

What is the value of an historical study? We may suggest these:

- a. Generally it tends to humble us at the note that we do not have the glorious past we imagine.
- b. It also serves to warn us about a number of presumptions that we easily meet in our lives.
- c. The chief problem is that--while it shows the failures, it does not provide the power to either avoid or overcome. Therefore it can be a discouraging study. But if we allow it to direct us to and rely on the power of God, it serves a truly useful purpose. Furthermore, in itself, history does not change people. They, seeing it, must desire and work for the change.
- d. The history of Israel is widely used in the N.T. as a background study for the believer to know what pleases and what displeases God.

4. The Practical Lessons:

- a. We learn that God's grace is not to be imposed upon. His will is to be honored and flagrant violation of it can only lead to judgment and grief. At the same time we can trust even His judgment to be intended for the recovery and blessing of His people--severe though it may be.
- b. Our own emotions cannot be trusted to guide us in making decisions and rendering judgments. We are likely to weigh everything in terms of our own convenience even when we may not be aware of it. The practical lesson of history is that we need an objective center on which to pin our values.
- c. Memory must be constantly prompted. It is very helpful and an enormously useful tool--but it must be fed with the spiritual facts in repeated order. Our ability to lose an accurate sight of the past is pretty appalling.

5. Conclusion: It is both privilege and prerogative to be taught by God's dealings.

F. Building one's Spiritual Character, Psalm 119

1. Introductory notes on the Psalm...since this is the most logical step in our progression.
 - a. Obviously too long a Psalm for one meeting or a week of meetings. It is a book in itself. It is an "alphabet" Psalm, with 22 sections of 8 verses each. Each section begins with a new letter of the Hebrew alphabet.