

The Delight of the Lord

By Daniel Gray

If you are a Christian, there are certain things you are not supposed to do. Sin, that list of forbidden things a Christian cannot do. Other people do them. They seem to enjoy it. They even talk about how much fun they had. It is so often said, "How can something that seems so good be wrong?" Many people see these as restrictions zapping the fun right out of life. Some people avoid the whole issue by not becoming a Christian saying, "You only live once! Right?" Others attempt to pursue the best of both worlds with a workaround approach. I will discuss the workaround approaches and then I will share a little-known secret to serving God without cumbersome restrictions.

The first work-around is the "God will forgive me" approach. It is nothing new and is employed by many people. In Old Testament times people would commit a sin. This did not seem like a huge problem for them because they could simply make a sacrifice to God and the sacrifice made it alright with God, it seemed. This work-around is easier for the Christian. It is a simple trip to confession with a priest. Or for those who do not have a priest, they simply say a quick prayer asking God to forgive them of their sin. Either way it seems all is taken care of. OneRepublic's song Love Runs Out brings out the sentiment of the "God will forgive me" work-around:

My momma raised me good, momma raised me right.
Momma said, "Do what you want, say prayers at night",
And I'm saying them, cause I'm so devout.
'Til the love runs out, 'til the love runs out, yeah.

God does not want sacrifices for willful sins. He does not want such prayers either. He wants obedience. "For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6) nasb95. See also Ps 40:6; Prov 21:3; Mt 9:13; 12:7; Heb 10:5,8

Another kind of attempted workaround is the "Almost Sinning" workaround where a person imagines a line they can get as close to it as they want without sinning as long as they do not cross it. To get close to the line is to enjoy as much of the world as possible without sinning. This is good in theory and looks good on paper but, there is a problem with it. People that push God as far as they can and try to get away with flirting with sin do not put the line in the right place. Maybe at first but the line is gradually moved farther from God and closer to sinning. Eventually, when they think they are barely skirting God's line dividing the acceptable from the sin, they are in reality well within the devil's territory.

The workarounds just do not work with God. Not only does God see all and know all, He also knows what is in our heart and that is where the workarounds fail. Workaround approaches are not for the Christian or even for a person considering Christianity. Now, are you ready for that "little-known secret approach to serving God without cumbersome restrictions." It is found in Psalms 37 verses 3 through 5. I will focus on verse four first.

Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalms 37:4) NASB95

When I think of "delight," I see my children when they are excited about something that they have to tell me about. Their eyes are brightened as their face radiates their delight. I follow their expressions and embellished gestures as they tell their story. Then they end with a big smile and say, "And that makes me so happy."

To delight in the Lord is to allow ourselves to be so flooded with adoration and appreciation of God that it makes us "so happy" that it spills out into the rest of our lives. Our spirits find a vitality when we

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worship and praise God, love and adore Him from our hearts. That's when we discover delight in the Lord.

When we delight in the Lord, things on the other side of the line that once looked so good will lose their luster because we do not want to offend the Lord. Our own desires change to align with God's desire for us and sin is no longer appealing. Our former desire to "not miss out" of the things of the world that are sinful turns into a desire to "not miss out" of the things of God. The formerly dreaded restrictions on the Christian life are no longer cumbersome. Instead they become a blessing because our desire is for God rather than the forbidden fruit. Our desire for God becomes a protective hedge keeping us near Him and away from sin. This desire stems from our delight in the Lord.

This may sound all well and good to delight in the Lord but how does one delight in the Lord? Verses 3 and 5 speak of trusting the Lord and doing good, committing our ways to the Lord, dwelling in the land, and cultivating faithfulness. These go along with delighting in the Lord. All of these things hinge on the three fundamental activities of Christianity being done regularly. These are prayer, understanding the Bible, and fellowship with other believers.

Verse three begins with "Trust in the Lord and do good." If we think of the parent child relationship, we see that the parent knows what is best for the child; yet, the child must choose to trust the parent. Just as this becomes difficult for teens, we too have difficulty trusting God to know what is best for ourselves. "Good," in this verse refers to what is morally good. Which is what God wants for us for He says, "Be holy, for I am holy." (Leviticus 11:44) NASB95. The first step is to trust God to know what is best for you and live a moral life. To trust God is to have faith in Him. "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" Romans 10:17 NASB95. We must study our Bibles to grow our faith in God.

Secondly it says, "Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness." This was originally written to Israel where God's people lived according to His word as a nation. Today's counterpart would be a Bible believing church where we attend regularly, and the people cultivate a faithfulness to God's word within each other. The church is also where we gain much of our Bible knowledge which helps us to be faithful to God. We do not know how to be faithful to God without knowing God's will found in the Bible.

Thirdly it says, "Delight yourself in the Lord" which is what we are working on right now. This is followed by the fourth command, "Commit your way to the Lord." People sometimes lament how they need to get closer to God. Really, a person is either for God or against God rather than close or far away from Him. What they mean to say is that they need to make their commitment to God more resolute. They want a stronger commitment to God. This is achieved through regular personal prayer. This is time spent with God in Prayer. [People who pray tend to live out what they believe.](#) Those who don't, don't.

To delight in the Lord comes through a combination of things that are provided through the habits of Christian fellowship at church, personal prayer, and Bible study. Our relationship with the Lord will fall into place if we focus on these things. Our desires will change so that we no longer want anything offered by those former restrictions. They place no restriction on us anymore because we do not want them. Our desire is for the Lord and we are satisfied with our delight in the Lord.