

FINDING DELIGHT IN THE LORD

*“Take delight in the LORD and
He will give you your heart’s desires.”*

Psalm 37: 4

When you hear the word “delight” or “delightful”, what images come to your mind? Perhaps you see a tea party or a particularly happy event. Maybe it is visualizing a stroll along the ocean front with a good friend or relaxing for a few minutes in a hot tub. It could be that you loved an idea that an acquaintance gave to you and told him/her that you were delighted to hear it. At this challenging time in our world, however, it seems that all of us are learning to find our satisfaction and pleasure in much simpler things at home than we normally did just one month ago. Instead of a fine meal in a restaurant, we are finding that having enough groceries in our house is satisfying. In place of going here and there whenever and wherever we wish, a short walk in a safe area can bring us a sense of joy or pleasure.

It is a very opportune time for all of us to examine where our sources of comfort and joy are found. Do they exist in our creature comforts or in the One who gives us all things to enjoy? Is your greatest pleasure found in your material and financial security or in a Savior who has promised to supply all of your needs. When anxiety and disappointment start to creep into the edges of your mind, where do you find solace and contentment?

You are invited to join us as we explore the Bible and discover various ideas that we can incorporate in our lives to help us “find delight (satisfaction, pleasure, joy, contentment) in the Lord”. After all, His promise to us is to satisfy our heart’s desires if we find Him to be the most admirable and worthy object of our focus and longings. That is a promise worth investigating, don’t you agree?

FINDING DELIGHT IN THE LORD

"Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart."
Psalm 37: 4

SPRING SCHEDULE

April 16		Introduction to the Study - Psalm 37: 1 - 9
April 23	Lesson 1	Through Focusing on HIS Greatness
April 30	Lesson 2	Through Enjoying HIS Amazing Creation
May 7	Lesson 3	Through Meditating on HIS Word
May 14	Lesson 4	Through Remembering HIS Faithfulness
May 21	Lesson 5	Through Knowing that Go Answers Prayer
May 28	Lesson 6	Through Enjoying the Gift of Music and Song

Additional Studies for Personal Use

STUDY SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS SERIES

As you come to your study time, it is always helpful to find a quiet place with as few distractions as possible. Be prepared with your Bible, a notebook or journal and your pen or pencil. Leave your cell phone, your "to do" lists, and your appointment schedule in another room. Then breath deeply and slowly and turn your mind and heart to your Heavenly Father asking Him to teach you, to guide your thoughts, and to give you the deep desire to get to know Him better through this time in His Word.

INTRODUCTION – This short section is to help you begin to focus clearly on the theme of each lesson. Take some moments to consider the theme verse, the ideas and the questions. Then be sure to write down your responses and thoughts.

MEDITATION and REFLECTION – You can choose to read the suggested Scripture verses in one sitting or over a period of a few days. They are the heart of the lesson and your time will be well spent if you really do ponder and find joy and pleasure in the things that you are learning about the Lord. What verses stand out to you at this time in your life? What encourages you in faith and gives you hope? How do these truths help you to find joy and pleasure in your Heavenly Father?

CONTEMPLATION – As you look back on these verses and on the notes that you made, what do you think God wants to show you about your relationship to Him? What does He want you to believe about His love and purposes for you? What are the desires of your heart? Has this lesson helped you to find new ways to "delight yourself in the Lord"? How? Give Him the praise and thanksgiving that you are feeling.

INVITATION – These suggestions are designed to move you into practical expressions from your study time. You will remember a great deal more about this lesson if you spend time and creative energy on a project that pleases you. It will bring you joy (as long as you don't compare the results with anyone else's project) and it will certainly bring delight the Lord, too. You may just come up with an original idea that will be better than anything suggested. Take the risk and time and do it!

FINDING DELIGHT IN THE LORD

Through Focusing on HIS Greatness

Lesson 1

*"I will exalt you, my God and King and praise Your name forever and ever.
I will praise You every day; yes, I will praise You forever.
Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise! No one can measure His greatness."*

Psalm 145: 1-3

Introduction

Would you agree that "what comes to your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you"? If that is a true statement, then you and I must constantly be on guard against worshipping a god that is smaller than the God of the Bible. Take some time to quietly consider the ideas that come to your mind when you think about God. Who is He? What are some words that help you describe Him? How great is your God?

Meditation and Reflection –

How do the following verses expand the greatness of God for you? Take time to write down your thoughts, underline important verses and ponder the concepts which are pictured for you as you read slowly through these Bible verses.

