

# Job 23:12 Commentary

## Job's Secret for Survival in the Storms of Life

### INTRODUCTION

**How Could Job Persevere and Hold Fast in the face of such extreme suffering and pain?** My contention is that the answer (at least potentially) lies in the fact that Job held fast ("stuck like glue") to the Word of Truth, the Word which was his life (Dt 32:47+, Pr 4:13+ - *How do you "take hold of instruction?"* Memorize it!), which securely "anchored" his soul and spirit when the winds of adversity began to blow fiercely and the waves of pain rolled over his innermost being. In Job 23:12 this afflicted man declared "***I have not departed from the command of His lips. I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.***" Note what he has just said in context - In Job 23:8-9 Job cannot perceive, see or behold God! Ponder that thought for a moment! Have you ever been there? I have and probably most of you reading this have also been there. It's like one wag said "When you don't feel close to God, guess who moved?" But let's keep reading, for the story does not stop with this sense of "Where is God?" Somehow Job is able to confidently declare "*But* (contrast with not being able to see Him) *He knows the way I take* (**How did Job know this? Answer = Job 23:12!**). *When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold*" (Job 23:10). How could he be so confident that the testing and refining would remove the dross and bring his heart and soul forth as "pure gold" (cf 1Pe 1:6-7+)? There can be only one answer -- Job **knew** and **believed** in the character of God, especially His [goodness](#) to His children (cp 2Ti 1:12+). And how did Job **know**? Because he had "*eaten*" and *held fast to* the living and active, eternal Word of Truth for soul nourishment (real "*soul food*"!), placing a greater value on the powerful [Word of Life](#) than he placed even on his daily intake of food necessary for physical nourishment! Many millennia later Job's Redeemer (Job 19:25) declared the same truth that "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word which proceeds from the mouth of God!" (Mt 4:4+, Lk 4:4+; cp 1Pe 2:2+, Heb 5:14+). Now you have some background to help your study Job's Secret for Survival in the Storms of Life.

**Job 23:12** I have not [departed](#) from the [command](#) of His [lips](#); I have [treasured](#) the [words](#) of His [mouth more than my necessary food](#) (literally - prescribed portion). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English of the Septuagint:** neither shall I transgress; but I have hidden His words (rhema) in my bosom.

**Amplified:** I have not gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have esteemed and treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**ASV:** I have not gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

**Barnes:** The commandment of His lips I have not neglected; More than every purpose of my own have I regarded the words of His mouth. (Albert Barnes)

**BBE:** I have never gone against the orders of his lips; the words of his mouth have been stored up in my heart.

**ESV:** I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.

**Keil & Delitzsch:** The command of His lips—I departed not from it; More than my own determination I kept the words of His mouth.

**KJV:** Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

**NET:** I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my allotted portion.

**NIV:** I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.

**NJB:** I have not neglected the commandment of his lips, in my heart I have cherished the words of his mouth.

**NKJV:** I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth

More than my necessary food (appointed portion).

**NLT:** I have not departed from his commands, but have treasured his words more than daily food.

**TLB:** I have not refused his commandments but have enjoyed them more than my daily food.

**Young's Literal:** The command of His lips, and I depart not. Above my allotted portion I have laid up The sayings of His mouth.

## I HAVE NOT DEPARTED FROM THE COMMAND OF HIS LIPS:

In his expositional comments on Job 23, **Spurgeon** writes that...

Job was a happy man to be able to say that. I hope that many of you could say the same. If you were tried with great bodily pain and depression of spirit, you could say, through divine grace, "I have not turned away from God." These are days when we want men of principle; men who can put their foot down, and keep it down, men who cannot be turned aside. They call this firmness, "bigotry." (Obstinate or blind attachment to a particular creed) It is, however, only another name for Christian manliness. If you dare to do right, and face a frowning world, you shall have God's commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant." ([Go to page 6 for beginning of exposition on Job 23](#))

**I have not departed** ([See Spurgeon's exposition of this phrase below](#)) - This is the fourth affirmation Job makes that he has obeyed God's Word (see Job 23:11-note). In New Testament language, **Job** was obedient to the command of James to...

**Prove** (present imperative) = command to make this your habitual practice, your lifestyle) yourselves **doers** (poietes - in classic Greek = "poets") of the word, and not merely **hearers** (akroates = one who sits passively listening to a speaker) who delude (paralogizomai in the present tense = they continually mislead, deceive, beguile) themselves. (Jas 1:22-note)

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEARING & OBEYING GOD'S WORD

Job **heard** God and he **obeyed** God. The result was that he did not just *know about* God but that he really **knew** God. He knew His character. He knew he could trust Him (see Ro 10:17-note for relationship between *hearing* the Word and *faith*).

Jesus taught on the relationship between **obeying** the truth and **knowing** the truth explaining that...

If any man is **willing** (speaks of a purposeful decision of one's will) to **do** His will, he **shall know** of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself. (John 7:17)

**Comment:** We don't really **know** the Bible unless we are **willing** to **obey** the Bible. We won't really **know God's will** unless we are willing to **do God's will**. Jesus is saying that if His hearers were willing to do God's will, they would be enabled (by His Spirit - this is implied for it is He Alone who can supernaturally illumine the supernatural Word, cp Jn 16:13) to arrive at the correct judgment about what Jesus was teaching. This same principle permeates all of Scripture - read, do, know is the immutable order which maximizes our spiritual growth in Christ likeness.

Am I truly **willing**? (is this my continual attitude?) Will I follow through ("to **do**")? If so, then I **shall know** (ginosko) or have an experiential knowledge of God's word and will.

**Merrill Tenney** adds that - "there must be a definite act of the human will to **do** God's will, a settled, determined purpose to fulfill it. Spiritual understanding is not produced solely by learning facts or procedures, but rather it depends on **obedience** to known truth. **Obedience** to God's known will develops discernment between falsehood and truth (Ed: Cp Heb 5:14-note)." (Bolding added)

**Jamieson** words it slightly different - "A principle of immense importance, showing, on the one hand, that *singleness of desire to please God is the grand inlet to light on all questions vitally affecting one's eternal interests*, and on the other, that the want of his, whether perceived or not, *is the chief cause of infidelity amidst the light of revealed religion*."

In the last part of Job 23:12 we can also see that Job's hunger for God's Word was related to his obedience to God's Word. It follows

that our **hunger** for the Word of God will be in direct proportion to our **obedience** to the Word of God.

In summary, because Job **obeyed** God's Word, he **knew** the God of the Word. And even though he could not see Him (Job 23:8, 9), he knew enough of God's character to know that although he was being sorely tried, God's purpose was not to destroy him but to remove the dross and bring him forth as pure gold (Job 23:10). Job had a Hebrews 11 type faith exhibiting "*the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*." (Heb 11:1).

**James** has an additional description of **Job** writing...

Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the **endurance** of **Job** and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. (Jas 5:11)

It is my personal belief that because Job treasured God's Word, he **knew** God's character and it grew not only his **trust** (faith) but also in his **endurance**. Job's example of **faith** and **patience** is what the writer of Hebrews desired for all his readers (and by way of application for all believers)...

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through **faith** and **patience** inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:11, 12)

**Oswald Chambers** says this of Job

We must get hold of the great souls, the men who have been hard hit -- hit and have gone to the basis of things and whose experiences have been preserved for us by God, that we may know where we stand. (**Ed**: Job is one of those men and faith and endurance deserve our **imitation**!)

**Not** - This word signifies negation, in this case Job's denial that he had disobeyed the Lord. The **Septuagint (LXX)** translation makes his denial even more emphatic for the Greek version translates the Hebrew word for **not** (lo) using two negatives (**ou me**). This could be paraphrased something like "**no, never have I departed**." Clearly, Job was not sinless (1Jn 1:8 2Chr 6:36 Ec 7:20 Jas 2:10) for only one Man fulfilled that strict rule (2Co 5:21-note He 7:26-note He 4:15-note), but he was zealous to follow the Lord and to not deviate from what he knew God had commanded (cp God's assessment of him in Job 1:1).

**The Disciple's Study Bible** notes that

To identify God's commandments is not enough. The transition of character they can bring begins when one **feeds** upon them and finds **sustenance** for one's **soul** from them. They must become our greatest treasure even in (**Ed**: I would say "*especially in*") dark days of suffering. ([Disciple's Study Bible](#))

**Matthew Henry** reminds us that...

Whatever difficulties we may meet with in the way of God's commandments, though they lead us through a wilderness, yet we must never think of going back (cp Job's "*I have not departed*"), but must press on towards the mark.

**The command of His lips** - This indicates that Job had direct communication from the Lord. Job had heard God's Word and he had obeyed God's Word.

Creationist **Henry Morris** who has authored an interesting commentary on Job agrees writing that...

Although it is now lost to us, God had given early man some kind of law code, long before Moses. Whatever this was, it was eventually superseded by the Mosaic laws and the rest of the Scriptures as we now have them (Genesis 26:5; Job 22:22).

Clearly Job's friends were also aware of God's communication, for in the preceding chapter **Eliphaz** had urged **Job**...

Please receive instruction from His mouth and establish His words in your heart. (Job 22:22).

**Departed** ([04185](#))(**mus/mush**) pictures the withdrawing of something (or someone) and thus pictures a failing to be present. To depart, leave, move away, vanish.

**NIDOTT**...

In the qal stem the verb means to **depart** when used of people or **to be moved** when applied to inanimate objects...

The verb can also mean to **cease doing something**. In a Jeremiah passage with obvious connections to

Psalms 1 (Holladay, 489–90), the verb is used when comparing the person who trusts in the Lord to a tree that **does not cease** to produce fruit (Jer 17:8). In the negative sense, Nineveh is called a city that **does not cease** from plunder, filling the earth with her victims (Nah 3:1).

