

# Delight Yourself in the Lord

## PSALM 37:4 COMMENTARY

- See also Psalm 37 Commentary

DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD: The Double Cure For Our Fretting and Fulfilling Our Desires - In Psalm 37 David is old (Ps 37:25) and thus speaks wise words of an a man after God's own heart who has spent much of his life dwelling in the presence of Jehovah. And so first let us observe that David uses the verb FRET 3 times in the first 8 verses (Ps 37:1,7-8), interweaving it with God's antidotes for fretting. In fact he exhorts us to do several things to counter fretting (Ps 37:2 understand evildoers final fate, Ps 37:3 Trust in the Lord, Ps 37:3 Do good, Ps 37:3 Cultivate faithfulness, Ps 37:5 Commit your way to the Lord, Ps 37:5 Trust Him, Ps 37:7 Rest in the Lord, Ps 37:7 Wait patiently for Him) but one activity that is unique is the command (not a suggestion) to "DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD." Notice that the verb fret has an [interesting derivation](#) from an Old English word (fretan) meaning to devour, which gives us a vivid picture of fretting, which is allowing something to "eat away" or "gnaw away" thus producing an envious, agitated, vexed or worried mind. Unfortunately fretting comes far too naturally to our fallen flesh, the old adversary, that Adamic nature still resident in our mortal body (Ro 7:18-note, Gal 5:17-note). And so in Ps 37:4 David gives us God's antidote, charging us to change our focus from fretting on evil doers to delighting in our good God, writing "Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart." Unfortunately my flesh too often "inverts" the order of the passage and focuses on my reward (the fulfilling of my desires) rather than the fulfilling of my responsibility (delight). David's order however clearly shows us that precepts come before promises, responsibility before rewards and delight before desires. So I need to take an honest inventory - "Am I truly delighting in the Lord?" To answer that question let us meditate on what it means to DELIGHT. And let us pray like the godly Puritan Richard Baxter "May the living God, Who is the portion and rest of His saints, make these our carnal minds so spiritual, and our earthly hearts so heavenly that loving Him, and DELIGHTING in Him, may be the work of our lives." Amen

In Psalm 37:4 the Hebrew verb for DELIGHT (anag) is a command which charges us to find our enjoyment in Jehovah. Another Hebrew word for delight (chephets) means to bend toward or incline toward, a very fitting description of what our attitude should be toward our Almighty God! A NT parallel of Ps 37:4 is Php 4:4-note which is also a command to continually "Rejoice in the Lord." If we attempt to DELIGHT in God out of a sense of duty, it will not be a delight but a drudgery! But God never gives a commandment without also providing the enablement. So how do we arouse a desire to delight and rejoice in the Lord? Simply put, we can't but God can! Paul commands us to work out our salvation (e.g., to DELIGHT), explaining that this is possible because "God is working (Gk = energeo ~ continually energizing) in us, giving us the DESIRE and the POWER to do what pleases Him." (Phil 2:12-13NLT-note) Note that we are both responsible and dependent! And so we work out what God's Spirit works in! We daily make the choice to renounce reliance on self efforts to muster up the affection to delight out of a sense of duty, and instead rely on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Christ alone can stir in our hearts this DESIRE and give us the supernatural power to DELIGHT in Jehovah. As A W Tozer said "We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit (and) when the Holy Spirit shows us God as He is we admire Him to the point of wonder and DELIGHT." James Smith explains that "Sin has taken our attention off of God - and fixed it upon ourselves, or the things around us. Grace calls our attention off of everything else - to fix it upon God. It directs us to DELIGHT in the Lord." Puritan Stephen Charnock adds that "This DELIGHT (in Ps 37:4) springs from the Spirit of God. Not a spark of fire on your own hearth is able to kindle this spiritual DELIGHT; it is the Holy Spirit Who breathes such a heavenly heat into our affections. The Spirit is the fire that kindles the soul, the spring that moves the watch, the wind that drives the ship. Just as prayer is the work of the Spirit in the heart, so DELIGHT in prayer owes itself to the same Author." As an unknown Puritan prayed "When I think upon and converse with Thee, ten thousand DELIGHTFUL thoughts spring up, ten thousand sources of pleasure are unsealed, ten thousand refreshing joys spread over my heart, crowding into every moment of happiness." ([Valley of Vision](#))

May God's Spirit stir our hearts to delight in the LORD as we pray David's words asking that we might "feast on the abundance of Your house and... drink from the river of Your DELIGHTS." (Ps 36:8, Jn 4:14, 7:38-39-note) "Dear fountain of DELIGHT unknown!/No longer sink below the brim/But overflow, and pour me down/A living and life-giving stream!" Amen (William Cowper)

What does delighting in the Lord look like practically? If we delight in a person, we desire to be in their presence and to hear their voice. Indeed, we should seek to be like the blessed man whose "DELIGHT is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night." (Ps 1:2-note) And like the psalmist who "opened wide his mouth and panted, because he longed for God's precepts." (Ps 119:131, 40) We need to daily chose to "delight in His commandments, which we love." (Ps 119:47) We should be like a young couple who is so in love that their greatest desire is to be in each other's company prompting them to rearrange all their priorities!

Why? Not because that was their duty but because it was their greatest desire and delight! This begs the question "Do I DELIGHT in God's Word like this? Do I set aside time to commune with Him in His Word because I DELIGHT in hearing to His voice? Has my quiet time become "too quiet," because I have begun to see it more as a duty than a DELIGHT?"

May God's Spirit revive our hearts according to His Word (Ps 119:25) that we might be like Jeremiah who said "Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the DELIGHT of my heart." (Jer 15:16-note) If we truly DELIGHT in Jehovah, we desire not only to spend time with Him, listening to His voice in His Word, but also longing to speak with Him. We need to imitate godly Nehemiah who prayed "O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who DELIGHT to fear (reverence) Your Name." (Neh 1:11) And may our heart be like "Mary, who was listening (cp Ps 81:10b) to the Lord's word, seated at His feet" and not like "Martha (who) was distracted...worried (fretting) and bothered about so many things." Indeed, may we delight in Jesus' words that "There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." (Lk 10:38-42) Remember, beloved, that our Lord desires our delight before our duty, our presence before our presents! Father grant that by Your Spirit we like the saints of old might discover that the one thing that is important in time and eternity is to sit lost in DELIGHT at our Savior's feet communing with Him through His Word and prayer. Amen

To DELIGHT in the Lord is to desire to be near Him, to be like the OT saints who cried "My soul longs for Thee, as a parched land. Selah." (Ps 143:6) "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I DESIRE nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (Ps 73:25-26) When we DELIGHT in the Lord we come to understand more fully that "the nearness of God is our good," (Ps 73:28) and that "a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." (Ps 84:10) And as we learn to delight in Jehovah, we will desire even more to daily be in His presence, for "In His presence (literally before His face) is fulness of joy. In His right hand there are pleasures forevermore. (Ps 16:11) So let us each morning enabled by His Spirit choose to DELIGHT in Jehovah and beseech Him to "hide us in the secret place of His presence." (Ps 31:20) "Let us come before His presence (face) with thanksgiving. Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms" (Ps 95:2), confident that He will make us "glad with the joy of His presence." (Ps 21:6) Indeed, as the writer of Hebrews encourages, "Let us therefore draw near with confidence (boldness) to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need (which is ALL the time!)" (Heb 4:16-note) "O God of my delight, Thy throne of grace is the pleasure ground of my soul." [Valley of Vision](#)

**WILL GOD GIVE ME ALL MY DESIRES?** - Some suggest that Ps 37:4 is a promise that we will receive whatever we desire. And most of us have fallen into the trap wondering "Lord, why don't You give me what I desire since it is not a bad thing?" When we are frustrated by a promise it may be because we are not interpreting the promise correctly! When we examine the context, we observe that Psalm 37 tells us not to fret or be envious of the wicked and not focus on what they have or what they seem to be getting away with. Instead we are to focus on Jehovah, the great I Am Who promises to "supply all our needs (not our wants) according to His riches in Christ Jesus." (Php 4:19-note) And when we compare a parallel passage like 1Jn 5:14-note, we see that we need to ask for desires that are "according to His will" not our will. (see also qualification of abiding in His Word - Jn 15:7) As Spurgeon says those "who delight in God desire or ask nothing but what will please God." In other words as we practice the presence of God, daily delighting in Him, in His Word, in prayerful communion with Him, gradually His Spirit transforms our heart so that our desires become His desires and it is those desires He will grant. Indeed, our desires will be His desires when our heart sings "Take my will, and make it Thine. It shall no be no longer mine. Take my love, my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store. Take myself and I will be, ever only, all for Thee, ever only all for Thee." (Frances Havergal) If God has our hearts, He can trust us with His blessings. So let us DELIGHT in God and He will become our greatest DESIRE! And if all we desire is God, God will give us all we desire...Christ Jesus Himself, "in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col 2:3-note) The path to true fulfillment in this short life does not lie in preoccupation with self but in selfless preoccupation with Jesus, our all in all (Heb 12:2-note, Col 3:11-note). Beloved, true contentment becomes our experiential reality when God's will is more important than our wants and when we come to realize that Jesus is everything we need for time and eternity!

While it is amazing grace that saved sinners can DELIGHT in the Lord, it is even more amazing that He takes DELIGHT in us! Like a diamond miner who picks up a rough, dull stone and rejoices with delight, God delights over unlovely people. He knows what precious gems, through His Spirit's shaping and polishing, sanctified sinners will become in Christ, yea, even becoming His own treasured possession (Dt 26:18, Titus 2:14-note)! And so the prophet exults that "The LORD your God is in your midst. He is a warrior Who can deliver. He TAKES GREAT DELIGHT in you. He renews you by His love. He shouts for joy over you." (Zephaniah 3:17NET)

May our prayer daily be like the words of the devout Puritans in the [Valley of Vision](#) - "If Thou seest in me any wrong thing encouraged, any evil desire cherished, any DELIGHT that is not Thy DELIGHT, any habit that grieves Thee, any nest of sin in my heart, then grant me the kiss of Thy forgiveness, and teach my feet to walk the way of Thy commandments. Produce in me self-despair that will make Jesus precious to me, DELIGHTFUL in all His offices, pleasurable in all His ways, and may I love His

commands (delight yourself) as well as His promises (desire fulfilled). Give me the saving lamp of Thy Spirit that I may see Thee, the God of my salvation, the DELIGHT of my soul, rejoicing over me in love (Zeph 3:17-note)." Amen

### [Take My Life and Let It Be](#)

Take my life and let it be,

Consecrated Lord to Thee.

Take my moments and my days

And let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my will, and make it Thine.

It shall no be no longer mine.

Take my heart heart, it is Thy own.

It shall be Thy royal throne.

What do you do when you don't desire to delight in God? Clearly this is an important question so I would strongly encourage you to watch the 6 part series by Dr John Piper on what do I do... "When I Don't Desire God" - <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/by-series/2005-regional-conference>

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Psalm 37:4 **Delight** yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

Take delight in Yhwh so that he may give you the requests of your heart.

One might paraphrase "delight yourself" -- "Find your joy in Jehovah." "Seek your pleasure in Yahweh." "Be preoccupied with the LORD."

David wrote - 25 I have been young, and now I am old" so clearly these are words of wisdom of a man who has walked with God for decades.

The wonderful truth is that we who were once hostile to God, can now delight in Jehovah. And even more amazing is that He delights in us for we are "accepted in the Beloved." Amazing grace indeed! Ps 16:3-[note](#) As for the saints who are in the earth, they are the majestic ones in whom is all my **delight**.

**Douglas Carew** notes that in Ps 37:4 "A close interplay exists between "**delight** ... in the LORD," and "**desires** of your heart." The path to true self-fulfillment does not lie in a preoccupation with self but in selfless preoccupation with God. When the psalmist sets his heart on God, God reciprocates by making him truly fulfilled. And since no one seeks after God on their own, we are continually dependent on the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us to give us the desire and the power to seek the face of God.

**A W Tozer** writes "**when the Holy Spirit shows us God as He is we admire Him to the point of wonder and delight**"

When something **delights** us, we are **preoccupied** with it and we tend to protect and guard our time so that we can more quality time with the object of our delight.

To **delight** is to take pleasure or enjoyment from an object (in Ps 37:4 not an object but a Person, Jehovah) and implying the object has desirability! Delight in something or someone depicts a high degree of pleasure, or satisfaction of mind. While the verb is different, the idea is similar in Ps 1:3 where read that the "blessed" man (Ps 1:1) is the one whose "delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night." (Ps 1:2) In other words, how does he show he truly delights in the Word? He spends time with (in) the Word. He makes the Word a top priority. By the same token if we truly delight in Jehovah, we desire to spend time with Him, to listen to His voice in the Word, to speak with Him in prayer. And we make those items top priority. Even as I write this, I am convicted -- I might tell you I delight in the LORD, but honestly do the actions of my live, my priorities, my passions, etc validate my claim to delight in the LORD?

**Webster's 1828 Dictionary** says that "**Delight** is a more permanent pleasure than joy, and not dependent on sudden excitement." There may some truth in that statement, but in the NT clearly joy is a part of the fruit of the Spirit, so it can certainly be long lasting, as long as we are daily choosing to be filled with the Spirit and walk by the Spirit.

**Webster** also says that to **delight** is to "To affect with great pleasure; to please highly; to give or afford high satisfaction or joy; as, a beautiful landscape delights the eye; harmony delights the ear; the good conduct of children, and especially their piety, delights their parents."

**Delight** (06026)(**anag**) is a verb which means to be soft, to be delicate (in Pual stem) but also means to delight oneself in ("to take exquisite delight" - BDB), to be glad in or to enjoy (in Hithpael stem), especially taking delight and pleasure in God (Job 22:26, Isa 55:2, Psalm 37:4). To take pleasure in. To find enjoyment in (implying the desirability of the object).

To be a dainty habit, to be pampered (treated with extreme care and attention, gratified to the full, treated with affectionate, even excessive indulgence). To take exquisite delight in something. To make merry over.

The idea of this verb delight is that the one who obeys this command to delight (obeying enabled by the power of the Spirit) experiences a sense of joy in the Lord. The picture is of one who enjoys the Lord, taking pleasure in Him, experiencing satisfaction in Him. It is the call for us as finite created beings to take exquisite delight in the infinite, transcendent, majestic, glorious Creator of the universe. **Delight is the picture of my being highly pleased and fully contented with God's Person and Presence.** As David so beautifully puts it in Psalm 16:11 "Thou wilt make known to me the path of life (ultimately this is Jesus Himself... He alone is the Way... the Life! Jn 14:6). In Thy presence is fulness of joy. In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever." The Hebrew word "fulness" pictures satisfaction or sufficiency by simply being in the Lord's presence!

To be pampered encourages us to spoil ourselves with God's presence!

Isaiah 58:13-14 God gives a wonderful (conditional) promise - "If because of the Sabbath (Rest), you turn your foot from doing **your own pleasure** on My holy day, and call the Sabbath **a delight**, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor it, desisting from **your own ways**, from seeking **your own pleasure**, and speaking **your own word**, then you will take **delight** in the LORD, And I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; And I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." Jehovah in essence is saying that the path of true "self-fulfillment" paradoxically lies not in a preoccupation with self ("your own" used 4x!) but in a selfless preoccupation with God (in this case specifically His Rest). As we set our heart on God as our chief delight, God reciprocates supernaturally by making us truly fulfilled! God grant that the chief desire of our heart would first and foremost be to take great pleasure in Your presence. Amen

When we delight ourselves in the infinite God, our finite desires begin to be changed by His indwelling, transforming Spirit into His eternal desires and "the things of this earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace." (Turn Your Eyes on Jesus)

**Swanson** on **anag** - **1.** (pual) delicate, effeminate, formally, delightful, i.e., pertaining to feminine attributes not typical of a man, as soft and pleasing to the touch, or sensitive to be touched (Jer 6:2+); (hitpael) sensitive (Dt 28:56+); **2.** (hitpael) mock, make sport, i.e., verbally ridicule and scorn another, as an extension of exploiting the sensitivities of another through ridicule (Isa 57:4); **3.** (hitpael) **delight, enjoy, be fond, i.e., take pleasure and enjoyment in an object, implying desirability of the object** (Job 22:26; 27:10; Ps 37:4, 11; Isa 55:2; 58:14; 66:11)

**Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs** on **anag** - verb. be soft, delicate, dainty (NH id. Pi. make soft, pliable, live or spend in enjoyment; Arabic عَبَّحَ (ʿabbaḥa) use amorous behaviour, after languor);—Pu. Pt. f. הִתְעַבְּבָה Jer 6:2 daintily bred, figuratively of Jerusalem. Hithpael. **1. be of dainty habit**, Inf. cstr. הִתְעַבְּבָה Dt 28:56 (woman, || **2.** הִתְעַבְּבָה. **take exquisite delight**, Pf. 3 pl. הִתְעַבְּבָה consec. Psalm 37:11 (עַל rei); 2 mpl. הִתְעַבְּבָה consec. Isaiah 66:11 (מִן rei); Impf. 3 ms. הִתְעַבְּבָה Job 27:10; 2 ms. הִתְעַבְּבָה Isaiah 58:14, הִתְעַבְּבָה Jobb 22:26 (all c. [3; (עַל-י; שְׂדֵי, fs. הִתְעַבְּבָה Isaiah 55:2 (ב rei); Imv. ms. הִתְעַבְּבָה עַל-י Psalm 37:4. **3. c. עַל, in bad sense, make merry over, make sport of**, Impf. 2 mpl. הִתְעַבְּבָה Is 57:4.

The cognate masculine noun **oneg** (06027) is used only twice in the OT helps shed some light on what it means to delight oneself in Jehovah. One use means luxury (Isa 13:22) and gives us no additional insights. However the only other use of **oneg** by Isaiah (Isaiah 58:13-14 - addressed to Israel) is useful in pondering the related verb in Ps 37:4 (delight yourself), helping us understand what it means to **delight** in Jehovah. Isaiah writes...

If because of the Sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure (*chephets* - the verb *chapes* means to incline toward, to take *delight in*, to be pleased with) on My holy day, and call the sabbath **adelight (the noun oneg)**, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor it, desisting from your own ways, from seeking your own pleasure, and speaking your own word, (**Isa 58:14**) then you **will take delight (the verb anag** in Hithpael; Lxx = peitho = to trust) in the LORD (take delight in the LORD is identical to the Hebrew phrase in Ps 37:4), and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (Isa 58:13-14)

**Comment** - So the Sabbath was to be a day of delight, a time of enjoyment for Israel (Isa 58:13). And if Israel turned from selfishness to selflessness on this day, God would cause them to "take delight in Jehovah!" Not to

mention He would take them on the "ride" of their life! And so to delight in this day was to delight in Jehovah, in fact to delight in "the Son of Man (Who) is Lord of the Sabbath (our Rest, our cessation from labor!)." (Mt 12:8, Mk 2:28, Lk 6:5)

**Charles Ryrie comments** - If... you turn your foot. I.e., if you do not use the Sabbath for work. Sabbath observance should be a delight, showing one's love for God and His law and resulting in great blessing (Isa 58:14).

