



REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

DELIGHTING IN GOD

By Pastor Brian De Jong

As part of our annual summer vacation, I prepare a Bible study for our family to use during our travels. This year we focused on Psalm 37. What stood out to me from Psalm 37 were the several references to delight.

To delight means to take pleasure in, to enjoy, to focus upon something with exquisite happiness. The Hebrew verb appears in a reflexive case, meaning it is something that you do for yourself and to yourself. For instance, when you “comb your hair” it is you doing something to yourself – it is a reflexive action. Hence to delight in something is something you choose to do for yourself.

The first reference to delight comes in v. 4, which reads, “*Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.*” The command calls us to focus upon the Lord – who He is and what He does. As we concentrate our attention upon Him, we find that He is altogether delightful. We take pleasure in Him – we enjoy Him.

The promise connected is nothing short of wonderful: He will give you the desires of your heart. That means that He will fill our lives with the good and godly things we long for and seek after. Spurgeon speaks well when he states, “*Men who delight in God desire or ask for nothing but what will please God; hence it is safe to give them carte blanche. Their will is subdued to God’s will, and now they may have what they will.*”

Delight is mentioned again in v. 24 of the Psalm, “*The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way.*” Now the shoe is on the other foot – God is the one doing the delighting.

When the Lord is working in a person’s life, He establishes that person’s steps. The Lord marks out the way he should go, and God leads him in that way. When we faithfully follow in God’s ways, and walk in His steps, then God delights in us. He enjoys seeing His children walking in paths of righteousness.

These two verses – vv. 4 & 24 – portray a mutual delight and a reciprocal enjoyment. We delight in God and God delights in us. We enjoy Him and He enjoys us. What a beautiful picture that is – of love flowing back and forth between the Triune God and His holy people. But there is even more.

The final reference to delight is found in v. 11 “*But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.*” When we are delighting in God, and when God is delighting in us, then we will inherit the earth and will delight ourselves in abundant prosperity. This life is better than anything the world can deliver. It is lasting pleasure – a full enjoyment of God and His blessings that begins here in this life and carries on through eternity.

The wicked may possess temporary pleasures, but their enjoyments are always tinged with sin, guilt and shame. Nothing they enjoy is lasting – it is like smoke that vanishes away quickly. That is why the believer is not to envy the evildoer or to covet their life or their things. We have something better – far better!

So this psalm left me wondering, “What am I delighting in? Do I delight in God?” It also raises the connected question, “Does God currently delight in me? Am I following His ways? Is my way pleasing to Him who loved me and gave up Himself for me?” In whom do we delight?



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Mnemonics...

- *All Presbytery Camp Meal, 5th*
- *Church Picnic, 12th*

Family Visits Explained

by Pastor Brian De Jong

If you've been around Grace Church for any time at all, you've probably heard about "family visits." You may wonder what it is all about, and why the Pastor and Elders want to come to your home? Here is a brief explanation and rationale for this practice.

When God set apart officers for his church, He designated them to be "shepherds of the flock." Members are sheep, elders and ministers are shepherds, and Christ himself is the chief Shepherd. Family visits are one of the ways that the officers carry out their shepherding duties.

It goes without saying that good shepherds will follow the example of the chief Shepherd, who is The Good Shepherd! Compassionate care, loving interest, faithful encouragement, regular feeding, binding up the bruises, healing the wounds – it is all part of the shepherdly care to be extended.

Because your shepherds care about you, they take time to come to your home and to visit personally with you. It is a time for fellowship, for sharing concerns, for encouraging good spiritual habits (like Bible reading and prayer), and for listening to the sheep. In short, it is time for the shepherds to be with the sheep.

One wise elder once observed to me that "the shepherds need to smell like the sheep." In other words, they need to be with the sheep and among them on a regular basis. If shepherds are isolated from contact with the sheep, they won't really understand them. Distrust and suspicion are usually directed toward "absentee shepherds" who don't know their people. Family visits help us to get to know you and to understand your life.

Another valuable aspect of family visits is the feedback we receive. When members are bothered by something in the church, they can openly voice those concerns to the elder and pastor at the family visit. We welcome such input as it helps us to know where potential problems lie. Discussions at family visits have led to several helpful initiatives in the congregation which have benefitted many.

So how do family visits work? The Session has relied upon Megan to help us with scheduling these visits. She usually puts together a list of families for the Spring, and another for the Fall. She then begins contacting families with potential dates. Some prefer an afternoon visit, and others are free only in the evenings. Megan works to schedule back-to-back visits so that the pastor and elder can accomplish two visits in one afternoon or evening. In response to feedback from several families, we've moved the evening visit slots to 6:45 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. In that way we can complete the second visit by 9:00-ish. So the next time Megan contacts you, you can make her job and our jobs easier by setting up a family visit time.

One last detail I should mention has to do with food. Some members of the congregation like to serve refreshments, others do not. That decision is left completely to the individual families, but the elders and I never expect or require anything to eat or drink. We're not coming to eat, but to visit with you. Whether you have refreshments or not doesn't matter to us – we just want to spend some time with you.



Camp Westminster

Everyone is encouraged to attend an “**All Presbytery Camp Meal**” at Camp Westminster held Thursday, August 5th at 5:30 p.m. at the Green Lake Conference Center. See Pastor De Jong for more details.

Camp Westminster will be held at Green Lake Monday-Friday, August 2-6 at Green Lake, WI. For more info, see the brochure in the hallway at church. For registration contact Joe & Judy Lewandowski.



CORN ROAST

You're Invited... to a corn roast at Rodney & Samantha Nyhof's home.

The open-house-style event will begin at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 28. Please RSVP to Samantha before August 26. Hope to see you there!



