

Doctrinal Summary of The Heart of Man: Critical for Not Sinning Against God

In Psalm 119:11 the psalmist identifies that filling the heart of man with God's instructions allows man to not sin against God.

"Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You."

The word "treasured" is translated from the Biblical Hebrew word **צָפַן** ("tsah-phan-tiy") which more literally means, "I performed the completed action to hide something away in a safe location so that it will be preserved and available for later use." The purpose of the hiding is primarily preservation oriented; whatever is being hidden is hidden in a safe place so that it is preserved in its fullness. The object needs to be kept safe and preserved so that it can be used when the time comes. Thus, it is hidden away in a safe location so that it can be kept safe until it is needed. The object which the psalmist has hidden away is the word of God.

Here, the word "word" is translated from the Biblical Hebrew word **אִמְרָתְךָ** ("im-ra-theh-kah") which more literally means, "that which has been stated belonging to You." It refers to the specific statement made by an individual which communicates a specific message, instruction, or command. Its focus is on what has been said, including the reason it was said and the purpose for which it was stated. The "You" the statement belongs to is God according to context. The psalmist is identifying that he has hidden away the statements of God in the safety of his heart for preservation and later use. At the time of the psalmist's writing this would be referring to the Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) which included the Law of Moses, the history of God's dealings with man up to that point in time, and many prophecies. Thus, the psalmist is identifying that he has hidden in his heart each of the messages, instructions, and commands which God has stated. The purpose behind this is so that the psalmist might not perform the action to sin against God.

The heart is the storage place for man's beliefs and man's beliefs are the source of his actions (cf. Matt. 15:18). For this reason, whatever the man hides in his heart will determine whether his actions are righteous or sinful, good or evil (cf. Luke 6:45). Righteous and good actions are produced from righteous and good beliefs hidden in the heart of man. For a belief to be righteous it must be in agreement with the norms and standards of God's design in form and function. For a belief to be good, it must be inherently valuable for reliance because it accurately corresponds to reality. Any belief which does not harmonize with God's norms and standards or which is not inherently valuable for reliance upon misses the mark and is sin.

Therefore, the ability of man to not sin before God requires him to hide God's Word in his heart. This requires two things from man. First, he must be spiritually alive and operating. If he is not spiritually alive (unbelievers) and not spiritually operating (all unbelievers and carnal believers), then he cannot understand the spiritual things of God (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14) and will not be able to learn God's messages, instructions, and commands. Secondly, he must study God's Word and learn it accurately. If the believer does not study and learn God's Word, then he will have nothing to hide in his heart and will continue sinning away. Even still, if the believer learns God's Word inaccurately, then he will hide false truths in his heart and continue sinning away despite his penalty being paid once and for all. The greater the believer knows and chooses to depend upon God's Word, the less he will falter in his walk (cf. Ps. 37:31).