**Matthew Henry** - The Sabbath is a sign between God and His professing people; His appointing it is a sign of His favor to them; and their observing it is a sign of their obedience to Him. We must turn from traveling on that day; from doing our pleasure on that holy day, without the control and restraint of conscience; or from indulging in the pleasures of sense. On sabbath days we must not follow our callings, or our pleasures. In all we say and do, we must put a difference between this day and other days. Even in Old Testament times the Sabbath was called the Lord's day, and is fitly called so still; and for a further reason, it is the Lord Christ's day, Revelation 1:10. If we thus remember the sabbath day to keep it holy, we shall have the comfort and profit of it, and have reason to say, It is good to draw near to God.

**Carew comments** - The parallel usage of **עָנַג** (oneg) with **חָפַצְתִּי** (chapes = verb = to delight in, have pleasure) in Isa 58:13 is instructive. The people had turned to their own desires, **חָפַצְתִּי**, because they did not perceive Sabbath observance a delight, **עָנַג**. Thus, they had not honored the Sabbath but had treated it as an empty ritual in pursuit of their own selfish interest. Isaiah calls for a change of disposition. If God's blessing is going to be experienced, they must perceive that true Sabbath observance is not only a profitable religious and social provision, but a **true delight**.

**Delight** is in the Hithpael imperative (command) which primarily expresses a **"reflexive"** action (thus the pronoun *"yourself"*). The idea is to enjoy oneself and in Ps 37:4 the object to enjoy is God.

**Driver** suggests the word comes from another root that means "abandon oneself to, depend on" ("Problems in the Hebrew text of Job," VTSup 3 [1955]: 84). NET Bible.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates the Hebrew word **anag** with **katatruphao** in the **aorist imperative** which is a command to do even with a sense of urgency. Do what? Take delight in Jehovah! But as already explained, if we are honest, our fallen flesh does not naturally gravitate toward but away from God. In other words our natural tendency is **not to delight** in God. Therefore we must depend on the Spirit to give us the desire and the power to delight in Jehovah (Php 2:13NLT). When we make the choice to delight in Him, we fulfill the command to work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Php 2:12)! God's Spirit sparks the urge and gives the power to delight, but we must still choose to delight. It is the mysterious "marriage" of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. When Spurgeon was asked how he reconciled God's sovereignty and man's free will he responded "I never have to reconcile friends!"

As an aside the root verb for **katatruphao** is **truphao** and is used only once in the Bible (James 5:5 "you have lived luxuriously"). In the only NT use the verb is clearly in a negative sense, and conveys the idea of living in pleasure. In the context of Ps 37:4 it is the picture of "living luxuriously" in the presence of Jehovah. Contrast the world's counterfeit is material wealth, thinking that will bring us lasting delight, when in fact James says it will bring "a day of slaughter!" Only in the presence of Jehovah is there fullness of joy. Where are you seeking **delight**? In the passing world or the eternal God? There is simply no comparison. This will be a constant battle because your flesh desires to delight in the temporal, while the Spirit continually leads us to desire to delight in the eternal. Walk by the Spirit and you will delight yourself in Jehovah.

C S Lewis was right when he said "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

**Gilbrant** on **anag** - Occurring ten times only in the **Pual** ( Pual Stem is the passive counterpart of the Piel Stem. The Pual Stem is used to express an intensive type of action with a passive voice.) and **Hithpael** (reflexive) stems, the verb **ānōg** is a primary root. A cognate in Samaritan means *"to enjoy oneself,"* and an Arabic cognate means *"to make a fuss."* The verb **ānōg** can be used to describe a person who has been raised to live a refined, sheltered life where luxury is the norm. When God's judgment strikes, even the person accustomed to a soft life will feel the full force of his anger. Jeremiah 6:2 uses **ānōg** in a figurative description of Jerusalem at the time of its destruction. Also, if Israel persisted in breaking the Covenant, the land would come under such siege that the woman too **dainty** to let her foot touch the ground would be so desperate that she would eat the placenta of her own child (Deut. 28:56f). The word is used once in a negative sense, describing the way that rebels jest or make sport of the righteous (Isa. 57:4). But more often, **ānōg** appears in a good sense, **speaking of the exquisite** (marked by deep sensitivity) **delight a person can take in someone or something**. Job's friend Eliphaz exhorted him to find his **delight in the Lord** (Job 22:26), while Job declared that **his enemy would not delight in the Almighty** (Job 27:10). Those living in the kingdom are described figuratively as

nursing from Jerusalem and taking pleasure from her comforting breasts (Isa. 66:11). The prophet Isaiah called on the people to stop spending their wages on that which does not satisfy; if they would listen to God's Word, they could delight themselves in abundance (Isa. 55:2). God told his people to observe the Sabbath by delighting in Him (Isa. 58:14). Psalm 37 contains two uses of the word: the instruction to take exquisite pleasure in the Lord (Ps. 37:4) and the promise that the humble will inherit the land and delight in abundant prosperity (Ps. 37:11). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Anag** - 10v - **NAS** Usage: dainty(1), delicateness(1), delight(4), delighted(1), jest(1), take delight(2).

Deuteronomy 28:56 "The refined and delicate (cognate - anog) woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground for **delicateness** and refinement, shall be hostile toward the husband she cherishes and toward her son and daughter,

Job 22:26 "For then you will **delight** in the Almighty And lift up your face to God.

Job 22:26 (NJB) Then **Shaddai** will be all your delight, and you will lift your face to God.

**Comment:** Note the context of Job 22:25 - Then the Almighty will be your gold (treasure) and choice silver to you.

Job 27:10 "Will he take **delight** in the Almighty? Will he call on God at all times?

Psalm 37:4 **Delight** yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

11 But the humble will inherit the land And will **delight** themselves in abundant prosperity.

**Comment:** Those who truly **delight** in Jehovah are not proud but are humble. The essence of this truth was repeated by Jesus in Mt 5:5 - Blessed are the **gentle** (Greek = **praus** = Humble attitude that expresses itself in patient submissiveness) , for they shall inherit the earth.

Isaiah 55:2 "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And **delight** yourself in abundance.

**Comment:** Those who truly **delight** in Jehovah are those willing to listen and obey.

Isaiah 57:4 "Against whom do you **jest**? Against whom do you open wide your mouth And stick out your tongue? Are you not children of rebellion, Offspring of deceit,

Isaiah 58:14 Then you will **take delight** in the LORD, And I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; And I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (See comments above).

**Comment** - Here delighting in Jehovah is associated with obedience to His command to keep the Sabbath day holy unto the Lord.

Isaiah 66:11 That you may nurse and be satisfied with her comforting breasts, That you may suck and be **delighted** with her bountiful bosom."

Jeremiah 6:2 "The comely and **dainty** one, the daughter of Zion, I will cut off.

**Goldingjay** on **delight yourself** - People are not to become too enthusiastic about mere material provision. It also does so by eventually changing our first perception of the syntax. We could initially take the first colon as a continuation of the promises disguised as exhortations. It then promises that people who trust in Yhwh (Ps 37:3) will find that they do have reason to delight in Yhwh, presumably because of Yhwh's provision. But the second colon turns out to be a purpose clause (or a result clause) dependent on this opening imperative, which suggests the imperative (Delight yourself) is indeed an exhortation. **People are being urged to delight in Yhwh now, not later when they have experienced Yhwh's blessing.** **Delight** in Yhwh is a more affective version of **trust** in Yhwh (Ps 37:3) or a more affective version of the idea of \*seeking help from Yhwh that appears elsewhere. It is also a positive affective equivalent to being vexed and fretting (Ps 37:1, 7, 8 - **Ed**: Fret = to be vexed, troubled, be distressed, worried, irritated, annoyed. **Fret** derives from two words which means to gnaw away or to consume. **Synonyms** of **fret** = agonize, anguish, brood, lose sleep over, obsess about, upset or distress oneself, worry). The remedy for negative feelings that come from looking at others is to look at Yhwh and let appropriate feelings arise. In turn, receiving the requests of our heart is equivalent to staying in the land and feeding on/in truthfulness. They are requests (a noun from šāal), not merely desires (NRSV). To let them stay as desires is to risk their not being fulfilled (James 4:2). But they are indeed the requests of the heart: the listeners are invited to bring their deepest longings to Yhwh so that they can be fulfilled (perhaps translating as a result clause would make the psalm a little too unequivocal). The line as a whole is parallel to Ps 37:3. (BCOT- Psalms 1- Baker)

**He will give you the desires of your heart** -

(1John 3:22) and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

From Ps 37:4a and from the passages below, notice the prerequisites for receiving the **desires of your heart** - We are delighting ourselves in Jehovah, manifesting a reverential awe of Him, abiding in Him, letting His Word abide (dwell at home - this would include memorizing and meditating on His word) in us, and asking according to His will (which we are more likely to do when we are abiding in His Word, because His will is most clearly revealed in His Word).

Ps 145:19 He will fulfill the **desire** of those who **fear** Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them.

John 15:7 If you **abide** in Me and My **words** abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you.

1John 5:14 And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

### **The Old Testament commands us to delight ourselves in the Lord (Psalm 37:4)**

#### **Where Is true "DELIGHT"? IN CHRIST ALONE**

Not in Unbelief—Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He wrote: "I wish I had never been born."

Not in Pleasure—Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure if anyone did. He wrote: "The worm, the canker, and grief are mine alone."

Not in Money—Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying, he said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth."

Not in Position and Fame—Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: "Youth is a mistake; manhood a struggle; old age a regret."

Not in Military Glory (Might)—Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, because he said, "There are no more worlds to conquer."

Where then is GENUINE DELIGHT TO BE FOUND?—

the answer is simple, in Christ alone. Find your chief joy in life in Him.

#### **If God has our hearts, He can trust us with His blessings.**

**Delight in God** and He will become your greatest **desire!**

The way to have our **heart's desire** is to make God our **heart's delight**. If God give us Himself to be our joy, He will deny us nothing that is good for us. No delight is comparable to the delight which gracious souls have in the Almighty; and those that acquaint themselves with him, and submit themselves entirely to him, shall find his favor to be, not only their strength, but their song. (Matthew Henry)

To **delight** in the LORD is to find our highest degree of gratification in Him, to experience our greatest pleasure in Him, to find that He is the One who supremely satisfies our soul. He is the source of our joy. He is the one who pleases our soul.

Webster says "Delight is a more permanent pleasure than joy, and not dependent on sudden excitement."

The first use of **delight** in the Bible was Eve who saw the tree "was a **delight** to the eyes." (NAS, ESV) The Hebrew word for **delight** (taavah; Lxx = arestos = pleasing) is actually more often translated desire.

Neh 1:11 - "O Lord, I beseech Thee, may Thine ear be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant and the prayer of Thy servants who **delight** to revere (a sense of awe) Thy name, and make Thy servant successful today, and grant him compassion before this man." Now I was the cupbearer to the king.

When our delight is in the love of God, our desires will be in the will of God. When we delight ourselves in the Lord, we will want the things that delight Him - **Wiersbe**

**Wiersbe** - If we delight in the Lord, and seek to please Him in everything, then something is going to happen to our own desires. His desires become our desires. We start to say with our Lord, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work" (John 4:34). Our praying, then, is simply the reflection of God's desires in our own heart... To cultivate a heart that desires what is good, a heart that delights in the Lord (Ps 37:4), is the first step toward the life that overflows with the blessing of the Lord. - Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Worshipful (Psalms 1-89).

When we **delight** ourselves in the Lord, we will **desire** the things that **delight** Him. When our **delight** is in the **love** of God, our **desires** will be in the **will** of God.

If what we desire is God, God will give us what we desire.

**Delightful** - Highly pleasing. Affording great pleasure and satisfaction.

**Adam Clarke** - his will, desire, affection, every motive in his heart, and every moving principle in his soul, are on the side of God and his truth.

## BELOW ARE MISCELLANEOUS

### WORKING NOTES ON DELIGHTING IN THE LORD

Note that these notes are in no particular order but are simply notes that were gathered in preparation for the summary blog at the top of this page.

**Pritchard** - The word "**delight**" means to **take great pleasure in**. It has the idea of **a consuming passion that controls your life**. Everyone "**delights**" in something. Some people delight in food. Others delight in a job or a hobby or a career. Some delight in a particular friendship. Many people delight in money or the things money can buy. And many delight in evil pleasures and wrong desires. Mark this well. Your "**delight**" **determines your direction**. What do you delight in? What gets your motor running? What gets you excited in the morning and keeps you awake at night? What do you daydream about? Tell me the answers to those questions and I'll tell you something crucial about who you are. **To delight is to be so excited about something that you just can't wait. Watch a young couple in love and you'll know what "delight" means.** Or take a young man who has fallen in love for the first time. Ask his friends and they'll say, "He's not the same guy he used to be." They mean he has radically changed. He doesn't want to hang around with them anymore. All he does is talk about "that girl." Just look at him. He's got this goofy grin on his face. He's in love. Now apply that principle to the Word of God. **We are to delight in God's Word as a lover delights in a letter from his beloved.**

**Delight** is an attitude that leads to an action (meditate). **Delight** is a good attitude and James says that every good thing and every perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights in Whom there is no variation or shifting of shadow (James 1:17-note). Before we were saved by grace through faith, we were hostile toward God and His Word. Clearly, salvation is necessary for one to delight and ultimately that delight is planted in our heart by the Father of lights. But this good gift like all gifts can be squandered and abused to the point that it begins to fade into only a dim memory of times when we truly delighted in the Word like a newborn babe (see 1Pe 2:1-note; 1Peter 2:2-note). Time and the effects of sin have a way of slowly eroding one's delight if we are not vigilant to watch over our heart with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23). If you find yourself in the "slough of despond" as Bunyan puts it, what are you to do that you might once again delight in His Word and in Him? Although it may sound simple and/or trite, I think the answer, as it is to all "sloughs", is prayer. Pray to your heavenly Father, pleading for the restoration of the good gift of delight, so that delight replaces a sense of drudgery or duty. God promises to hear and answer prayer in accord with His will and His will is that we be in His Word and His Word in us, renewing our mind and transforming us into the image of His Son. Perhaps you need to confess and repent of some secret (not to God) sin that has been nipping away at and eroding your sense of delight. Ask God to search your heart and see if there is any hurtful way in you, and if He reveals it, then ask Him to lead you in the everlasting way (Ps 139:23,24).

**But what if His Word is not your delight (remembering that delight in His Word is another way of saying "delight in the LORD" because His Word is about Him)?** You can always pray knowing that our Father's will is for His children to delight in His Name and His character. You can know He will answer according to His good, and acceptable and perfect will (cp 1John 5:14,15). Another resource you might consider to stimulate you to discipline yourself for godliness is to download the Pdf of Dr John Piper's book [When I Don't Desire God - How to Fight for Joy](#).

We must delight ourselves in His beauty, bounty, and benignity; our souls must return to Him, and repose in Him, as their rest, and their portion forever. **Matthew Henry**

**Valley of Vision** - Prayers -

Give me the saving lamp of thy Spirit that I may see thee,

the God of my salvation, the **Delight** of my soul, rejoicing over me in love.

O God of my **delight**, Thy throne of grace is the pleasure ground of my soul.

Singing thy praises uplifts my heart,



for Thou art a fountain of **delight**,

and dost bless the soul that joys in thee.

When I think upon and converse with thee

ten thousand **delightful** thoughts spring up,

ten thousand sources of pleasure are unsealed,

ten thousand refreshing joys spread over my heart,

crowding into every moment of happiness.

Render my obedience to thy will holy, natural,

and **delightful**.

If Thou seest in me

any wrong thing encouraged,

any evil desire cherished,

any **delight** that is not thy **delight**,

any habit that grieves Thee,

any nest of sin in my heart,

then grant me the kiss of Thy forgiveness,

and teach my feet to walk the way of

Thy commandments.

I have no Master but thee,

no law but thy will,

no **delight** but thyself,

no wealth but that thou givest,

no good but that thou blessest,

no peace but that thou bestowest.

Give me to know that heaven is all love,

where the eye affects the heart,

and the continual viewing of thy beauty

keeps the soul in continual transports of **delight**.

When I think upon and converse with thee

ten thousand **delightful** thoughts spring up,

ten thousand sources of pleasure are unsealed,

ten thousand refreshing joys spread over my heart,

crowding into every moment of happiness.

Produce in me self-despair that will

make Jesus precious to me,

**delightful** in all his offices,  
pleasurable in all his ways,  
and may I love his commands  
as well as his promises.

**Their Rock of refuge has become a fountain of delight.**

**J Ligon Duncan** - You understand that the Christian life is a fight for joy. It is not the rejection of joy: it is the rejection of cheap joy. It is not the rejection of satisfaction: it's the rejection of superficial satisfaction. It's not the rejection of **delight**: it's the rejection of **delight**... of shallow **delight**...in pursuit of cheap **delight**. The Apostle Paul has tasted of the everlasting bottomless **fountain of delight** in Jesus Christ, and the world is lost on him! Boy! Do we need that! And this letter is calling us to long to know Christ.

**Comment:** When we reject the shallow, passing delight of the world, the pursuit of cheap, counterfeit delight, and pursue Christ, we come to recognize that Jesus Christ alone is the everlasting bottomless **fountain of delight**.

"Fading is the worldling's pleasure, all his boasted pomp and show,  
"Solid joys and lasting treasures, none but Zion's children know." - John Newton

What is the world to me  
With all its vaunted pleasure  
When you, and you alone,  
Lord Jesus, are my treasure!

You only, dearest Lord,  
My soul's **delight** shall be;  
You are my peace, my rest

What is the world to me!

Georg M. Pfefferkorn  
Thou spreadst a table in my sight;  
Thine unction grace bestoweth;  
And, oh, what transport of delight  
From thy pure chalice floweth!

--The King of Love My Shepherd Is = Henry W. Baker

Thou holy Light, Guide Divine,  
Oh, cause the Word of Life to shine!  
Teach us to know our God aright  
And call Him Father with delight.

--Martin Luther (Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord)

Fear Him, ye saints, and you will then  
Have nothing else to fear;  
Make you His service your delight,  
He'll make your wants His care.

Nicholas Brady, 1659-1726 and Nahum Tate,

"Through All the Changing Scenes of Life"

They (angelic hosts) never rest nor sleep as we;

Their whole **delight** is but to be

With you, Lord Jesus, and to keep

Your little flock, your lambs and sheep.

Lord God, to You We All Give Praise - Philipp Melanchthon

The man is ever blessed

Who shuns the sinners' ways,

Among their counsels never stands,

Nor takes the scornners' place.

But makes the Law of God

His study and delight

Amid the labors of the day

And watches of the night.

--Isaac Watts

My heart's **Delight**, My Crown most bright,

Thou, Jesus, art forever.

Nor wealth nor pride Nor aught beside

Our bond of love shall sever.

Thou art my Lord; Thy precious Word

Shall be my guide, Whate'er betide.

Oh, teach me, Lord, to trust Thee!