Exodus 15: 1 – 13 (Moses' song)

I Chronicles 16: 23 – 33 (David's psalm)

I Chronicles 29: 10 – 20 (David's prayer)

Job 38 and 39 (God speaking to Job)

Isaiah 40: 12 - 31

Jeremiah 32: 17 – 23 (Jeremiah's prayer)

Psalm 47

Psalm 93 and 96

Psalm 145

Romans 11: 33 - 36

Colossians 1: 15 – 20

Revelation 15: 3 – 4, 19: 1 – 10

Contemplation - God wants us to understand that He is inconceivably greater than all things. You and I were made to esteem something far greater than ourselves or anything else in creation. We were designed to take delight in the God who is supreme. Our understanding of God must be entirely shaped from the Bible itself rather than our man-made ideas. Take time to ask God's Spirit to come and give you new and meaningful glimpses into His greatness. Prayer is a two-way connection with the God who longs to reveal not only greatness but His immense love for you. By the way, journaling is great way to put into concrete words the thoughts and intents of your mind and your heart.

Invitation – Starting with the letter "A" and going through the entire alphabet, write down as many adjectives for God that begin with each letter as you can think of. You can keep adding to this list day by day. This is a wonderful way to focus your mind and heart on the supremacy and greatness of your God.

FINDING DELIGHT IN THE LORD

Through Enjoying HIS Amazing Creation

Lesson 2

*“O LORD, what a variety of things you have made! In wisdom you have made them all.
May the glory of the LORD continue forever! The LORD takes pleasure in all He has made!*

Psalm 104: 24 and 31

Introduction

How would you define the word “create”? The dictionary says it is “to cause to exist, bring into being, originate, produce”. One of the best ways to get to know someone is to discover their unique creative abilities. Just think of the wonders in God’s creation that surround you wherever you live. Then let your imagination move you on to the spectacular sights and enormous variety of life in the depths of the ocean, on the highest mountains, in the dense forests of our world and in the heavens above. How does thinking about God’s creation bring you pleasure, satisfaction or delight?

Meditation - Reflection –

The following verses will help you picture and expand your concept of the glory of God as it is displayed in His creation. Take time to write down your thoughts, underline important verses and ponder the concepts to which the Spirit of God draws your mind and heart.

Genesis 1 – How did God feel about His creation?

Nehemiah 9: 6

Job 37

Isaiah 42: 5 – 12

Psalm 8

Psalm 33: 1 – 11

Psalm 104

Psalm 148

John 1: 1 – 4

Romans 1: 18 – 25

Colossians 1: 15 – 20

Contemplation - Just as God Himself takes delight in His indescribable creation, He invites us to find joy and pleasure through the wonders that we can see and experience. As you and I stand in awe of the Creator through appreciating the world that we see as well as the expanse of the universe that draws us into mystery and wonder, there is a sense of the greatness of our God and inevitably, glory and praise can be expressed in words and in moments of complete silence. Take time to walk and talk with the Creator of the universe and of you. (Psalm 139: 13 – 19) As you enjoy His creation, how does it help you to “delight in the One who designed and upholds every aspect of it?”

Invitation –

1. Simply go outside for 5 – 15 minutes and breath in the beauty of God’s creation in silence and God’s presence.
2. Design a collage picturing or expressing some of your favorite places/things/aspects of God’s creation? Write a poem, song, psalm or even a letter to God expressing the joy that His creative genius brings to you.
3. How does God want to help you to creatively use your unique personality, talents, interests and abilities, to bring glory and honor to Him and great satisfaction or happiness to you?

FINDING DELIGHT IN THE LORD

Through Meditating on His Word

Lesson 3

*“I rejoice in following Your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.
I meditate on Your precepts and consider Your ways.
I delight in Your decrees; I will not neglect Your word.” Psalm 119: 14 - 16*

Introduction –

Would you say that you “love God’s Word”? If not, why not? If so, what do you mean by that statement? Perhaps you might be thinking that you admire or agree with the Gospel message that is in the New Testament or you might even say that it is the guidebook for your life. Perhaps the Scriptures are important to you because of God’s promises or the great stories of God’s interaction with mankind through the ages. While really loving and taking delight in the Bible may not come naturally to any of us, would you agree that like faith, God is willing and waiting to give us the ability and desire to find pleasure and joy as we absorb His love for us through the gift of His written Word. Have you asked Him to do that for you?

Meditation and Reflection –

How do the following verses describe the Bible and help you find delight in it? Take time to write down your thoughts, underline important verses and ponder the concepts which are pictured for you as you read slowly through these Bible verses.