The verb is also used in statements about the relationship between God and His people (**Ed**: See verses that use **mus** below - several uses are in the context of the promise of the New Covenant to Judah and Israel)... Job, too, contends that he has never **departed** from the command of God's lips (Job 23:12), and so is certain that he will be vindicated when tested (Job 23:10-note).

**Mus** is the word used by God in His famous exhortation to **Joshua** that he might prepare himself spiritually to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land...

This book of the law shall not **depart** (mus) from your mouth, but you shall meditate (mutter, continually recite His words to himself) on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (Joshua 1:8, cp the vivid picture portrayed by **mus** in Ex 33:11 where Joshua would not **depart** from the tent [where Jehovah met face to face with Moses]. **May we seek to do likewise, practicing the presence of the Lord all through our day, wherever our path might take us!**)

**Comment:** If **meditation** on God's Word was vital in order to assure that Joshua could successfully lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land, is the discipline of **meditation** (see also **meditate**) any less crucial for God's appointed leaders (pastors and elders) in the New Testament so that they might lead God's children into the abundant life in Christ (Jn 10:10b), in Whom is every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies (Eph 1:3-note) and in Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3-note)? Clearly this is a rhetorical question which expects, even demands, an affirmative answer! Lead as you are led by the living and active Word of the Living Lord, the Incarnate Word and His Spirit.

## **JOB - A DOER NOT JUST A HEARER**

Even though he did not know Joshua, Job in fact pictures a man who heeded God's instructions to Joshua (Joshua 1:8-note), by not **departing** from the eating of His trustworthy Word, and not **departing** from the Word he had "eaten". Let us strive to imitate Job's example that we too "will make our way prosperous" and "have success."

**Mus** - 19v in **NAS** - Ex 13:22; 33:11; Num 14:44; Josh 1:8; Judg 6:18; Job 23:12; Ps 55:11; Pr 17:13; Isa 22:25; 46:7; 54:10; 59:21; Jer 17:8; 31:36; Mic 2:3-4; Nah 3:1; Zech 3:9; Zech 14:4. **NAS translates** as - cease(1), depart(6), departed(1), departs(2), give way(1), left(1), move(2), remove(2), removed(2), removes(1), take away(1).

Exodus 13:22 He did not **take away** the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

**Comment:** The pillar was the visible symbol of God's presence to **Guide** them by day and to **Guard** them by night. (cp Ex 14:19-20).

Exodus 33:11 Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not **depart** from the tent.

**Comment:** Note that the tent here is not the tabernacle, for the tabernacle had not yet been constructed. This was the tent where God met with Moses.

Numbers 14:44 But they went up heedlessly (NET: "dared") to the ridge of the hill country; (NET "although") neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD (symbolic of the presence and power of Jehovah) nor Moses **left (mus)** the camp.

**Comment:** **Mus/mush** is used here in the context of the description of the Israelites who failed to heed Moses' warning not to go up to fight in the promised land after they had disbelieved God's promise to give it to them! This passage is a sad commentary on Israel but a strong warning for all of us to be careful not to seek our will while we leave the Lord is left in the camp so to speak! Beloved, unless the Lord goes with us, we go in vain (Jn 15:6, 6:63), and like the Israelites might even be in physical danger or in line for God's hand of discipline (Heb 12:5-6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

Moses' instruction to Israel in Dt 20:4 just as applicable to us today - "the LORD your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you." (See also Dt 1:30, Dt 3:22, Dt 11:25, Dt 32:30, Ex 14:14, Josh 10:42 - **Notice** Joshua did not just "let go and let God" but said "let's go and let God" - it is a mystery how this works but it works because God established the "ground-rules"! Josh 23:10, 2Ch 32:7, 8, Ps

Joshua 1:8-note "This book of the law shall not **depart** from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Judges 6:18 "Please do not **depart** from here, until I come back to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before You." And He said, "I will remain until you return."

Job 23:12 "I have not **departed** from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.

Psalms 55:11 Destruction is in her midst; Oppression and deceit do not **depart** from her streets.

Proverbs 17:13 He who returns evil for good, evil will not **depart** from his house.

Isaiah 22:25 "In that day," declares the LORD of hosts, "the peg driven in a firm place will **give way**; it will even break off and fall, and the load hanging on it will be cut off, for the LORD has spoken."

**Comment:** Isaiah warned that eventually even Eliakim the palace administrator and a godly man here personified as a peg would come to an end, which was in a sense a prophecy that eventually the southern kingdom of Judah would be taken away into captivity to Babylon.

Isaiah 46:7 "They lift it upon the shoulder and carry it; They set it in its place and it stands there. It does not **move** from its place. Though one may cry to it, it cannot answer; It cannot deliver him from his distress.

Isaiah 54:10 "For the mountains may be **removed** (the topography will actually be changed in the Millennium) and the hills may shake, but My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, and My covenant of peace will not be shaken (fall down, waver, be very insecure and undependable)," Says the LORD who has compassion on you.

**Comment:** God's lovingkindness is more sure than the very foundations of the mountains which will be altered in the Millennium! The covenant of peace (Ezek 34:25; Ezek 37:26 = refers to it as an everlasting covenant) refers to New Covenant (see New Covenant in the Old Testament), promise which God made to Judah and Israel in the OT and which will be completely fulfilled in the Millennium.

**TWOT adds:** Isaiah's use of the term is theologically significant. While the mountains will depart (Isa 54:10a), God's covenant of peace made with Abraham and David, and the new covenant of Jeremiah will not be removed (Isa 54:10b; Jer 31:36). It is permanent! If God's ordinances with the sun, moon, and stars depart, then his promise with Israel will do likewise (Jer 31:36). As of this writing, however, the sun, moon, and stars continue to shine and therefore his covenant promise to Israel continues. ([Harris, R L, Archer, G L & Waltke, B K Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Moody Press](#) or [Logos](#) or [Wordsearch](#))

Isaiah 59:21 "As for Me, this is My covenant with them (with Judah and Israel = Jer 31:31 32 33 34 = the New Covenant)," says the LORD: "My Spirit which is upon you (cp Ezek 36:26 27 also referring to the New Covenant. Joel 2:29 probably also refers to this event - which will be fulfilled in the Millennium), and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not **depart** from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the LORD, "from now and forever. (these promises will be fulfilled in the Millennium)"

Jeremiah 17:8 "For (see Jer 17:7 for the "condition" or prerequisite necessary for the following promises to be realized) he will be like a tree planted by the water, That extends its roots by a stream And will not fear when the heat comes; But its leaves will be green, And it will not be anxious in a year of drought Nor **cease** to yield fruit.

Jeremiah 31:36 "If this fixed order **departs** From before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever."

**Comment:** The fixed order refers to that of the sun, moon and stars (Jer 31:35). The context is God's promise of the New Covenant to Judah and Israel, a promise He will fulfill in the Millennium. Also, do not miss what this prophetic passage is clearly stating - Israel will continue as a nation. Prior to 1948 skeptics and non-literal interpreters of the Scripture would have referred to a passage such as this to undergird their interpretation that Israel in the OT has been replaced by the Church. And yet in our day we have seen a partial fulfillment of this promise with the rebirth of the nation of Israel in May, 1948. There is yet a greater fulfillment of this promise when Messiah returns to rule and reign from Jerusalem and Israel will be the leading nation of the world.

Micah 2:3 Therefore thus says the LORD, "Behold, I am planning against this family a calamity From which you cannot **remove**

your necks; And you will not walk haughtily, For it will be an evil time. 4 "On that day they will take up against you a taunt And utter a bitter lamentation and say, 'We are completely destroyed! He exchanges the portion of my people; How He **removes** it from me! To the apostate He apportioned our fields.'

Nahum 3:1 Woe to the bloody city (Nineveh), completely full of lies and pillage; Her prey never**departs**.

Zechariah 3:9 'For behold, the stone (a metaphor referring to the Messiah - cp stone in Ps 118:22,23-note; Is 8:13 14 15; 28:16; Da 2:35,45-note; Mt 21:42; Ep 2:19 20-note Ep 2:21 22-note; 1Pe 2:6-note 1Pe 2:7 8-note - click for Scripture chain on Stone/Rock) that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and I will **remove** the iniquity of that land in one day.

**Comment:** God will remove the iniquity from the land of Israel, in the day that the Messiah returns. Seven eyes is symbolic language, probably referring to His "all seeing" ability or omniscience. Zechariah speaks more of that future glorious day in Zech 12:10 11 12 13 14 13:1 (cp Ro 11:25 26 27-note).

Zechariah 14:4 In that day (When the Lord Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords at the end of the Great Tribulation and the inception of His Millennial kingdom - Re 19:11-note Re 19:16-note) His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will **move** (mus/mush) toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Though trials come, though fears assail,  
Through tests scarce understood,  
One truth shines clear--it cannot fail--  
My God is right and good. -  
-Hager

## BETTER or BITTER

**Wiersbe** agrees with the sustaining role of God's Word to Job in the midst of overwhelming trials commenting that...

God's Word was Job's guide as he walked the path of life, and he was careful not to go on any detours (Job 23:11, 12). But even more, God's Word was his nourishment that was more important to him than his daily meals. Like Jeremiah (Jer 15:16) and Jesus (Mt. 4:4; Jn 4:31 32 33 34), Job found in God's Word the only food that satisfied his inner person. (See Ps 1:2; Ps 119:103; 1Pe 2:1 2 3.)

Some people go into (God's) **furnace of affliction**, and it **burns** them; others go in, and the experience **purifies** them. **What makes the difference?**

### Their attitude toward the Word of God and the will of God.

If we are nourished by the **Word** and submit to His **will** (Ed: Which is most clearly revealed in His Word!), the furnace experience, painful as it may be, will refine us and make us **better**. But if we resist God's will (Ed: And His hand of loving discipline or "child rearing") and fail to feed on His truth, the furnace experience will only **burn** us and make us **bitter**. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament. Victor or Wordsearch](#)) (**Bolding and color added**)

## FORWARD, FORWARD! LET US NOT DEPART FROM THE COMMAND OF HIS LIPS

**Spurgeon** comments (extracted from his sermon [Fair Portrait of a Saint](#)) on Job's declaration that he had **not departed** or turned back from the **command of His lips** (which implies God spoke to Job, quite likely audibly - God speaks to us today through His written Word and His indwelling Spirit)...