"Seek Where Ye May to Find a Way"

by Georg Weissel, 1590-1635

O Lord, how shall I meet Thee,

How welcome Thee aright?

Thy people long to greet Thee,

My Hope, my heart's Delight!

O kindle, Lord, most holy,

Thy lamp within my breast

To do in spirit lowly

All that may please Thee best.

"O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee"

by Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676

O bread of heaven, my soul's delight,

For full and free remission

I come with prayer before your sight

In sorrow and contrition.

Your righteousness, Lord, cover me

That I receive ;you worthily,

Assured of your full pardon.

Lord Jesus Christ, Life Giving Bread

By: Johann Rist

**Wiersbe** - "Pray without ceasing" does not mean we must always be mumbling prayers. The word means "constantly recurring," not continuously occurring. We are to "keep the receiver off the hook" and be in touch with God so that our praying is part of a long conversation that is not broken. God knows the desires of the heart (Ps. 37:4), and He responds to those desires even when our voice is silent. - Bible Exposition Commentary

**Wiersbe - Delight in the Lord** (Ps 37:4). The word translated "**delight**" comes from a root that means "to be brought up in luxury, to be pampered." It speaks of the abundance of the blessings we have in the Lord **Himself**, totally apart from what He gives us. To enjoy the **blessings** and ignore the **Blesser** is to practice idolatry. In Jesus Christ, we have all God's treasures, and we need no other. If we truly **delight** in the Lord, then **the chief desire of our heart will be to know Him better so we can delight in Him even more, and the Lord will satisfy that desire!** This is not a promise for people who want "**things**," but for those who want **more of God** in their lives. -- Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Worshipful (Psalms 1-89).

**Daniel Akin** - in the new birth I receive a new nature. With this new nature comes new affections, passions, treasures, and values. Because I now love God instead of hating Him, **I treasure and value Him above everyone and everything else.** And because I treasure and value Him above everyone and everything else, **I delight in obeying Him.** Now I find His commands not to be a **burden**, but a **blessing**. They are not **drudgery**, they are a **delight**. John Piper is right: "**What you desire to do with your whole heart is not burdensome to do**" ("Regeneration, Faith, Love"). My heart desires to love and obey my Lord. (Christ-Centered Exposition - Exalting Jesus in 1,2,3 John)

As **Daniel Akin** says "In the Psalms we repeatedly find the joyful testimonies of regenerate hearts as they sing of their joy in doing the will of the Lord and obeying His commands. (Ps 1:1-2, Ps 35:27 , Ps 37:4 , Ps 40:8 , Ps 112:1 , Ps 119:14 , Ps 119:16, Ps 119:24, Ps 119:35, Ps 119:47, Ps 119:77, Ps 119:143, Ps 119:174)

Ps 119:70 their heart is unfeeling like fat, but I delight in your law. = ESV

It is only when God's people find their ultimate joy in him that they are able to receive and appreciate properly his blessings.

**Glen Spencer** - The promise, he shall give thee the desires of thine heart, is based on the condition, Delight thyself also in the Lord. It is not telling us that we will get everything we desire, but that we have the right desires. One who's delight is in the Lord will have righteous desires. A person's desires reveal the condition of his heart. Because of her commitment to Him, God had given Ruth the desires of her heart. The promise, he shall give thee the desires of thine heart, is based on the condition, Delight thyself also in the Lord. It is not telling us that we will get everything we desire, but that we have the right desires. One who's delight is in the Lord will have righteous desires. A person's desires reveal the condition of his heart. Because of her commitment to Him, God had given Ruth the desires of her heart. Expository Pulpit Series - Expository Pulpit Series – Ruth: Romance and Redemption.

**Maclaren's sermon** -- (same as below but summarized) - I. Here is the secret of tranquility in freedom from eager, earthly desire—'Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desire of thine heart'. The great reason why life is troubled and restless lies not without, but within. It is not our changing circumstances, but our unregulated desires, that rob us of peace... Unbridled and varying wishes are the worst enemies of our repose. And still further they destroy tranquility by putting us at the mercy of externals. Whatsoever we make necessary for contentment, we make lord of our happiness. (*Read that sentence again!*) By our eager desires we give perishable things supreme power over us, and so intertwine our being with theirs that the blow which destroys them lets out our life-blood... If then our desires are, in their very exercise, a disturbance, and in their very fruition prophesy disappointment, and if their certain disappointment is irrevocable and crushing when it comes, what shall we do for rest? There is but one answer—'Delight thyself in the Lord'. This glad longing for God is the cure for all the feverish unrest of desires unfulfilled, as well as for the ague (chill, shaking, shivering) of fear, of loss and sorrow. (The Expositor's Dictionary of Texts)

**Alexander Maclaren** in his sermon "The Secret of Tranquility" (Ps 37:4-5, 7) - Nobody can 'commit his way unto the Lord' who has not begun by '**delighting in the Lord**'; and nobody can '**rest in the Lord**' who has not '**committed his way to the Lord**.' These three precepts, then, the condensed result of the old man's lifelong experience, open up for our consideration the secret of tranquility. Let us think of them in order.

**I. Here is the secret of tranquility in freedom from eager, earthly desires—'Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.'**

The great reason why life is troubled and restless lies not *without*, but *within*. It is not our *changing circumstances*, but our *unregulated desires*, that *rob us of peace*. We are *feverish*, not because of the external temperature, but because of the state of our own blood. The very emotion of *desire* disturbs us; wishes make us unquiet; and when a whole heart, full of varying, sometimes contradictory longings, is boiling within a man, how can he but tremble and quiver? One *desire* unfulfilled is enough to banish tranquility; but how can it survive a dozen dragging different ways? A deep lesson lies in that word *distraction*, which has come to be so closely attached to *desires*; the lesson that all eager (anxious) longing tears the heart asunder. **Unbridled and varying wishes (desires), then, are the worst enemies of our repose.**

And, still further, they destroy tranquility by putting us at the mercy of externals. Whatsoever we make necessary for our contentment, we make lord of our happiness. By our eager desires we give perishable things supreme power over us, and so intertwine our being with theirs, that the blow which destroys them lets out our life-blood. And, therefore, we are ever disturbed by apprehensions and shaken by fears. We tie ourselves to these outward possessions, as Alpine travellers to their guides, and so, when they slip on the icy slopes, their fall is our death. If we were not eager to stand on the giddy top of fortune's rolling wheel, we should not heed its idle whirl; but we let our foolish hearts set our feet there, and thenceforward every lurch of the glittering instability threatens to lame or kill us. He who desires fleeting joys is sure to be restless always, and to be disappointed at the last. For, even at the best, the heart which depends for peace on the continuance of things subjected to a thousand accidents, can only know quietness by forcibly closing its eyes against the inevitable; and, even at the best, such a course must end on the whole in failure. Disappointment is the law for all earthly desires; for appetite increases with indulgence, and as it increases, satisfaction decreases. The food remains the same, but its power to appease hunger diminishes. Possession bring indifference. The dose that lulls into delicious dreams today must be doubled tomorrow, if it is to do anything; and there is soon an end of that. Each of your earthly joys fills but a part of your being, and all the other ravenous longings either come shrieking at the gate of the soul's palace, like a mob yelling for bread, or are starved into silence; but either way there is disquiet. And then, if a man has fixed his happiness on anything lower than the stars, less stable than the heavens, less sufficient than God, there does come, sooner or later, a time when it passes from him, or he from it. Do not venture the rich freightage of your happiness in crazy vessels. If you do, be sure that, somewhere or other, before your life is ended, the poor frail craft will strike on some black rock rising sheer from the depths, and will grind itself to chips there. If your life twines round any prop but God your strength, be sure that, some time or other, the stay to which its tendrils cling will be plucked up, and the poor vine will be lacerated, its clusters crushed, and its sap will bleed out of it.

If, then, our desires are, in their very exercise, a disturbance, and in their very fruition prophesy disappointment, and if that certain disappointment is irrevocable and crushing when it comes, what shall we do for rest? Dear brethren! there is but one answer—'Delight thyself in the Lord.' These eager desires, transfer to Him; on Him let the affections fix and fasten (Col 3:1-2); make Him the end of your longings, the food of your spirits. This is the purest, highest form of religious emotion—when we can say, 'Whom have I but Thee? possessing Thee I desire none beside.' And this glad longing for God is the cure for all the feverish unrest of desires unfulfilled, as well as for the ague fear of loss and sorrow. Quietness fills the soul which delights in the Lord, and its hunger is as blessed and as peaceful as its satisfaction.

Think how surely rest comes with delighting in God. For that soul must needs be calm which is freed from the distraction of various desires by the one master-attraction. Such a soul is still as the great river above the falls, when all the side currents and dimpling eddies and backwaters are effaced by the attraction that draws every drop in the one direction; or like the same stream as it nears its end, and, forgetting how it brawled among rocks and flowers in the mountain glens, flows with a calm and equable motion to its rest in the central sea. Let the current of your being set towards God, then your life will be filled and calmed by one master-passion which unites and stills the soul.

And for another reason there will be peace: because in such a case desire and fruition go together. 'He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.' Only do not vulgarize that great promise by making it out to mean that, if we will be good, He will give us the earthly blessings which we wish. Sometimes we shall get them, and sometimes not; but our text goes far deeper than that. God Himself is the heart's desire of those who delight in Him; and the blessedness of longing fixed on Him is that it ever fulfils itself. They who want God have Him. Your truest joy is in His fellowship and His grace. If, set free from creatural delights, our wills reach out towards God, as a plant growing in darkness to the light—then we shall wish for nothing contrary to Him, and the wishes which run parallel to His purposes, and embrace Himself as their only good, cannot be vain. The sunshine flows into the opened eye, the breath of life into

the expanding lung—so surely, so immediately the fulness of God fills the waiting, wishing soul. To delight in God is to possess our delight. Heart! lift up thy gates: open and raise the narrow, low portals, and the King of Glory will stoop to enter.

Once more: desire after God will bring peace by putting all other wishes in their right place. The counsel in our text does not enjoin the extinction, but the subordination, of other needs and appetites—'Seek ye first the kingdom of God.' Let that be the dominant desire which controls and underlies all the rest. Seek for God in everything, and for everything in God. Only thus will you be able to bridle those cravings which else tear the heart. The presence of the king awes the crowd into silence. When the full moon is in the nightly sky, it sweeps the heavens bare of flying cloud-rack, and all the twinkling stars are lost in the peaceful, solitary splendour. So let delight in God rise in our souls, and lesser lights pale before it—do not cease to be, but add their feebleness, unnoticed, to its radiance. The more we have our affections set on God, the more shall we enjoy, because we subordinate, His gifts. The less, too, shall we dread their loss, the less be at the mercy of their fluctuations. The capitalist does not think so much of the year's gains as does the needy adventurer, to whom they make the difference between bankruptcy and competence. If you have God for your 'enduring substance,' you can face all varieties of condition, and be calm, saying—

'Give what Thou canst, without Thee I am poor,

And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.'

The amulet that charms away disquiet lies here. Still thine eager desires, arm thyself against feverish hopes, and shivering fears, and certain disappointment, and cynical contempt of all things; make sure of fulfilled wishes and abiding joys. 'Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.' (The Secret Of Tranquility by Alexander Maclaren)

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### [The Secret of Tranquility](#)

#### [Psalm 37 - The Secret of Tranquility - Choir](#)

1. Forever trusting in the Lord,  
Take heed to do His will;  
So shalt thou dwell within the land, (2x)  
And He thy needs shall fill.

2. Delight thee in the Lord, and He  
Will grant thy heart's request;  
To Him commit thy way in faith, (2x)  
And thus thou shalt be blessed.

3. And He shall make thy righteousness  
Shine brightly as the light,  
And as the burning noonday sun (2x)  
Thy judgment shall be bright.

4. Rest in the Lord with quiet trust,  
Wait patiently for Him;  
Though wickedness triumphant seem, (2x)  
Let not thy faith grow dim.

**Terry Briley** - The point of Psalm 37:4 is not to give God lip-service in order to get from him what you want. It is rather to find your ultimate delight in God so that your desires will conform to that which is within his will. Similarly, Isaiah contrasts "doing as you please" with finding delight in God. Religious rituals become burdensome when they represent requirements to be met in order to win God's favor. They become delightful when they serve as opportunities to know and enjoy a relationship with God more fully. Only when one seeks God as an end and not as a means to an end may the full measure of covenant blessings (the inheritance of your father Jacob) be enjoyed. (The College Press NIV Commentary – Isaiah: Volume 2)

To delight in someone means to experience great pleasure and joy in their presence and this happens only when as we grow to know that person well. Thus, to delight in the Lord, we must know Him better. Knowledge of God's great love for us will indeed give us delight.

**Are you delighting in the Lord?** Ps 40:8 I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart." Do you truly **delight** to do His will? and Romans 7:22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law." Do you truly **delight** in God's law, in His Word? We delight ourselves in the Lord by obeying Him (1Sa 15:22-23) How do we put His law within our heart? By memorizing it! Are you systematically, actively treasuring God's Word in your heart that you might not sin against Him? (Ps 119:11) What would happen to

our desires if we spent more time in the first part of Psalm 37:4 than in the last part of the passage? That's clearly a rhetorical question!

**Matthew Henry** on God granting our desires - "He has not promised to gratify all the appetites of the body and the humors of the fancy, but to grant all the desires of the heart, all the cravings of the renewed sanctified soul. **What is the desire of the heart of a good man?** It is this, to know, and love, and live to God, to please Him and to be pleased in Him." \*

**Tony Evans** - If you haven't memorized Psalm 37:4, you should. David wrote, "Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart." When your thinking and heart and desires are in agreement with God and His Word, you will hear from Him, because now you both have the same desires. And you have nothing to fear from God's desires, because He wants to give you His best even more than you want to receive it.

**John Piper on delight yourself in the Lord** - The desires of the heart cease to be merely natural desires when the heart delights above all else in the Lord. **Delighting** in the Lord—in the hallowing of his name and the seeking of his kingdom and the doing of his will—transforms all natural desires into God-related desires. They are transposed up into a different key.

**Adrian Rogers on Ps 37:4** - I am satisfied with Jesus; I really am... What that means is when you delight in the Lord, the deepest needs of your heart will be met. The desire of your heart is Jesus. That's what your heart yearns for; that's what you were made for: for Him. The Bible says it is in Him that "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28)—in Him. You'll never be satisfied apart from Him, 'till you can say, "The Lord is my shepherd. It's not what He gives me, but He Himself."... That doesn't mean you'll have a swimming pool and a pink Cadillac. That means, when you delight in the Lord, the desires of your heart are met, which are God. God is the desire of your heart. And, when you delight yourself in Him, then the desires of your heart will be met, and you will find out, with Job—are you listening?—not only is Jesus necessary; Jesus is enough. And, God is not finished with you, until you can say, "Not only is God necessary; God is enough."

**Steven Cole** on Ps 37:4- Be delighted in the Lord (37:4). Trust, obedience, patience, and humility can all be summed up in the phrase, "Delight yourself in the Lord." **Be captivated with the Lord and all that He is. Rather than focusing on the things which the world seeks, focus on the Lord. In gaining the Lord, you gain everything else you ever need:** "He will give you the desires of your heart." This doesn't mean that He will give you anything your selfish heart desires. If you are delighting yourself in the Lord, then your desires will be in line with His desires. This is the Matthew 6:33 of the Old Testament: "Seek first God's kingdom and righteousness and all these things [your needs] will be added unto you."

They should delight themselves in the Lord, or find their satisfaction in God, not in the pursuit of evil (cp. Ps. 1:1). Delighting in God will give one righteous desires and thus God will give the desires of the heart. - Holman Old Testament Commentary - Holman Old Testament Commentary – Psalms 1-75.

**GotQuestions - Question: "What does it mean to delight yourself in the Lord (Psalm 37:4)?"**

Answer: Psalm 37:4 says, "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." Taking delight in the Lord means that our hearts truly find peace and fulfillment in Him. If we truly find **satisfaction** and worth in Christ, Scripture says He will give us the longings of our hearts. Does that mean, if we go to church every Sunday, God will give us a new Rolls Royce? No. The idea behind this verse and others like it is that, **when we truly rejoice or "delight" in the eternal things of God, our desires will begin to parallel His and we will never go unfulfilled. Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things [the necessities of life] will be given to you as well."**

Many delight in wealth, status, material possessions, and other temporary things of this world, but they are never **satisfied**. They never truly get what they want, hence the reason they are always **wanting more**. This is the lesson King Solomon learned in his pursuit of earthly treasure: "Everything is meaningless!" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). **On the other hand, delighting in the Lord is true treasure indeed: "Godliness with contentment is great gain"** (1 Timothy 6:6).

First John 2:15–17 says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever." We will never be deeply fulfilled or "happy" with the things this world has to offer. If we place our joy and hope in God first, He will meet all of our **needs**. He will even grant our **wants**, as our **hearts' desires** begin to match up with **His will**. If we truly place priority on the Lord, chances are our heart's greatest desire will not be a brand new Rolls Royce, but eternal treasures in Christ. This world can never satisfy our deepest longings, but **if we choose to delight in God's way, He will always provide above and beyond our expectations. Jesus said, "Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life"** (John 4:14). ([What does it mean to delight yourself in the Lord Psalm 37-4](#))

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Here is an excellent word on delight ourselves in God -

Psalm 37: 4 New King James Version (NKJV)

4 Delight yourself also in the Lord,

And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Context of This Verse - Psalm 37 was written by the prophet David later in his life. One duty of a prophet was to explain the laws that were given to Moses and God's people. Many people were questioning the outcomes they were witnessing for people who did follow God's laws. God's people were confused as to why some evil people seemed to be receiving blessings while some followers of Christ seemed to be suffering for their faith. David wrote this psalm to explain God's providence. Unlike David's other psalms which are written as devotions, this one is written as a sermon. The lines of this particular psalm contain imperative sentences. David is giving us direct statements to follow in order that we can live a happy Christian life. God created each one of us. He knows what will TRULY make us happy and satisfy us. This psalm is written to help us realize that if we look to God to fulfill us and if we long for MORE GOD instead of more "stuff"- then we WILL be happy! We should not feel jealous of those people who obtain lots of "stuff" and riches by doing evil things. They are not truly satisfied. They will keep needing more and more "stuff".... their happiness is focused outwardly and dependent on their circumstances. We, on the other hand, can have inward true happiness. True happiness is constant and not dependent on any outward circumstance. David is telling us that we can have constant joy and peace if we place our longings inward! We will be satisfied and happy if we depend solely on the source of our true happiness ,OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, to fill us!!! The Lord will provide for us with what we TRULY need to be happy! The more of HIM we accept the FULLER we will become!!!

Key Words:

Delight

Yourself

Delight: verb- to take great pleasure

Yourself: – pronoun: you personally (used to emphasize the person being addressed).

"you're going to have to do it yourself" - Notice that the word delight is a verb- it shows action. We must act to do what this imperative sentence is telling us to do! It is up to each one of us to delight ourselves in God! We must be intentional about where we find our pleasure!

