



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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**Psalms 119:97** *"O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day!"*

Our verse today comes from the longest chapter in the Bible. It is broken into sections by the Hebrew alphabet. The chapter is a tribute to the word of God. The value of the word and the praise of the word are expressed continually throughout the chapter.

The verse we are looking at today expresses three thoughts.

First, the law was loved. The law was more than just information. It was more than just things people needed to know. There was an attachment to the law. The writer loved the law. In college I was a science major. I took lots and lots of biology classes. I don't think I ever thought that I loved my biology text book. It was necessary to complete the class, but most students either sold their book back to the school or ditched it in the nearest trash can. There was no love there.

Understand also, for the Psalmist, the law that he loved included the dreaded Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. We are not talking about Philipians. We are not talking about the amazing Gospels. His law was the very parts of the Bible that we read the least and dread the most. He loved it not because it was intriguing literature, but rather, because it was from God. This was God's word. This was God trying to connect, lead, shape and help the people that He loved. How could a person not love it for that very reason.

Second, because he loved God's law, he would make it a part of his life. Loving the law and ignoring the law do not go together. Today, people say, "What's the big deal?" What's the big deal about how we worship? What's the big deal about the form of music in worship? It doesn't matter? Really? Those that say that make that claim on their own. They won't find the Bible making that claim. They won't find God in the Scripture saying, "I really don't care." No, it's just the opposite. God is specific. God declares. To love the law is to love the way of God. Those that are determined to change things, often claim that they are fighting tradition, but most times, they are fighting God. It doesn't bother them to introduce new things, different things, even wrong things. Their actions reveal that they do not have a love for the Lord nor a love for His word. You can't love the Lord and not love His word. His word came from Him. His word is part of Him. "I love God, but I don't do much of that Bible stuff," is ridiculous. It's modern theology. It's a lie of Satan. You can't know God without the Bible. To purposely ignore what the Bible says is to insult God.

Those that love God, love His word. They make the word of God a part of their lives. They read it. They study it. They know it. They use it. That word shapes their lives. Because of that word, they make adjustments in their language, attitude, and even friends. That word warns them. That word defines the boundaries of what is right and wrong. That word becomes a central piece of their lives.

(OVER)

Third, because of that love for the law, the Psalmist thought about the law. He meditated upon it all day long. That's how the Bible gets into us and works upon us. It's more than just reading several verses every day. It's chewing on a verse or two. It's thinking about what it meant then and what it means today. It's finding applications. It's using that word in our world. It's seeing how that word helps us at work and at home. It's learning and changing because of that word.

The Psalmist meditated upon the law of God. He went about his day thinking about that law. This brought God into his day. This raised the bar for him spiritually. He didn't turn off his spiritual radar once he left the place of worship. It stayed with him. At home. In business. In his travels. With the law racing through his mind, he would be more thoughtful and thankful. He would see things as God sees them. He would have a proper perspective of his place in the world. The evils of pride, materialism, judgmental spirit and apathy are driven out when one is thinking about the law of God.

This meditation did not involve sitting with your legs folded like a pretzel, burning incense and humming with your palms facing upward. This wasn't a Hindu practice. Meditation involves thinking about things on purpose. It's bringing great thoughts to your mind. Here, it involved bringing the word of God to your attention. He seemed to do this on his own. It wasn't that someone told him to do this. It wasn't that he was sitting in God's house. It seems he decided to think about God's word on his own. Why would he do that? Because he loved the word. We tend to think about what we love. If you think a lot about money, guess what? You may have a love of money problem. If you think about yourself a lot, you may have your priorities out of order. If you think about wrong things, you might one day do those wrong things. Here was a man that loved God, loved God's word and he thought about that word. He thought about it often. Our verse says, "all day" he meditated. He thought and thought about God's word.

We wonder, didn't the guy have to go to work? How can you think about the law when at work I have to think about numbers, people, budgets, inventory and so forth. Then, when I get home, I have to think about dinner, the kids, taking care of the place, catching up on the news. We look at our verse and think, "I'd love to be able to do that, but I have a life." It's easy to conclude that our Psalmist was like a monk that just sat around all day thinking about the word. That's not a fair picture. More than that, it's not accurate. Sure he worked. Sure he had a family. Sure he had obligations. But he still thought about the word. Could it be that when in different settings, the word of God that affected that is what he thought about. For instance, at work, he might have thought about honesty and working hard. There are verses about that. At home, he thought about his love for his family and his need to be a spiritual leader. There are verses about that. With friends, he thought about his light shining. There are verses about that. In worship, he thought about the God he loved. Lots of verses about that. Maybe, just maybe, what he was doing shaped what portions of the word he thought about. Maybe his life and the word walked together, each helping the other.

The person who does this finds that he rarely turns off his spiritual thinking. This easily leads to multiple prayers to God throughout the day. That "pray without ceasing," becomes a pleasant reality. He thanks God. He asks God for forgiveness. He asks God for understanding. Praying, thinking, walking with the Lord. This becomes natural. It's not like the artificial leg that has to be strapped on. It supports a person but there is neither feeling nor warmth in the fake leg. This is not our faith. This is not our religion.

Give some thought today to God's word. Find some passages that fit what you are doing today and let them simmer a while in your mind. Learn. See. Grow. That's the way this works.

Roger Shouse