

## Light for my Path and Joy for my Heart (Psalm 119:105-112)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on January 18, 2009

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Our study today brings us to one of the great statements of Scripture about itself, words we have already sung of today. The Bible has been given many tributes and descriptions. Thomas Guthrie said, “The Bible is an armory of heavenly weapons, a laboratory of infallible medicines, a mine of exhaustless wealth. It is a guidebook for every road, a chart for every sea, a medicine for every malady, and a balm for every wound. Rob us of our Bible and our sky has lost its sun.”<sup>1</sup>

The Bible within its own pages refers to itself by various images:

- The book of James compares the Word of God to a **mirror**
- Ephesians 6 and Hebrews 4 call it the **Sword** of the Lord
- God Himself says in Jeremiah 23:29 “‘is not my word **like a fire,**’ says the Lord, ‘and **like a hammer that breaks the rock to pieces**’”
- Psalm 119 has already called a **treasure** and compared it to **riches** and **honey**.

<sup>105</sup> **Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.** <sup>106</sup> **I have sworn and I will confirm it, That I will keep Your righteous ordinances.** <sup>107</sup> **I am exceedingly afflicted; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.** <sup>108</sup> **O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, And teach me Your ordinances.** <sup>109</sup> **My life is continually in my hand, Yet I do not forget Your law.** <sup>110</sup> **The wicked have laid a snare for me, Yet I have not gone astray from Your precepts.** <sup>111</sup> **I have inherited Your testimonies forever, For they are the joy of my heart.** <sup>112</sup> **I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes Forever, even to the end.**

During the dark ages the Roman Catholic Church for centuries had kept the light of Scripture under a bushel, away from the people, restricted to only the elite church leaders (and even they were in dark ignorance of its teachings). This year marks the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, a shining star of Protestant Reformation from France along with Martin Luther in Germany and Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland, and later John Knox in England. They recovered God’s Word as a lamp that led them out of the darkness, and they shone it as a light on the path for the feet of many others, the lost path of the true gospel of God’s grace. The light-giving life-giving Scriptures led their way, as v. 105 says. Scriptures were being translated and taught again in verse-by-verse illuminating exposition, the darkness of false religion was exposed.

You may have heard me refer before to their motto, *post tenebras lux*, which in English means “After darkness, light.” The spiritual darkness of the times was overcome by the lamp and light of God’s illuminating Word that kindled fires of lasting bright burning Reformation, unstoppable spreading blazes. This phrase *post tenebras lux* ‘was subsequently adopted as the motto of the entire [Protestant Reformation](#), and also of [John Calvin](#)’s adopted city of [Geneva, Switzerland](#). As a mark of its role in the Calvinist movement, the motto is engraved on the [Reformation Wall](#).’<sup>2</sup>

The statue of Calvin has both hands on the open Bible, the lamp and light of the Reformation. The Reformers understood the truth of verse 105: “Thy Word is a *lamp* unto my feet and a light unto my path.” We’ve all experienced being in a room of total darkness, and then having even a light turned, and that metaphor is used spiritually in Scripture of God’s Word as the only thing that can bring *post tenebras lux* (after darkness, light) whether it was in the days of OT Israel, or middle-age Europe, or an individual’s life in any day.

Sadly, here in America, if things continue as they are, the motto of our country will prove to be “After light, darkness” – following the pattern of much of Europe – *remaining “religious” but returning to darkness after having so much light in the past*. We can be thankful that God always has “elect from every nation” and we can rejoice that in other places of the world, there is great light coming to the darkness of Asia and the Muslim world, but we want to pray for a modern Reformation of our nation bringing them truly back to the Word of God, including churches that have abandoned God’s Word and their past heritage of Scripture’s authority and sufficiency. The prayer of verse 107 should be our prayer: “Revive us, O Lord, according to Your Word.” Will you revive us again? Will you at least revive *me*, according to Your Word?

*Sola Scriptura*, the Reformation principle “Scripture Alone” (that the Bible is sufficient for salvation and all of life and godliness) is really not something the Reformers made up. It is the message of Psalm 119.

*In our text today, Scripture Alone is the Source of:*

1. Supernatural Light (v. 105-106)
2. Supernatural Strength (v. 107-110)
3. Supernatural Joy (v. 111-112)

***#1: Scripture Alone is the source of Supernatural Light***

v. 105 “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path”

In the past two sections, the psalmist has been basking in and bathing in the fountain of living water of God’s Word in a refreshing and revitalizing spring at the top of this Mount Everest of the Psalms. Now he begins his descent on the other side of his journey through dark and dangerous paths, which not only verse 105 alludes to, but in v. 108 (“I am exceedingly afflicted”), in v. 109 he says his very life is continually in his hand (i.e., in danger), and v. 110 says there are enemies all around trying to capture him.