Job declares that he had not slackened (slowed down, become negligent in) his pace, and much less had he turned back from God's commands. May none of you ever go back. This is the most cutting grief of a pastor, that certain persons come in among us, and even come to the front, who after a while turn back and walk no more with us. We know, as John says

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued



with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. (1Jn 2:19)

And yet what anguish it causes when we see apostates (One who has forsaken the profession to which he or she had before adhered) among us and know their doom.

**Take heed** (present imperative - command for continually being on the lookout) brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. (Hebrews 3:12-note)

Let Lot's wife be a warning. Season your souls with a fragment of salt from that pillar, and it may keep you from corruption.

Remember that you can turn back, not only from all the commandments, and so become an utter apostate, but there is such a thing as backing at single commandments. You know the precept to be right, but you cannot face it; you look at it, and look at it, and look at it, and then go back, back, back from it, refusing to obey.

Job had never done so.

**If it was God's command he went forward to perform it. It may be that it seems impossible to go forward in the path of duty, but if you have faith you are to go on whatever the difficulty may be.**

The black man was right who said,

"Massa, if God say, 'Sam, jump through the wall'; it is Sam's business to jump, and God's work to make me go through the wall."

Leap at it, dear friends, even if it seem to be a wall of granite. God will clear the road. By faith the Israelites went through the Red Sea as on dry land.

**It is ours to do what God bids us, as He bids us, when He bids us, and no hurt can come of it. Strength equal to our day shall be given, only let us cry "Forward!" and push on.**

Here just one other word. Let us take heed to ourselves that we do not go back, for going back is **dangerous**. We have no armor for our back, no promise of protection in retreat. Going back is ignoble and base. To have had a grand idea and then to turn back from it like a whipped cur, is disgraceful. Shame on the man who dares not be a Christian. Even sinners and ungodly men point at the man who put his hand to the plough and looked back, and was not worthy of the kingdom.

Indeed, it is fatal; for the Lord has said,

If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. (Hebrews 10:38-note)

Forward! Forward! though death and hell obstruct the way, for backward is defeat, destruction, despair.

**O God, grant us of Thy grace that when we come to the end of life we may say with joy, "I have not gone back from Thy commandment." Amen.**

The covenant promises persevering grace, and it shall be yours, only look ye well that ye trifle not with this grace.

**There is the picture which Job has sketched. Hang it up on the wall of your memory, and God help you to paint after this old master, whose skill is unrivalled.** (Read the entire sermon - [Fair Portrait of a Saint](#))

**W F A** on Job 23:11, 12 discusses a faithful life, first dealing with its course (See notes on Job 23:10) and then in the section below its inspiration, answering the question "How is it possible to be faithful, keeping continuously to God's way?" and gives a two part answer...

**1. By the guidance of revelation.** Job has been following God's commandments. We cannot follow God's way without the aid of light from heaven. Instinct and conscience are our natural guides; but instinct is blind, and conscience has been in some cases perverted. Therefore God has given us "the more sure word of prophecy." God's Word is a lamp to the feet of his people. This is its chief object. Difficulties are felt as to certain questions about the Bible, e.g. how to reconcile Genesis with geology, how to settle the relation of the Law to the prophets, how to harmonize the gospel narratives. But these questions do not touch the main purpose of the Bible, which is to be a guide to conduct. The righteousness of the ten commandments, the blessedness of the sermon on the mount, and above all, the glory of Christ, still shine from the sacred page as beacon-lights undimmed by the clouds of controversy that gather about quite secondary points.

**2. In the power of affection.** Job has set a supreme value on the words of God's mouth. Their truth and goodness and beauty won the heart of the author of the hundred and nineteenth psalm. We have still greater

attractions in the New Testament. Christ, the living Word of God, draws men to himself by his love and by his sacrifice of himself, so that when he is known and loved faithfulness becomes possible for his sake. Christians are called to walk, not only in the steps which God has marked out for them, but in those which Christ has trodden, which he has made sacred by his own presence. ([The pulpit commentary](#))

## I HAVE TREASURED THE WORDS OF HIS MOUTH:

- Job 22:22 Ps 19:9,10 119:11,103,127 Jer 15:16 Jn 4:32,34 1Pe 2:2

## LAYING UP PRICELESS TREASURE

Many commentators see Job's assertion in this passage as a direct response to [Eliphaz's](#) accusation/recommendation in the previous chapter...

Please receive instruction from His mouth and establish His words in your heart. (Job 22:22)

**Matthew Henry writes:** Eliphaz had told him to lay up God's words in his heart, Job 22:22. "I do," says he, "and always did, that I might not sin against him, and that, like the good householder, I might bring forth for the good of others."

**Matthew Poole** comments...

Hebrew = I have hid, or laid it up, as men do their best treasures, or what they most love and value. The phrase notes a high estimation of it, a hearty affection to it, and a diligent care to preserve it.

**Treasured** ([06845](#)) (**tsapan/sapan**; Lxx of Job 23:12 = **krupto** - hide, conceal) means primarily to hide, to keep secret, to conceal something often of great value with a definite purpose (for protection or for sinister purposes). The wicked hide themselves in order to ambush the innocent (Pr 1:11), but in the end it is their own lives for which the ambush is set (Pr 1:18).

Definitions of English verb **To Treasure** (Where applicable try "inserting" these different definitions in place of *treasured*)

**Jealously safeguard** something considered precious.

**Collect and store up** something of value for future use (**Ed**: I like that definition - Unless we memorize the Word, how can the Spirit enable us to utilize it in the future in our time of need?).

**Esteem** - set a high value on, regard highly and prize accordingly.

**Keep carefully.**

**Cherish** (hold dear, feel or show affection for, entertain something in one's mind deeply and resolutely - eg, he still cherishes that memory; Keep or cultivate with care and affection).

**Prize** highly as valuable, rare or costly!

**Tsapan/sapan** - 31v in **NAS** - Ex 2:2 3 (hid baby Moses); Josh 2:4 (Rahab hid Israeli spies); Job 10:13; 14:13; 15:20; 17:4; 20:26; 21:19; 23:12; 24:1; 34:13; Ps 10:8; 27:5; 31:19f; 56:6; 83:3; 119:11; Pr 1:11, 18; 2:1, 7; 7:1; 10:14; 13:22; 27:16; Song 7:13; Jer 16:17; Ezek 7:22; Hos 13:12. **NAS** = ambush(2), authority(1), conceal(1), concealed(2), hid(1), hidden(1), hide(2), keep them secretly(1), kept(1), lurk(1), restrain her restrains(1), saved(1), secret place(1), stealthily watch(1), store(1), stored(5), stores(1), stores away(1), treasure(2), treasured(3), treasures(1).

God calls His people **treasured ones** (Ps 83:3). He "**conceals** (David) in His tabernacle". He **stores up** His goodness for those who fear Him (Ps 31:19) and **keeps** them **secretly** in a shelter (Ps 31:20).

**TWOT** adds that **tsapan** can refer to...

Sins be stored up in the sense that they will receive their appropriate punishment on a day of judgment (Hos 13:12; cf. Job 15:20; 21:19).

Amidst trials and plots of men, God hides His people in his presence ("in the day of trouble" = Ps 27:5; 31:20). Israel's God displays his special concern for his people in giving them security and shelter. In fact, his people are referred to as the hidden ones (Ps 83:3 [H 4], RSV "[thy] protected ones").

The word also connotes storing or treasuring things on account of their value (Jer 36:29). Thereafter Jeremiah



refers to Judah's foe as Babylon. He goes on to prophesy that Babylon shall be defeated by a nation from the north (Jer 50:9; 51:48). Ezek too places Israel's foes who will fight the last climactic war as coming from the far places of the north (Ezek 38:6, 15). The north, then, becomes a harbinger of evil. In various mythologies it is the seat of demons. ([Harris, R L, Archer, G L & Waltke, B K Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Moody Press](#))

See below for some related uses of **tsapan/sapan**...

**The best thing  
In the best place  
For the best of purposes.**

Solomon uses **tsapan/sapan** in Proverbs to exhort the reader...

Proverbs 2:1 My son, if you will receive my words and (**Do what?**) **treasure** (**With what?**) my commandments (**Where?**) within you,

**Charles Bridges comments:** *Treasure my commandments within you.* Carry them about with thee as thy choicest treasure for greater security (Col 3:16, with Mt 13:44); as thy furniture always at hand for present use. (Pr 4:20, 21; 7:3. Job 22:22 23:12) Let the heart be the hiding-place for the treasure. (Lk, 2:19, 51 Ps 119:11) Satan can never snatch it thence. (**Below are related uses of tsapan/sapan**)

Pr 2:7 He **stores** up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity,

Pr 7:1 My son, keep my words And **treasure** my commandments within you.

Pr 10:14 Wise men **store up** knowledge, But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.

**Pulpit Commentary** (Pr 2:1): The original (טָפַן, tsaphan) is here used in a different sense to that in which it occurs in Pr 1:11 18. It here refers, as in Pr 7:1; 10:14; 13:22, to the storing or laying up, as of treasure, in some secret repository, and means "to lay up." The Divine commands of the teacher are to be hidden in safe custody in the **memory**, in the **understanding**, in the **conscience**, and in the **heart** (cf. Pr 4:21; 7:1). The psalmist expresses the same idea in Ps 119:11,

**Bruce Waltke comments** (Pr 2:1): store up (or treasure), which means, with the accusative of thing, to hide or conceal for a definite purpose (cf. Ps 119:11). That notion entails that one treasures that which he stores (see Pr 2:4; 10:14; Job 15:20; 21:19; Hos 13:12). The metaphor signifies to **memorize with religious affection** Solomon's "sound bites" **in order to have them ready when the occasion demands them** (cf. Pr 5:2; 7:1; 22:18; cf. Job 23:12; Ps 119:11). The rabbis said,

"One who repeats his lessons a hundred times is not like one who repeats it a hundred and one times"!