Connection - Have you ever noticed how what you look at and what you surround yourself with affects your desires? For example, a person can enter a mall not even being hungry, but they still begin to DESIRE a cookie as soon as they see and smell the booth they pass. Another example, you may have a closet full of clothes. You have enough shirts, pants, and shoes to not repeat the same outfit for at least 3 weeks, yet when you go to the mall all of a sudden you want more. As you "window shop" you begin DESIRING new things. Your closet full of things no longer satisfies you. It is up to us to control what we focus on and surround ourselves with. We CAN control our desires, we just have to be intentional about what we spend our time doing! (Ed: This is where I would differ slightly -- the truth is we are a spiritual war zone 24/7 whether we know it or not. And that war is between the fallen flesh and the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit can win the battle over this powerful enemy. And yet as this writer says we are responsible to make the choice to follow hard after God. And we do that by yielding to the Spirit's continual leading, for He is continually energizing us and giving us the desire and power to delight ourselves in God. Then we will truly delight in Jehovah. If we try to do this is our own strength, we might have what appears to be a modicum of success, but the truth is that eventually we will fail because the old nature does not desire to delight in God.)

Now let's relate this realization to what David says.....

Our spiritual life and relationship with God work the same way as the above examples. By choosing daily to immerse ourselves in Heavenly thoughts, we will begin to DESIRE more God and less stuff! Our DESIRE to have more God will lead us to HAVING more God! The more God we have the more content and happy we truly will be!!!! Stuff will come and go ultimately leaving us feeling empty. Our relationship with our Heavenly Father is ETERNAL and FULFILLING. Our God is who we were created to truly DESIRE.

I challenge you today and from this day forward to intentionally guide your desires! You can do this by spending time with God each morning and evening in prayer, listening to Christian music, spending time with Christian friends, and by reading and studying The Word of God! (Ed: All of these are true, especially time in the Word. But the truth is the only way we will accomplish this is by surrender to the Spirit Who will enable us to seek God above all things temporal).

Each one of us are given a set number of hours each day- it is up to us to spend those hours in ways that will ultimately fill us!!!

[\(Delight Yourself in the Lord\)](#)

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**John Piper - How Do I Delight Myself in the Lord?** - It means first seeing Him as the most admirable Person and reality in the



universe. Ironically Ayn Rand who was an atheist and wrote Atlas Shrugged said something stunningly true "Admiration is the rarest of pleasures." Now in her mouth I think that was pure cynicism, meaning she's already rejected God the Source of admiration and all admirability and she can't see many people that she admires and so she is a cynic, but oh how right she is that admiration is one of our greatest pleasures. We love to admire sports figures and music figures and acting figures and admire beauty and sunrise and sunsets and mountains and rivers. We are admiring creatures to the core and I think we are 'wired' to be satisfied by admiring the most admirable and the most admirable is God and therefore "delight yourself in the Lord" means delight yourself in seeing His infinite admirableness. For me Jonathan Edwards has been a huge help here. He has observed that the beauty of Christ, the excellencies of Christ that satisfy the human longing for ultimate excellence and ultimate beauty and in them ultimate satisfaction -- those he said are seen most clearly when you observe the diverse excellencies or the surprising juxtaposition of seeming opposites in Christ. So I jotted down a little section from his sermon "[The Excellencies of Christ](#)" to give us a flavor of what I see when I am delighting in Jesus. "The person of Christ brings together infinite highness and infinite condescension, infinite justice and infinite grace, infinite glory and lowest humility, infinite majesty and transcendent meekness, deepest reverence towards God and equality with God, infinite worthiness of good and greatest patience under suffering evil, exceeding spirit of obedience with supreme dominion over heaven and earth, absolute sovereignty and perfect resignation, self-sufficiency and entire trust and reliance upon God." And he is right! When Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4 that the devil keeps us from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ Who is the image of God, he means the devil is in the business of killing our enjoyment of the beauty of Christ in the Gospel and the Gospel is the place where the Cross brings those diverse excellencies together most clearly... Delighting in God practically means seeing and savoring the diverse excellencies of God especially as they are manifest in Christ, especially as He brings them to fulfillment at the Cross. Here's the second thing. Know this God as your intimate caring Savior and Friend... no one goes to the Grand Canyon to increase his self-esteem. We go to the Grand Canyon... because standing at the Grand Canyon and watching this vast, cavernous, open space that goes down a mile... with a tiny river at the bottom (which is a massive river) -- it does something to our souls because God made us to know Him as the great "Grand Canyon." A woman said to me one time "Well, yes, but it's hard to enjoy the Grand Canyon if you feel you might fall over the edge and be killed by the Grand Canyon." She's absolute right. If we don't have (in addition to seeing and savoring the Grand Canyon) a sweet sense that the Canyon is not going to kill us... if God and Jesus are not for us, if they're not in love with us, if they're not our Friend, if they're not our Savior, if they're not kind to us and caring for us and protecting us, we won't have the capacity to see the Grand Canyon as beautiful. We'll just be terrified. We'll be locked up inside our fears and we won't be able to know Him and enjoy Him. So from the time I was a sophomore in college Galatians 2:20 has served me like that. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, (Here Piper pauses and says those words) Who loved me (one of the few places where Paul uses the singular personal pronoun of how Jesus relates to him -- He love me), and delivered Himself up for me. In Rev 2:17 "I will give him (Piper personalizes this - "I will give you... ") a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it." Why does He say that? He says it because He wants to assure me you're not a "number in the system." You're not a "cog" in the great wheel of providence. I have you in mind. I have a name for you and I want you and Me to have the kind of relationship that there are things about it nobody else knows. That is simply breath-taking. So... delighting in God means delighting in His love for me and delighting in the fact that He cares for me and will protect me and means to have kind of intimate personal relationship with me. And... we delight in God through what He has made. The heavens are telling the glory of God... all through the day every good thing that gives us pleasure should be an instance of delighting in God. So let me say those three again - Seeing and savoring Him as infinitely admirable. Embracing Him as your dearest Friend, Savior, Caring Protector, Provider. And thirdly, receive with thanks and worship everything He gives you. ([Desiring God](#))

**H A Ironside** - He has never promised to do that in an indiscriminate kind of way. But He does say, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psa. 37:4). And again, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). Here, you see, you have **the soul occupied with Christ**, occupied with His work, and now the cry goes out to God on the cloud of the burnt sacrifices and the answer comes, "He will grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel." When you and I are really taken up with Him, when His will is our will, when we are delighting ourselves in Him, when His Word abides in us and we are consciously in communion with Him, we may ask what we will and it will be done. "Well," somebody said to me one time, "If that is true, why don't you ask the Lord for a million dollars and pay up everything and not have to take up any more collections?" I could not do that if I am delighting myself in Him. He does not tell me to ask for a million dollars. If He did, I would do it. When George Mueller delighted himself in Him and he asked for a million pounds, God gave it to him during a lifetime of fifty years, when running that orphanage. If I had a responsibility like that I could go to the Lord about it too. If you and I are really living in communion with Him the Holy Spirit dwelling within us will move our hearts and show us that for which we should ask, and as we pray in the Holy Spirit we can be assured of an answer... This is the key to answered prayer. Obedience gives confidence. It is impossible to ask in faith when clinging to something that is grieving the Holy Spirit and dishonoring the Lord Jesus Christ. If prayer is not answered, if the heavens seem as brass, it is a solemn indication of a wrong state of soul, and should lead to self-judgment and the forsaking of every evil way.

Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows but only empties today of its strength.

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON (1834–1892)

Anxiety is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained. ARTHUR SOMERS ROCHE

Anxiety is not only a pain which we must ask God to assuage but also a weakness we must ask him to pardon—for he's told us to take no care for the morrow. C. S. LEWIS (1898–1963)

Anxiety is the interest paid on trouble before it is due. WILLIAM RALPH INGE (1860–1954)

Anxiety is the natural result when our hopes are centered in anything short of God and his will for us. BILLY GRAHAM (1918– )

Anxiety springs from the desire that things should happen as we wish rather than as God wills.

Do not look forward to what may happen tomorrow; the same everlasting Father; who cares for you today, will take care of you tomorrow, and every day. Either he will shield you from suffering or he will give you unflinching strength to bear it. SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES (1567–1622)

**Fretfulness** springs from a determination to get my own way. OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874–1917)

God never built a Christian strong enough to carry today's duties and tomorrow's anxieties piled on top of them. THEODORE LEDYARD CUYLER (1822–1909)

If your heart is troubled, you are not living up to your belief. OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874–1917)

Lord Jesus, make my heart sit down. AFRICAN PROVERB

Fret - verb [Middle English, to devour, fret, from Old English *fretan* = to devour, consume] 1a: to eat or gnaw into: CORRODE also: FRAY b: RUB, CHAFE c: to make by wearing away a substance the stream fretted a channel 2: to cause to suffer emotional strain: vex. To be **constantly or visibly anxious**. To distress or be distressed.

**Fret**, an act of causing unease, used in the Bible as a reflexive imperative verb: 'fret not yourself' (Ps. 37:1, 7, 8; Pr. 24:19). It conveys the sense of "being vexed or agitated" for the hithpael of Heb **charah, hārā** in Ps 37:1, 7-8.; Pr 24:19. To be vexed, chafed, irritated, angry. The godly man or woman is not to fret (Ps 37:1, 7–8) but is to have his mind stayed on the Lord (Isa 26:3).

**FRET** occurs four times in the obsolete sense of eat into, gnaw, corrode, or be eaten away, become corroded, decay. "A fretting leprosy" appears in Leviticus 13:51, 52; 14:44, and "it is fret inward" in Leviticus 13:55. These are Tyndale's terms, accepted by later versions. For the first of these terms RSV has "a malignant leprosy." The Hebrew word represented by "fret inward" is a noun which means leprous decay; RSV translates it "the leprous spot." Intransitive verb - a: to eat into something b: to affect something as if by gnawing or biting: to become vexed or worried

**Steve Fuller** - What Happens When We Delight in the Lord?... Think of a time when you delighted in something — maybe a sunset. While you delighted in the sunset, were you desiring food? Or new shoes? Or fame? No. As you delighted in the sunset, what you desired was the sunset. You wanted to keep enjoying the beauty of the sunset. Later on you might have other desires, but at the moment that you delight in the sunset, what you desire is the enjoyment of the sunset. In the same way, when we delight in the Lord what we desire is the Lord — to keep beholding his glory, worshiping his majesty, seeing his beauty. So when we delight in the Lord, the desires that we have in our hearts are desires for the Lord. So what Psalm 37:5 means is that if we delight in the Lord, he will satisfy our desires for him, by giving us more joy in him... That's what God promises us in Psalm 37:4 — satisfied hearts. God promises that if we delight ourselves in him, his glory and beauty and love and majesty will so fill us that we will desire nothing else. Our hearts will be completely full. We will be perfectly content. He will have satisfied every desire of our hearts — in himself. How Do We Delight Ourselves in the Lord? This is not something we can simply choose to experience. Because of our remaining sin we need the Spirit's work to see and feel God's glory in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 4:6). So this is not ultimately under our control. It is a sovereign, gracious, and blood-bought gift from God. But there are steps we can take through which God promises to give us this gift. First, confess sin. Sin grieves the Spirit, diminishing his work (Ephesians 4:30). So turn to Christ, and confess to him all known sin. Second, trust Christ. God provides the work of the Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:5). So look to Christ's mercy, by faith alone. Turn from everything else to trust him to change your heart so you see and feel him as your all-satisfying treasure. Third, pray for the Spirit's work. Jesus promised that the Father will increase the work of the spirit on everyone who asks (Luke 11:13). So pray — earnestly. Fourth, meditate on God's word. The Spirit softens our hearts, and reveals Christ, through his word (Ephesians 6:17). So find passages displaying God's glory in Christ, and read them slowly, thoughtfully, and prayerfully. Fifth, humbly and persistently wait on the Lord. He promises that as we come to him in faith, he will satisfy our hearts by pouring out his Spirit and revealing Christ to us (John 6:35; John 7:37-39; Galatians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 3:18). So trust his promise, and persist in seeking him. He will be faithful. He will pour out his Spirit's work so you once again can see and feel the glory of Jesus Christ. And

when you do, you will find yourself delighting in the Lord – so satisfied in him that you desire nothing else.

**Alden** - When we delight in the Lord, we want what He wants. Then what we ask will be in His will. The desires of our heart will be the desires of His heart.

**Wiersbe** Ps 37:4 - Find all your joy and pleasure in His will. Make Him your delight, and your desires will be in His will. Living to please the Lord sets you free from fretting about what men are doing.

Ps 37:11 will live in peace and prosperity. This is the same verb that is translated “take delight” in 37:4. Those who take delight in the Lord will also take delight in prosperous security.

**Warren Wiersbe** on Ps 37:4 - We find a third admonition. "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). **When we delight in the Lord, we learn to appreciate the delights of the Lord. Our desires become His desires, and we pray and live in His will.** Don't fret today. Look to the Lord in faith, trust in Him and delight in Him. Competing with others and comparing yourself to them can lead to fretting. Measure yourself only against yourself and against Jesus Christ. Consider your needs. Are there any the Lord cannot provide? Place your trust in His provision. He is faithful.

**James M Boice** - “**Delight ... in the Lord**” (Ps 37:4). Before people are converted, they resist a relationship to God, because they do not think that God is desirable. They suppose Him to be moralistic and harsh, establishing rules intended only to keep people from fulfilling themselves or having fun. The truth is entirely different, for the God we come to know in salvation is **entirely delightful**. He is holy, to be sure. He is also the sovereign, exalted, awesome God the Bible everywhere pictures Him to be. We cannot trifle with Him. He cannot be taken lightly. **But in addition to understanding those incontrovertible truths, the one who trusts God also finds Him to be a source of exquisite delight. For He is the perfection of grace, compassion, mercy, kindness, patience, and love. He is, in other words, like Jesus Christ, and the better we know Him the more we inevitably delight in Him. The reason many apparent Christians do not delight in God is that they do not know Him very well, and the reason they do not know Him well is that they do not spend time with Him.** The promise attached to this verse is that if we delight in God, God will give us the desires of our hearts. This does not mean that God will give us any foolish thing we may long for. **It means that if we are delighting in God and longing for God, God will give us Himself**

John Butler - Consecration (Psalm 37:4) "Delight thyself also in the Lord" (Psalm 37:4). Focus on the Lord, not on the wicked who prosper in the world.

- The instructions for the duty. "Delight thyself also in the Lord." This speaks of devotion, of affection, of interest. We get excited about many things but seldom does the Lord interest us enough to delight us. If we delight in the Lord, there will be no disappointments... If we delight ourselves in the Lord, the desires of our heart will be purified so that what we ask will be what God will be pleased to grant. The one that delights himself in the Lord does not ask from evil passions.
- The inspiration for doing the duty. "He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." God will grant you what you want when you delight in Him. But what you want will be greatly affected by your delight in the Lord. If we delight in Him, we will not desire many things that the flesh desires, but will desire what God wants. God will quickly grant those desires.

Analytical Bible Expositor - Analytical Bible Expositor – Psalms.

**Pulpit commentary** - Draw from communion with God all that inward intensity of joy which it is capable of giving.

**Preacher's Commentary** - Moreover, beyond “trust” there is “delight” (v. 4). The verb for “de light” means “to be of dainty habit, to take exquisite delight.” As the righteous “delight” in Yahweh, the “desires” of their hearts will be given to them. This does not mean that our selfish desires will be granted, although God promises to care materially for His people. It does mean that as we delight in the Lord He will change us and the desires of our hearts will be in conformity to His will. So Jesus promises, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7).

**Barnes - Delight** - The word rendered delight means properly to live delicately and effeminately; then, to be tender or delicate; then, to live a life of ease or pleasure; then, to find delight or pleasure in anything. The meaning here is, that we should seek our happiness in God—in his being, his perfections, his friendship, his love. And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Literally, the askings, or the requests of thy heart. What you really desire will be granted to you. That is, (a) the fact that you seek your happiness in him will regulate your desires, so that you will be disposed to ask only those things which it will be proper for him to grant; and (b) the fact that you do find your happiness in him will be a reason why he will grant your desires. The fact that a child loves his father, and finds his happiness in doing his will, will do much to regulate his own wishes or desires, and will at the same time be a reason why the father will be disposed to comply with his requests.

**Jon Courson** - Enjoy the Lord. Make Him your delight. And as you do, an amazing thing will happen: He will put His will, His plan in your heart. “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

Asked how to discern God's will, Augustine answered, "Love God with all your heart and do whatever you want." That is, if you're loving God passionately—wanting to please, obey, and honor Him continually—you can do what you want because His plan will automatically be your desire.

**Warren Wiersbe** - We often talk about our delighting in the Lord. "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4). That's important to do. But what about God's delighting in us? As parents and grandparents, we enjoy delighting in our children and grandchildren. In a similar way God wants to delight in us. Because God delights in us, He delivers us. And He uses the difficult experiences of life to make us bigger. "He also brought me out into a broad place" (Psalm 18:19).

**Contentment** - God promises to provide the necessities of life, such as food and clothing. Once we have accepted this, we have laid the foundation for genuine contentment.

"As World War II was drawing to a close, the Allied armies gathered up many hungry orphans. They were placed in camps where they were well-fed. Despite excellent care, they slept poorly. They seemed nervous and afraid. Finally, a psychologist came up with the solution. Each child was given a piece of bread to hold after he was put to bed... This particular piece of bread was just to be held—not eaten. The piece of bread produced wonderful results. The children went to bed knowing instinctively they would have food to eat the next day. That guarantee gave the children a restful and contented sleep" (Charles L. Allen, *God's Psychiatry*).

For most of us, the refrigerator and the cupboard contain enough food for tomorrow's meals. Yet, like those children, we still feel a gnawing anxiety. Why is this? Either we do not trust God or we think we need more than we have. We have substituted desire for need and need for desire. Even Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart," is not an unconditional promise that God will give us whatever we want. We must first delight ourselves in Him. Then our desires will be in line with what He desires to give us—and that will bring us true contentment. —D. J. De Haan.

#### **Contentment comes not from greater wealth but from fewer wants.**

**Spurgeon** on Ps 37:4 - **DELIGHT** in God has a transforming power and lifts a man above the gross desires of our fallen nature. Delight in Jehovah is not only sweet in itself, but it sweetens the whole soul, till the longings of the heart become such that the Lord can safely promise to fulfill them. Is not that a grand delight which moulds our desires till they are like the desires of God?

Our foolish way is to desire and then set to work to compass what we desire. We do not go to work in God's way, which is to seek Him first, and then expect all things to be added unto us. If we will let our heart be filled with God till it runs over with delight, then the Lord Himself will take care that we shall not want any good thing. Instead of going abroad for joys, let us stay at home with God and drink waters out of our own fountain. He can do for us far more than all our friends. It is better to be content with God alone than to go about fretting and pining for the paltry trifles of time and sense. For a while we may have disappointments; but if these bring us nearer to the Lord, they are things to be prized exceedingly, for they will in the end secure to us the fulfillment of all our right desires.

