

MEDITATION ON A SINGLE WORD

My meditation today centers upon a single word. Occasionally there have been times when a more complete understanding of one word will be the key that brings the whole Bible into sharper and clearer focus. Sometimes the full meaning of a word will come directly from the Bible itself, as in the case of the word, understanding. This definition as found in Pr 19:11 is “the knowledge of the holy.” This can be knowledge of holy “things” or the holy “One” and, as it is not specific, the application becomes all-inclusive. Thus the understanding of any topic, natural or spiritual, is incomplete without the knowledge of God.

Another word that has brought the whole Bible into clearer focus is the word, iniquity. Through the explanation of an enlightened teacher, this word took on a whole new meaning. Simply put, but with profound application, the word, iniquity means “self-will.” With this definition, there is no escaping the fact that self becomes the center of all sin; a concept that brings us to our knees in guilt and shame, especially as we read, “and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa 53:6).

The word in my reading today that has taken on a whole new and extended meaning is the word, “precepts.” In Ps 119, “precepts” takes its place alongside laws, testimonies, statutes, commandments and judgments. It is found 21 times in this Psalm and we learn that precepts are something to keep diligently (v 4), meditate in (v 15), understand (v 27), long after (v 40), seek (v 45) and never forget (v 93). *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines a “precept” as a commandment intended as an authoritative rule of action, but is that all it is? Is this word only a synonym for commandment? Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary repeats the same and I am almost convinced except for noticing the word in the New Testament as follows:

Mark 10:5

And Jesus answered and said unto them, **For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.**

When I read this verse, it came to mind that Moses was writing a prescription to arrest a condition before the infection spread out of control. Is a precept like a doctor’s prescription?

There are indeed similarities. A prescription is given only if we are sick. It is given for our good with the intent of either providing relief from or a cure for our sickness. We may not understand how it is effective but we have faith in the one who is writing the prescription; that he is familiar with us and with the sickness that plagues us, enabling him to determine our need. As for us, we must not forget to take it as prescribed, believing it will restore us.

To further test this idea using a tool of man, *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines the word “prescript” as a direction; precept; model prescribed. But, for confirmation, I prefer to use the Word of God.

Psalm 119:93

I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me. (to make alive, to animate, to revive, to reinvigorate)

From this day forward whenever I read the word, “precept” I will think “prescription” as I rejoice that the one treating me, and might I add, bearing the cost Himself, is The Great Physician.