In dark times, the torch of God’s Torah lights up the pitch-black terrain, reveals to us the dangerous places where not to step and illuminates the path way where we should step in the jagged journey below. Sometimes going back down the mountain can be more dangerous than going up, especially as darkness sets in. Here verse 105 has been compared to ‘a grappling hook that is securely anchored on that high plateau of stability and sufficiency (i.e. vv. 89-104), but at the same time, attached to it is the first length of fragile cord for the disciple’s dangerous descent downwards. In verse 105 God’s Word ... is regarded as both a focused (v. 105a) and a diffused light source (v. 105b). As a “lamp” it is like a flashlight’s beam aimed at the next step of one’s feet on life’s dark path. As “light,” it is like a floodlight which penetrates the murky shadows surrounding the meandering highway ahead.’<sup>3</sup>

In the highways of life today, Scripture is both our headlights and our foglights, and we should be especially able to appreciate the image on roads in our context and community as recently the evening fog has especially dense and thick and very hard to see through very far in front of you and you have to go slowly and carefully. In the original context, the lamps or lanterns they used at this time would have illuminated only the next step in front of you. So God’s Word is a step-by-step light, and it’s not enough to have it, we must use it and follow it every step of the way as we go.

The imagery is summed up this way: ‘When an ancient traveler journeyed at night he carried an oil lamp with him. As he walked along, swinging the lamp out in front of him, he could see the rocks and ruts directly ahead of him in the road, and he could avoid them. Sometimes he actually strapped a small clay lamp to his ankle and it illuminated the path before him, one step at a time, as he walked. That is how God uses his Word to guide us. He does not promise a brilliant blaze of light to illuminate the road for miles ahead. He promises a lamp to our feet, enough light for the next step ... The headlights on our automobiles do not expose the dangers a mile or so ahead. They merely divulge the next bend in the road. God knows that it may not be best for us to see too far down the highway of our lives. If he showed us the whole plan at the outset, we might decide that we do not want to follow it. It might involve more sacrifices than we are willing to make at this stage of our spiritual maturity, or it might look too difficult for us to handle at this point in our spiritual growth ... [think of a time camping and us walking with a group of people in the dark to the bathroom with just one person in the group carrying a flashlight] If we run ahead of the light to see what lies beyond the next step, we shall find ourselves in the dark again.’<sup>4</sup>

J. I. Packer writes: ‘This pictures what God’s word does for us, showing us how to [walk] ... The psalmist’s cry is one of praise, thanks, admonition, testimony and confidence—praise that God glorifies his grace by giving men so precious a gift as his word; thanks because he knows how much he himself needed it, and how lost he was without it.’<sup>5</sup>

The writer of this Psalm that refers so often to God’s Law (Torah) knew how that Torah scroll begins, the first word recorded of God: “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3). This is God’s specialty, light from darkness, and this is what God’s Word continues to do, His written Word, in our everyday lives, bringing light to life’s darkness. He also would have been well familiar with the Torah’s story of Israel under Moses being led for nighttime journeys by a pillar of fire that would light up the way they should go, illuminating their path as a large lamp or torch giving them light for their feet. They were led by it on a day-by-day basis (a pillar for both day and night) wherever it went. When it moved, they moved. When it stopped, they set up camp. If it remained one day, they stayed one day. If it remained a year, they stayed a year. But then when it lifted, they broke camp and followed. They had to trust and follow every day.

Prov 6:23 “the commandment is **a lamp** and the teaching is **light**; And reproofs for discipline are the **way of life**”

2 Peter 1:19 “So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention **as to a lamp shining in a dark place** ...”

In John 8:12, [the Incarnate Word] Jesus says “I am the Light of the world; **he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness**, but will have the Light of life.”

2 Samuel 22:29 “For **You are my lamp**, O LORD; And the LORD **illuminates my darkness**.”

Our Lord Himself in His Word provides a light that far surpasses any human lamp then or now. As one pastor said it: ‘The Bible is a *reading* lamp, with which we can read the very thoughts of God. It is a *miner’s* lamp, which illumines the darkest places in the pit but also reveals the gems that are buried there. It is a *safety* lamp, which, like the one used by miners many years ago that prevented the lamp flame from igniting dangerous gases, protects us from the dangers lurking unseen around us. It is the *lighthouse* lamp, which lights the shore and reveals the rocks of ruin that await. It is a *hurricane* lamp, which ... can never be blown out no matter how strong the wind. It is a *street* lamp, which illumines the shadows of the night and reveals enemies that hide there. And it is the *hand* lamp ... simple flashlight, that we can easily carry and point ...’<sup>6</sup>

Think of times you've walked in the darkness without a lamp or light. Have any of you experienced the pain of hitting your shin on a coffee table? Or stepping on legos or little toys? A lamp or light not only shows us where to walk but where not to walk. It provides both direction and protection. The illustrations of this verse go on and on. Verse 105 is undoubtedly the most famous verse of this psalm and perhaps the most famous throughout history.