**With you** means that the commands are to accompany the son wherever he goes (cf. Pr 6:22) (Waltke, B. K. The Book of Proverbs. Chapters 1-15. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co)

The Psalmist utilizes **tsapan/sapan** writing...

(**What?**) Thy Word have I **hid** (**treasured**; Lxx = krupto - hide, conceal) (**Where?**) in mine heart, (**Why?**) that I might not sin (**Who?**) against thee. (Ps 119:11)

**Spurgeon Comments:** As one has well said here is the **best thing**, "thy word;" hidden in the **best place**, "my heart" for the **best of purposes**, "that I might not sin against thee."

This was done by the Psalmist with personal care, as a man carefully hides away his money when he fears thieves, -- in this case the thief dreaded was sin. Sinning "against God" is the believer's view of moral evil; other men care only when they offend against men. God's word is the best preventive against offending God, for it tells us His mind and will, and tends to bring our spirit into conformity with the divine Spirit. No cure for sin in the life is equal to the word in the seat of life, which is the heart. There is no hiding from sin unless we hide the truth in our souls.

A very pleasant variety of meaning is obtained by laying stress upon the words "thy" and "thee." He speaks to God, he loves the word because it is God's word, and he hates sin because it is sin against God himself. If he vexed others, he minded not so long as he did not offend his God. If we would not cause God displeasure we

must treasure up his own word.

The personal way in which the man of God did this is also noteworthy: "With my whole heart have I sought thee." Whatever others might choose to do he had already made his choice and placed the Word in his innermost soul as his dearest delight, and however others might transgress, his aim was after holiness: "That I might not sin against thee." This was not what he purposed to do, but what he had already done: many are great at promising, but the Psalmist had been true in performing: hence he hoped to see a sure result. When the word is hidden in the heart the life shall be hidden from sin.

**Spurgeon** - The best thing in the best place: —

#### **I. THE WORD OF GOD IS THE BEST THING.**

1. Because it is Divine.
2. It is good throughout.
3. It is the root of all good.
4. It is most prized at last.

#### **II. PUT IT IN THE BEST PLACE.**

It is of no good to any of us until it is there, — that is, in the heart.

**III. Here is THE BEST PURPOSE.** "That I might not sin against Thee." Does some one fancy that there could be a higher reason, a nobler purpose, than that? If you will think it over you will come to the conclusion that the Christian has no nobler ambition than to live without sin. "That I might not sin against Thee!" — there is no higher ambition than to live on earth the life of heaven. But, how does hiding God's Word in the heart promote holiness, how does it prevent sin?

1. It discovers sin. If you know God's Word well, you are on the high road to the easy discovery of God's will, for it is the revelation of the Divine will. By these testimonies you will know what God approves and delights in. It will be equally plain what He abhors and detests. These are the balances of the sanctuary.
2. It announces sin. It tells you where the evil is, and when you may expect it. It is a sort of tocsin that warns you of impending danger; an alarum timed to startle you just when the danger is close, and there is yet time to escape.
3. It points out the way of escape, it reveals the secret door in the wall, when your only safety is in flight. It is the chart on which is marked every shoal, and every quicksand, and every rock; and the safe channels, too.
4. It arms us against the danger. If kept in the heart, it keeps the heart.
5. It strengthens and nerves the spirit.
6. It reveals to us the path of duty. (Spurgeon.)

**Alexander Maclaren comments** (Ps 119:11): THE DEEP, INWARD SECRET OF ALL NOBLE, AND ESPECIALLY OF ALL DEEP, REAL, CHRISTIAN LIFE. "Thy Word have I hid in my heart." This means, first, familiarity with your Bible. Do not let any notion that God speaks "at sundry times and in divers manners," not only in Scripture, but otherwise, in providences, and in the world, and in our own hearts, cause us to neglect, as this generation does neglect, the systematic, diligent, daily perusal of Holy Scripture. You cannot hide the Word of God in your heart if you neglect, as so many of us do, the most articulate utterance of that Word in that Book, which, whatever may be the theories about the way it came into being, is the Word of the living God. Then there is another way by which we hide the Word in our hearts. It is, to cultivate the habit of referring everything to God's will. There must also be loving submission to what we know to be God's will. Put the will of God into your heart, and it will be like a bit of camphor wrapped up in some fur garment; it will keep all the moths off.

**Illustration - Word in the heart a defence:** — The early settlers in America had to keep their guns within reach while about their work on the farm, for the Indians might come upon them unawares. Our foe, the devil, is quite as likely to take us when off guard. We need to have our weapon at all times within reach. It is not probable that our Saviour had the Scriptures in His hands when Satan came to Him in the wilderness, but He had laid up the truth in His heart so that no surprise was possible.

**Anonymous** (Ps 119:11) - The Word must be in the heart as power and life; controlling the thoughts — the motives — the principles. In the heart. Hid in the heart. Laid up there; made secure there against the robbery of sin, Satan, skepticism, etc. The Word of God, in its doctrines, precepts, promises, threatenings, examples, is a power in man which no other word can be. It teaches; it restrains; it warns; it guides; it saves. Things which we value; which are essential for certain ends, we preserve in the most secure places; as deeds, jewels, wills, etc. So a good man hides the Word of God in his heart; so that in times of danger it is safe. A priest once took a Bible from a boy, and burnt it. The boy said to him, "You cannot burn the Word which I have in my heart." It was the Word of God hid in the heart that made the apostles so courageous in work and sufferings; that made martyrs so true and faithful; that now makes Christians so unyielding to the world's jeers, persecution, and atheism. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but God's Word, hid in the heart, endures for ever. (Anon.)

**John Stephen comments** (Ps 119:11): Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. There laid up in the heart the word has effect. When young men only read the letter of the Book, the word of promise and instruction is deprived of much of its power. Neither will the laying of it up in the mere memory avail. The word must be known and prized, and laid up in the heart; it must occupy the **affection** as well as the **understanding**; the whole mind requires to be impregnated with the word of God. Revealed things require to be seen. Then the word of God in the heart -- the threatenings, the promises, the excellencies of God's word -- and God himself realized, the young man would be inwardly fortified; the understanding enlightened, conscience quickened -- he would not sin against his God. John Stephen.

**Dean Boys** (Ps 119:11) - Thy word have I hid in mine heart. It is fit that the word, being "more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold," a peerless pearl, should not be laid up in the porter's lodge only -- the outward ear; but even in the cabinet of the mind. Dean Boys, quoted by James Ford.

**William Cowper** (Ps 119:11) - Thy word have I hid in mine heart. There is great difference between Christians and worldlings. The worldling hath his treasures in jewels without him; the Christian hath them within. Neither indeed is there any receptacle wherein to receive and keep the word of consolation but the heart only. If thou have it in thy mouth only, it shall be taken from thee; if thou have it in thy book only, Thou shalt miss it when thou hast most to do with it; but if thou lay it up in thy heart, as Mary did the words of the angel, no enemy shall ever be able to take it from thee, and thou shalt find it's comfortable treasure in time of thy need. William Cowper.

**Thomas Watson** comments on **treasuring the Word...**

O, prize the word written; prizing is the way to profiting. If Caesar so valued his Commentaries, that for preserving them he lost his purple robe, how should we estimate the sacred oracles of God? "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than any necessary food" (Job 23:12KJV) King Edward the Sixth, on the day of his coronation, had presented before him three swords, signifying that he was monarch of three kingdoms. The king said, there was one sword wanting; being asked what that was, he answered, "The Holy Bible, which is the sword of the Spirit, and is to be preferred before these ensigns of royalty." Robert King of Sicily did so prize God's word, that, speaking to his friend Petrarcha, he said, "I protest, the Scriptures are dearer to me than my kingdom; and if I must be deprived of one of them, I had rather lose my diadem than the Scriptures."—Thomas Watson, in "The Morning Exercises."

**Matthew Henry...**

I have laid it up (the word), as those that lay up provision for a siege, or as Joseph laid up corn before the famine... The word of God is to our souls what our necessary food is to our bodies; it sustains the spiritual life and strengthens us for the actions of life; it is that which we cannot subsist without, and which nothing else can make up the want of: and we ought therefore so to esteem it, to take pains for it, hunger after it, feed upon it with delight, and nourish our souls with it; and this will be our rejoicing in the day of evil, as it was Job's here.

## WORDS FROM THE ALMIGHTY GOD

**Words** (**amar**) refers most often to direct conversation (Ge 1:3, 3:1, 10, etc, Balaam's donkey Nu 22:28).

**His Words** - This most likely does not refer to the Law given to Moses at Mt Sinai (which had probably not been given) but more likely refers to any Word received from God (cp Jer 9:20).

God's Word is compared (see **metaphor**) to **bread** (Mt 4:4 Dt 8:3, cp Mt 6:11-note), **meat** (He 5:14KJV-note Jn 4:34KJV), **food** (He 5:14-note, Jn 4:34 cp Ezek 2:8 Jer 15:16 Josh 1:8-note), **pure milk** (1Pe 2:2-note), **honey** (Ps 19:10-note Ps 119:103-note Ezek 3:3 Rev 10:10-note), all of which seem to present us a clear "**message**" from the Lord that His Word must not only be **tasted** but **digested** and **assimilated** (absorbed and incorporated) into our "spiritual being (inner man)."