New Testament insights about the Word of God:

Matthew 24: 35

II Timothy 3: 14 – 17

Hebrews 4: 12 – 13

I Peter 1: 23 – 24

Insights from the Psalms

Psalm 19

Psalm 119 – (22 stanzas of 8 verses each) –

How many names for the “law of the Lord” can you find?

How many ways does the Psalmist describe it?

What are the blessings of obeying God’s statutes?

What are this poet’s requests and longings?

Contemplation - Would you agree that “to love God’s Word means to commit yourself to making it the foundation of your life”? If so, then you know that this takes a combination of a God given desire and diligence on your part. You might want to look at it as a “love letter from the Lord” as you read and ponder it, memorize and pray over it. You will find that God will reveal His tender mercy and His faithfulness to you. This will not only warm your heart and stir your Godward passion, but you will discover that your love for God will become deep and abiding – until He calls you to your heavenly home.

Invitation –

1. Start a promise box for your own use. Choose one promise weekly and post it on your bathroom mirror. Talk about it with your family and friends. Take delight in how you see God’s faithfulness.
2. Talk about a Scripture passage with a friend or 2 every week. Take turns choosing the verses for that week. Ask each other questions and pray together with that Scripture as your focus. Choose someone who is eager to “take delight in the LORD through meditating on HIS Word”.

FINDING DELIGHT IN THE LORD

Through Remembering His Faithfulness

Lesson 4

*“The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease.
Great is His faithfulness. His mercies begin afresh each morning.”*

Lamentations 3: 22 - 23

Introduction

If you have been a believer for any length of time, then you, no doubt, have experienced God’s consistent faithfulness – to forgive, to help, to sustain, to convict, to heal, or to show His tender compassion. In what other ways has He demonstrated His unchanging mercy and grace to you? Have there been people in your life that have demonstrated God’s faithfulness to you, as well? Who would that be and what actions bring them to your mind?

Meditation and Reflection –

How do the following verses expand your beliefs about the faithfulness of God? Take time to write down your thoughts, underline important verses and ponder the concepts which are pictured for you as you slowly read through these Bible verses.

Deuteronomy 7: 6 – 13

Psalm 34: 1 – 11

Psalm 36: 5 – 10

Psalm 89: 1 – 18

I Corinthians 1: 4 – 9 and 10: 11 – 13

I Thessalonians 5: 23 -24

II Timothy 2: 8 – 13

Hebrews 10: 19 - 23

I John 1: 5 - 9

Contemplation - In the act of remembering their history, God’s people found their strength and courage renewed. Jesus instructed His disciples and all of us to partake in communion as a reminder of His death and His resurrection. (Luke 22: 13 – 23 and I Corinthians 11: 23 – 26) Paul said that he gave thanks to God for the Philippians because he remembered how kind they had been to him. There seems to be an important balance between longing for “the good ol’ days” and the very practical reasons to remember and to learn from the past in order to live in the present in ways that reflect God’s character and His faithfulness. How could sharing your story of God’s faithfulness to you yesterday and today and by faith for tomorrow bring greater delight in the Lord to you and encourage others on their journey of faith?

Invitation – It’s time to make a timeline of your life. It will help you to recall the highpoints of your journey with Jesus. You might want to divide the line by decades from your birth year up to the present time. Then you can begin to remember both events and people that were spiritual highpoints in your life. When did you accept Jesus? When did you make a decision to follow Him wholeheartedly? Was it at camp, in a youth group, with a friend, in a Bible study, or simply on your knees in the privacy of your room? When did you grasp certain truths about God or experience an answer to prayer that was a turning point in your life? As you do this, God will bring to your mind times that you will want to remember to give you renewed confidence in the Lord the next time there is a crisis, serious doubts, troubles or even discouragement in your future.

FINDING DELIGHT IN THE LORD

Through Knowing that God Answers Prayer

Lesson 5

Jesus said: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you"

Matthew 7: 7

Introduction

Do you believe that God really does hear and answer prayer? On what basis do you place your confidence? What are the various kinds of answers God has given to you? Jesus prayed earnestly in the garden just before His crucifixion, didn't He? He asked His Father to take the cup of suffering from Him and then He totally relinquished His own desires knowing that what He really wanted was God's will to be accomplished. How grateful are you that God "didn't answer the prayer of His Son" that night? How willing are you to believe that whether the answer to your prayer is "no" or perhaps "not now" or simply "keep on asking" that you can have joy and take pleasure in knowing that God is good and He really does hear you pray?

Meditation and Reflection –

How do the following verses expand your confidence that God will hear and answer you as you pray to Him? Take time to write down your thoughts, underline important verses and ponder the concepts which are pictured for you as you read slowly through these Bible verses.

