

Psalms 71:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

Analysis

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. This verse testifies to lifelong spiritual education and ongoing proclamation. 'Thou hast taught me' (limadtani, לִמְךָתַנִּי) recognizes God as the primary teacher—not merely through human instructors but directly through experience, Scripture, and divine illumination. The psalmist has been in God's school 'from my youth' (mineuray, מִנְעִירִי), emphasizing that spiritual education began early and continued throughout life. God's pedagogy isn't limited to formal instruction but encompasses all life experiences interpreted through faith.

'Hitherto' (ve'ad hennah, עַד-הַהִנָּה, until now) marks a lifetime of testimony. 'I declared' (aggadti, אֶגְגָּדֵתִי) means to announce publicly, to make known—not private knowledge but public witness. 'Thy wondrous works' (niphleotekha, נִפְלְאֹתֶיךָ) describes God's miraculous interventions, His extraordinary acts that defy natural explanation. The verse creates a pattern: God teaches → the believer learns → the believer declares → others hear of God's wonders. Faith transmission requires both learning and testifying.

For Christians, this pattern continues. We're taught by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 'the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost... shall teach you all things'), and we're commanded to declare what we've learned (Matthew 28:19-20, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations'). Paul wrote to Timothy, 'And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also' (2 Timothy 2:2). Each generation receives divine

instruction and passes it to the next, creating an unbroken chain of testimony to God's wondrous works.

Historical Context

Jewish education emphasized memorization and repetition. Children learned Torah by reciting it repeatedly, embedding it in memory. The Talmud preserves teaching methods of the rabbis—using questions, parables, and memorable sayings to ensure transmission. Synagogues served as both worship centers and schools (*bet sefer*, house of the book), where children learned to read using Scripture texts.

The concept of 'declaring God's wondrous works' permeates Israel's worship. Psalms repeatedly command declaring God's works to the next generation (Psalm 78:4, 'We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD'). Festivals commemorated historical events—Passover retold the Exodus, Tabernacles recalled wilderness wanderings, Purim celebrated Esther's deliverance. These celebrations ensured that each generation learned God's saving acts from the previous generation.

Early Christianity continued this pattern. Catechesis (systematic instruction) prepared converts for baptism, teaching Scripture, theology, and Christian practice. Creeds emerged as summaries of essential teaching, memorizable statements of faith passed to new believers. The New Testament letters often include credal formulas (Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Timothy 3:16) that churches recited corporately, teaching theology through worship. Church fathers like Augustine and Chrysostom wrote catechetical works teaching new believers. This pattern continues—each generation receives instruction in 'God's wondrous works' and bears responsibility to declare them to the next.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How has God 'taught you' throughout your life, and what have you learned from His instruction?
2. What 'wondrous works' of God have you witnessed that you need to declare to others?
3. How are you ensuring the next generation learns of God's faithfulness through your testimony?
4. What role does both formal instruction and experiential learning play in your spiritual growth?
5. How can you be more intentional about publicly declaring God's works rather than keeping faith private?

Interlinear Text

הָבָה וְעַד מִנְעָוֶךָ לִמְדָת נִיְמָה יְהִי אֱלֹהִים

O God thou hast taught me from my youth H5704 H2008

H430 H3925 H5271

אָגִיד נְפִילָאֹתִיךְ

and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works

H5046 H6381

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:9 (Parallel theme): Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Psalms 71:5 (References God): For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth.

Psalms 119:102 (Parallel theme): I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.