#### Spurgeon notes

that what God had spoken to him he treasured up. He says in the Hebrew that he had hid God's word more than ever he had hidden his necessary food. They had to hide grain away in those days to guard it from wandering Arabs. Job had been more careful to store up God's word than to store up his wheat and his barley; more anxious to preserve the memory of what God had spoken than to garner his harvests. Do you treasure up what God has spoken?" ([Quoted by Dave Guzik - Job 23 – Job's Desire to Appear Before God](#))

**John Wesley** expressed a similar heart hunger as did Job for God's Word...

I have thought I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God and returning to God; just hovering over the great gulf, till a few moments hence I am no more seen. I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven—how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way: for this very end he came from heaven.

**He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the Book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri* [a man of one book].** (John Wesley "Preface to Sermons on Several Occasions, 1746)

## A PLACE FOR THE WORD

In **Spurgeon's** notes on John 8:37 he addresses what place the Word of God should have in our hearts...

The Word comes from Jesus, the appointed Messenger of God; it is true, weighty, saving; and, therefore, it must have a place among those who hear it.

#### It ought to obtain and retain—

1. **An inside place:** in the thoughts, the memory, the conscience, the affections. "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart" (Ps. 119:11. See also Jer 15:16; Col 3:16).
2. **A place of honor:** it should receive attention, reverence, faith, obedience (Jn 8:47; Lk 6:46; Mt 7:24 25).
3. **A place of trust.** We ought in all things to rely upon the sure Word of promise, since God will neither lie, nor err, nor change (Is 7:9; 1Sa 15:29; Titus 1:2).
4. **A place of rule.** The Word of Jesus is the law of a Christian.
5. **A place of love.** It should be prized above our daily food, and defended with our lives (Job. 23:12; Jude 1:3).

From his [Sermon](#) - "**God's Word is never truly known till it is loved**" "I hate vain thoughts ("double-minded" NAS), but Your Law do I love," (Ps 119:113KJV) said David. He esteemed it more than gold, yes, than much fine gold. In religion, to love is to know—I wish it were always true that to know is to love. When we love the Word and it saturates our whole being so that we cannot relinquish it, but take an intense delight in it, and have a fervent affection for every part of it—then it is that we put the Word of God into the place it ought to occupy— not in the attic of the brain, but in the parlor of the heart, and there let it take up its permanent abode!"

6. **A permanent place.** It must so transform us as to abide in us. ([Place for the Word - Sermon Notes](#)) (Read his corresponding **sermon** on this vital topic - [Place for the Word](#))

O Book! Infinite sweetness! Let my heart  
Suck every letter, and a honey gain,  
Precious for any grief in any part;  
To clear the breast, to mollify all pain.  
— George Herbert

## THE EXAMPLE OF

## WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

A brief entry from the life of William Wilberforce presents quite a convicting example of a man who esteemed God's Word more than his necessary food.

In 1877 **William Alexander** records in his treatise "The Witness of the Psalms"...

Incident. In the midst of a London season; in the stir and turmoil of a political crisis, 1819; **William Wilberforce** ([biography](#)) writes in his Diary --

**Walked from Hyde Park Corner repeating the 119th Psalm in great comfort**

What was the source of the strength and resolve of William Wilberforce in the face of tremendous opposition to his efforts to see slavery abolished in England? Although, the answer is undoubtedly more complex, there is little question that the fact that Wilberforce had **treasured the words of His mouth** in his heart (see Memorizing His Word) and was able to **meditate** (see also Biblical meditation) thereon, provided the nourishment of his soul which enabled him to stand fast. He had eaten God's Word and girded himself about with His Word of Truth (Ep 6:10 11 12 13 14-see **notes** Ep 6:10; 11; 12; 13; 14), and God blessed his efforts mightily (Ps 1:1 2 3-see **notes** Ps1:1; 1:2; 1:3). On his deathbed in 1833 Wilberforce received word that the British Parliament had forever abolished the horrendous practice of slave trading! One wonders how **Wilberforce** would have been enabled to persevere (see Jas 5:11 "**endurance** of Job") had he not partaken of the firm foundation of God's Holy Word! May his tribe increase (He 6:11, 12-note)!

**Aldous Huxley** (who I don't think was a believer) made a statement that relates to treasuring (hiding) God's Word (especially Memorizing it) more than one's necessary food declaring that...

Each man's memory is his private literature. (**Interesting thought!**)

## THE ONE THING NEEDFUL

**Luke** records the NT picture of Mary who was treasuring the **Words of Jesus' Mouth** more than her necessary food (or the preparation thereof)...

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening (imperfect tense = pictures Jesus saying a Word and Mary grabbing it, eating it like a baby bird, doing this over and over) to His word. But Martha was distracted (perispao = drawn in two different directions at the same time) with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried (merimnao = from merizo = divide ~ divided mind or heart) and bothered (turbazo = make a noise or uproar ~ pictures a disturbance of one's mind) about so many things; but **only one thing is necessary (needful)**, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38-42)

**Wiersbe Comments:** Would you rather have your Bible than food?... Mary chose the Word, but her sister Martha got involved in making a meal (Lk 10:38-42). Mary got the blessing while Martha lost the victory... God's Word is the heavenly food that nourishes our spiritual life, and we must feed on it daily... Instead of feeding on the things of the world that bring death, let's cultivate an appetite for the holy Word of God.

**Spurgeon** (Sermon on Job 23:10-12)

**II. Secondly, let us take a peep behind the wall to see how Job came by this character.** Here we note Job's Holy Sustenance,

I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

First, then, God spoke to Job. Did God ever speak to you? I do not suppose Job had a single page of inspired writing. Probably he had not -even seen the first books of Moses; he may have done so, but probably he had not. God spoke to him.

**Did he ever speak to you?** No man will ever serve God aright unless God has spoken to him. You have the Bible, and God speaks in that book and through it; but mind you do not rest in the printed letter without discerning its spirit. You must try to hear God's voice in the printed letter. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son"; **but oh, pray that this divine Son may-speak by the Holy Ghost right into your heart. Anything which keeps you from personal contact with Jesus robs you of the best blessing.**

... you can make an idol of your Bible by using the mere words as a substitute for God's voice to you. The book is to help you to remember God, but if you stick in the mere letter, and get not to God at all, you misuse the sacred word. When the Spirit of God speaks a text right into the soul, when God Himself takes the promise or the precept -and sends it with living energy into the heart, **this is that which makes a man have a reverence for the word: he feels its awful majesty, its divine supremacy, and while he trembles at it he rejoices, and goes forward to obey because God has spoken to him.**

Dear friends, when God speaks be sure that you have open ears to hear, for oftentimes he speaks and men regard Him not. In a vision of the night when deep sleep falls upon men God has spoken to His prophets, but now He speaks by His word, applying it to the heart with power by His Spirit. If God speaks but little to us it is because we are dull of hearing. Renewed hearts are never long without a whisper from the Lord. He is not a dumb God nor is He so far away that we cannot hear Him: they that keep His ways and hold His steps, as Job did, shall hear many of His words to their soul's delight and profit.

### **God's having spoken to Job**

**was the secret of his consistently holy life.**

**Then note, that what God had spoken to him he treasured up** He says in the Hebrew that he had hid God's word more than ever he had hidden his necessary food.

**They had to hide grain away in those days to guard it from wandering Arabs.** Job had been more careful to store up God's word than to store up his wheat and his barley; more anxious to preserve the memory of what God had spoken than to garner his harvests.

**Do you treasure up what God has spoken? Do you study the Word? Do you read it? Oh, how little do we search it compared with what we ought to do. Do you meditate on it? Do you suck out its secret sweets? Do you store up its essence as bees gather the life-blood of flowers, and hoard up their honey for winter food?**

Bible study is the meat that makes a Christian; this is the strong meat on which holy men are nourished; this is that which makes the bone and sinew of men who keep God's way in defiance of every adversary. God spake to Job, and Job treasured up His words.

**Let God's Word fill your memory,**

**Rule your heart, and guide your feet.**

**Adam Clarke...**

**I have esteemed the words of his mouth** -- Mr. Good has given a better version of the original: In my bosom have I stored up the words of his mouth. The Asiatics carry every thing precious or valuable in their bosom, their handkerchiefs, jewels, purses, etc. Job, therefore, intimates that the words of God's mouth were to him a most precious treasure. ([Job 23 Commentary](#))

The **word of God** reveals the **will of God** and Spurgeon aptly said of Job that...

God's will had taken the helm of the vessel, and the ship was steered in God's course according to the divine compass of infallible justice and the unerring chart of the divine will.

### **HOW DOES ONE TREASURE THE WORD?**

Here is one of the most poignant and convicting illustrations of treasuring the Word I have ever read...

The first requirement for keeping that **TREASURE** is to recognize that it is a **TREASURE**. A beautiful and touching story is told of a young French girl who had been born blind. After she learned to read by touch, a friend gave her a Braille copy of Mark's gospel. She read it so much that her fingers became calloused and insensitive. In an effort to regain her feeling, she cut the skin from the ends of her fingers. Tragically, however, her calluses were replaced by permanent and even more insensitive scars. She sobbingly gave the book a goodbye kiss, saying,

**"FAREWELL, FAREWELL, SWEET WORD OF MY HEAVENLY FATHER."**

In doing so, she discovered that her lips were even more sensitive than her fingers had been, and she spent the rest of her life reading her great treasure with her lips. Would that every Christian had such an appetite for the Word of God!



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**The Book To Treasure** - READ: Psalm 19:7-11 - I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. --Job 23:12

Joseph Brodsky won the Nobel Prize for Literature and was a US Poet Laureate. He proposed that books of American poetry be placed next to Gideon Bibles in motel rooms. "Poetry," he reasoned, "is perhaps the only insurance we've got against the vulgarity of the human heart." Before Brodsky's death in 1996, many books had already been distributed to hotels and hospitals.

Those of us who love poetry find in it pleasure, wisdom, and inspiration. But even the best literature cannot be compared to the value of the words of the Bible.

