



ASSOCIATION
of CHRISTIAN
LIBRARIANS®

Reference Point

October 2015

Solid Foundation, Secure Footing

We all like to know where we are going, but that often means facing the reality of knowing where we have been and where we currently are. One of my favorite verses is Psalm 119:105 “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” I would submit that there are four essential elements we must recognize, from verses 89 to 105: first, the nature of mankind; second, the nature of God; third, the nature of God’s Word; and finally, our response, in order to fully realize the impact of this often quoted verse.

The psalmist reveals that our own human nature seeks its own self-sufficiency, is forgetful and finite, is destructive and evil, yet is also able to love and learn. We have the power do great harm and, even at the same time, great good. We can see that played out at the circulation desk with complaints and our responses to those complaints. So which side of our nature will we allow to come out?

This reflection of what we are prompts us to ponder where we need to go by comparing our humanity to God’s nature. He builds up, is faithful, gives life, shares His wisdom, and teaches. We should strive to move from our fallen humanity to model this God-established standard. How do we then attain this standard?

God’s Word is the vehicle communicating God’s character to us because it is eternal, heavenly, has the power to hold the universe together, and yet is the conveyor of wisdom and is understandable.

This should make it our primary source of spiritual guidance in the here and now.

Verse 105 captures the heart of this passage revealing that the Word is designed for the daily steps we take and provides the illumination for the broader direction of the path ahead. We all have probably experienced at some point how far we can get on our own when it’s pitch black around us. Not far. Appropriate lighting makes a world of difference. We would be foolish not to use the proper light source. Light is something outside of ourselves that we must seek and find. Ultimately, we are faced with the question: will God’s Word guide us, or will we try to guide ourselves without it?

The psalmist doesn’t leave us hopeless, but rather instructs us how to respond to God’s Word. We should trust it (v. 89-92), delight in it (v. 92), remember it (v. 93), seek it (v. 94), do what it says (v. 95, 100-101), love it (v. 97, 104), meditate on it (v. 97, 99), evaluate ideas by it (v. 104), and allow it to direct our path (v. 105). And this beginning point is indeed a very good place to start. We have been given a solid foundation that leads to secure footing for the journey ahead; we just have to grasp the lamp.



—Mark Hanson

Mark Hanson serves as Library Director of Cedarholm Library at Maranatha Baptist University in Watertown, WI and has been a member of ACL since 2013.