Psalms 145: 1 – 2, 17 – 21

Jeremiah 29: 11 – 13 and 33: 1 - 3

Matthew 6: 5 – 13 and 7: 7 – 11

Matthew 18: 19 – 20

John 14: 9 – 14

Romans 8: 26 – 27

Ephesians 1: 15 – 23 and 3: 14 – 20 and 6: 18

Philippians 4: 4 – 7

Hebrews 4: 14 – 16

James 1: 5 – 8 and 5: 13 - 18

I John 5: 13 - 15

Contemplation - What would happen if you and I spent as much time thanking God in advance for His answers to prayer and acknowledging His wisdom and goodness, as speaking our requests and reciting our needs. Think about this by Andrew Murray – "Prayer is not monologue but dialogue. God's voice in response to mine is the most essential part." How does prayer change your focus, your level of peace and joy, your love for God and for others? How does having confidence in Your Heavenly Father bring you the joy and delight of knowing what He desires to do in and through you by His power?

Invitation –

1. Do you have a "system" that helps you remember daily or weekly the people and ministries that you care about and want to bring before the Lord in prayer? If not, create one and then start using it.
2. Use some of the prayers in the epistles or weekly promises that you like as your basis for praying for yourself and for the others whom God has brought into your life. God loves to answer these kinds of prayer.
3. Simply take some time each day to devote to prayer alone!

FINDING DELIGHT IN THE LORD

Through Enjoying the Gift of Music and Song

Lesson 6

*“Sing a new song to the LORD! Let the whole earth sing to the LORD!
Sing to the LORD; praise HIS name. Each day proclaim the good news that He saves.
Psalm 96: 1 - 2*

Introduction

Did you know that there was music at the time of creation? Job tells us that “the morning stars sang together” – Job 38: 7. Was it the stars or was it an angelic host singing out their praises to God in the heavens? In Revelation we are told that as we gather around the throne of God, we will join together expressing our praise and worship through song – “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain” – Rev. 5: 12. Music has been an integral part of the worship experience of God’s children throughout the ages. What kind of music and song are a part of your expression of praise and adoration? You may or may not consider yourself to be “musical”, but incorporating the inspiration, consolation and expression of your faith and hope through the medium of music can certainly move you and me to “find delight in the Lord”. Do you find this to be true? When and where?

Meditation and Reflection –

As you read these verses, pause to think about how the gift of music and song enables God’s children to express their gratitude and commitment to Him in meaningful and beautifully satisfying ways. How do these Scriptures help you to find delight in HIM?

Exodus 15: 1 – 21 (Moses’ song)

I Chronicles 23: 1 – 5 (David’s view of music)

Matthew 26: 30 – (Last supper with Jesus)

Luke 1: 46 – 55 (Mary’s song)

Psalms 9: 1 – 2

Psalms 33: 1 – 5

Psalms 47

Psalms 66: 1 – 8

Psalms 146, 147, and 149

Romans 15: 5 – 13

Ephesians 5: 15 – 20

Colossians 3: 15 - 17

Contemplation - Contemporary or traditional, loud or contemplative, drums and cymbals or organ – the diversity of types of music that people prefer in churches today can be distracting and confusing. What are your preferences and how are you incorporating the wonderful gift of song into your daily experience as well as your church life? It’s worth pausing to think about your preferences and your willingness to address the needs and desires of other people so that the Biblical view of “singing unto the Lord” can be a very helpful and energizing means of “delighting in the Lord”.

Invitation – Have you ever composed your own Psalm patterned after one in the Bible? Try it. You’ll like it. Using a tune that you know, write your own words for some new songs unto the Lord. Simply sing to the Lord in the moments of your day when you are feeling distracted or stressed

FINDING DELIGHT IN THE LORD . . .

For your continuing study and inspiration:

Through Being in Fellowship with HIS People *1 John 1: 1 - 7, Ephesians 1: 15 - 17*

Through Believing HIS Precious Promises *1 Peter 1: 3 - 8*

Through Hospitality and Generosity *Acts 2: 42 - 47, Romans 12: 10 - 13*

Through Obeying HIS Commands *Psalms 40: 8, John 15: 9 - 11*

Through Listening to the Holy Spirit *John 14: 15 - 20, Philippians 2: 12 - 13*

Through Using Your Unique Gifts and Abilities *Ephesians 4: 11 - 16*

Through Loving Your Neighbors *Mark 12: 29 - 34*

Looking for ways to grow in your faith and your love of the Lord God?

Search for the Scriptures that support each of these additional ideas and think of some of your own ideas.