

64 The earth, O LORD, is full of Your mercy;
Teach me Your statutes.



Teth

65 You have dealt **well** with Your servant,
O LORD, according to Your word.

66 Teach me **good** judgment and knowledge,
For I believe Your commandments.

67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,
But now I keep Your word.

68 You are **good**, and do good;
Teach me Your statutes.

69 The proud have forged a lie against me,
But I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart.

70 Their heart is as fat as grease,
But I delight in Your law.

71 It is **good** for me that I have been afflicted,
That I may learn Your statutes.

72 The law of Your mouth is **better** to me
Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.

YOD

73 Your hands have made me and fashioned me;
Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.



Teth notes

There are two familiar themes in the Teth section: affliction, and the goodness of God. Every verse in the section addresses one or the other, or both.

Five verses in the section begin with the Hebrew word for “good.” (In the page layout, these words appear in bold print. The three verses that do not begin with “good” are indented.) The message is clear: God is good, his word is good, the life he gives me is good.

This is true even though that life includes affliction, as shown in verse 67 (which speaks of the corrective benefit of affliction) and 69-70 (which describe a specific affliction faced by the psalmist). Verse 71, finally, states outright what verse 67 hints, that it’s not just that the good in life outweighs the affliction, but that the affliction itself is part of the good. For the servant of God, affliction is a blessing, since it turns him to God’s word. The psalmist never says that affliction is pleasant or unpainful; he doesn’t even go so far as to say that it is sent by God. He does affirm, though, that it works for his good (compare Rom. 8:28).

It’s not easy to attain the attitude of verse 71, even in the face of life’s minor disappointments. How many of us have ever spoken from this perspective?

It’s good for me that I was cut from the basketball team.

It’s good for me that my ears are too big.

It’s good for me that I got a B- in a class where I deserved an A.

It’s good for me that my manuscript was rejected

. . .that I didn’t get that promotion

. . .that my co-workers are gossiping about me.

It is a good thing--it really is--that life doesn’t always go our way. All these things work to push us closer to him. For the servant of God, it’s all good. Believe it.

Hebrew scholars tell us that the “good judgment” the psalmist requests in verse 66 is, literally, “taste.” He’s asking for the ability to sense right and wrong immediately--as we judge food by its taste--so he can shape his actions accordingly.

And the commentators agree that though the simile of a heart “as fat as grease” does not occur elsewhere in the Bible, it probably refers to a lack of sensibility or a hardness of heart. These are just people that it’s hard to get through to, people who do not understand and do not care kind what of damage their actions cause to others.