This verse 'is the text prefixed to a little book called *The Lantern of Light*, which was the favorite reading of the Lollards before the Reformation ... these children of the dawn [of light as they considered themselves. In the 1400s] Lollards of England and Scotland were charged with reading the Bible in their mother tongue [not using the "authorized version" of the Catholic Church in Latin, their crime was reading an English translation by Wycliffe, and their other great crime was they viewed the Bible as authoritative and superior to the teaching of man and they were] esteeming it above any instruction they received from the priests. On this account they were called *Biblemen*. A considerable number of them were taken up for trial ... in 1494, nearly 70 years before the time of Knox. That region, so prominent in the time of the Reformation and the Covenant, had the seed in the soil.'<sup>7</sup>

Shakespeare, too [in history, was perhaps influenced by this verse] in the speech from the Second Part of "King Henry the Sixth," addressed by the king to Humphrey, Duke of Gloster, we have the lines –

... *God shall be my hope,  
my stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet;  
And go in peace, Humphrey*<sup>8</sup>

In the beginning of *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian speaks with *Evangelist* and is told to flee from the wrath to come, and it says 'after looking upon *Evangelist* very carefully, said, "Which way must I go to escape?" Then said *Evangelist*, pointing with his finger beyond a very large field, "Do you see a *Wicket-gate* [*small gate*] over there?" The man replied, "No." Then he was asked, "Do you see a shining light not quite so far away?" He said, "I think I do." Then said *Evangelist*, "Keep that light before your eye, and go directly toward it, and then you shall see the gate ..."<sup>9</sup>

In Charles Spurgeon's *Autobiography*, he writes: 'a vast audience gathered to hear the famous lecture on "Sermons in Candles" delivered by my dear father; and well do I remember ... What a wonderful light the lecturer threw upon his subject! It can well be imagined with what interest the little lads, in their ninth year, looked and listened, as the different candles were lighted, and the sermonettes sparkled. Most vividly do I recollect how daintily my dear father walked across the platform ... bearing in his hand a small cane, at the end of which hung a colored paper lantern, thus illustrating Psalm 119:105: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" I must confess that I had, even then, a wish to do the sell-same thing, little dreaming that, in after-lite, the dear father, whom I was watching with such intense delight, would make over to me, as a love-gift, the whole of the apparatus he had used, with a bound copy of the lecture, saying, "There, Charlie, my boy, you can go on giving it."<sup>10</sup>

What's the appropriate response to the light-giving truth of God?

<sup>106</sup> **I have sworn and I will confirm it, That I will keep Your righteous ordinances.**

He is saying “I am bound and determined to keep your righteous judgments.” I swear to keep the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God (obviously as you read the rest of the psalm you know he knows he cannot keep God’s Word without God’s help). He is pledging allegiance to God’s Word.

Every morning the kids at Providence Christian School that meets here begin with: “I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God’s Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I will hide its Words in my heart that I might not sin against God.” What a great way for us adults to begin our day as well by re-committing ourselves to God and His Word.

## **#2 Scripture is the source of Supernatural Strength (vs. 107-110).**

<sup>107</sup> I am exceedingly afflicted; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.

The word “afflicted” has appeared several times in this psalm already, but this is the first time he adds the word “exceedingly” to it. The afflictions in the Christian life do not disappear as we mature, they sometimes increase, but God also gives increased strength to deal with them as they do as we cry out “revive me.”

This is a prayer to be given life, to live, to be alive, to thrive spiritually, to be revived spiritually from darkness or depression. When God does so, it will be according to God’s Word (v. 107b).

Jay Adams writes: ‘In a time when one is falling, he grabs whatever is at hand. If the Word of God is not uppermost in his mind at such moments, he will grab for something else. That is why he must meditate on the Word day and night – throughout the whole day. That is why he must store up God’s Word in his heart. If he does so faithfully, his normal, habitual response will be to “grab” for the promises of God when he senses he is beginning to fall.’<sup>11</sup>

<sup>108</sup> O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, And teach me Your ordinances.

Freewill offerings were voluntary offerings, that Israel gave at various times in addition to their tithes and taxes to support the priests and government of Israel. This offering was not a compulsory amount, but was to be given willingly, voluntarily, bountifully, liberally. As I understand what the N.T. prescribes about giving, especially in the key text in 2 Corinthians 8-9, this is the key principle in N.T. giving. We want you to give to the Lord and the Lord’s work not mainly because of some legal requirement of OT law, but lovingly from our hearts. The amount is between you and God and is none of my business – I don’t know what anyone in the church gives through our offering – but my business is only to tell you what that passage says, that the Lord loves a cheerful giver. Our giving is to be from the heart, generously, but not grudgingly, motivated by love but not legalism.