August Birthdays



Church Picnic

Everyone's Invited... to Grace

Church's Annual Church Picnic! The event is August 12 at 5:30 p.m. in Gibbsville Park. Dinner will begin at 6:00 p.m. Each family should bring plates, napkins, utensils, tablecloths and drinks. Remember balls, bats, mitts and etc. for the recreation time after the meal.





Grace OPC

August 2010

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Camp Westminster	3 Camp Westminster	4 Camp Westminster	5 Camp Westminster All Presbytery Camp Meal, 5:30 p.m.	6 Camp Westminster	7
8 Missions Sunday	9 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	10	11	12 Church Picnic, 5:30 p.m.	13	14
15	16 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	24	25	26	27	28 Corn Roast at Rodney & Samantha Nyhof's House
29 Lord's Supper, (p.m.)	30 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	31	28	29	30	31

Thoughts about Thoughts

by C. H. Spurgeon

...There are not so many hours in a year as there may be thoughts in an hour. Thoughts fly in flocks, like starlings, and swarm like bees. Like the withered leaves in autumn, there is no counting them; and like links in a chain, one draws on another. What a restless being man is! His thoughts dance up and down like midges in a summer's evening. Like a clock full of wheels with the pendulum in full swing, his mind moves as fast as time flies. This makes thinking such an important business. Many littles make much; and so many light thoughts make a great weight of sin. A grain of sand is light enough, but Solomon tells us that a heap of sand is heavy. When there are so many children the mother better look well after them. We ought to mind our thoughts, for if they turn to be our enemies, they will be too many for us and will drag us down to ruin. Thoughts from heaven, like birds in spring, will fill our souls with music; but thoughts of evil will sting us like vipers.

There is a notion abroad that thought is free; but I remember reading that, although thoughts are toll-free, they are not hell-free; and that saying quite agrees with the good old Book. We cannot be summoned before an earthly court for thinking, but depend upon it we shall have to be tried for it at the Last Judgment. Evil thoughts are the marrow of sin, the malt that sin is brewed from, the tinder which catches the sparks of the devil's temptations, the churn in which the milk of imagination is churned into purpose and plan, the nest in which all evil birds lay their eggs. Be certain, then, that as sure as fire burns brushwood as well as logs, God will punish thoughts of sin as well as deeds of sin.

Let no one suppose that thoughts are not known to the Lord, for He has a window into the closest closet of the soul, a window to which there are no shutters. As we watch bees in a glass hive, so does the eye of the Lord see us. The Bible says, "Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much

more then the hearts of the children of men?" Man is all outside to God. With heaven there are no secrets. That which is done in the private chamber of the heart is as public as the streets before the all-seeing eye.

But some will say that they cannot help having bad thoughts. That may be, but the question is: do they hate them or not? We cannot keep thieves from looking in at our windows, but if we open our doors to them and receive them joyfully, we are as bad as they. We cannot help the birds flying over our heads, but we may keep them from building their nests in our hair. Vain thoughts will knock at the door, but we must not open to them. Though sinful thoughts rise, they must not reign. He who turns a morsel over and over in his mouth does so because he likes the flavor, and he who meditates upon evil loves it and is ripe to commit it. Think of the devil, and he will appear; turn your thoughts towards sins and your hands will soon follow. Snails leave their slime behind them, and so do vain thoughts.

An arrow may fly through the air, and leave no trace; but an ill thought always leaves a trail like a serpent. Where there is much traffic of bad thinking, there will be much mire and dirt; every wave of wicked thought adds something to the corruption which rots upon the shore of life. It is dreadful to think that a vile imagination, once indulgers, gets the key of our minds and can get in again very easily, whether we will it or not, and can so return as to bring seven other spirits with it more wicked than itself. What may follow, no one knows. Nurse sin on the knees of thought, and it will grow into a giant. Dip rope in naphtha, and how it will blaze when fire gets to it. Lay a man soaked in depraved thought, and he is ready to flame up into open sin as soon as the opportunity occurs. This shows us the wisdom of watching, every day, the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts. Good thoughts are blessed guests and should be heartily welcomed, well fed, and much sought.





Showing forth the
excellencies of Jesus
Christ

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CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

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CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE:

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Did You Know?

★ Did you know that in 1934 a new magazine began?

★ Did you know that this periodical was called *The Presbyterian Guardian*?

★ Did you know that for the next 44 years this magazine contained not only updates on the progress of the fight against the Modern-

ists of the era but also many spiritually edifying articles?

★ Did you know that although it was not officially produced by the OPC, many leading men in the OPC served as editors, such as J. Gresham Machen & Ned B. Stonehouse?

★ Did you know that several books first appeared in parts as articles in this periodical, including R. B. Kuiper's *Glorious Body of Christ* and the second half of our previous Adult Sunday School book *Redemption Accomplished & Applied* by John Murray?

★ Did you know that all of the issues from this series are now available online on opc.org?

★ Interested in Psalm singing? Check out the article in the feature edition: Volume 2, No. 7 from July 6, 1936 today!!

Frosty Fruity Kefir Treat

- ★ Frozen Blueberries
- ★ Frozen Raspberries (both available in bags at Walmart)
- ★ Lifeway Lowfat Kefir (Raspberry, Strawberry or Pomegranate flavor from Walmart or Pick & Save in 32 oz. bottles)

Note Kefir is similar to yogurt in flavor, but is more of a liquid.

Fill 1/3 of wide mouth 8 oz. glass with frozen blueberries. Fill the next 1/3 of glass with raspberries. Add Kefir to fill glass to 1/2" from top. Stir mixture up immediately for approx. 30 seconds. Add more kefir if needed. Serve with a spoon. The fruit will slightly freeze the kefir while you eat it. Enjoy!!

Shary De Troye



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food in
due time.
You open Your
hand
And satisfy the
desire of every
living thing.”