**Spurgeon** - Morning, June 14 Go To Evening Reading

"Delight thyself also in the Lord." Psalm 37:4

The teaching of these words must seem very surprising to those who are strangers to vital godliness, but to the sincere believer it is only the inculcation of a recognized truth. The life of the believer is here described as a delight in God, and we are thus certified of the great fact that true religion overflows with happiness and joy. Ungodly persons and mere professors never look upon religion as a joyful thing; to them it is service, duty, or necessity, but never pleasure or delight. If they attend to religion at all, it is either that they may gain thereby, or else because they dare not do otherwise. The thought of delight in religion is so strange to most men, that no two words in their language stand further apart than "holiness" and "delight." **But believers who know Christ, understand that delight and faith are so blessedly united, that the gates of hell cannot prevail to separate them.** They who love God with all their hearts, find that his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. Such joys, such brimful delights, such overflowing blessednesses, do the saints discover in their Lord, that so far from serving him from custom, they would follow him though all the world cast out his name as evil. We fear not God because of any compulsion; our faith is no fetter, our profession is no bondage, we are not dragged to holiness, nor driven to duty. **No, our piety is our pleasure, our hope is our happiness, our duty is our delight.**

**Delight and true religion are as allied as root and flower; as indivisible as truth and certainty; they are, in fact, two precious jewels glittering side by side in a setting of gold.**

"'Tis when we taste thy love,

Our joys divinely grow,

Unspeakable like those above,

And heaven begins below.”

### **Spurgeon - Sunshine in the heart**

‘Delight thyself also in the LORD, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.’ Psalm 37:4

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Psalm 84:1–12

‘I can’t understand,’ once said a bird to a fish, ‘how it is that you always live in the cold element; I could not live there. It must be a great self-denial to you not to fly up to the trees. See how I can mount aloft.’ ‘Ah,’ said the fish, ‘it is no self-denial to me to live here, it is my element; I never aspire to fly, for it would not suit me. If I were taken out of my element I should die unless I was restored to it very soon, and the sooner the better.’ So the believer feels that God is his native element. He does not escape from his God, or from his Master’s will and service; and if for a time he were taken out of it, the sooner he could get back to it the better. If he is thrown into bad company he is miserable and wretched until he gets out of it again. Does the dove deny itself when it does not eat carrion? No, verily the dove could not delight in blood, it would not feed thereon if it could. When a man sees a company of swine under the oak delighting themselves in their acorns, and grunting out their satisfaction, does he deny himself when he passes them by without sharing their feast? No, verily, he has better bread at home whereof he can eat, and swines’ meat is no dainty to him. So it is with the believer; his religion is a matter of delight, a matter of satisfaction; and that which he avoids and turns from is very little self-denial to him. His tastes are changed, his wishes are altered. He delights himself in his God, and joyously receives the desire of his heart.

**Spurgeon - Treasury of David** - Make Jehovah the joy and rejoicing of your spirit. Bad men delight in carnal objects; do not envy them if they are allowed to take their fill in such vain idols. Fill yourself with your sublimer portion. The wicked delight in their portion; take care to delight in yours, and so far from envying you will pity them. There is no room for fretting if we remember that God is ours, but there is every incentive to sacred enjoyment of the most elevated and ecstatic kind. **Every name, attribute, word, or deed of Jehovah should be delightful to us, and in meditating thereon our soul should be as glad as is the epicure who feeds delicately with a profound relish for his dainties.** And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Those who delight in God desire or ask for nothing but what will please God; hence they may have what they will. Our innermost desires are here meant, not our casual wishes; there are many things which nature might desire which grace would never permit us to ask for; these deep, prayerful, asking desires are those to which the promise is made.

**Charles Simeon** - [Fidelity itself would not be acceptable, if it proceeded from a principle of slavish fear: we must regard God as a Father, and “delight ourselves in him.” It is not a low measure of spirituality that we should aim at: we should aspire after such an enjoyment of God as David himself spake of, when he said, “I will go unto God, my exceeding joy.” (Ps 43:4) In order to do this, we should meditate upon all his glorious perfections, and especially on those perfections as displayed and magnified in the work of redemption. O! what wonders of love and mercy may we see in our incarnate, our redeeming God! In the contemplation of these we should exercise ourselves day and night, till the fire kindle in our bosoms, and we burst forth in acclamations and hosannahs to our adorable Emmanuel. Say, ye who have ever been so occupied, whether such “meditations be not sweet;” and whether “your souls have not been satisfied as with marrow and fatness,” when you have been so employed?]

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### **Butler - Analytical Bible Expositor**

Consecration (Psalm 37:4)

“Delight thyself also in the LORD” (Psalm 37:4). Focus on the Lord, not on the wicked who prosper in the world.

- The instructions for the duty. “Delight thyself also in the LORD.” This speaks of devotion, of affection, of interest. We get excited about many things but seldom does the Lord interest us enough to delight us. If we delight in the Lord, there will be no disappointments.
- The inspiration for doing the duty. “He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” God will grant you what you want when you delight in Him. But what you want will be greatly affected by your delight in the Lord. If we delight in Him, we will not desire many things that the flesh desires, but will desire what God wants. God will quickly grant those desires.

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### **F B Meyer - LEAVE IT THERE**

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. PSALM 37:4

HOW CAN YOU FIND "REST for your soul"? One way is by faith. "We which have believed do enter into rest" (Heb. 4:3 italics added).

The point there is that faith has two hands. With one hand faith is always handing over, and with the other she is always reaching down - ours is the up and the down life. The angels went up on the ladder carrying Jacob's worries, and they came down the ladder bringing God's help. You have the two directions in your life. Send them up, and let them come down.

Do you know what it is when you are worried to kneel down and say to God: "Father, take this," and by one definite act to hand over the worry to God and leave it there? I heard a lady say that she had been in the habit of kneeling by her bedside and handing things over to God, and then jumping into her bed and by a strong pull pulling in all the things after her. Now that is not the best way. When you really trust God, you put a thing into His hands, and then you do not worry yourself or Him.

If there is one thing that annoys me more than another, it is for a man to say to me: "Will you do this?" And I say, "Certainly," and then he keeps sending postcards or letters to me all the time to work me up. I say, "That man does not trust me." So when I have really handed a thing over to God I leave it there, and I dare not worry for fear it would seem as if I mistrusted Him. But I keep looking up to Him - I cannot help doing that - and say, "Father, I am trusting."

My dog at home has such trust. He used to worry me very much to be fed at dinner, but he never got any food that way. But lately he has adopted something that always conquers me. He sits under the table and puts one paw on my knee. He never barks, never leaps around, never worries me, but he sits under the table with that one paw on my knee, and that conquers me. I cannot resist the appeal. Although my wife says I must never do it, I keep putting little morsels under the table.

That is the way to live - with your hand on God's knee. Say, "My God, I am not going to worry; I am not going to fret but there is my hand, and I wait until the time comes, and Thou shalt give me the desires of my heart."

**John Calvin** - Thus, the Lord granted Calvin his desire to write and publish far beyond his original expectations. Why? Because Calvin had made the Lord the delight of his life: "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4).

Calvin's personal motto read, "I offer my heart to you, Lord, promptly and sincerely," but this was more than a slogan—it was Calvin's life, the life of a churchman serving as pastor of St. Peter's Church in Geneva. He was unalterably committed to God and His glory, passionately desirous for the preeminence of Christ, and confidently reliant upon the Holy Spirit.

**Charles Stanley** - When you delight yourself in another person, **you spend as much time** as possible with that person, and you get to know that person as well as possible. When you are delighted in your relationship with another person, you are **fulfilled, complete, satisfied, content, and joyful** in your relationship. If you experience such a relationship, many material and physical things usually become very unimportant...

**And so it is when we come to delight in our relationship with the Lord. Nothing else really matters when we experience an intimate time with the Lord. Everything else pales in comparison to Him... First, delight yourself in the Lord on a regular basis (Ps. 37:4). When you make loving God your chief desire, you will find your requests aligned with His will the majority of the time.**

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## **David Jeremiah - DELIGHT IN THE LORD**

PSALM 37:4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Tracing the word "**delight**" through the Old Testament, I was surprised to learn that the **majority of its uses are in relationship to the Word of God—delighting in the Word**. The psalmists delighted in God's will as expressed in His law (Psalm 40:8); delighted in His statutes (Psalm 119:16); delighted in His commandments (Psalm 119:35); and delighted in His precepts and law (Psalm 119:69–70, 77, 92, 174). **There is a profound relationship between delighting in the Lord and delighting in His Word. Think about your relationship with a person who is the object of your affections. Your conversations, the letters you receive, the phone calls you share—their words are a reflection of who they are. So to delight in that person's words is to delight in them** And the same is true of our relationship with God. To **trust** in God is also to **delight** in Him and His promises. No Christian who delights in what God says about the future ("I will provide for you") can also be found worrying about the future. **When delighting in the Lord is your focus, everything else is brought into perspective.**

**A W Tozer** - Admire Him! Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. —Psalm 37:4

Admiration ... is appreciation of the excellency of God. Man is better qualified to appreciate God than any other creature because he was made in His image and is the only creature who was. This admiration for God grows and grows until it fills the heart with wonder and delight.

"In our astonished reverence we confess Thine uncreated loveliness," said the hymn writer. "In our astonished reverence."

The God of the modern evangelical rarely astonishes anybody. He manages to stay pretty much within the constitution. Never breaks over our bylaws. He's a very well-behaved God and very denominational and very much one of us, and we ask Him to help us when we're in trouble and look to Him to watch over us when we're asleep. The God of the modern evangelical isn't a God I could have much respect for. **But when the Holy Ghost shows us God as He is we admire Him to the point of wonder and delight.** WMJ022-023

O Lord, You're beautiful,

Your face is all I seek,

And when Your eyes are on this child,

Your grace abounds to me.

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### David Wilkerson - DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD

Our peace always depends on our resignation into God's hands, no matter what our circumstance. The psalmist writes, "Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4).

If you have fully resigned yourself into God's hands, then you are able to endure any and all hardships. Your Father's desire is for you to be able to go about your daily business without fear or anxiety, totally trusting in His care. The more resigned you are to God's care, the more indifferent you will be to the conditions around you.

If you are resigned to Him, you will not constantly be trying to figure out the next step. You will not be scared by the frightful news swirling around you or overwhelmed about the days ahead—because you have entrusted your life, family and future into the Lord's safe and loving hands.

Sheep are not worried as they follow their shepherd because they are totally resigned to his leading them. Likewise, we are the sheep of Christ, who is our great Shepherd. Why should we ever be concerned, disquieted or worried about our lives and futures? Our Shepherd knows perfectly how to protect and preserve His flock—because He leads us in love.

In my own life, I have had to learn to trust God one problem at a time. Think about it: How can I say I trust God with everything if I have not proven I can trust Him with just one thing? Merely saying the words, "I trust the Lord completely," is not sufficient. I have to prove it over and over in my life.

Many people today have said, "I resign, I commit, I trust," only after they saw there was no other way out of their situation. But true resignation, the kind that pleases God, is done freely, prior to our coming to our wits' end. So "delight yourself in Him."

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**Patrick Morley on Ps 37:4** - The word **delight** comes from a Hebrew word that means "to be soft or pliable." So then, when we are to "delight" in the Lord, we are to be soft or pliable. In other words, to delight in the Lord is to be clay in the potter's hands, to come humbly without heavy demands, to come eager to know the God who is and not the God we want, to come anxious for God to "make me" rather than for Him to "give me."

When I finally surrendered my expectations of Psalm 37:4, a chain reaction initiated. I started coming to the Lord with a new attitude, one of *softness* and *pliability*. Instead of telling God what my desires were, I came to understand Him. What is His character? What are His attributes? How can I worship Him more acceptably?

Then the amazing began. God began to grant my desires. But here is the trick: As I surrendered my expectations and "delighted" in Him, the **desires of my heart began to change**. Through my newfound pliability, He changed my desires by making His desires come alive in me. Over time, His desires actually became my desires. And when my desires were one with His desires in a given area, He would grant them. He granted them because they were actually His desires (His will) now alive in me as the delight of my own heart and mind.

There are no contradictions in Scripture. What is not understood is a paradox or a mystery, but not contradiction. The Word will always resolve its own apparent contradictions and enigmas, either in this life or the life to come. What we do not yet understand does not make the Bible invalid. It only means that God has not yet chosen to reveal a particular truth to us. We will know it all in due time.

Our expectations need to be altered, not our belief in Scripture's inerrancy. The Bible is not in error, we are. Believe the Word, not men. "Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?" (Isaiah 2:22). We are vapors that appear for a little while and then vanish, but the Word of God stands forever.

Are your expectations twisting the meaning of Scripture? Do you come to God soft and pliable, seeking Him as He really is? Or have you not yet surrendered your expectations to Him? Surrender your expectations and delight in Him; then He will give you the desires of your heart.

I SURRENDER - Dear God, I realize that I have superimposed selfish expectations onto the Bible and my personal relationship with You. I know that You are who You are, and that I must seek You as the God who is, not as the God I want. I surrender my expectations to You and ask You to change the desires of my heart until they are one with Yours. Amen. (Devotions for the Man in the Mirror)

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### John Butler- Delight in God Psalm 37:4

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4).

Carnality looks at the last part of our text and not the first part. But in our text the precept comes first then the promises. Responsibility comes before the rewards. Delight before the desires. If one does not get this order right he will never perceive or appreciate our text.

### FIRST—DELIGHTING IN THE LORD

"Delight thyself also in the Lord." This is the first and most important part of our text. Not many folk are delighting in the Lord. How do we know that? Just a few simple observations will show it.

- Delight in the Scriptures. If one delights in the Lord, he will be interested in what the Lord has to say. If you delight in a person, you will be most interested in their letters or emails, in anything they have to say. For the person who delights in the Lord, they will delight in the Scriptures. Few delight in the Scriptures today. They do not read the Scriptures nor study them and are not too sure where they last laid their Bible.
- Delight in Supplication. Those who delight in the Lord will pray much. You will want to talk with that person you delight in. Parents spend much in paying for long distance phone calls from their children away at college because they love and delight in their children. Those who delight in the Lord will be those who spend much time in prayer. Show me a person's prayer life and I will show you how much he delights in the Lord • Delight in the Sanctuary. Delight in the Lord evidences itself in delight to be in the sanctuary to worship the Lord. If you delight in a person, you will be quick to praise and honor that person. If you delight in the Lord you will be quick and faithful in honoring God through the worship and adoration of God. Poor church attendance often says you lack delight in the Lord

### SECOND—DESIRES FROM THE LORD

"And he will give thee the desires of thine heart." We like this part of the text for it contains the promise. But if you ignore the precept, God will ignore the promise. Note two things about the desires.

- Answered prayer. The word translated "desires" means to ask or petition. Thus those that delight in the Lord will have their prayers answered. If you are not getting many prayers answered, check your delight, your love for the Lord. If there is a lack in that area, there will also be a lack of answered prayers.
  - Acceptable prayer. If you want to pray acceptable prayers to the Lord then learn to delight in Him. If you delight in the Lord, you will not pray for things which do not delight the Lord. You will pray only for that which delights Him. This gives assurance that your prayers will be answered. Many of our prayers, the desires of our heart, are unacceptable to God because we do not delight in the Him. (Sermon Starters)
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**Vance Havner** - We carry checks on the bank of heaven and never cash them at the window of prayer.

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**MacArthur** on Ps 37:4 - In other words, when we are what God wants us to be, He is in control and our will is merged with His will, and He therefore gives us the desires He has planted in our hearts. Because true worshipers love God, **they find in Him their source of joy and delight.** They acknowledge that "the joy of the Lord is [their] strength" (Neh. 8:10). They "sing for joy in the Lord" (Ps. 33:1; cf. Ps. 84:2; 92:4; 95:1; 98:4), because they are filled "with the joy of the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess. 1:6; cf. Rom. 14:17). Like the psalmist, they find in "God [their] exceeding joy" (Ps. 43:4). True worshipers "**delight to revere [His] name**" (Neh. 1:11), and heed David's exhortation, "Delight yourself in the Lord" (Ps. 37:4). **The contemplation of God's glory and majesty, and what He has done in their lives, is their supreme joy and delight.**

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MacArthur - When obedient believers delight themselves in the Lord, He will plant the desires in their hearts for what glorifies Him (Ps. 37:4), and those desires will control their prayers. God's answers to those prayers will glorify Him, bring believers' wills into line with His purposes, and fill them with joy. -- MacArthur New Testament Commentary – 1-3 John.

## WE MUST DELIGHT OURSELVES

1. In God Himself, Psa. 37:4
2. In His Word, Psa. 1:2; 119:24
3. In His Service, Psa. 40:8
4. In Prayer, Isa. 58:2

Then what a joy to learn that God will delight in us (Psa. 37:23; Prov. 11:20; 12:22).

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**John Phillips** - "Delight thyself also in the LORD, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." This is good to remember, for when things go wrong we tend to get occupied with the problem. Maybe things have gone wrong at work or at home. Perhaps the children are rebellious. We must get our eyes back on the Lord. As long as we look at the problem, we shall become increasingly depressed, but if we look at the Lord we shall rise above our circumstances. After all, He hasn't failed. He cannot fail. **Our happiness must not rest upon what happens.** It must be drawn out of the wellsprings of salvation and from our experiential knowledge of the goodness, grace, and greatness of our God. (Explore the Psalms)

**Vance Havner** - It is the same principle where we read that if we delight ourselves in the Lord He shall give us the desires of our hearts (Ps. 37:4). One readily can see how that if everyone got from God what he desired we should have hopeless confusion; with two men, for instance, in the same community praying, one for rain and the other for dry weather. The antecedent conditions are that we delight in the Lord, rest in His will, and then the desire of our hearts will be that His will be done. In other words, as we abide in Him He creates within us such holy desires as He is pleased to answer.

### **Vance Havner** on Psalm 37:4 - The Desires Of Thine Heart

Life, for the Christian, does not always run along in story-book style. The hero is not always crowned, the honest do not always get rich, nor does the noble knight invariably claim the princess and live happily ever after; sometimes it happens, but oftener it does not.

This leads weak believers to question God's promises and live in the doldrums because their faith is not the password to every garden of desire. They fail in business, they get sick, they lose their dearest ones, they plug along at some mediocre job, and then because their trust in God did not pull down the plums they charge the Almighty with sending them crab-apples.

I know how such people feel, for I, too, have been familiar with tumbled castles and fading dreams. I used to read (Psalm 37:4): "Delight thyself also in the Lord: and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart"; and I wondered how it could be true. It did not seem to work in my case. Most of the things I'd craved seemed to have gone to somebody else. I stood in the harbour and watched others unload the cargoes of dreams come true, but my ships did not come in.

