

.. . ✨ .. . SPANISH MOSS .. . ✨ .. .

In a couple of winter devotionals, we discussed mistletoe, an arboreal plant that draws nutrition from host trees. Today I would like to tell you about another arboreal plant found throughout the deep South—Spanish moss. The curly, thin strands grow upon the branches of large trees in humid, swampy regions. Most often found on southern live oaks, the moss drapes itself across the twisting branches like beautiful, silvery hair. If you’ve ever walked beneath such trees, you know that the moss creates an enchanting, ethereal atmosphere.

Until recently, I’d never realized that Spanish moss was a living plant. In fact, it’s classified as an epiphyte, which means that it draws moisture and nutrients from the air. Unlike other tree-dwelling, parasitic plants like mistletoe, Spanish moss draws no nourishment from its host trees.

As usual, learning about the moss made me love it even more. So, newly fascinated with the plant, I brought home a large bundle after my most recent trip to New Orleans. Once home, I distributed the moss among various other plants and containers, and I continued to meditate upon its properties. I felt the Lord nudge my spirit with the question, “What if my people took responsibility for their own growth instead of depending upon others to feed them?” Like the Spanish moss, God calls us to take responsibility for our own health and growth.

As a Bible teacher, my heart is often grieved by the seeming lack of interest many of God’s people have toward his Word. Even if we attend church every Sunday, we’ll receive only two hours of biblical teaching per *month*. Instead, our Father calls us to nourish ourselves daily upon his Word.

The Psalmist describes the joy and security derived from a personal devotion to studying God’s statutes. He rejoices,

*Oh, how I love your instructions!  
I think about them all day long.  
Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,  
for they are my constant guide.  
Yes, I have more insight than my teachers,  
for I am always thinking of your laws.  
I am even wiser than my elders,  
for I have kept your commandments.  
I have refused to walk on any evil path,  
so that I may remain obedient to your word.  
I haven’t turned away from your regulations,  
for you have taught me well.  
How sweet your words taste to me;  
they are sweeter than honey.  
Your commandments give me understanding;  
no wonder I hate every false way of life.*  
**Psalm 119:97–104**

The Psalmist didn’t depend upon his teachers to spoon-feed him God’s Word. In fact, he studied so diligently that he surpassed his elders in wisdom. He was transformed as he learned the ways of God and began to walk in them. His intimacy with the Lord empowered him to recognize deception, avoid evil, and seize each day with joy.

If you are reading these devotionals, I know you already hunger for God's Word. I encourage you to stoke that desire and continue growing in maturity by searching the Scriptures for yourself.

*Lord, thank you for the gift of Scripture. I ask you to grow my desire to spend time in study, and I repent of neglecting time in your Word. Help me prioritize my studies rather than allowing other parts of my life to get in the way. Give me understanding and clarity as I seek to learn your statutes. I ask for a greater knowledge so that I can remain on your path and avoid evil ways. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

#### Personal Reflection

Re-read Psalm 119:97–104 above. Underline every benefit of God's Word, then read the passage again and circle every action the Psalmist takes to receive these benefits. Compare and contrast your own attitudes and habits with those of the Psalmist, and write your thoughts below.