Imagine a despairing soul on the verge of suicide picking up a book of poetry and thumbing through its pages. It's highly unlikely that even the noble thoughts of Henry W. Longfellow or John Greenleaf Whittier, to say nothing of a modern poet like T. S. Eliot, would inspire him to fall on his knees and cry out to God for mercy and grace. Yet the Gideons' files are full of testimonies from individuals who, alone in their hotel rooms, have opened a Bible and through its message have been born again to newness of life.

Poetry has its honored place in our culture. But human words, however creatively woven together, can never take the place of God's Word. — Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A well-turned phrase and words that rhyme  
Can give us inspiration,  
Yet nothing but the Word of God  
Can bring us His salvation.  
--Sper

**Many books can inform.  
Only the Bible can transform.**

><>><>><>

**Are You Starving? READ: Psalm 119:33-40 ([See also Spurgeon's Comments](#))**

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. --Matthew 4:4

Hold everything! Wait a minute! Have you read the Scripture for today? It's only eight short verses, and it will take you only 45 seconds.

No, don't lay this booklet down and mumble to me, "I'm in a hurry and you're delaying me." I see you're eating breakfast this morning even though you're late. You take time to feed your body, but you were going to starve your soul. Take 45 seconds and read Psalm 119:33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40-[Spurgeon's Comments](#). If you don't read the rest of this devotional, that's okay--as long as you read the Bible.

These articles in Our Daily Bread are not designed to be a substitute for the Bible; they are meant to stimulate your desire to read more of the Bible. If reading this booklet has caused you to neglect the Word of God, please throw this booklet in the wastebasket!

Job said, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). Jesus taught, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4).

Yes, you may have had a rough day yesterday and you're way behind. But why should you be surprised that it was such a bad day if you started it without God's Word? Don't make the same mistake today. Take time to read. --M. R. De Haan, M.D. (founder of RBC Ministries) ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Read Psalm 119:33-40 and make its words your prayer:**

Teach me (Ps 119:33). Give me (Ps 119:34).  
Make me (Ps 119:35). Incline me (Ps 119:36). Turn me (Ps 119:37).  
Establish me (Ps 119:38). Spare me (Ps 119:39). Revive me (Ps 119:40).

**If you're too busy to read the Bible,  
you're too busy!**

><>><>><>

**GOLD RUSH - READ: Job 28:12-28** Where can wisdom be found? --Job 28:12

In the late 1970s, thousands of men and women rushed to the American West. In the tradition of the diehard prospectors of 1849, they dredged river bottoms and reopened gold fields long since abandoned. The activity, however, was not sparked by new finds. The same old metal had been there all the time. But because the value of gold had skyrocketed, the dust and flecks were now worth mining.

Suppose you knew that 100 pounds of pure gold could be found somewhere in the walls of your house? What you wouldn't do to find it!

Now let's change the stakes. What would we do if we knew that a large amount of wisdom was in our house? Well, it is! God tells us that nothing compares in value with the spiritual treasures contained in the Bible--not even gold at the highest prices (Job 28:12-17).

We would probably search everywhere in our house to find 100 pounds of gold. Yet, do we seek with as great a diligence the mind and will of God? As His followers, we should long to understand the fear of the Lord and to develop a hatred of evil--which the Bible says is true wisdom (v.28). And its value has never been higher. We need a new rush--not for gold, but for God! — Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

More valuable than diamonds rare  
Is priceless wisdom from above;  
With purest gold it can't compare  
Because it's filled with truth and love.  
--DJD

**Wisdom is understanding  
what's really important.**

## **MORE THAN MY NECESSARY FOOD:**

### **REAL SOUL FOOD**

**Necessary food** - Food is necessary for the health of our body, but God's Word is necessary for the health of our soul. That being said, Job places higher value on the latter than he does on the former.

The **NET Bible** has a note on this last phrase writing that...

The form in the Massoretic Text (מִתְּחִילָּה, mekhuqqi) means "more than my portion" or "more than my law." An expanded meaning results in "more than my necessary food" (see Ps 119:11; cf. KJV, NASB, ESV).

**Matthew Poole** comments that this phrase can be rendered...

My necessary food, or my appointed food, or my daily portion, i.e. that food or provision which is necessary for the support of my life, as this word is used, Ge 47:22; Pr 30:8; 31:15, which is more prized and desired than all the riches in the world.

The value that Job places on the Word of God parallels the instruction of Jesus that...

MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD. (Mt 4:4 from Dt 8:3)

**Comment:** It is interesting that Jesus used **rhema** which refers to the spoken word, which was most likely the way Job heard from God, for most scholars feel that antedated Moses' writing down of God's Word.

**Warren Wiersbe** rightly notes that...

When people are sick, their appetites change--in fact, they often lose their appetites completely. Likewise, sin

in our lives robs our spiritual appetite, and we lose our desire for the Word. May we always have an appetite for the sweetness of the Word of God, even when we have to read things that convict us. That first bite of Scripture may taste sour sometimes, but it will turn sweet. It's important to feed your soul a proper diet. Do you feed and nourish on God's Word? The Bible is sweet to those who love it. Learn it and live it. (Prayer, Praise and Promises)

**John MacArthur** comments that...

In view of postmodern culture's relentless output of informational junk food through radio, television, films, the Internet, computer games, books, periodicals, and even so-called Christian pulpits—all of which causes spiritual malnourishment and dulls appetites for genuine spiritual food—believers must commit to regular nourishment from God's Word.

**Glen Spencer** adds that...

The Word of God is food for our spiritual lives. It is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. The physical man lives by bread, but the spiritual man lives by every word that proceeds from our heavenly Father. No wonder Job said, I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. (Job 23:12) Think about the trials that Job was going through! What a lesson! God's Word was more precious to him during his trials than anything else he could imagine. The Bible is the spiritual food by which we grow in grace (2Pe 3:18). Is your spiritual growth stunted? Are you hungry for a good spiritual meal? Then pull up to God's table and let Him feed you with the pure Word of God. ([Expository Pulpit Series - 1 Peter](#))

**H A Ironside** on our "**spiritual diet**"...

Our food has much to do with making us what we are. The same is true of us morally. We become like that on which we feed; and we feed on what our hearts crave. The man of understanding values knowledge and devotes himself to its pursuit. The fool does not care for that which would build true character and draw him away from his evil ways. Instead he feeds on folly and vanity, becoming more empty and foolish than before. Let the young Christian ponder this well. Have you learned to know Christ? Then leave behind forever the carnal pleasures of the world. Do not attempt to feed the new life on the world's trashy literature and its sinful pleasures. If you do, there will be no real growth, and a moral and spiritual breakdown is sure to follow. But if you set the Lord before you and find your food in His Word and what is edifying, you will grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Imitate David (Psalm 119:103-104), Jeremiah (Jer 15:16), and Job (Job 23:12). Do not allow yourself to fall into the ways of the mixed multitude (Nu 11:4-9), who lost their appetite for angels' food by lusting after Egyptian delicacies.

**Simeon** has this note on **necessary food**...

A man may feel no great appetite for dainties; but for his necessary food he cannot but feel a most intense desire. Hunger and thirst will in time so oppress a man, that he will gladly part with all that he possesses in the world to satisfy their pressing demands. In the famine that was in Egypt, the whole people of the country sold their lands, yea, their very bodies, to Pharaoh, for a supply of necessary food (Ge 47:19). Yea, on some occasions, women have eaten their own children, to satisfy the calls of nature (Dt 28:54-55, 56, 57). Yet was Job's desire after the words of God more urgent than any pressure of the natural appetite for bodily food...

His refreshment from the Word was more abiding—Elijah, after a hearty meal, "went in the strength of his meat forty days and forty nights." (1Ki 19:5-8) And Jonathan, after a day's extreme fatigue, did but taste a little honey, and his strength was renovated in a very extraordinary degree (1Sa 14:29, 30). But the strength which God's blessed Word imparted to Job was visible in every part of his life. Truly "it enlightened his eyes," insomuch that his discernment of God's truth was incomparably clearer than that of any of his friends who came to instruct and comfort him: for God himself says of them, that "they had not spoken of him the thing that was right, as his servant Job had." (Job 42:7) And, as the Word informed his understanding, so it strengthened him to bear his trials with a degree of confidence and composure never surpassed by mortal man. In immediate connexion with my text, he says, "God knows the way that I take: when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." And James represents him, in this respect, as the most perfect pattern to the Church in all ages: "You have heard of the patience of Job." (Jas 5:11) I may add further, his love for the word of God was that to which we must trace the whole of the obedience which he describes in verses 11, 12a: "My foot hath held his steps; his ways have I kept, and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandments of his lips: I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." ([Job's Love to the Word of God](#))

**Illustration** - Would you cook a meal for yourself even if you didn't feel like cooking? You probably say, "Yes, food is necessary." Did you skip your devotions today? If your answer is, "Yes, I was too tired to study God's Word," then consider the words in Job 23:12, where Job affirms that God's Word is more precious to him than his necessary food. It doesn't matter if you don't feel like learning God's Word. It is necessary to your life as a Christian.

God frequently associates His **Word** with **food**...

Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts. (Je 15:16)

**Comment:** Jeremiah is having a "pity party" (and I can't blame him - read Je 15:10 11 12 13 14 15 17 18) but even in the midst of this episode of self pity, he makes the wise choice to acknowledge that God's Word has been his source of joy and delight.

**Peter** writes...

Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babes, long for the **pure milk** of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation (1Pe 2:1, 2)

**Comment:** Notice that the first verse gives us a clue as to why we might not be treasuring God's Word - unconfessed sin. You've probably heard the old adage that sin will keep you from the Book or the Book will keep you from sin! Notice also that if there is no intake of God's Word there can be no growth into the image of God's Son, no growth in sanctification (cp Jn 17:17).