Today I believe more than ever in the promises of God. For one thing, God has promised us that we shall have trouble in this world. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). These are promises just as surely as are the assurances of good things. We must take all the promises into our calculations. God has not guaranteed to save me from the adversities common to man, but He has written that He will keep me in the midst of them. So, when I have trouble, that is one promise being kept, and when He sustains me in trouble, He is keeping another promise. Remember that when Jesus said we should have tribulation in the world He added, "but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

What about the desires of mine heart? If I delight myself in the Lord and want a million dollars, shall I get it? Faith in God is not an easy path to self-satisfaction. What is the true desire of one whose delight is in the Lord? "Not my will, but Thine." When we are living in Him our wish is that His will be done. And when this is the desire of our hearts, He will give us our desires.

Faith in God will not get for you everything you may want, but it will get for you what God wants you to have. The unbeliever does not need what he wants: the Christian should want only what he needs. And God has promised to supply our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. That is enough, for what we do not need can do us no good.

The believer should pray, "I want this thing, if it be in Thy will." If he does not get it, then it will be because it was not in God's will; and if it was not in His will, then he did not spiritually desire it. In this blessed state that delights in the Lord there can be no disappointment.

If you are doubting Psalms 37:4, the trouble is not that the promise has failed. You simply are not keeping the first half of the verse, the condition of the promise. If you really delight in Him, your desires will be the kind He has promised to satisfy.

**Stephen Charnock** - Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.—Psalm 37:4

[This delight in prayer] is a delight in God, who is the object of prayer. The glory of God—communion with him, enjoyment of him—is the great goal of believers in their prayers. Such delight in prayer is only a spark of the delight that the soul has in the object of prayer. God is the center, in whom the soul rests, and the goal that the soul aims at. According to our perceptions of God are our desires for him; when we see him as the chief good, we will desire him and delight in him as the chief good. There must first be a delight in God before there can be a spiritual delight or a constancy in duty. Delight is a grace, and, as faith, desire, and love have God for their object, so does this. And according to the strength of our delight in the object or purpose is the strength of our delight in the means of attainment. When we delight in God as glorious, we will delight to honor him; when we regard him as good, we will delight to pursue and enjoy him and delight in that which brings us into communion with him. Those who rejoice in God will rejoice in every approach to him. “The joy of the LORD is your strength” (Neh. 8:10). The more joy in God, the more strength to go to him. The lack of this is the reason of our snail-like motion to him. We have no sweet thoughts of God and therefore no mind to converse with him. We cannot judge our delight in prayer to be right if we do not have a delight in God—natural men and women may have a delight in prayer when they have corrupt and selfish ends. They may have a delight in a duty as it is a means, according to their understanding, to gain their purpose, as Balaam and Balak offered their sacrifice cheerfully, hoping to ingratiate themselves with God and to have liberty to curse his people...

This delight in prayer is a delight in the precepts and promises of God, which are the ground and rules of prayer. First, David delights in God’s testimonies and then calls on him with his whole heart. A gracious heart must first delight in precepts and promises before it can turn them into prayers, for prayer is nothing else but presenting God with his own promise, desiring that which he has promised to us. No one was more cheerful in prayer than David, because no one was more rejoicing in the statutes of God. God’s statutes were David’s songs (Ps. 119:54). And the divine Word was sweeter to him than honey. If our hearts do not leap at divine promises, we are likely to have drowsy souls in desiring them. If our eyes are not on the delicacies God sets before us, our desires cannot be strong for him. If we have no delight in the rich legacies of God, how can we sue for them? If we do not delight in the covenant of grace, we will not delight in prayers for grace. The hopes of reward made Moses valiant in suffering, and the joy set before Christ made him so cheerful in enduring the shame (Heb. 12:1–2).

A delight in prayer itself. A Christian’s heart is—in secret—transported into heaven. There is a delight in coming near God and warming the soul by the fire of his love.

The angels are cheerful in the act of praise; their work is their glory. Holy souls so delight in this duty that if there were no command, no promise, they would be stepping into God’s courts. They do not think it a good day that passes without some communion with God. David would have taken up his lodgings in the courts of God and regards it as the only blessedness (Ps. 65:4). And so great a delight he had in being in God’s presence that he envies the birds the happiness of building their nests near God’s tabernacle. There is a delight in the holiness of prayer; natural men or women under some troubles may delight in God’s comforting and easing presence—but not in his sanctifying presence. They may delight to pray to God as a storehouse to supply their wants—but not as a refiner’s fire to purge away their dross. Prayer, as praise, is a melody to God in the heart (Eph. 5:19). And the soul loves to be fingering the instrument and touching the strings...

[This delight in prayer is] a delight in the things asked. This heavenly cheerfulness is most in heavenly things. What delight others have in asking worldly goods, a gracious heart has in begging the light of God’s face. Souls cannot be dull in prayer who seriously consider they pray for no less than heaven and happiness, no less than the glory of the great God. A gracious person is never weary of spiritual things, as people are never weary of the sun; though spiritual things are enjoyed every day, yet we long for them to rise again. From this delight in the matter of prayer, the saints have redoubled and repeated their petitions and redoubled the Amen at the end of prayer, to show the great affections to those things they have asked. The soul loves to think of those things the heart is set on, and frequent thoughts express a delight.

[Delight in prayer is] a delight in those graces and affections that are exercised in prayer. A gracious heart is most delighted with that prayer in which grace has been more stirring, and gracious affections have been boiling over. The soul desires not only to speak to God, but to make melody to God; the heart is the instrument, but graces are the strings, and prayer is touching them, and therefore the soul is more displeased with the flagging of its graces than with missing an answer. There may be a delight in gifts, in a person’s own gifts, in the gifts of another, in the pomp and varnish of devotion, but a delight in exercising spiritual graces is an ingredient in this true delight. The Pharisees are marked by Christ to make long prayers, self-glorifying in an outward bravery of words, as if they were playing the courtiers with God and complimenting him; the publican had a short prayer but more grace: “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” There is reliance and humility. A gracious heart labors to bring flaming affections, and if it cannot bring flaming grace, it will bring smoking grace; Christians desire the preparation of their hearts as well as the answer of their prayers. (Stephen

Charnock)

**John Calvin** on Ps 37:4 - This delight is set in opposition to the vain and deceitful allurements of the world, which so intoxicate the ungodly, that despising the blessing of God, they dream of no other happiness than what presents itself for the time before their eyes. This contrast between the vain and fickle joys with which the world is deluded, and the true repose enjoyed by the godly, ought to be carefully observed; for whether all things smile upon us, or whether the Lord exercise us with adversities, we ought always to hold fast this principle, that as the Lord is the portion of our inheritance, our lot has fallen in pleasant places,

as we have seen in Psalm 16:5-6. We must therefore constantly recall to our minds this truth, that it can never be well with us except in so far as God is gracious to us, so that the joy we derive from his paternal favor towards us may surpass all the pleasures of the world. To this injunction a promise is added, that, if we are satisfied in the enjoyment of God alone, he will liberally bestow upon us all that we shall desire: He will give thee the desires of thy heart. This does not imply that the godly immediately obtain whatever their fancy may suggest to them; nor would it be for their profit that God should grant them all their vain desires. The meaning simply is, that if we stay our minds wholly upon God, instead of allowing our imaginations like others to roam after idle and frivolous fancies, all other things will be bestowed upon us in due season.

**David Rudolph** - I have experienced the fulfillment of this promise many times in my life. I have also discovered that it never seems to work when I delight myself in the Lord in order to receive the desires of my heart. Delighting in the Lord must be its own separate desire, a glorious end in itself.

As we continue to delight in the Lord, our desires become purified. Those based totally on self-indulgent motives are in time revealed for what they are, while those which will not divert our focus from the Lord are in time realized. Other desires may become modified as we begin to perceive circumstances in a new light.

### **Ian Paisley - Sing Your Hallelujahs**

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Psalm 37:4

Having stopped your fretting and started your trusting, now sing your Hallelujahs.

**ADDITION— "Delight thyself also"** This addition is emphasized by the word "**also**". Having obeyed the first two commands you will lose the blessing if you don't start delighting yourself. How many of us lose out because we stop in verse three and don't go forward to verse four. How happy is the man who delights in His God.

**SUBMISSION—**"in the Lord" Yes, our delights must not be in the worldly and carnal but in the heavenly and spiritual. **God must be the centre of our attraction, He must be the foundation, fabric and finish of all our joys. Outward earthly circumstances can never rob us of our delights if those delights have their roots in the happy God. There is a great difference in rejoicing in salvation and rejoicing in the God of our salvation (Hab. 3:18). This is the secret we all need to learn.**

**ADDITION AGAIN—**"He shall give thee the desires of thine heart" God's blessings are running-over blessings. Here is addition again. The text starts with addition and ends with addition and what an addition. Every desire fulfilled! What an experience! Earthly delights are but the weeds of Paradise Lost. Heavenly delights are the wonders of Paradise Regained.

### **Joni E Tada- All I Want for Christmas ...**

Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.— PSALM 37:4

You've heard the song, "All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth"? When I got out of the hospital back in the late '60s, my big holiday wish was, "Lord, all I want for Christmas is my body back!" I'd see a star in the night sky and whisper, "Star light, star bright, first star I see tonight ... ," and I'd plead, "Jesus, I know that wishing on a star and asking for Christmas gifts may not be very 'Christian,' but please may I have back the use of my hands and legs?" I was spurred on by John 15:7 where Jesus said, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." It sounded like Jesus was on my side.

I began to follow faithfully the condition of that promise from John 15:7. I sincerely abided in the Lord in prayer, as his Word abided in me. As I did, I came across Acts 14:22 reminding me I would "go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." Romans 8:17 explained that I could be a co-heir with Christ if I shared in his sufferings. There were scores of other verses just like these!

When Christmas rolled around years later, I knew I had received the best present. I delighted myself in the Lord according to John 15:7, and he granted me my desire — I had a deeper, more fulfilling relationship with my wonderful Savior!

Of all the gifts you could receive at Christmas, what would be your heart's desire? When you see a star appear, for what do you privately hope? Jesus says that whatever you wish, it will be done for you if his words fill your life and if you abide in him. When you do that, you end up receiving far more than you could ever hope for — you get the Bright and Morning Star himself.

Lord Jesus, I want you to be the sole desire of my heart. Grant me this desire, I pray.

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**Getting What We Want** - Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. --Psalm 37:4

A certain airline pilot had a peculiar habit. Whenever he took off from his hometown of Minneapolis, he would ask the copilot to take the controls. Then he would stare intently out the window for a few moments.

Finally the copilot's curiosity got the best of him, so he asked, "What do you always look at down there?"

"See that boy fishing on that riverbank?" the pilot asked. "I used to fish from that same spot when I was a kid. Whenever a plane flew over, I would watch it until it disappeared and wish that I could be the pilot." With a sigh he added, "Now I wish I could be back down there fishing."

It's natural to spend time thinking about where we'd like to be or what we'd like to have. But we must evaluate our desires to make sure they are consistent with what God says will truly satisfy.

King David found satisfaction by putting first things first. His joy was rooted in the strength of the Lord and the salvation He provided (Ps. 21:1-2). It was because David sought the Lord that God gave him the desires of his heart (37:4).

When our desires conform to God's will, we're not likely to waste time wishing for things that can't satisfy. Real joy comes not in getting what we want, but in wanting to be close to God. --D C Egener

Fret not for want of earthly things--  
They'll never satisfy;  
The secret of contentment is  
To let the Lord supply. --DJD

Contentment comes when we realize God has everything we need.

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**Beyond Disappointment** - Perhaps you've seen the video of the little boy who learns he's getting another sister. In the middle of his meltdown he laments, "It's always girls, girls, girls, girls!"

The story gives an amusing glimpse into human expectations, but there's nothing funny about disappointment. It saturates our world. One story from the Bible seems especially steeped in disappointment. Jacob agreed to work 7 years for the right to marry his boss's daughter Rachel. But after fulfilling his contract, Jacob got a wedding night surprise. In the morning he discovered not Rachel but her sister Leah.

Jesus brings justice & restores hope.

We focus on Jacob's disappointment, but imagine how Leah must have felt! What hopes and dreams of hers began to die that day as she was forced to marry a man who did not love or want her?

**Psalm 37:4 tells us, "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."** Are we to believe that God-fearing people are never disappointed? No, the psalm clearly shows that the writer sees injustice all around him. But he takes the long view: "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him" (Ps 37:7). His conclusion: "The meek will inherit the land" (Ps 37:11).

In the end, it was Leah whom Jacob honored and buried in the family grave plot with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 49:31). And it was through the lineage of Leah—who in life thought she was unloved—that God blessed the world with our Savior. Jesus brings justice, restores hope, and gives us an inheritance beyond our wildest dreams.

Lord, sometimes it's so hard to wait patiently for good things. Forgive us for comparing ourselves to others and for complaining about what we don't have. Help us meet You in a new way today.

Jesus is the only friend who never disappoints.

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Not What I Planned - Rest in the Lord. —Psalm 37:7

This isn't the way I expected my life to be. I wanted to marry at 19, have a half-dozen children, and settle into life as a wife and mother. But instead I went to work, married in my forties, and never had children. **For a number of years I was hopeful that Psalm 37:4 might be for me a God-guaranteed promise: "He shall give you the desires of your heart."**

But God doesn't always "bring it to pass" (Ps 37:5), and unmet desires stir up occasional sadness. Like mine, your life may have turned out differently than you planned. A few thoughts from Psalm 37 may be helpful (even though the psalm is primarily about comparing ourselves to the wicked).

We learn from Ps 37:4 that unfulfilled desires don't have to take the joy out of life. As we get to know God's heart, He becomes our joy.

"Commit your way to the Lord" (Ps 37:5). The word commit means "to roll." Bible teacher Herbert Lockyer, Sr., says, "'Roll thy way upon the Lord,' as one who lays upon the shoulders of one stronger than himself a burden which he is not able to bear."

"Trust also in Him" (Ps 37:). When we confidently entrust everything to God, we can "rest in the Lord" (Ps 37:7), for He is bringing about His best for our lives.

As I walk along life's pathway,  
Though the way I cannot see,  
I shall follow in His footsteps,  
For He has a plan for me. —Thiesen

A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. —Proverbs 16:9

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**A Sheer Delight** - Delight yourself ... in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. —Psalm 37:4

After finishing high school in 1941, Clair Hess anticipated serving his country by joining the army. But when he developed a heart murmur from a bout with scarlet fever, he was denied acceptance. He admits that he was envious of his fellow graduates and other servicemen in their uniforms, but he was helped by reading Psalm 37 and seeing how the psalmist David handled envy.

While Clair was wondering about God's direction for his life, his uncle suggested to him that the Lord might be calling him to His service. So Clair attended Moody Bible Institute and was led into a career of singing and later editing for RBC Ministries. He's been doing that for 50 years now and calls serving God "a sheer delight."

David encouraged us in Psalm 37 to delight in the Lord and not to envy others (Ps 37:1-4). Although he was talking about envying people who get away with evil, we can apply it to other types of envy. Instead of comparing ourselves with others, we need to delight ourselves in God. In His time, He'll fulfill the desires of our heart and affirm that we are in His will.

We're all in "God's service" as believers. And serving Him is a sheer delight.

Let the joy of the Lord be your strength—

May His peace fill your heart day and night;

As you walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,

You will find that He'll lead you aright. —Hess

Contentment comes when God's will is more important than our wants.

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**Frustrating Promises** - Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. —Psalm 37:4

Do any Bible promises frustrate you? Some people say that Psalm 37:4 is a guarantee that you'll get whatever you want—a spouse, a job, money. This has made me wonder at times, Why don't I have what I want?

When a promise frustrates us because it seems that God is not fulfilling it, maybe it's because we don't understand what the verse really means. Here are three suggestions to help, using Psalm 37 as an example:

Consider the context. Psalm 37 is telling us not to worry or be envious of the wicked. Our focus is not to be on what they have, nor on what they seem to be getting away with (Ps 37:12-13). Instead, we are commanded to trust and delight in the Lord (Ps 37:3-4).

Consider other verses. We're taught in 1 John 5:14 that our requests need to be according to God's will for us. Other Scriptures on the same topic can give us a balance.

Consult a Bible commentary. In *The Treasury of David*, C. H. Spurgeon says this about Ps 37:4: "[Those] who delight in God desire or ask for nothing but what will please God." Doing a little deeper study can help us understand frustrating Bible verses like this one.

As we learn to delight in the Lord, His desires will become our own and He will grant them.

Standing on the promises that cannot fail,  
When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,  
By the living Word of God I shall prevail,  
Standing on the promises of God. —Carter

You can't break God's promises by leaning on them.

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**Adrian Rogers** - Psalm 37:4 "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." The deepest needs of your heart will be met. He will turn every hurt to a hallelujah, every tear to a pearl. Every midnight to a sunrise. Every Calvary to an Easter.

### **Adrian Rogers - DELIGHT IN THE LORD WHEN DREAMS DISSOLVE**

Psalm 37:4

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

1. Why do we fret? Because the source of our joy and supply is being threatened.
2. You must find a source that cannot be threatened. When we delight in the Lord, we have done just that.
3. And when we do that, the desire of our heart is truly met.

Depression comes when our innermost needs are not being met.

This speaks not of surface wants or casual wishes. Those cravings can be met, and we can still be depressed.

The child reaches for the butterfly. It then becomes a yellow smear in his hand.

Corrie ten Boom said, "Look around and you will be distressed. Look within and you will be depressed. Look at Jesus and you will be at rest."

4. God is not finished with any of us until our chief delight is in Him alone. Children, wealth, home, job and life will pass away.

When the Stock Market crashed, there were people jumping out of windows.

Hebrews 10:34

For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

Could you have a song in your heart if soldiers came and took away all of your goods?

2 Cor. 6:10

As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Satan says that if you serve me, I will pay you well. You can't pay me because I already have everything. Satan says that if you don't serve me, I will take away what you have. You can't take away anything because I have nothing.

5. You can tell a lot about a person by what makes him sad or glad or mad.

Hold all things loosely. "I wear this world like a loose garment."

**Adrian Rogers** - What's he saying? Folks, we're in deep water, now; we're in deep water. God showed up, when Job shut up. And, God said, "Job, I am sovereign. And, Job, I am sufficient." That's what the psalmist meant, in Psalm 37:4: "Delight yourself in the LORD: and He'll give you the desire of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). He doesn't mean He'll give you things, and health, and a job, or anything else. He will give you Himself. And, friend, when He does, that's how to stand, when you don't understand. You don't have to know why. You may never know why. All you must know is Him. He is sovereign, and He is sufficient. We're in deep water, this morning; but folks, you can go from tragedy to mystery to victory, just like old Job did, so long ago. We ought to be grateful for Job—that he suffered all this, that we might look here, today, and learn this lesson.

**Do you remember with the Bible says in Psalm 37:4?** I love it. It says, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desire of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). Now, that doesn't mean that you'll have every surface need met—every whim, every fancy—

every lust of your eyes, and your flesh, satisfied. Oh, no! It means, when you find all in Jesus Christ, when you delight yourself in the Lord, what your heart has really been seeking for, it will find. That's what that verse means. Delight yourself in the Lord, and you'll have the desire of your heart. What your heart really yearns for is God. "Friends all around me are trying to find what the heart yearns for" (Harry Dixon Loes)—and only in Jesus can those things be found. The deepest need of your heart can be met.

