

Psalms 143:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.

Analysis

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. After expressing devastation (vv. 3-4), David pivots to remembrance—a crucial spiritual discipline when present circumstances overwhelm. "I remember" (zakarti, זָקַרְתִּי) is active recollection, deliberately calling to mind God's past faithfulness. "Days of old" (yamim mikedem, יָמִים מִקְדֵּם) could refer to David's personal history or Israel's salvation history—likely both.

The three parallel verbs—"remember," "meditate" (hagiti, הָגַתִּי), and "muse" (asicha, אֲשִׁיכָה)—intensify the focus. Hagah (הָגָה) means to murmur, mutter, or meditate deeply (same verb in Psalm 1:2 for meditating on God's law). Siach (שִׁיחָה) means to ponder, rehearse, or contemplate. David fills his mind with God's "works" (po'alekha, פּוֹעֵלֶךָ) and the "work of thy hands" (ma'aseh yadekha, מְעַשְׁתָּךְ יָדֶךָ)—both creation and redemptive acts.

This models cognitive behavioral therapy before the term existed: when overwhelmed, deliberately redirect thoughts to truth. Paul commands the same: "whatsoever things are true...think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). Memory of God's past faithfulness fuels hope for present deliverance. If God acted in "days of old," He remains faithful today.

Historical Context

Israelite worship constantly rehearsed God's mighty acts: creation, the exodus, wilderness provision, conquest, judges' deliverances, David's anointing. Annual feasts commemorated these saving events. This wasn't mere historical interest but faith-sustaining remembrance—the same God who acted in the past is present now. Psalm 77 similarly moves from distress (vv. 1-9) to remembrance of God's wonders (vv. 10-20), finding hope in recounting redemptive history. The Lord's Supper continues this practice: "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What specific past works of God in your life or biblical history can you meditate on during overwhelming circumstances?
2. How does deliberately remembering God's faithfulness differ from nostalgia or escapism?
3. What spiritual disciplines help you fill your mind with God's works when anxiety threatens to dominate your thoughts?

Interlinear Text

בְּמַשְׁעָה הַ פָּעַל בָּהּ בְּמַשְׁעָה הַ

I remember the days of old I meditate

H2142

H3117

מִקְדָּם יְמִים יָמִים

H6924

בְּגִתְּתִי

H1897

בְּכָל

H3605

פָּעַל בָּהּ

on all thy works

H6467

בְּמַשְׁעָה הַ

on the work

H4639

אֲשַׁׁוּךְ יְדֵיךְ

I muse of thy hands

H3027

I muse

H7878

Additional Cross-References

Micah 6:5 (Parallel theme): O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.

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