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers. His work required long rides on horseback. He suffered many privations and died in 1747 at the age of 29. His journals were not written for the purpose of publication, but they were published and have proved to be an inspiration to many through the intervening years. Let us look at just three excerpts from his journals to illustrate how well he learned to be content with whatever state God chose to place him.

1. **FOOD.** Written on the Lord's Day: I had no bread, nor could I get any. I am forced to go or send ten or fifteen miles for the bread I eat; and sometimes it is mouldy and sour before I eat it, if I get any considerable quantity. And then again I have none for some days together, for want of an opportunity to send for it, and cannot find my horse in the woods to go myself; and this was my case now; but through divine goodness I had some Indian meal, of which I made little cakes, and fried them. Yet I felt contented with my circumstances, and sweetly resigned to God. In prayer I enjoyed great freedom; and blessed God as much for my present circumstances, as if I had been a king; and thought that I found a disposition to be contented in my circumstances. Blessed be God.

2. **SHELTER.** An autumn day in October. We went on our way into the wilderness, and found the most difficult and dangerous travelling, by far, that ever any of us had seen. We had scarce anything else but lofty mountains, deep valleys, and hideous rocks, to make our way through. However, I felt some sweetness in divine things, part of the day, and had my mind intensely engaged in meditation on a divine subject. Near night my beast on which I rode, hung one of her legs in the rocks, and fell down under me; but through divine goodness, I was not hurt. However, she broke her leg; and being in such a hideous place, and near thirty miles from any house, I saw nothing that could be done to preserve her life and so was obliged to kill her, and to prosecute my journey on foot. This accident made me admire the divine goodness to me, that my bones were not broken, and the multitude of them filled with strong pain. Just at dark, we kindled a fire,

cut up a few bushes, and made a shelter over our heads, to save us from the frost, which was very hard that night; and committing ourselves to God by prayer, we lay down on the ground, and slept quietly. Thus I have frequently been exposed, and sometimes lain out the whole night; but God has hitherto preserved me; and blessed be His name. Such fatigues and hardships as these serve to wean me from the earth, and, I trust, will make heaven the sweeter.

3. **HEALTH.** In the hot days of summer (no air conditioning). I was taken exceedingly ill, and brought to the gates of death by the breaking of small ulcers in my lungs, as my physicians supposed. In this extremely weak state, I continued for several weeks, and was frequently reduced so low, as to be utterly speechless, and not able so much as to whisper a word. At various times this season my friends gathered round my bed to see me breathe my last, which they expected every moment, as I myself also did. The third day of my illness, and constantly afterwards, for four or five weeks together, I enjoyed as much serenity of mind, and clearness of thought, as perhaps I ever did in my life. I think that my mind never penetrated with so much ease and freedom into divine things, as at this time.

Learning contentment in whatever state that God put him, David Brainerd also learned to let go of his earthly roots, as expressed in this poem that he wrote in his journal on April 26, 1742.

Farewell, vain world, my soul can bid adieu;  
Your Savior taught me to abandon you.  
Your charms may gratify a sensual mind,  
But cannot please a soul for God designed.  
Forbear to entice, cease then my soul to call;  
'Tis fixed through grace - my God shall be my all.  
While He thus lets me Heavenly glories view,  
Your beauties fade; my heart's no room for you.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth, nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:19-21). \*

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# Lessons in John 13

## from the Lips of the Master

J. Boyd Nicholson

The Lord Jesus has been revealed as the elect and beloved Servant. "Behold my servant, whom I chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased." (Matt. 12:18, cf. Isa. 42:1) In John 13, the feet-washing is a living parable on the self-humbling of Christ as outlined in Philippians chapter 2. It teaches us something of what it meant for Him to take that form of a servant. Thus He gave an example for all acceptable service, John 13:15.

### **It Involved a Decision**

"He riseth," v.4. Here is a picture of that great decision in eternity, to serve on behalf of fallen man at infinite cost. By this the Lord teaches His disciples that, in all spiritual service, there must be a determination to do it, a sincerity in doing it and the actual doing of it. "As the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." (Eph. 6:6) James speaks of the "doers of the word and the 'not-doers'." The "doers" are characterized by their uncompromising walk, continuing in the perfect law of liberty, and are blessed in their doing. The "not-doers" are characterized by their unbridled talk, contemptuous of the perfect law of liberty, and are self-deceived in their heart. (Jam. 1:22-26)

### **It Involved a Renunciation**

"He laid aside His garments," v. 4. This answers to Philippians 2:7, "[He] made Himself of no reputation." The Lord did not empty Himself of anything. It was Himself that was emptied out, into the vessel of perfect sinless humanity, yet never ceasing to be God. He did not lay aside His divine nature, but took to himself a human nature, so that He might die. He did not become another person, but partook of "the seed of Abraham." Thus having two natures in one glorious Person, He was "God...manifest in the flesh."