**Allen Ross** - When you delight yourself in the LORD, that will determine what the desires of your heart will be, and so when you pray you will be praying for what God wants. Some of the great Rabbis put it this way: When you pray, make His will your will, so that He will make your will His will.

### **David Wheeler - Delight in God**

The third element in building this relationship with our loving God involves delight. There is a difference between desire and delight. Desire implies a hunger for God—a pursuit after Him, to know Him. Delight, on the other hand, describes our reaction to this relationship with Him.

I graduated from the University of Oklahoma. It is no secret that over the decades the university has amassed a huge, loyal following totally dedicated to Oklahoma Sooner football. I'm guilty. I love OU football. A loyal OU football fan desires to know more about each new player, new strategies for winning games, the latest college rankings, important statistics, and even the comings and goings of the coaching staff. One might say that a loyal OU Sooner is obsessed with a desire to know more about OU football.

But, their desire to know more about OU football fades when compared to the delight they experience when the team wins a championship, tournament, or bowl game. Desire turns into delight as the fans witness and enjoy all that the team can do.

Delight implies great joy and pleasure, happiness, glee, and enjoyment. John Piper says, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." The psalmist reminds us to "delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps 37:4 NIV). The relationship with God is something we experience and enjoy. In the presence of God is fullness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures forever (see Ps 16:11). There is exceeding joy in knowing God (see Ps 43:4). The great psalmist of Israel declares, "How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps 119:103 NKJV). The truth of God's message in 1 John is for our "joy to be full" (1 John 1:4). The apostle Paul encourages the brethren under the siege of persecution to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil 4:4 NKJV).

Herein is the secret of this relationship with God. We find our joy in Him. God responds by giving us more joy. Our response becomes an outgrowth of that which God is doing in our hearts. And, as C. S. Lewis exclaims, "all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise."

We delight in God because He created us to enjoy Him. The hidden secret in building a relationship with God is confirmed as we learn and believe that God formed and created us for His glory and calls us by name. The Westminster Catechism asserts that "the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." This is the secret of perfect worship. We establish our relationship with God as we love Him, give our hearts to Him, enjoy His presence, thrill at the wonder of His mighty acts, and spontaneously explode with expressions of praise to Him:

To love God does not mean to meet His needs, but rather to delight in Him and to be captivated by His glorious power and grace, and to value Him above all other things on earth. All the rest of the commandments are the kinds of things that we will do from our hearts, if our hearts are truly delighted with and resting in the glory of God's grace.

**Matthew Poole** - Delight thyself in the Lord; in his favour and service, and in the study of his word and promises.

**Ray Pritchard** - What's most important? Guidability! "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:4) Why is that verse true? Because as you delight yourself in the Lord, your desires are going to become his desires and his desires are going to become your desires. As you delight yourself in God, you are going to be changed on the inside so that the things you really want are the things that God wants for you!

Today in the word - As we know the Lord more deeply, our desires become conformed to His (see Ps. 37:4; 40:8).

**Ray Pritchard** - Without exception, the greatest pray-ers are always men and women who know the Word of God. Fill your heart with God's Word and your prayers will soon reflect God's priorities. This is the true meaning of Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart."

**Robertson McQuilkin** - Different interpretations are given to the promise "He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4). Does the psalmist mean to indicate that God will answer prayer by giving what the person desires? Or does he mean that the desire or "want" a person ought to have will be given to him?

The answer to that question can be settled by a simple word study that indicates that the Hebrew word translated "desires" actually means "petitions." Another way to determine the meaning is to check parallel passages. For example, Psalm 78:29-31 reads: "So they ate and were well filled; and their desire He gave to them. Before they had satisfied their desire, while their food was in their mouths, the anger of God rose against them."

Obviously in that passage they were not given the right kind of desires, but rather were provided with what they had pled for. The psalmist is promising that those who delight themselves in the Lord are the ones who will have their prayers answered.

**Chuck Smith** - The Bible said, "Delight thyself also in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). Well, what that psalm doesn't say, but what is also true, that as you begin to delight yourself in the Lord, the Lord begins to redirect the desires of your heart. According to that which He wants and according to that which He has purposed. So that doing the will of God becomes really the most glorious thing of your entire existence. It becomes the fulfillment of your dreams and of your desires. And it's marvelous.

**Steven Cole** - Seeking first His kingdom means committing yourself to whatever God wants you to do with your life. Have you given Him the blank check? Remember, if you delight yourself in the Lord, He will give you the desires of your heart (Ps. 37:4). Sometimes He grants your desires; at other times, He changes your desires to match His desires. But, you can trust the loving Father to do what is best when you give yourself fully to His cause.

**Andrew Bonar** - Tuesday, June 19th.—Have often found of late that verse powerful, Psalm xxxvii. 4: 'Delight thyself.' The more I have been able to make God my chief joy the less do I feel in any way tormented with earthly desires, and I see myself surrounded with comforts.

**Piper** - David says in Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." By implication this must mean, "Delight yourself in everything that delights the Lord,"

**John Piper** (Nine Implications of Christian Hedonism) - 3. Since God is the most glorious of all beings, and since that glory shines most brightly in us when we are most satisfied in him, therefore it is our duty to pursue the greatest and longest happiness in God every hour of the day and forever.

Psalm 16 is one of the great expressions of this. I get the words "greatest" and "longest" from this psalm. Here is composite of Ps 16:8–11:

"I have set the Lord always before me [so this is intentional; this is pursuit] ... Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; For ... You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

### **We are commanded to pursue our joy in God.**

"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing" (Psa 100:1–2)!

"Delight yourself in the LORD" (Psa 37:4).

"Rejoice in the Lord ... " (Phil 4:4).

**William Arnot** - Proverbs 11:23 "The desire of the righteous is only good."— IN the preceding chapter we learned that " the desire of the righteous shall be granted ." here we are told that it is good. The fruit we gathered on a former page; and now the tree that bore it is displayed. A good tree bringeth forth good fruit : holy desires implanted in the heart will issue in glad enjoyments. " Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart " (Ps.37:4).

### **James Smith - Delighting in God!**

"Delight yourself in the Lord — and He shall give you the desires of your heart!" Psalm 37:4

Delighting in worldly things — effectually prevents our delighting in God. Therefore it is often the case, that the Lord strips us of these things, or incapacitates us to enjoy them — in order to bring us back to delight in Himself.

He delights in His people — and He desires that His people to delight in Him. In order to accomplish this, He has revealed Himself in the most amiable characters, as ...

- Husband;
- Friend;
- Brother;



- Savior;
- Shepherd, and so forth —

all on purpose to endear Himself to us!

Surely if our hearts were right — we would delight in Him on account of ...

His glorious perfections;

His unalterable love;

the perfect atonement made for our sins;

the promises made for our comfort and encouragement;

the gift of the Holy Spirit;

the communion we are urged to hold with Himself;

and the glorious paradise of blessedness set before us — where we shall forever ...

view the unfolding of His glories,

enjoy the riches of His grace, and

drink of the river of His pleasures!

Sick Christian, Jesus bids you to delight in Him!

Delight in Him as your Savior, Friend, and Brother!

Delight in His person and glories!

Delight in His perfect work!

Delight in His glorious fullness!

Delight in your salvation in Him, union to Him, and claim upon Him.

Oh, delight in Jesus!

You will have no permanent peace or solid satisfaction — but as you are delight in Him, and rejoice in Him, saying, "You are my portion, O Lord!"

He who delights in God has the desires of His heart — because they are in accordance with the purpose, promise, and pleasure of God.

The mind is thrown into the mold of God's mind, and the soul cries from its inmost recesses, "Not my will — but may Your will be done!" Its pleasures are spiritual, permanent, and satisfactory. The desire for earthly things becomes very contracted — a little of the things of this poor world will satisfy a soul that is delighting in Jehovah.

Delighting in God always produces resignation and holy contentment. Whatever they have — they enjoy it as the undeserved gift of God; and they feel obligated and thankful for all. They would rather be conformed to God's will — than have their own will. They know that His appointments are best — because they are infinitely wise, holy, and gracious. They can say, "I trust in You, O Lord, for You are my God! My times are in Your hand!" They find that godliness with contentment is great gain; and say with one of old, "The little that a righteous man has — is better than the riches of many wicked!" "Better a little with the fear of the Lord — than great treasure with turmoil."

The presence, the promise, and the smile of God — are to them inestimably valuable; but other things are not so important. They seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness — and all other necessary things are added unto them. They live at the fountain — when all the streams are dried up! They delight in God — when creatures fade and wither!

O Lord! I would delight in Thee,

And on Your care depend;

To You in every trouble flee,

My best, my only Friend!

No good in creatures can be found,

But may be found in Thee;

I must have all things and abound,

While God is God to me!

J. I. Packer asks "What were we made for? To know God. What aim should we set ourselves in life? To know God. What is the best thing in life, bringing more joy, DELIGHT, and contentment, than anything else? Knowledge of God." Not simply intellectual knowledge of course, but intimate knowledge! God grant us grace to obey the command to delight ourselves in You! Amen

Unfulfilled desires (we all have them somewhere in our past or even our present) - Ps 37:4 teaches us that unfulfilled desires do not have to take the joy out of life, for as we delight in God and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we grow to find that He is our joy, that the "joy of the Lord is our strength" to keep pressing on (Neh 8:10)!

Piper - You were made to see God, love God, delight in God, be stunned by God!

When our delight is in the love of God, our desires will be in the will of God. When we delight ourselves in the Lord, we will want the things that delight Him - Wiersbe

When we delight ourselves in the Lord, we will desire the things that delight Him.

When our desires conform to God's will, we are not likely to waste time wishing for things that cannot satisfy. Real joy comes not in getting what we want, but in wanting to be close to God!

The way to have our heart's desire is to make God our heart's delight. If God give us Himself to be our joy, He will deny us nothing that is good for us. No delight is comparable to the delight which gracious souls have in the Almighty; and those that acquaint themselves with him, and submit themselves entirely to him, shall find his favor to be, not only their strength, but their song. (Matthew Henry)

Matthew Henry - To converse with God, to have a regard for Him, a DELIGHT in Him, a concern for Him: This is to be alive to God.

Ray Pritchard paints a vivid picture explaining that delight "has the idea of a consuming passion that controls your life. Everyone "delights" in something. Some people delight in food. Others delight in a job or a hobby or a career. Some delight in a particular friendship. Many people delight in money or the things money can buy. And many delight in evil pleasures and wrong desires. Mark this well. Your "delight" determines your direction. What do you delight in? What gets you excited in the morning and keeps you awake at night? Tell me the answers to those questions and I'll tell you something crucial about who you are. To delight is to be so excited about something that you just can't wait. Watch a young couple in love and you'll know what "delight" means." Now apply this picture to the Lord. We are to delight in the Lord as a lover delights their beloved! Does this depict your delight in the Lord?

What you choose to delight in is that which gives you great pleasure and soul satisfaction.

Ps 119: 40 How I long for your precepts! Preserve my life in your righteousness.

To desire God is to desire His word...

16 I shall delight in Thy statutes; I shall not forget Thy word.

24 Thy testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors.

47 And I shall delight in Thy commandments, Which I love.

77 May Thy compassion come to me that I may live, For Thy law is my delight.

131 I opened my mouth wide and panted, For I longed for Thy commandments.

174 I long for Thy salvation, O LORD, And Thy law is my delight.

We spend time in God's Word, his "love letter" to us. We are reading it as a "love letter" from the Lord, making it top priority. We delight in God's Word, even as the king delighted in Esther (Esther 2:14). We are like a young couple who delight in each other's company and so they rearranges their priorities so that spend time together. Why? Because that is their greatest desire! They are like "Mary, who was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet" and not like "Martha (who) was distracted..., worried (fretting)

and bothered about so many things." (Lk 10:39-41) We need to be like Mary's who delighted in Jesus Who said that "There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it." Our Lord desires our DELIGHT above our service. Father grant that by Your Spirit we like Mary might discover the one thing that transcends time is to sit lost in DELIGHT at our Savior's feet communing with Him through His Word and prayer. Amen

Why? Not because they have to but because that is their greatest desire! Nothing interferes with their spending time with the object of their delight! I need to ask myself "Do I DELIGHT in God's Word like this? Do I set aside time to commune Him in His Word because I delight in listening to His voice? Or instead of seeing my time with Him as a delight, has it become more of a duty?"

in His Word become more of a duty thinking "A chapter a day keeps the devil away!"

The Bible is God's love letter to you. You're reading the counsel of a loving, all-wise Heavenly Father as to how you should live. His commandments are for your blessing and good. It should be no more of a duty to spend time in God's Word than it is for a young man to spend time with an attractive woman. The way to true happiness is to delight in God's Word. (Ibid)

John Piper - God is not honored when we celebrate the high days of our relationship out of a mere sense of duty. He is honored when those days are our DELIGHT! Therefore to honor God in worship we must not seek Him disinterestedly, for fear of gaining some joy in worship and so ruining the moral value of the act. Instead, we must seek Him hedonistically, the way a thirsty deer pants after the stream, precisely for the joy of seeing and savoring God! Worship is nothing less than (Spirit enabled) obedience to the command of God, "DELIGHT yourself in the LORD" (Psalm 37:4). (The Dangerous Duty of Delight)

Boice - the one who trusts God also finds Him to be a source of exquisite delight. For He is the perfection of grace, compassion, mercy, kindness, patience, and love. He is, in other words, like Jesus Christ, and the better we know Him the more we inevitably delight in Him. The reason many apparent Christians do not delight in God is that they do not know Him very well, and the reason they do not know Him well is that they do not spend time with Him.

O Lord! I would delight in Thee,

And on Your care depend;

To You in every trouble flee,

My best, my only Friend!

As Spurgeon says "Beloved, the thought of God is to the souls of those who know and love him the most delightful that can cross the mind. Blessed is the Christian who can practically enjoy delight in the Almighty by making him to be his all in all, all the day, and every day."

Piper - God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.

John Piper - "Puritans whose aim was to know God so well that "delighting in him, may be the work of our lives," (Richard Baxter) because they knew that this joy would "arm us against the assaults of our spiritual enemies and put our mouths out of taste for those pleasures with which the tempter baits his hooks." (Matthew Henry)

Westminster Catechism says "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." DELIGHTING in Him is enjoying Him, finding pleasure in Him.

Whatever delights your heart will end up directing your heart. If you delight in the Lord and in His Word, you will eat it (memorize) and chew it (meditate) and as your delight in the Word leads to eat of it and eating will lead to increasing delight in the Lord, and so the circle continues.

In what do we DELIGHT? Are we like the Montana miners who suddenly struck a mother lode of gold and happily began shouting with DELIGHT, "We've found it! We've found gold! We're rich!" May the Spirit enable us to be among those who have truly "struck it rich" DELIGHTING not in our earthly gold but DELIGHTING in our heavenly God! Then we can say "We're really rich!"

What if we do not desire to delight? Consider praying as did the psalmist "From the end of the earth I call to Thee, when my heart is faint; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

When God becomes our "exceeding joy" (Ps 43:4) our hearts will be stirred to delight in Him day and night and to "serve the Lord with gladness (with exceeding joy)." (Ps 100:2)

Let us "go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and upon the lyre I shall praise Thee, O God, my God." (Ps 43:4)

May David's words be the cry of our heart "One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of

the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to meditate in His temple." Amen (Ps 27:4)

May He grant you your heart's desire, and fulfill all your counsel! Ps 20:4

(Ps 70:4) Let all who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee; And let those who love Thy salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified."

complete and lasting pleasure is found in God alone: "In Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever" (Psalm 16:11).

LISTEN TO HIM - JER 15:16

SPEAK WITH HIM - If we truly DELIGHT in Jehovah, we desire not only to spend time with Him, listening to His voice in the Word, but we desire to speak with Him in prayer. We will be like godly Nehemiah who prayed "O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who DELIGHT to fear (show reverence for) your name." (Neh 1:11)

SPEND TIME WITH HIM like "Mary, who was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet" and not like "Martha (who) was distracted..., worried and bothered about so many things." (Lk 10:39-41) We need to be like Mary's who delighted in Jesus Who declared "There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it." Our Lord desires our delight above our service. As Jim Elliot said "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." God grant that by His Spirit we too might discover the one thing that transcends time as we sit lost in DELIGHT at our Savior's feet. Amen

When we find our DELIGHT in Him in Whom "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3), we find that Jesus is enough!

Turn your eyes on Jesus

If Christ is the center of our life, we are more likely to delight in Him.

Indeed let it true of us O God that "As a deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:1-2), for

"Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy." (Psalm 43:4)

Psalm 70:4, "May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation say evermore, 'God is great!'" That is delighting in God.

Psalm 63:3, "Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you."

Note: Those last two texts show something crucial. One says that when you love God's salvation you don't say mainly, "God's salvation is great!" You say, "God is great!" And when you experience the steadfast love of the Lord, you don't mainly say, "My lips will praise your steadfast love." You mainly say, "My lips will praise you!" In other words, in all these texts the command is to delight in God himself, and all other blessings we enjoy should lead us to God himself as our final and fullest satisfaction.

Delight is the picture of my being highly pleased and fully contented with God's Person and Presence. As David in Psalm 16:11 "Thou wilt make known to me the path of life (ultimately this is Jesus Himself... He alone is the Way... the Life! Jn 14:6). In Thy presence is fulness of joy. In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever." The Hebrew word "fulness" pictures satisfaction or sufficiency by simply being in the Lord's presence!

Perhaps you are not delighting in God "If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored; If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent,

24 And place your gold in the dust, And the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks,

25 Then the Almighty will be your gold and choice silver to you.

26 "For then you will delight in the Almighty, And lift up your face to God. Job 22:23-26

When we DELIGHT ourselves in the God, our finite, temporal desires begin to be transformed by the Spirit into His infinite, eternal desires and "the things of this earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace." (Turn Your Eyes on Jesus)

Boice - "if we are delighting in God and longing for God, God will give us Himself."

When our desires line up with His desires, then we will find that brings us true contentment. We will experience that true contentment comes not from greater wealth but fewer wants, for when we find our DELIGHT in Him in Whom "are hidden all the

treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3), we find that Jesus is enough!

"When my DELIGHT in the Lord is no longer as great as my DELIGHT in someone or something else, I have left my first love." (Rev 2:4)

Richard Baxter - "God and mammon, earth and heaven cannot both have the DELIGHT of thy heart.... Certainly, so much as thou delightest and takest up thy rest on earth, so much of thy delight in God is abated."

Mt 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Spurgeon - We delight to see God in the shadow of every passing cloud, in the colouring of every opening flower, in the glitter of every dewdrop, in the twinkling of every star. The Lord is personally at work in all the processes of nature, and natural laws are simply the Lord's usual method of operation. Our God is so near us that in him we live, and move, and have our being. At this spring tide, in the fragrance of the flowers and the song of birds, we perceive God everywhere present, renewing the face of the year. Beloved, the thought of God is to the souls of those who know and love him the most delightful that can cross the mind.... Happy is the Christian who can practically enjoy delight in the Almighty by making him to be his all in all, all the day, and every day.