**John MacArthur:** Spiritual growth is always marked by a craving for and a delight in God's Word with the intensity with which a baby craves milk

**David** writes the following description of God's Word...

They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. (Ps 19:10-note)

**Spurgeon comments:** The pleasures arising from a right understanding of the divine testimonies are of the most delightful order; earthly enjoyments are utterly contemptible, if compared with them. The sweetest joys, yea, the sweetest of the sweetest falls to his portion who has God's truth to be his heritage.

**David** invites us...

O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! (Ps 34:8).

**Spurgeon comments:** Make a trial, an inward, experimental trial of the goodness of God. You cannot see except by tasting for yourself; but if you taste you shall see, for this, like Jonathan's honey, enlightens the eyes. That the Lord is good. You can only know this really and personally by experience. There is the banquet with its oxen and fatlings; its fat things full of marrow, and wine on the lees well refined; but their sweetness will be all unknown to you except you make the blessings of grace your own, by a living, inward, vital participation in them. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. Faith is the soul's taste; they who test the Lord by their confidence always find him good, and they become themselves blessed. The second clause of the verse, is the argument in support of the exhortation contained in the first sentence.

Psalms 119 affirms a similar delight in God's Word writing...

How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Ps 119:103)

**Spurgeon comments:** *How sweet are thy words into my taste.* He had not only heard the words of God, but fed upon them: they affected his palate as well as his ear. God's words are many and varied, and the whole of them make up what we call "the word": David loved them each one, individually, and the whole of them as a whole; he tasted an indescribable sweetness in them. He expresses the fact of their sweetness, but as he cannot express the degree of their sweetness he cries, "How sweet!" Being God's words they were divinely sweet to God's servant; He who put the sweetness into them had prepared the taste of His servant to discern and enjoy it. David makes no distinction between promises and precepts, doctrines and threatenings; they are all included in God's words, and all are precious in his esteem.

**Oh for a deep love to all that the Lord has revealed,  
whatever form it may take.**

*Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.* When he did not only eat but also speak the word, by instructing

others, he felt an increased delight in it. The sweetest of all temporal things fall short of the infinite deliciousness of the eternal word. Honey itself is outstripped of the Lord Widen the Psalmist fed on it he in sweetness by the word found it sweet; but when he bore witness of it it became sweeter still. How wise it will be on our part to keep the word on our palate by meditation and on our tongue by confession. It must be sweet to our taste when we think of it, or it will not be Sweet to our mouth when we talk of it.

**Jonathan Edwards:** How sweet are thy words unto my taste! etc. There is given to the regenerated a new, supernatural sense, a certain divine, spiritual taste. This is in its whole nature diverse from any of the other five senses, and something is perceived by a true saint in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely different from anything that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by looking on it or feeling of it. Now the beauty of holiness is that which is perceived by this spiritual sense, so diverse from all that natural men perceive in them; or, this kind of beauty is the quality that is the immediate object of this spiritual sense; this is the sweetness that is the proper object of this spiritual taste. The Scripture often represents the beauty and sweetness of holiness as the grand object of a spiritual taste and a spiritual appetite. This was the sweet food of the holy soul of Jesus Christ, John 4:32,34. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of... My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." I know of no part of the Holy Scriptures where the nature and evidence of true and sincere godliness are so fully and largely insisted on and delineated, as in the 119th Psalm.

## **TREASURING THE WORD OF GOD**

**Our Lord Jesus Christ** laid down an important principle about our **hearts** and our **treasure** writing that "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Mt 6:21) What is it that you treasure? Whatever or whoever that is will tell you where the passion of your heart lies.

Let's apply Job's "**Passion Principle**" to our lives --

### **"I have treasured the word of God**

**more than \_\_\_\_\_."**

What is in that blank for you? What is it that makes your pulse quicken when you think of doing it? Is it racing down a slope on fresh powder? ... hiking the majestic Rockies? ... watching your favorite football team on Sunday afternoon? ... eating a barbeque meal with your family all around you? You know what fills that blank for you. It may not be "bad" things, but it is just not the best thing. The best thing is bathing in the Father's Word, basking in light of His glorious life giving truths, chewing the cud of His word which is more precious than gold, sweeter than even the honey from the honey comb. Why? Ultimately it is so that we might know God better and be more like His beloved Son...

And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.  
(John 17:3 cp 2Pe 3:18)

**Tony Evans** comments that...

So important was the Word of God to Job that he said, "I have treasured the words of [God's] mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). In other words, what God had to say was more important to Job than his fried chicken, greens, and cornbread. It was more important to him than three meals a day. It was the fuel by which Job lived his life, and by which he was sustained during his severe trial. We live in a time of trial as a people today. Our need for the Word of God is critical, because we are watching a generation "perish for the lack of knowledge." We live in a world of theory. Everyone has an idea and will get mad at you if you think you have the ultimate idea. It's hard today to stand up and say, "This is truth," without getting an argument. Someone will retort, "Who do you think you are?" People no longer believe there is a final word—even from God (Evans, A. T. Our God is Awesome. Chicago: Moody Press)

**F B Meyer** writes a summation of Job's suffering and endurance in his comments on Job 42:6...

**Now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**

This is the clue to the entire book. Here is a man, who was universally known as perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil; who abounded in beneficent and loving ministries to all who were in need; to whom respect and love flowed in a full tide. He was not conscious of any failure in perfect obedience, or of secret sin; indeed, when his friends endeavored to account for his unparalleled calamities by suggesting that

there was some discrepancy between his outward reputation and inward consistency, he indignantly repelled the charge, and repudiated the impeachment.

But there were inconsistencies and failures in him that needed to be exposed and put away before he could attain to perfect blessedness and enjoy unbroken peace. If man could not discover them, and if Job were unconscious of them, they were, nevertheless, present, poisoning the fountain of his being; as a hidden cesspool, whose presence is undetected, may be doing a deadly work of undermining the health of an entire household. So God let the man into His presence; and, like Isaiah, Ezekiel, Peter, and many others, he at once confessed himself vile. The light of the great white throne exposes all unsuspected blemishes. Have you ever seen God! Oh, ask for that vision, that you may know yourself! In proportion as we know God, we abhor ourselves. Then Jesus becomes unspeakably precious. Through His death we pass into the true life, and begin to intercede for others. We never have such power for the blessing of the world as when we lie most humbly at the feet of God.

### **SPURGEON ON... THE SECRET OF JOB'S CONSISTENTLY HOLY LIFE**

After elaborating on **Job's** holy character, **Spurgeon** writes...

let us take a peep behind the wall to see how Job came by this character. Here we note Job's **HOLY SUSTENANCE**,

**"I have esteemed the words of his mouth  
more than my necessary food."**

**First, then, God spoke to Job.** Did God ever speak to you? I do not suppose Job had a single page of inspired writing. Probably he had not even seen the first books of Moses; he may have done so, but probably he had not. God spoke to him. Did he ever speak to you?

**No man will ever serve God aright  
unless God has spoken to him.**

You have the Bible, and God speaks in that book and through it; but mind you do not rest in the printed letter without discerning its spirit. You must try to hear God's voice in the printed letter. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son"; but oh, pray that this divine Son may speak by the Holy Ghost right into your heart. Anything which keeps you from personal contact with Jesus robs you of the best blessing... You can make an idol of your Bible by using the mere words as a substitute for God's voice to you. The book is to help you to remember God, but if you stick with the mere letter, and fail to get to God at all, you misuse His sacred word. When the Spirit of God speaks a text right into the soul, when God Himself takes the promise or the precept - and sends it with living energy into the heart, this is that which makes a man have a reverence for the word: he feels its awful majesty, its divine supremacy, and while he trembles at it he rejoices, and goes forward to obey because God has spoken to him.

Dear friends, when God speaks be sure that you have open ears to hear, for often he speaks and men do not regard him. In a vision of the night when deep sleep falls upon men God has spoken to his prophets, but now he speaks by His word, applying it to the heart with power by His Spirit. If God speaks but little to us it is because we are dull of hearing. Renewed hearts are never long without a whisper from the Lord. He is not a dumb God nor is He so far away that we cannot hear Him: they that keep His ways and hold His steps, as Job did, shall hear many of His words to their soul's delight and profit.

**God's having spoken to Job  
was the secret of his consistently holy life.**

Then note, that what God had spoken to him **he treasured up**. He says in the Hebrew that he had treasured God's word more than ever he had treasured his **necessary food**. They had to hide grain away in those days to guard it from wandering Arabs. Job had been more careful to store up God's word than to store up his wheat and his barley; more anxious to preserve the memory of what God had spoken than to garner his harvests.

**Do you treasure up what God has spoken?  
Do you study the Word?  
Do you read it?**



Oh, how little do we search it compared with what we ought to do.

**Do you meditate on it?  
Do you suck out its secret sweets?  
Do you store up its essence  
as bees gather the life-blood of flowers,  
and hoard up their honey for winter food?**

Bible study is the meat that makes a Christian; this is the strong meat on which holy men are nourished; this is that which makes the bone and sinew of men who keep God's way in defiance of every adversary. God spake to Job, and Job treasured up his words.

#### **JOB ATE GOD'S WORD**

**We learn from our version of the text that Job lived on God's word** he reckoned it to be better to him than his necessary food. He ate it. **This is an art which some do not understand-eating the Word of the Lord** Some look at the surface of the Scriptures, some pull the Scriptures to pieces without mercy, some cut the heavenly bread into dice pieces, and show their cleverness, some pick it over for plums, like children with a cake; but **blessed is he that makes it his meat and drink**. He takes the Word of God to be what is, namely, a Word from the mouth of the Eternal, and he says,

God is speaking to me in this, and I will satisfy my soul upon it; I do not want anything better than this, anything truer than this, anything safer than this, but having got this it shall abide in me, in my heart, in the very bowels of my life, it shall be interwoven with the warp and woof of my being.

