

## **DELIGHTING IN THE LAW OF THE LORD** Berry Kercheville

Think back over your life and pick out two or three of your “greatest hits,” those times in your life that brought you special joy. What are those memorable moments that you can’t forget and love to replay in your mind over and over? I relish the moment when I saw the one I love come down a spiral staircase and up the aisle to become my wife. Every day since, I am filled with wonder and thankfulness as I awake to her presence and enjoy the smile of her greeting when I return from work. We all have those moments and they are special gifts from a loving God.

But they are only moments. They are part of vanity in life under the sun. They are brief moments of pleasure that soon vanish. We cannot package them up and reopen them to repeat the same experience. Instead, we wait, search, and long for the next special moment. As God said through Isaiah, *“Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food”* (Isa. 55:2).

Just as when Jesus fed the 5000 for the purpose of pointing Israel to himself as the bread of life, so the temporary gifts of pleasurable times should point us to God who can completely satisfy our soul and provide joy beyond the moment. Therefore, the psalmist said, *“Blessed is the man whose...delight in is the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night”* (Psalm 1:1-2). “Blessed” goes beyond a moment of pleasure; blessed is a state of joy in which we can live. Blessed is being permanently “filled,” not having our appetites briefly assuaged with a snack.

### **Delight**

Who could turn down the feast of listening diligently to the Lord? Who could say “no” to rich food that satisfies? Shockingly, most people do. Even many Christians chase the food that does not satisfy and spend their money for that which is not bread. Notice carefully the word “delight.” Delight goes far beyond acceptance. It is not the idea of saying that we are willing to submit ourselves to God’s law. Delight energetically embraces God’s law because God’s law is God. Delight shouts to the world about the wonder of God’s law because it is better than the honeycomb, better than the best pleasure. Delighting in anything is an addiction to it. It is what I cannot wait to enjoy; it is what I cannot do without. As the next line points out, what I delight in I can’t stop thinking about. It is my meditation. It is not a passing thought; it is what my mind keeps returning to after being interrupted with the more mundane parts of life. It is like eating something delicious and extremely disappointed when it is gone. We want just one more bite, but even that isn’t enough.

Please consider where this “delight” is found. It is in the *law* of the Lord. In Psalm 119:97, the psalmist says, “O how I love your law...” Most people aren’t real thrilled about God’s laws. His laws rub them the wrong way because their hearts are leaning more in the direction of the counsel of the wicked. Mind you, they may not think of themselves as wanting to be wicked, but they certainly are more interested in the counsel of the wicked than in delighting in God’s law. Even us, as we grow as Christians struggle with loving all of God’s laws. We love the laws that we already want to obey, but it is a challenging growth process to truly love the whole law of God.

### **Meditation**

Meditation is a challenge for our present culture because we have lost the ability to give much attention for any length of time. Turn the sound off your TV for just one minute and time how often the screen changes. It will never be more than 2 seconds, and most of the time less. Young people cannot stand the old movies because the dialogue between two people is actually a conversation that goes beyond a one-liner.

This has translated into a generation of people whose minds are often untrained in the ability to carefully and deeply consider matters that cannot be depicted on a screen or communicated in a 140 character Tweet. Most ancient Hebrews had to rely on careful listening because they could not own a copy of the scriptures. Therefore, they meditated by remembering what they had heard from the reading and then thoughtfully reciting and pondering the words. In so doing, they stored the words in their heart. In Nehemiah, Israel stood all morning as Ezra read the law to them and the

priests gave them understanding. But today the call is for short and simple so that our full schedules are not compromised. Delighting and meditating on the law of God is hardly the attitude.

You might say, "Well, this is a different culture." It sure is, but nothing that our culture has to offer, including all its electronics, will shortcut the need to deeply meditate and delight in the law of God. God did not reveal his mind mashed up into baby food and fed to us with a tiny spoon while the feeder says, "Choo, choo, here comes the train." Our personal search for God in our Bible study has to be better than that.

Notice how often this meditation happens with the blessed person. It is not just certain occasions, it is "day and night." This is not a mechanical, "Oh I have to meditate" exercise. This is, "I delight in the law of the Lord and I can't get it off my mind." On the other hand, to get to the point of delighting, it will mean that we search and ponder his words deeply in order to appreciate the God who revealed himself to us. If we truly appreciate our salvation, we will not neglect this effort.

In a previous article, Tim Jennings wrote: "Americans check their phones 8 billion times a day. Hours are consumed on trivial tidbits about what someone had for breakfast or a funny photo." Indeed, we have packed our lives with everything that could possibly dazzle our eyes. We dare not miss out on the latest activity, the new thing to see under the sun of which our eyes are never satisfied, our souls never full, and there isn't any part of us that says, "that's enough." In the midst of this American craze that accompanies all our wealth, Christians across the country clamor for less time in prayer, less time in Bible study, less time together, less time to share the gospel message. Our question about spiritual pursuits seems to be, "Haven't we done enough?" But we never seem to ask that same question about our secular desires. When do I ask the question, "Haven't I spent enough time on this electronic device? Haven't I spent enough time in this sport or activity? Haven't I spent enough time chasing the desires of my eyes?" We seem to find ways to limit our pursuit of God; when do we finally limit our pursuit of self? [berrykerch@gmail.com](mailto:berrykerch@gmail.com)