Delighting in God means realizing the presence of God. Think of relationships you have on earth in which you experience great delight. You make interacting with those people your priority so that you might grow even closer for in their presence you experience great joy. The same is true of delighting in God. And so an occasional cursory prayer will hardly foster a sincere delight in the Lord.

'Tis when we taste Thy love,

Our DELIGHT will divinely grow,

Unspeakable like those above,

Then heaven begins below.

Teach me, O Lord, Thy holy way,

And give me an obedient mind;

That in Thy service I may find

My soul's delight from day to day

Only the Holy Spirit can overcome it and make people willing to find their happiness from a God who has absolute authority over their lives. - Piper The biblical evidence for God's authoritative command to be happy is Psalm 37:4 As Psalm 16:11 says (at the bottom of the panel), "You [God] have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." This is what people are after: fullness of joy and endless pleasure. Full and endless. Full and endless.

Come with rejoicing, come with delight,

Nature in waking, glad and bright;

Hearts overflowing gather today,

Fill us with rapture, Lord we pray.

Fanny Crosby

(Deut 12:18) "But you shall eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all your undertakings.

God is not just to be known with the mind. He is to be delighted in, savored. He is to be seen and savored. "Taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Psalm 34:8).

The desires of the heart cease to be merely natural desires when the heart delights above all else in the Lord. Delighting in the Lord-in the hallowing of his name and the seeking of his kingdom and the doing of his will-transforms all natural desires into God-related desires. They are transposed up into a different key.

Without exception, the greatest pray-ers are always men and women who know the Word of God. Fill your heart with God's Word and your prayers will soon reflect God's priorities. This is the true meaning of Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will

give you the desires of your heart."

What we desire most is often an indication of where we are spiritually.

Example of one who delighted in the Lord - Phillips Brooks, former minister of Boston's Trinity Episcopal Church, is perhaps best known as the author of "O Little Town of Bethlehem." He was a very busy pastor, yet he always seemed relaxed and unburdened, willing to take time for anyone in need. Shortly before Brooks died, a young friend wrote to him and asked the secret of his strength and serenity. In a heartfelt response, Brooks credited his still-growing relationship with Christ. He wrote, "The more I have thought it over, the more sure it has seemed to me that these last years have had a peace and fullness which there did not used to be. It is a deeper knowledge and truer love of Christ (cf Delight)... I cannot tell you how personal this grows to me. He is here. He knows me and I know Him. It is the most real thing in the world. And every day makes it more real. And one wonders with DELIGHT what it will grow to as the years go on."

How to delight in God - Would you like a suggestion that could revolutionize your worship time? Before you begin, take a moment to say five simple words: "Lord, speak to me today." That's a prayer God DELIGHTS to answer. As the saying goes, "God always speaks loud enough for a willing ear to hear."

When we delight ourselves in the Lord, we find that He is the one who brings true and complete fulfillment and joy to our souls.

The truth of God's message in 1 John is for our "joy to be full" (1 John 1:4). NAU John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

The relationship with God is something we experience and enjoy. In the presence of God is fullness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures forever (see Ps 16:11). (Ps 16:11) Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever. There is exceeding joy in knowing God (see Ps 43:4). (Ps 43:4) Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And upon the lyre I shall praise Thee, O God, my God.

Herein is the secret of this relationship with God. We find our joy in Him. God responds by giving us more joy. Our response becomes an outgrowth of that which God is doing in our hearts. And, as C. S. Lewis exclaims, "all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise."

We delight in God because He created us to enjoy Him. The hidden secret in building a relationship with God is confirmed as we learn and believe that God formed and created us for His glory and calls us by name. The Westminster Catechism asserts that "the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." This is the secret of perfect worship. We establish our relationship with God as we love Him, give our hearts to Him, enjoy His presence, thrill at the wonder of His mighty acts, and spontaneously explode with expressions of praise to Him:

To love God does not mean to meet His needs, but rather to delight in Him and to be captivated by His glorious power and grace, and to value Him above all other things on earth. All the rest of the commandments are the kinds of things that we will do from our hearts, if our hearts are truly delighted with and resting in the glory of God's grace.

God delights in our relationship with Him. God is most pleased when we are satisfied in Him. He is our song in the morning and our strength at night. Trust Him and He will fulfill your deepest desires.

2. God nurtures our relationship as we worship Him. God is vitally interested in seeing us establish a relationship as a daily companionship with Him as the living Lord of the universe. He desires that this relationship with Him be active, vibrant, energetic, and a true holy friendship. God wants to walk with us. He does not walk or run ahead of us. He walks with us. As we seek to know Him, He nurtures this relationship-personally, individually, and lovingly.

3. God reveals Himself through this loving relationship. This principle is at the heart of His motive in establishing a relationship with you and me. God wants to reveal more of Himself so that we will enjoy worshipping Him. As we worship, He reveals more of His wonder, glory, and majesty. As we grow and mature in our understanding of God, that relationship grows and develops. As we enjoy being with Him, God grants to us the opportunity to rest in His peace and assurance. As we work for Him, serve Him, and "go into all the world" for Him, He promises His presence and His favor.

Jonathan Edwards, who discovered and taught as powerfully as anyone that "the happiness of the creature consists in rejoicing in God, by which also God is magnified and exalted." "The end of the creation is that the creation might glorify [God]. Now what is glorifying God, but a rejoicing at that glory he has displayed?"

So here we see that those who fear Him are those who delight in God because He gives the desire to both of them Ps 145:19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them.

Pr 10:24 says "the desire of the righteous will be granted"

John Piper - David counsels Christian Hedonism when he commands, "Delight yourself in the Lord; and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). And he demonstrates the kernel of Christian Hedonism when he cries out, "As a deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:1-2).

John Piper - You glorify a person by delighting in their presence. Hedonism is essential to glorifying God. The pursuit of your pleasure in God is not even optional. It is commanded. "Delight yourself in the Lord" (Psalm 37:4) because we were created to glorify him.

George Mueller (who pastored a church of 1200, ran 5 large orphanages. never asking for funds) said "I have read the Bible through 100 times and always with increasing DELIGHT! I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the Word of God... I have always made it a rule never to begin work until I have had a good season with God and His Word. The blessing I have received has been wonderful." Mueller delighted in the Lord by delighting in His Word. Are you delighting in the Lord by delighting in His Word?

C S Lewis - I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. If it were possible for a created soul fully to 'appreciate,' that is, to love and delight in, the worthiest object of all, and simultaneously at every moment to give this delight perfect expression, then that soul would be in supreme blessedness. To praise God fully we must suppose ourselves to be in perfect love with God, drowned in, dissolved by that delight which, far from remaining pent up within ourselves as incommunicable bliss, flows out from us incessantly again in effortless and perfect expression. Our joy is no more separable from the praise in which it liberates and utters itself than the brightness a mirror receives is separable from the brightness it sheds.

David Jeremiah - Tracing the word "delight" through the Old Testament, I was surprised to learn that the majority of its uses are in relationship to the Word of God-delighting in the Word. The psalmists delighted in God's will as expressed in His law (Psalm 40:8); delighted in His statutes (Psalm 119:16); delighted in His commandments (Psalm 119:35); and delighted in His precepts and law (Psalm 119:69-70, 77, 92, 174). There is a profound relationship between delighting in the Lord and delighting in His Word. Think about your relationship with a person who is the object of your affections. Your conversations, the letters you receive, the phone calls you share-their words are a reflection of who they are. So to delight in that person's words is to delight in them. And the same is true of our relationship with God. To trust in God is also to delight in Him and His promises. No Christian who delights in what God says about the future ("I will provide for you") can also be found worrying about the future. When delighting in the Lord is your focus, everything else is brought into perspective.

William Cowper -

No more I ask or hope to find

Delight or happiness below;

Sorrow may well possess the mind

That feeds where thorns and thistles grow.

Col 3:1 If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

NAU Psalm 112:1 Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.

ESV Psalm 119:16 I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

ESV Psalm 119:24 Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.

ESV Psalm 119:35 Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.

NAU Psalm 119:47 I shall delight in Your commandments, Which I love.

NAU Psalm 119:70 Their heart is covered with fat, But I delight in Your law.

NAU Psalm 119:77 May Your compassion come to me that I may live, For Your law is my delight.

NAU Psalm 119:92 If Your law had not been my delight, Then I would have perished in my affliction.

NAU Psalm 119:143 Trouble and anguish have come upon me, Yet Your commandments are my delight.

NAU Psalm 119:174 I long for Your salvation, O LORD, And Your law is my delight.

Psalm 40:8 I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart."

ESV Psalm 111:2 Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

Isaiah writes "my soul desires You. Indeed, my spirit within me earnestly seeks You." (Isa 26:9)

By the same token And we make those items top priority. Even as I write this, I am convicted -- I might tell you I delight in the LORD, but honestly do the actions of my life, my priorities, my passions, etc validate my claim to delight in the LORD?

Jeremiah 6:10 To whom shall I speak and give warning That they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed And they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the LORD has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it.

Wrong Delight - Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Stephen Charnock - [Delight in the Lord springs] from a good conscience. Guilt will come trembling and with a sad face into the presence of God's majesty. A guilty child cannot with cheerfulness come into a displeased parent's presence. A soul smothered with hell cannot with delight approach heaven. Guilty souls, in regard of the injury they have done to God, will be afraid to come, and in regard of the soot of sin with which they are defiled and the blackness they have contracted, they will be ashamed to come. They know that by their sins they would provoke his anger-not allure his love. A soul under conscience of sin cannot look up to God. Nor will God with favor look down on it. Jonah was asleep after his sin and was outdone in readiness to pray even by idolaters. The mariners jostled him but could not get him, that we read of, to call on that God whom he had offended. Where there is corruption, the sparks of sin will kindle that tinder and weaken a spiritual delight.

Spurgeon - Ungodly persons and mere professors never look upon relationship with God as a joyful thing; to them it is service, duty, or necessity, but never pleasure or delight.

In Isaiah 58:13-14 although God is speaking to Israel about honoring the Sabbath, he is teaching the principal that if we honor God and "desist from our ways and seeking our own pleasure and speaking our own word, then we will take DELIGHT in the Lord."

NAU Isaiah 58:13 "IF because of the sabbath, you turn your foot From doing your own pleasure on My holy day, And call the sabbath a DELIGHT, the holy day of the LORD honorable, And honor it, desisting from your own ways, From seeking your own pleasure And speaking your own word, 58:14 THEN you will take DELIGHT in the LORD, And I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; And I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Richard Baxter (Pride) - O christian! if thou wouldst live continually in the presence of thy Lord, lie in the dust, and he will thence take thee up. "Learn of him to be meek and lowly; and thou shalt find rest unto thy soul. " Otherwise thy soul will be "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt;" and instead of these sweet delights in God, thy pride will fill thee with perpetual disquiet. As he that humbleth himself as a little child shall hereafter be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, so shall he now be greatest in the foretastes of that kingdom. God "dwells with a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. " Therefore, "humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. "

Delight yourself in the Lord and you will desire strongly only what is in harmony with His will and best for yourself.

As they have delighted themselves in the Lord, his desires have become part of their desires so that when they pray, they are truly praying according to God's will. Why should we be surprised when God answers our prayers when we pray in his will? Should we not expect God to keep his Word? Perhaps we would all benefit by keeping a record of our prayers and God's answers. Certainly this is in the spirit of Jesus who said, "Ask and you will receive" (Matthew 7:7). The converted slave-trader John Newton expressed this truth in these words from an old hymn: "Thou art coming to a King, large petitions with thee bring; for His grace and power are such, none can ever ask too much."

Pritchard - Why is that verse true? Because as you delight yourself in the Lord, your desires are going to become his desires and his desires are going to become your desires. As you delight yourself in God, you are going to be changed on the inside so that the things you really want are the things that God wants for you!

Allan Ross - When you delight yourself in the LORD, that will determine what the desires of your heart will be, and so when you pray you will be praying for what God wants. Some of the great Rabbis put it this way: When you pray, make His will your will, so that He will make your will His will.



Adrian Rogers - So many, people misread this verse, in verse 4. They get the idea, you know, if I love God, I can have whatever I want. No! If you love God, you've got what you want. That's what it says. Delight yourself in the Lord and you'll have the desire of your heart, which is the Lord. Your innermost need is the Lord himself. Corrie Ten Boom one time and listened to her. She said this, Look around and you'll be distressed. Look within-you'll be depressed. Look to the Lord-you'll be at rest. Delight yourself in the Lord. In 1929 when the stock market crashed, people were jumping out of buildings. You know why? They were jumping out of buildings because that's where their delight was and their dreams had dissolved.

Mayhue - The essence of prayer does not involve satisfying our personal wishes, but rather being so changed by our communion with God that we come to wholeheartedly crave His will for us.

Think of the last thing you prayed about-were you devoted to your desire or to God? Determined to get some gift of the Spirit or to get at God? "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." The point of asking is that you may get to know God better. "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart." Keep praying in order to get a perfect understanding of God Himself.

-Oswald Chambers i

Wiersbe writes that David is saying "Find all your joy and pleasure in His will. Make Him your delight, and your desires will be in His will. Living to please the Lord sets you free from fretting about what men are doing."

Warren Wiersbe - a third admonition. "Delight yourself"

When we delight in the Lord, we learn to appreciate the delights of the Lord. Our desires become His desires, and we pray and live in His will. Don't fret today. Look to the Lord in faith, trust in Him and delight in Him. Competing with others and comparing yourself to them can lead to fretting. Measure yourself only against yourself and against Jesus Christ. Consider your needs. Are there any the Lord cannot provide? Place your trust in His provision. He is faithful.

### **Herbert Lockyer - A Garland of Delights**

Wordsworth speaks of one as being "a phantom of delight," but the delights of which the Bible speaks, and which are so full of the promise of blessing and satisfaction, are no mere phantoms. They are all real, substantial, and satisfying, except those false objects of delight. Of these phantom-like delights, the Bible warns in no uncertain terms—

"They delight in lies." Psalm 62:4

"Scatter them that delight in war." Psalm 68:30

"He delighteth not in the strength of the horse." Psalm 147:10

"Thou delightest not in burnt-offering." Psalm 51:16

"The scorners delight in their scorning." Proverbs 1:22

"Who delight in the frowardness of the wicked." Proverbs 2:14

"As for gold, they shall not delight in it." Isaiah 13:17

"Did not choose that wherein I delighted not." Isaiah 65:12; 66:4

"Their soul delighteth in their abominations." Isaiah 66:3

"Every one that doeth evil... he delighteth in them." Malachi 2:17

Many of the above so-called "delights" are among what Shakespeare calls "violent delights" which have "violent ends." Have you ever thought of gathering together God's delights, that is, those objects that please and satisfy His heart? Cowper wrote of Winter, because of its "fireside enjoyment" and "homeborn happiness," as "king of intimate delights." Greater than Winter is the One who created it and He is the King of most intimate delights.

His delight is in His beloved Son

"As a father the son in whom he delighteth." Proverbs 3:12

"I was daily his delight." Proverbs 8:30

"Seeing he delighted in him." Psalm 22:8

"The messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." Malachi 3:1

"My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." ("delighted," margin) II Peter 1:17

Between the Father and the Son there has ever existed that pure delight, possible only to Deity. The Father has always found delight in His Son, and the Son ever delights in the Father—

"I delight to do thy will, O God." Psalm 40:8; Hebrews 10:7

He delights in His people.

Can it be true that such poor, unworthy creatures as we are can be the objects of God's delight? Yes, the humblest believer can say, "Through grace, I am Jehovah's delight; the object of His highest love; the subject of His sweetest thoughts; and His portion forevermore." What a blessed promise and incomparable privilege is ours! The infinite God fixed upon us from eternity and then sent His Son, the supreme Object of His delight, to die for our sins. In a very real way God turned His Delight into a sacrifice on our behalf.

"If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land." Numbers 14:8

"The saints... in whom is all my delight." Psalm 16:3

"The Lord taketh delight in his people." Psalm 149:4 margin "My delights are with the sons of men." Proverbs 8:31

"How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!" Song of Solomon 7:6

"The Lord delighteth in thee." Isaiah 62:4

"Ye shall be a delightsome land." Malachi 3:12

He delights in the prayers of His people.

"The prayer of the upright is his delight." Proverbs 15:8

He delights in the way of His people.

"He delighteth in his way." Psalm 37:23

"He delivered me, because he delighted in me." Psalm 18:19; II Samuel 22:20

"Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee." I Kings 10:9

He delights in His mercy towards us.

"Because he delighteth in mercy." Micah 7:18; Ephesians 2:4

"Lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness... in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 9:24

He delights in honesty and integrity.

"A just weight is his delight." Proverbs 11:1

"Such as are upright in their way are his delight." Proverbs 11:20

"They that deal truly are His delight." Proverbs 12:22

"Righteous lips are the delight of kings." Proverbs 16:13

Pursuing this aspect of meditation further, we discover that we are commanded to delight ourselves in God. So we have a kind of "mutual-delight society." If we do delight ourselves in the Lord, we have the promise that He will give us the desires of our heart (Psalm 37:4). When Milton urged us, "To scorn delights and live laborious days," he was not referring to the divine delights which enable us to face laborious days.

"Then shalt thou have delight in the Almighty." Job 22:21, 26; Isaiah 58:14

We are to delight in His Word.

"His delight is in the law of the Lord." Psalm 1:2

"Blessed is the man... that delighteth greatly in his commandments." Psalm 112:1

"I will delight myself in thy statutes." Psalm 119:16 (see verses 22, 24, 35, 47, 70, 92, 143, 174)

"The word of the Lord... they have no delight in them." Jeremiah 6:10

"I delight in the law of God." Romans 7:22

We are to delight in His Day.

"Call the Sabbath a delight." Isaiah 58:13

We are to delight in His provisions.

"They take delight in approaching to God," Isaiah 58:2

"Thy comforts delight my soul." Psalm 94:19

"Let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isaiah 55:2

"They delighted themselves in thy great goodness." Nehemiah 9:25

"I delight to do thy will, O my God." Psalm 40:8

"The meek... shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Psalm 37:11

"I sat down under his shadow with great delight." Song of Solomon 2:3

"Will he delight himself in the Almighty?" Job 27:10

John Masefield speaks of one who "delighted all my undelighted hours." No one, and nothing, can delight all our undelighted hours like Him, Who is the blessed Object of our delight, and whose Promises and Provisions constantly delight our hearts.

**John Piper** - Perhaps most shocking to me in 1968 was the simple and obvious observation that this joy in God is commanded. You see it on the second page of the booklet:

Psalm 37:4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 33:1 Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.

Psalm 32:11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

It's commanded because what is at stake is not just our joy but the glory of God, the honor and reputation of God. If we do not rejoice in God—if God is not our treasure and our delight and our satisfaction, then he is dishonored. His glory is belittled. His reputation is tarnished. Therefore God commands our joy both for our good and for his glory.