

Session 2

October 20, 2019

GOD'S WILL AND THE BIBLE

Psalm 19:7-14

There's an oft repeated proverb: "When all else fails, read the directions."

Those who believe that life doesn't come with an instruction manual are simply wrong. God gave us His Word not only to tell His story of redemption, but how to live the life of the redeemed. God's will for our lives is contained in the Bible, and it's always His will that we obey it. Jesus Himself said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). In Psalm 19, David extols the benefits and blessings of God's Word.

The essence of God's Word (vv. 7-10). In this section, David uses six different labels to describe the essence of the Scriptures and the subsequent benefit associated with each label. The terms are lofty in their usage, but profound in their meaning. The word "instruction" (v. 7) is the basic Hebrew word *torah*. It refers to the law, teaching, or doctrine of the Bible. Here, it is said to be perfect (flawless). The older translations say it is "converting" the soul, but the better word is *renewing* (or refreshing) the soul. In other words, God's instruction brings new life back to the soul. "Testimony" (v. 7) broadens the picture. God's witness—contained in His teaching—is a testimony that is trustworthy and true. Even the simplest among us gain wisdom by attending to Him. "Precepts" (v. 8) are more specific. They refer to rules and policies. David says they are "right;" they are straightforward and correct. The result? Those who follow them find joy in them. His "commandments" are "pure" (v. 8; KJV). The newer translations take into account the light of the eyes mentioned in the phrase that follows. In other words, His commandments have no impurities that might fog the perception. The light of His Word illuminates the eyes of the hearer with understanding. The "fear" mentioned in verse 9 is the reverence and respect toward Him as a result of the power of His Word. That it is pure (or "clean") means that the reverence one feels toward God because of His Word is morally upright; it won't lead the believer astray. The word for "ordinances" (v. 9) is the term for "judgements," and most often applies to the entirety of God's commandments. In every way, His Word is trustworthy ("reliable") and His decisions are absolutely just. Verse 10 moves away from the descriptions of God's Word, to the value of it. The believer who is committed to God's Word finds His teachings more valuable than gold and more delectable than honey. In both instances, the imagery moves from precious, to even more so. His Word is worth more than gold...even an abundance of the best. It is more delectable than honey...even the sweetest which drips directly from the comb.

The effectiveness of God's Word (vv. 11-14). Besides the glories of His Word, David mentions the practical benefits of obeying God's Word. First, there are warnings to be heeded. Bible commentator Matthew Henry rightly pointed out that His admonitions reach in both directions: "God's word warns the wicked not to go on in his wicked way and warns the righteous not to turn from his good way." But more than just avoiding trouble, there is great reward for obeying God's commandments. The language allows for both a future reward (the *result* of obeying God) as well as a present reward (the *act* of obeying God.) Like Paul in Romans 7, the profundity of his revelation now sends the writer to his own knees. Understanding the perfections of God's law makes even the noblest ask, "How can I ever live up to this?" The final phrase in verse 12

provides the answer. "I can't." What the psalmist (and hopefully we as well) realizes is there is mercy and forgiveness for all who sin (see Rom. 5:20). The final verse of the psalm is a reflection and response to the enormity of the truth just revealed. The words that spill out, as well as the thoughts that produce them...might they be acceptable to the Lord.