

Psalm 119:65-72  
God's Goodness Viewed Through the Lens of Affliction

**Introduction:** From the Teth section of Ps. 119. Six uses of the Hebrew root word *tob*.

**1) Based on God's PAST providence—119:65-67**

- a) **Humble observation of God's work:** <sup>65</sup> *You have dealt well [tob] with Your slave, O Yahweh, according to Your word [dabar].*
- i) He said He would, and He does. (Jay Adams) (cf. Ps. 1:1-3)
  - ii) Good:
    - (1) What it is, how to appreciate it, where to find it, what is its source and its demands (Alec Motyer)
    - (2) That which is pleasing, valuable, or useful
  - iii) Cf. James 1:2-4; Rom. 5:1-5
- b) **Prayer for "good taste":** <sup>66</sup> *Teach me good [tob] discernment / taste and knowledge, For I believe in Your commandments [mitsvah].*
- i) A repeated prayer in Ps. 119:12, 26, 64, 66, 108, 124, 135.
  - ii) Develop a taste for what pleases God. (Heb. 5:11-14)
  - iii) Jay Adams writes: He needs to know the specific commands that will guide him in his daily decision-making and he needs to know exactly how to obey them.
- c) **Humble perspective of being habitually misled:** <sup>67</sup> *Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word [imrah].*
- i) As Andrew Davidson reminds us: going astray refers to all sins done not in a spirit of rebellion against the law or ordinance of Jehovah—sins committed through human imperfection, or human ignorance, or human passion; sins done when the mind was directed to some end connected with human weakness or selfishness, but not formally opposed to the authority of the Lawgiver.
  - ii) Restoration of fellowship by means of distress. (Heb. 12:3-13)
- d) **Prayer for being taught:** <sup>68</sup> *You are good [tob] and do good [tob] ; Teach me Your statutes [hoq].*
- i) God's actions (what He does) flow from His attributes (who He is). He is actively good because He is essentially good.

**2) Based on God's PRESENT providence—119:69-72**

- a) **The contrasting values** of the arrogant and the righteous—119:69-70
- i) **Value of activity**, the arrogant value lies and slander: <sup>69</sup> *The arrogant have smeared / plastered me with lying;*
    - (1) Whole-hearted obedience: *With all my heart I will observe Your precepts [piqqud].*

- (2) The man of God did not sue for defamation of character but rather sanctified himself unreservedly for obedience to God's Word and will. (George Zemek)
  - (3) The important issue is not the arrogant or what the arrogant say/do. It is the Godward response of the believer.
  - ii) **Value of pleasure**, the arrogant value spiritual insensitivity: <sup>70</sup> *Their heart is covered with fat* (from material prosperity),
    - (1) Pleasure in God's instruction: *But I delight in Your law [torah]*.
      - (a) Cf. Ps. 1:2
  - b) **The proper values** of the righteous despite the slander—119:71-72
    - i) **The value of suffering**: <sup>71</sup> *It is good [tob] for me that I was afflicted* (cf. 119:67), *That I may learn Your statutes [hog]*.
      - (1) This emphasizes a lifelong preoccupation with God's Word.
      - (2) This is what used to be referred to as gratitude for bitter medicine.
      - (3) By faith he is enabled to view affliction as a mark of God's grace and fatherly discipline. Cf. 119:75
    - ii) **The value of God's Word**: <sup>72</sup> *The law [torah] of Your mouth* (i.e. the inspired Word) *is better [tob] to me Than thousands of gold and silver pieces*.
      - (1) Every disciple needs to decide, by God's grace, what is the most valuable thing they can treasure.
- 3) Things we need to remember:**
- a) When the faithful study God's word and pray to understand his ways, they realize that his word is good—better than riches. (Allen Ross)
  - b) The person of faith does not live by the priorities and values of the world (Heb. 11:24–27) but puts the will of God ahead of everything else. (Warren Wiersbe)
  - c) God is in the business of using personal affliction as a catalyst for spiritual growth and also as a cultivator of right attitudes and proper priorities. (George Zemek)