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If you were to describe the Bible, how would you describe it? Many of us might say something like it's true, it's authoritative, it's holy, it's powerful, it's ancient, it's inspired, or something else. The Psalmist in Psalm 119 chose a surprising word to describe the word of God: sweet. Psalm 119:103 says,

*How sweet your words taste to me;
they are sweeter than honey.*

Psalm 119

- Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible: a 176-verse acrostic poem built from 22 stanzas of eight lines each, one stanza per letter of the Hebrew alphabet, with every line in a stanza beginning with that letter.
- The theme of Psalm 119 is the Torah, the law, and the poet employs eight key terms to refer to it. These eight synonyms are used repeatedly throughout the Psalm to describe God's Word:
 1. law (*torah*) 25 times = instruction
 2. word (*dābār*) 24 times
 3. testimonies (*'ēdōt*) 23 times
 4. rules (*mišpāṭim*) 23 times = judgments
 5. commandments (*mišwōt*) 22 times
 6. statutes (*ḥuqqim*) 21 times
 7. precepts (*piqqūdīm*) 21 times
 8. promise/word (*'imrā*) 19 times = what God said
- Psalm 119 is an extended meditation by the psalmist on the word of God to teach others to delight in God's Word in order to live a life marked by God's blessing (Ps 119:1). Some scholars believe that Psalm 119 is an extended meditation on Psalm 1.

Psalm 119:97-104

- Verses 97-104 are the Mem (מ) stanza, nearly the middle of Psalm 119. The theme of these verses is that the Word of God produces surpassing wisdom and sweetness.
- In 119:97, the psalmist says he "thinks about them [the instructions] all day long." This verb is often translated as meditation, which describes a physical act: muttering, murmuring, rehearsing words under your breath or aloud, turning them over, as you might chew a piece of food rather than glance at it.

Psalm 119:103 teaches us three ideas about the word of God being sweeter than honey:

Savor the Word of God

- Notice the sensory language the psalmist uses: taste. The psalmist doesn't merely read. He tastes, and taste is personal. No one can taste for you. You have to experience it.
- Psalm 34:8, *Taste and see that the Lord is good*. In Psalm 119, the psalmist is tasting the word of God, which he describes as sweet.
- When the psalmist says he meditates on the law all day long, he is not describing quiet devotional reading. He is describing constant, audible rehearsal, the ancient equivalent of carrying a verse in your mouth from morning to night.
- The psalmist is not saying the law is interesting. He is saying it is delicious, and that this delight, not obligation, is what produces verse 101's obedience and verse 104's hatred of falsehood.
- Savoring takes time. In our fast world, we can read the Bible like we check email, read text, or scroll through social media. The invitation from Psalm 119:103 is to slow down, enjoy, and delight in the word of God. Savoring

Satisfy Your Life with the Word of God

- The Psalmist doesn't just say that God's words are sweet. He makes a comparison that they are sweeter than honey.
- Honey in the ancient Near East was not one sweet option among many, the way it is in a culture with refined sugar, candy, and soda. It was, for most people, the sweetest thing they would ever taste, rare enough to symbolize abundance itself, which is why the land of promise is described as flowing with milk and honey. Comparing God's words to honey was not decoration. It was the strongest sensory claim available to the psalmist, and it was a claim about the mouth, not just the mind. What a modern reader most often misses is that this is a psalm about taste and appetite, not information.
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- The word of God feeds an appetite nothing else can reach. Our appetite is a cue to God's grace, but we attempt to satisfy it through many things in life besides the word of God.

Sustain Your Life with the Word of God.

- Sweetness is not just about satisfaction, but also about endurance.
- In the wilderness, the Lord fed the people of Israel manna daily, which tasted like honey (Exodus 16:31). The people collected just enough for today, and God supplied enough for forty years.
- Most of what satisfies us has a shelf life or an expiration date. The psalmist isn't claiming a momentary sugar rush. He's claiming something that keeps, the same way the Word itself is described just a few verses earlier as fixed forever in the heavens (119:89). When you build your appetite around the Word of God it doesn't spoil on you later.

Summer Reading Plan

Join us in reading one chapter each day through the Gospels using BibleProject's Gospel Reading Plan on the Bible App. We are starting Luke 1 on Tuesday, July 21.

