

It was always a learning experience when I got to spend time with my friend, the storyteller. He had a gift with words, and I discovered that this gift grew from his great love of them. I asked him how he came up with the ideas for his stories, and how he crafted together the words that made them so engaging.

I knew that he found ways to connect ideas as though they were pieces of a puzzle¹. But there was another dimension to it, that of building a strong, beautiful, and useful structure. As he described his love for language, he paid great tribute to the Psalmist. He absorbed the Psalms all of his life, as he read and re-read them from day to day.

The Psalms were such a core part of his thinking and worship (and indeed should be for the entire kingdom of God), that it made him consider how David had created such a great body of poetic work. David “loved the law” with a great passion, such that he described it in his own words again and again. He took the raw material and worked it and reworked it into a continual life of worship. It never got old and stale to him, for he was refreshed by it².

The storyteller told me that he could imagine David as a young man, staying out in the fields under the stars while he watched the sheep. He could see him putting words together in different patterns and feeling the rhythm and meaning when everything fit together. He did not just love the Word, he loved to reassemble the words from it in ways that helped glorify the name of God. But he also constructed songs of sorrow and despair from the emotions that flowed from his sensitive heart. In these structures that he built, he found ways to help people understand all the levels and states of their emotional lives.

The storyteller went on to say that he believed God truly enjoyed watching us put together our ideas about Him in different ways³. They aren't all correct, but they are all a sign of our love for Him. David loved God with a love that flowed into psalms with words so well joined together that they became things of beauty and power that brought life and joy to others⁴. The Creator was so clearly “declared⁵” to him that he saw the power of His Presence no matter what was his situation in life. We all should be able to “get it” in this manner, especially with the aid of the poetry of the Psalmist.

It is a wonder, in a way, that David could see God's Goodness so clearly without the full knowledge that we now have of the self-sacrifice of the Savior (a descendent of David, as a matter of fact), who died on the cross for us⁶. Even without this direct knowledge of the future, though, he could “see” the eternal kingdom, and wanted to be in it with God forever⁷. David could see farther through his honest and persistent pursuit of God.

David loved the law⁸ because he loved the principles of God's Goodness that were their foundation⁹. This is why he was called “a man after God's own heart¹⁰.” And so should we all aspire to be.

After continued discussion, the storyteller finally said:

“I love to study the Bible because it stirs a creativity in me to build something from what I learn. Worship is not just a reassembling of rules to suit me – it invokes the transformation of a heart to suit God. In my storytelling, I find that this is essential to enabling others to see His Glory.”

As we parted company I was, as usual, inspired by this other “Psalmist” to continue with my own search for the meaningful truths that are available from God's awesome Word. I saw that just as David created his psalms, Jesus Himself presented truths of the Kingdom in parables, and I believe that in any life situation we all can find an analogy or allegory that could help us to see God more clearly. It is like holding up images of things that we encounter in life and comparing them to God to find deeper meaning. It is to take every thought captive¹¹ as we dig for greatest treasure of all¹².

1. “The Storyteller's Own Story”, from Stories of the Second Swordsman

2. Psalm 23:3a, “... he refreshes my soul...”

3. Consider the action of a kaleidoscope in rearranging pieces into different patterns: God enjoys as long as we don't get stuck on a bad image
4. "... words fitly spoken are things of beauty and power that bring life and joy." Dallas Willard
5. Psalm 19:1
6. 1 John 4:10
7. Psalm 23:6b
8. Psalm 119
9. see Matthew 22:40
10. Acts 13:22
11. 2 Corinthians 10:5
12. Matthew 13:44

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