

When You Experience Chronic Affliction, 73-80

Psalm 119:73-80

The situation of the author

He was experiencing verbal abuse

119: 22, 23, 42, 51, 67

He was suffering

Imprisonment

119:61

Entrapment

119:85, 110, 119

He was afflicted

119:67, 71, 75, 85, 87, 134

He was far from home

119:55

He was emotionally distressed

119:25, 28, 143,

His enemies were numerous

119:157

His enemies were "circling in for the kill"

119:150

The structure of the Psalm

Psalm 119 is one of several alphabetic acrostics in holy writ.¹ There are 22 stanzas. Each line of each stanza begins with the letter of the alphabet that begins that stanza. One reason authors wrote this way was as a mnemonic aid...²

The structure of the *yodh* strophe, 73-80

Structurally, this *Yôd* stanza is quite complex, since it unfolds in an introverted pattern. This phenomenon is most readily observable by noting literary and/or conceptual parallelisms from the core of the strophe outwardly. ... Consequently, in verses 73—80, the man of God echoes four concentric circles of prayer requests based upon his chronic experience with affliction...³

Whoever the author was, he, in the midst of an incredibly difficult situation, took great pains to produce profound truth that could be easily mastered by his readers.

The hope of the afflicted, 119:73-80

God wants you to long for spiritual maturity, 73, 80.

You should pray with hope for more discernment, 73.

God made you and formed your constitution.

Its proposal is phrased in the oft-repeated ... “give me understanding” (cf. vv. 27, 34, 125, 144, 169), i.e. grant me practical perception for real life (esp., amidst its many pressures).⁴

It is he who can grant you understanding if you ask, James 1:5.

You should pray with hope for more conformity, v 80.

The desire for conformity, 80a.

Our author wanted to be pure

The reason for conformity, 80b.

Our author didn't want to be ashamed

Our author knew he needed to grow. He knew that trials were a wonderful tool to do that very thing. He didn't want to “blow it” now that pressure was on.

God wants you to care about and minister to other believers, 74, 79.

¹ These include Pss 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145. Proverbs 31:10-31 and Lamentations 1, 2, 3, 4

² Zemek, *The Word of God in the Child of God*, pp. 24, 25. See also Rev 1:8; 21:6; 22:13.

³ Zemek, pp. 193, 194.

⁴ Zemek, pp. 195, 196.

In the midst of trials God calls on you to have a bigger picture. He wants you to see how what you learn in trials might benefit others, 2 Cor 1:3-7.

Get me out of this mess. Or others are watching how I handle trials.

God wants you to have the right perspective on all hardships, 75, 78.

God wants you to see the ultimate source of all trials and hardships, 75.

See also Gen 50:19,20; Job 1, 2; Eph 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:7-11; James 1:2-8, 17.

God wants you to see your responsibility to those who hurt you, 78.

Gen 50:20, “Am I in the place of God?” 1 Peter 1:21-22

²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

Although this man of God recognized his LORD’s sovereign sway over all things, especially including his own affliction (e.g. v. 75), he also understood that these malignant servants of trial were nonetheless morally responsible and therefore deserving of retributive justice. ... But it wasn’t his responsibility .As for me” I (characteristically, customarily) meditate on Your precepts.”⁵

Out author did not consider going to court for defamation of character, rather he “meditated on God’s word.”

God wants you to see your deepest need in trial, 76, 77.

What it is NOT...

What it is...

The character of God...

The afflicter is also the comforter...

Hesed, v 76.

This entreaty for “loyal love” seems to point to that essentially rational and volitional dimension of his LORD’s great grace which he anticipated would be manifested in a fatherly form of firm and unfaltering consolation.⁶

Compassion, 77.

“Your ‘tender mercy.’ This root refers to deep love (usually of a “superior” for an “inferior”) rooted in some “natural” bond. This root is frequently used of God. It incorporates ... the strong tie God has with those whom he has called as his children (Ps

⁵ Zemek, pp. 202, 203.

⁶ Zemek, p. 199.

103:13). God looks upon his own as a father looks upon his children; he has pity on them (cf. Mic 7:17).⁷

...revealed in the Word of God

According to your promise, 76b

Your law is my delight, 77b.

Who is God, what has he said, what has he done, and what does that mean to me?

What about you?

Are you troubled? Distressed? Depressed? Is someone verbally abusing you?

God wants you to see the goal in the hardship.

God wants you to see the good in the hardship

God wants you to see his glory in the hardship

Oh God, help me see what you are up to.

Help me to want to change, learn and grow, more than anything.

⁷ Zemek, p. 200.