But the text adds that he esteemed it more than his necessary food. Not more than dainties only, for those are superfluities, but more than his necessary food, and you know that **a man's necessary food is a thing which he esteems very highly** He must have it. What, take away my bread? says he, as if this could not be borne. To take the bread out of a poor man's mouth is looked upon as the highest kind of villainy: but Job would sooner that they took the bread out of his mouth than the word of God out of his heart.

He thought more of it than of his needful food, and I suppose it was because meat would only sustain his **body**, but the word of God feeds the **soul**. The nourishment given by bread is soon gone, but the nourishment given by the word of God abides in us, and makes us to live for ever. The natural life is more than meat, but our spiritual life feeds on meat even nobler than itself, for it feeds on the **bread of heaven**, the Person of the Lord Jesus. Bread is sweet to the hungry man, but we are not always hungry, and sometimes we have no appetite; but the best of God's word is that he who lives near to God has always an appetite for it, and the more he eats of it the more he can eat. I do confess I have often fed upon God's-word when I have had no appetite for it, until I have gained an appetite. I have grown hungry in proportion as I have felt satisfied: my emptiness seemed to kill my hunger, but as I have been revived by the word I have longed for more.

So it is written,

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled:" (Mt 5:6-note)

and when they are filled they shall continue to enjoy the benediction, for they shall hunger and thirst still though filled with grace.

God's word is sweeter to the taste than bread to a hungry man, and its sweetness never cloy, though it dwells long on the palate.

**You cannot be always eating bread,**

**but you can always feed on the word of God.**

You cannot eat all the meat that is set before you, your capacity is limited that way, and none but a glutton wishes it otherwise; but oh, you may be ravenous of God's word, and devour it all, and yet have no surfeit (disgust caused by excess intake). You are like a little mouse in a great cheese, and you shall have permission to eat it all, though it be a thousand times greater than yourself. Though God's thoughts are greater than your thoughts, and His ways are greater than your ways, yet may His ways be in your heart, and your heart in His ways. You may be filled with all the fullness of God, though it seems a paradox. His fullness is greater than you, and all His fullness is infinitely greater than you, yet you may be filled with all the fullness of God (cp Eph 3:19-note). So that the Word of God is better than our necessary food: it hath qualities which our necessary food hath not.

No more, except it be this: **you cannot be holy**, my brethren, unless you do in secret live upon the blessed word of God, and you will not live on it unless it comes to you as the word of His mouth.

It is very sweet to get a letter from home when you are far away: it is like a bunch of fresh flowers in winter time. A letter from the dear one at home is as music heard over the water; but half a dozen words from that dear mouth are better than a score pages of manuscript, for there is a sweetness about the look and the tone which paper cannot carry.

### A SPEAKING TRUMPET

Now, I want you to get the Bible to be not a book only but a speaking trumpet, through which God speaks from afar to you, so that you may catch the very tones of His voice. You must read the word of God to this end, for it is while reading, meditating, and studying, and seeking to dip yourself into its spirit, that it seems suddenly to change from a written book into a talking book or phonograph; it whispers to you or thunders at you as though God had hidden Himself among its leaves and spoke to your condition; as though Jesus who feeds among the lilies had made the chapters to be lily beds, and had come to feed there. Ask Jesus to cause his word to come fresh from His own mouth to your soul; and if it be so, and you thus live in daily communion with a personal Christ, my brethren, you will then with your feet take hold upon His steps (Job 23:11, 12a); then will you keep His way, then will you never decline or go back from His commandments, but you will make good speed in your pilgrim way to the eternal city. May the Holy Ghost daily be with you. May every one of you live under His sacred bedewing ( to moisten in a gentle manner with any liquid), and be fruitful in every good word and work. Amen and amen. (Read the full sermon - [Job 23:11-12 Fair Portrait of a Saint](#))

### REPROOF FOR NOT TREASURING GOD'S WORD

**Charles Simeon** reproves us for not **treasuring God's Word** like Job...

How much fuller a revelation of God's mind do we possess! Doubtless Job's views, both of himself as a sinner, and of Christ as a Saviour, were, in many respects, clear and just (Job 9:20, 21 and Job 19:25 26 27). But how incomparably richer is that discovery of God's revealed will, which is transmitted to us in the writings of the Old and New Testament! There is nothing concealed from us, which it would be for our advantage to know. All the eternal counsels of God, as displayed in the covenant of grace, are exhibited to our view, together with all the wonders of redeeming love. How highly, then, should these be estimated by us!

**If Job felt such regard for the partial revelations vouchsafed to him, what should not we feel towards this complete system of divine truth, which we are privileged to enjoy?**

But how low is the esteem in which it is held by us! Not only is "our necessary food" preferred before it, but every base indulgence: the gratifications of sense which are most sinful, and the acquisition of objects which are most worthless, have a greater preponderance in our minds than either the Law of Moses or "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." Let us only look back, and see how faint have been our desires after divine knowledge, and how feeble our endeavours to obtain it. In truth, every book has been preferred before the sacred volume: and, with almost every one amongst us, the perusal of a novel or a newspaper would be resorted to, at any time, to occupy a leisure hour, rather than God's blessed word.

To what is our ignorance of heavenly subjects to be ascribed, but to this? And to what else must our disobedience to God's commandments be traced? We love not God's word, and therefore we do not study it: we explore not its contents, and therefore we neither know it nor obey it. Though it ought to be our meditation and delight all the day, with many the sacred volume is scarcely ever read at all: and with those who do occasionally take it into their hands, it is read only in a superficial manner, and without that veneration and love which it deserves. I say, then, that Job may well rise up in judgment against us, to condemn us for our grievous neglect of that sacred volume, which even "the angels in heaven desire to look into."

### APPLICATION

Redeem, then, the time which you have lost, for the attainment of divine knowledge—Were the salvation of your soul out of the question, God's blessed word deserves more attention than any other book: for there is no other book whose contents are so curious, so instructive, so edifying in every view. But, when the salvation of your soul depends on your obedience to it, what shall I say? (**Ed:** Simeon is not saying obedience saves but that it does demonstrate one's salvation is genuine) Methinks, you should be studying it day and night, in order to obtain all its proffered benefits, and to comply with all its most reasonable demands. In public, when it is opened to you in the ministration of the Gospel, "receive it, not as the word of man, but as the word of the living God." (1Th 2:13) And in your secret chamber study it, as it were, upon your knees; and implore of God the teaching of His Holy Spirit, in order that you may be able to comprehend its mysterious contents. In a word, esteem the revelation of your God as Job esteemed it: and then, like Job, shall you have a record on high, that you pleased God, and that you were accepted of Him. ([Job's Love to the Word of God](#))

### GEORGE MULLER TREASURED THE WORD MORE THAN HIS NECESSARY FOOD

Listen to the words of the great saint of yesteryear, [George Müller](#) (1805–1898). Observe carefully what made him "tick" and methinks why God used him so mightily in His kingdom work. May the tribe of men like Job and [Müller](#) increase in our day of in which delight in the Word seems to be sorely wanting and/or waning. In his well known book [Desiring God](#), [John Piper](#) (in a section he subtitles "*How George Muller Started His Day*") writes...

*In 1841 Muller made a life-changing discovery. The testimony of this from his autobiography has proved to be of tremendous value in my life, and I pray that it will also bear fruit in yours:*

While I was staying at Nailsworth, it pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, irrespective of human instrumentality, as far as I know, the benefit of which I have not lost, though now ... more than forty years have since passed away.

The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit.

**Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as an habitual thing, to give myself to prayer, after having dressed in the morning. Now I saw, that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reproved, instructed; and that thus, whilst meditating, my heart might be brought into experimental, communion with the Lord. I began therefore, to meditate on the New Testament, from the beginning, early in the morning.**

The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessing upon His precious Word, was to begin to meditate on the Word of God; searching, as it were, into every verse, to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word; not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon; but for the sake of obtaining **food for my own soul**. The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that though I did not, as it were, give myself to prayer, but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer.

When thus I have been for awhile making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it; but still continually keeping before me, that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation. The result of this is, that there is always a good deal of confession, thanksgiving, supplication, or intercession mingled with my meditation, and that my inner man almost invariably is even sensibly nourished and strengthened and that by breakfast time, with rare exceptions, I am in a peaceful if not happy state of heart. Thus also the Lord is pleased to communicate unto me that which, very soon after, I have found to become food for other believers, though it was not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word that I gave myself to meditation, but for the profit of my own inner man.

The difference between my former practice and my present one is this. Formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible, and generally spent all my time till breakfast in prayer, or almost all the time. At all events I almost invariably began with prayer... But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even an hour on my knees, before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc.; and often after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then began really to pray.

I scarcely ever suffer now in this way. For my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into experimental fellowship with God, I speak to my Father, and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy of it!) about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word.

It often now astonished me that I did not sooner see this. In no book did I ever read about it. No public ministry ever brought the matter before me. No private intercourse with a brother stirred me up to this matter. And yet now, since God has taught me this point, it is as plain to me as anything, that the first thing the child of God has to do morning by morning is to obtain food for his inner man.

As the outward man is not fit for work for any length of time, except we take food, and as this is one of the first things we do in the morning, so it should be with the inner man. We should take food for that, as every one must allow. Now what is the food for the inner man: **not prayer, but the Word of God; and here again not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it,**

**and applying it to our hearts...**

I dwell so particularly on this point because of the immense spiritual profit and refreshment I am conscious of having derived from it myself, and I affectionately and solemnly beseech all my fellow-believers to ponder this matter. By the blessing of God I ascribe to this mode the help and strength which I have had from God to pass in peace through deeper trials in various ways than I had ever had before; and after having now above forty years tried this way, I can most fully, in the fear of God (**Ed**: Oh, for such a healthy, holy fear!), commend it. How different when the soul is refreshed and made happy early in the morning, from what is when, without spiritual preparation, the service, the trials and the temptations of the day come upon one! (quoted from John Piper's book [Desiring God - Pdf can be downloaded](#))