

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, זָכַרְתִּי) is active recollection, deliberately calling to mind God's past faithfulness. "Days of old" (yamim mikedem, יָמִים מִקֶּדֶם) could refer to David's personal history or Israel's salvation history—likely both.

The three parallel verbs—"remember," "meditate" (hagiti, הִגִּיתִי), and "muse" (asicha, אָשִׁיחָה)—intensify the focus. Hagah (הִגָּה) means to murmur, mutter, or meditate deeply (same verb in Psalm 1:2 for meditating on God's law). Siach (שִׁיחַ) means to ponder, rehearse, or contemplate. David fills his mind with God's "works" (po'alekha, פְּעֻלָּתְךָ) and the "work of thy hands" (ma'aseh yadekha, מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ)—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

אֲנִי כִּי רָחֵמְתִּי	יָמֵי יוֹם	מִקֵּדָם	הִגֵּי יִתִּי	בְּכָל	פְּעָלֶיךָ	בְּמַעֲשֵׂה ה
I remember	the days	of old	I meditate	H3605	on all thy works	on the work
H2142	H3117	H6924	H1897		H6467	H4639
יְדֵי יְיָ	אֲשׁוּחֶחֱ:					
of thy hands	I muse					
H3027	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.