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## BEGIN HERE!

The Bible is God's gift to us as a domestic and personal 'means of grace'. Just as the Lord's Supper is a corporate 'means of grace' at which the Lord ministers to his believing children his promises of eternal salvation, and assures us of our 'interest' in them, so, day by day, in the family and in the privacy of personal times of devotion, we open his holy Word, hear his voice, learn his truth, delight in his presence, embrace his promises, and recommit ourselves to the life of the obedience of faith.

It is a particularly lovely thing to take up an attitude of prayer as we hear the Word of God so that we can move straight from the Scriptures to talk to our Heavenly



Father, to the Lord Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit, bringing before him the truth he has just imparted, turning it to prayer, praise, adoration, thanksgiving and intercession.

So will you take up an attitude of readiness for prayer as you read the Word of God as it is written in Psalm 19, a Psalm of David. The Word of God says;

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul. The testimony of the Lord is reliable, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgements of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb (Ps. 19:7–11).

Lovely words in Psalm 19, are they not? We could go on reading them over and over again and pondering them. Delightful words! But just look at verse 10 again. That will do for now. ‘More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, honey flowing from the comb.’

#### INTRINSIC RICHES; EXPERIENCED DELIGHT

‘More to be desired than gold’—that’s the intrinsic value of the Word of God. Intrinsic—the value that is there; the value that inheres in the Word of God—gold and fine gold in abundance. You know that the Psalms have come to us in Hebrew. If we were to open up the translation of verse 10 just a fraction—not paraphrasing but opening up

the meaning that is there, we'd say 'More to be desired than gold, yes, and deservedly so.' This is the intrinsic value of the Word of God.

But then alongside the intrinsic value there is the experienced value—'sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.' Do you like honey? The experienced value of the Word of God—honey flowing out of the honeycomb for our delectation and enjoyment, tasting the sweetness of it on our tongues and palates. What a beautiful description of the Word of God, and, please God, one well known to you and me in personal experience, when the pure gold God has infused into his Word becomes the pure honey of our delight! Very often it may be an old truth, already well known but suddenly alive with fresh vigour and tastiness; it may be a new truth or a new emphasis but in it and with it the fresh honey is flowing from the comb.

#### THE GOLDMINE; THE HONEYCOMB

Now do something very obvious, tell yourself where this verse is in the Bible—Psalm 19, yes, and where, pray, is Psalm 19? It's not part of the Book of Revelation, looking back over the whole book of Scripture. It's not part of what we call the New Testament, where the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ would lead us to expect the finest gold and the purest honey. It's bang in the middle of what we call the Old Testament, and it says about the Old Testament that it has greater intrinsic value than much fine gold and greater sweetness in experience than

fresh honey flowing out of the honeycomb. And I say for myself, 'Lord, make your Word like that to me. And particularly this larger bit of our Bibles, the bit at the beginning that we call the Old Testament—make it to me the purest of gold, the sweetest of honey.

*Some Old Testament references to the Word of God:*

Read Ezekiel 2:8–3:4 and note how this 'illustrative experience' underlines (1) the completeness of God's Word as given, 2:10a, written on both sides, leaving no room for addition; (2) the clarity of its contents, 2:10b, pointing to the ability of the word to make itself plain to the reader; (3) Its inherent nourishment, 2:8; 3:1, 3a; (4) how 'palatable' it is to those who feed on it, 3:3b; cf. Jer. 15:16; (5) Its effectiveness as a 'tool' for ministry, 3:4—NB (NKJV) 'with', i.e., 'by means of'. The Word is the

**□** Seven titles for the Word of God from Psalm 1 (NKJV):

- 'law' = 'teaching', the word to instruct (v. 1);
- 'testimonies', what God 'testifies to' as his truth and the truth about himself, the word to reveal (v. 2);
- 'ways', the word as the guide to characteristic life-style (v. 3);
- 'precepts', the word as instruction for the details of daily life (v. 4);
- 'statutes', from the verb 'to engrave', the word in its permanency, engraven in the rock (v. 5);
- 'commandments', the word given by God for our obedience (v. 6);
- 'judgments'—as of the authoritative pronouncements of a judge; the word expressing what the Lord himself has 'decided upon' as truth to hold and life to live (v. 7).

only weapon given to Ezekiel to deal with the inveterate hard-heartedness of his audience (2:7).

Genesis 1:3, 6–7, etc. refer to the Word in Creation, to its creative power and control (cf. Ps. 33:6; 147:15; 148:5).

Isaiah 40:6–8 speaks of the enduring Word.

The psalmist extols its purity (Ps. 12:6); it demands purity in those who would use it (Jer. 15:19).