A Humble Approach…

As we are memorizing scripture together, it is always interesting to talk with others and see how they approach the verses and commit to memorizing them. All kinds of methods are used as we are all different people. On a personal note, many times one thing that happens for me as I start a certain section of scripture is that a one word description will emerge in my mind describing the overall meaning of the verses. This week I was in my car sitting at a stoplight when I first looked at our verses and immediately one word was clear – "humility". While that word is not specifically used in the verses this week, I personally see it as a theme overshadowing them. Let's look closer and I will share why…

"I am exceedingly afflicted; revive me according to Thy Word.
O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me Thine ordinances."
Psalm 119:107-108 (NASV)

I don't know if you have ever felt *"exceedingly afflicted"* or not. What constitutes affliction reaching the exceeding point? I am not sure; I think that is relative to your experience and emotional maturity. What may seem like over the top affliction to a teenager is not always so to an adult, but more than likely we have all been to the place of "exceedingly afflicted" at some point in our life journey thus far. To me that isn't the important part of this verse… the important part comes in the second statement - *"revive me according to Thy Word."* This writer has humbled himself to the Word of God, realizing that in his affliction, the only thing that will truly revive him is God's Word.

It takes a humble faith to reach for the Word when affliction is present. Our flesh would like for us to reach for any number of other things to make us feel better for the moment. We have probably all done that with something or another, whatever will give us a quick lift when times are hard. In my early marriage years when I was just starting out as a pastor's wife, I remember meeting another pastor's wife who was an anxious sort, if you know what I mean. I will never forget the time she told me that she took a nerve pill every Saturday night to help settle her nerves before she went to church on Sunday. Something just didn't seem right about that to me! Now that I am older and wiser, and have more understanding from the Word, I much prefer the approach given here… *"revive me according to Thy Word."* In other words, "God use Your powerful Word to meet me at my place of affliction and give me Your perspective. I know it is the only way I will truly be revived."

You see, God can use His Word to say just the right thing for comfort, just the right word of wisdom, just the right word of direction to lift us up out of our affliction, but it takes a humble faith to believe that and reach for it when other more tangible "revivers" are at an arm's reach. Where do you turn when you are afflicted?

See what I meant when I said there is an overshadowing of humility in these verses… what about the next one? It says,

"O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me Thine ordinances."
Psalm 119:108 (NASV)

I also love the way the NIV version phrases the first part, it says, *"the willing praise of my mouth."* Both versions make it clear it is not a forced offering. More than likely at some point you have seen a child offer a forced statement of thanks or apology, and it is quite clear that it is not a willing offering. But here the writer states that he has chosen to praise God and that he has chosen to acknowledge the authority of God in His life and he is in effect saying, "I need to be taught, I need to know what you say, because I know that it is right and true and beneficial to my life… please teach me!" There is a definite difference between forced and willing. Is that your approach to the Lord and to what He has to say in your life?

"Forever O Lord, let us humble ourselves to Your Word."