### **It Involved Humiliation**

"He took a [servant's] towel," v.4. This answers to Philippians 2:7, "[He] took upon Him the form of a servant." The lord thus taught the disciples that true, acceptable, spiritual service will involve taking the place of submission. As sinful beings, we cannot imagine what it must have meant for the Lord to become a man. Human existence is all that we have ever known, but not He, the eternal Son of God. We began in humanity. He became a man.

### **It Involved a Voluntary Restriction**

"He girded Himself." The Lord was never restricted in Himself. He is God. He did however, restrict the expressions of His greatness on occasions. *Relative to time*, He came from the infinite extensions of eternal days to the realm of sunrise

and sunset. Yet ever He possessed His attribute of eternity. *Relative to space*, the One of whom the poet wrote, "Who art Thyself Thine own vast dwelling place," came to dwell on the insignificant speck of stellar dust. Yet He ever possessed the attribute of immensity. *Relative to power*, He came from the infinite expressions of absolute authority and might, to learn obedience by the things which He suffered and to be touched with the feelings of our weaknesses. Yet He ever possessed the attribute of omnipotence.

The disciples could learn by His example, that if their service was to be after the character of their Lord's, it will be very costly relative to their own persons., their own time, their own movements and their own energies. They will "not go out free." As to our time, it is irretrievable and "cannot be gathered up again." As to our movements, we are accountable, and we shall meet them again at the Bema. As to our energy, it is expendable and soon, so soon, our strength diminishes and the good that we would, we cannot.

### **It Involved a Special Provision**

"He poureth water into a basin." The water was there, but it had to be taken up, and it had to be poured out. We read of "the water of the word." At great cost to God and to many of His servants, even martyrs, we have the Word in our mother tongue. It is there, readily available, in Western lands at least. But it is not enough that it has been provided. It must be appropriated. By daily discipline, it must be personally taken up.

The Lord did not pour the water into the cup, that would have been useless. He did not pour the water on their heads, that would have been thoughtless, it was their feet that needed the water. He did not pour it on the floor, that would have been waste. The water was applied where it was needed. The disciples could learn by this, that the application of the Word must be relevant to the need, thoughtful, and profitable to the blessing of those ministered to.

### **It involved Completion**

Having washed the disciple's feet, He took a towel and wiped their feet dry. Their cleanliness and comfort were restored. He did it completely, for behind the task was His own character. He did it tenderly, for behind the towel was His own blessed hand. He did it perfectly, for behind the act was His own purpose, divine instruction. Paul followed His Lord in this, he "finished the course." Spiritual service must be done in the right way, for the right reasons and at the right time and we are not to leave our allotted task undone for someone else to fulfill.

The Lord has given the example that "Ye should do as I have done to you," v.15. May we all be followers of the Perfect Servant.

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**Let this mind be in you, which was  
also in Christ Jesus.**

**Philippians 2:5**

**September, 2001**

## **Beyond Immodest**

Steve Hulshizer

*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety.*  
(1 Tim. 2:9)

The hemlines rise as the necklines plunge. The dresses are so tight and short that sitting down is very difficult. In others long slits expose the legs well above the modest hemline. Short tops leave the naval exposed. Tight fitting tops with soft underclothing reveal every detail.

Who wears such clothing? While our first thought might be of those we see in the world everyday, I am thinking more of professing Christians I have seen in local assemblies and other Christian gatherings.

This type of dress goes beyond being immodest and enters the realm of being immoral. The Lord himself said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

The truth is, there are young, and even some older, sisters who dress in ways that not only draw attention to themselves (immodest, 1 Tim. 2:9-10), but who unknowingly, I trust, encourage young men, and some older ones, to sin. Their dress is so revealing and provocative that it is very difficult for the opposite sex not to take that second look.

Dress among professing Christians has gone from casual to sloppy and inappropriate, and now to immoral. It is time for older sisters to approach younger sisters and speak to them on this issue. In some cases, elders may need to address this problem..

It is not only women who are dressing immorally. Young men also need to take into consideration the temptation they place before the opposite sex. Many young men also dress inappropriately for assembly gatherings. This is not to say that a jacket and necktie are mandatory, but looking like one just came off the ballfield or basketball court is not appropriate for an assembly gathering of Christians. These same young men would never dress in this fashion for an employment interview, or to attend a wedding, but have no reverence for meeting with the Lord's people in the Lord's presence.

Perhaps of even greater concern is that Christian parents seem to say little or nothing to their children about their dress, and it would be reasonable to assume that they supply the clothing that is worn. Is it because they condone this type of dress, or is it that they are simply afraid of speaking about this subject?

Some in assembly leadership may be fearful of driving the youth away by addressing such issues. What a shame it would be if in an effort to keep our young people we ignore the obvious. (1 Cor. 13:6) We may keep them, but what will be the product of such thinking? Certainly not mature and godly young people. The same grace that saved us also teaches us "that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," and we need to teach it as well.

Given the atmosphere of the day in which the guilty often claims to be the victim, it may well be that those who do speak to the issue will be labeled as legalistic, or worse. Let us not allow such labels to deter us from speaking the truth in love concerning the immoral dress which is evident among professing Christians. Brethren, these things ought not to be. \*