In this verse he uses a term for offering but he adds “of my mouth.” He uses the literal language to refer to the praise of his lips that he offers to God, his voluntary worship, which he does because he wants to, not because someone told him he has to. Notice in verse 108, he moves from his mouth to the teaching from God’s mouth. He prays yet again “teach me,” a phrase we’ve seen many times in this Psalm already.

James Boice writes: ‘When we come to church, first and foremost we should be taught the Bible ... There is nothing more important for Christian growth and the health of the church than sound Bible teaching. Yet sadly, serious Bible teaching is being widely neglected in our day, even in so-called evangelical churches. Instead of Bible teaching, people are being fed a diet of superficial pop-psychology, self-help therapy, feel-good stimulants, and entertainment, and the ignorance of the Bible in the churches is appalling. George Gallup [a name many of you know] has followed the rise of biblical illiteracy for decades, and he reports that although ... almost every home in America has a Bible, and most people say they believe it – only small percentages know who preached the Sermon on the Mount, are able to name the four Gospels, or recall even one of the Ten Commandments [I’ve heard some of the interesting answers given by some church-goers: Epistle is a female Apostle, Eve was married to an apple, Gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, *Luther*, and John, etc.]

Not long ago ... at the National Christian Booksellers Convention ... Shane Rosenthal, the producer of the radio program, *The White Horse Inn*, asked 256 people if they could name the ten commandments just off the top of their heads. In that huge assembly, not of secular people but of evangelical staffpersons and leaders, only a very few people could do it. These are people who are lobbying to get the Ten Commandments restored to the walls of our courtrooms and the public schools!’<sup>12</sup>

By the way, when you see that word “freewill,” that’s the only context in which the Bible uses that term, only in the OT for voluntary offerings as opposed to mandatory offerings in OT laws. The term is never used in the context of salvation – it’s not a biblical expression or explanation as to how people get saved. So many are confused and want to use this phrase that’s not in the NT to try and explain away all the NT verses about election and God’s sovereignty in salvation.

But are unsaved people as free as so many assume? Unbelievers are not referred to as free, as we’ve seen before; Jesus says in John 8 all are slaves to sin, and we need to be *set free*, and he says we need the Son to set us free to be *truly free*. There is genuine volition and choices mankind makes, and fallen men *freely choose sin*, and *willfully reject Christ* without any coercion needed. Our will gets us into trouble but not into heaven. There must be the sovereign gracious will of God rescuing us from the choices of our sinful will (John 6:44, 63, 65, 15:4, 16, Romans 9:15-16, etc.)

You can debate that all you want; I’d just as soon thank God for it. I would rather surrender to God’s sovereignty than argue against it. Why He doesn’t save everyone is His business, not mine, I’m just so incredibly thankful He had mercy on me! I have zero interest in trying to take any of the credit and glory for my conversion by insisting desires for Christ originated in my heart by my willpower.

If these doctrines are a struggle for you, let me encourage you to read the above scriptures from John and Romans and seek to truly have the attitude at the end of v. 108 before the Lord: “teach me.” Humbly recognize your mind has limitations, but be committed to believe whatever God’s Word teaches, and don’t try and explain it away by other ideas from culture rather than clear Bible teaching. Don’t trump supernatural revelation with natural rational thoughts. Be content with God being smarter than you, and also that in God’s just character no one goes to hell unfairly or undeservedly, which the Bible also unquestionably teaches.

Let's be content with and committed to God's Word like v. 109, our whole trust in it not only for eternal life, but physical life, too

<sup>109</sup> My life is continually in my hand, Yet I do not forget Your law.

The Jewish Targum paraphrases the Hebrew idiom as: "I am constantly exposed to danger." God's sovereign hand will keep us, but we still are required to keep His law. Sovereignty never removes our *responsibility*, but notice that his responsibility does not remove his *reliance* on God for life and law.

One detailed study of this psalm says 'one's soul in the hand ... signifies, according to the context, to remain consciously in danger of death. To *take* one's soul in his hand (Judges 12:3; 1 Samuel 19:5, 28:21; Job 13:14) means: to be prepared to give up one's life [if that's what God's sovereign will has for us, nothing is too precious for us to give up] ... the Talmudic saying: Man's prayer is not heard unless he takes his life in his hand; i.e. unless he is ready to sacrifice his life.'<sup>13</sup> [Jesus said "take up your cross" and called us to be willing to give up all things?]

The motto emblazoned on his coat of arms is: "The man who carries his life in his hand, should carry the law in his heart."<sup>14</sup> His life may be in danger, but if you look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the verse, he understands his greater danger is forgetting God's Word.

One commentator asks: 'Do we understand the danger of abandoning God's Word? I do not think so, and the fact I would put into evidence is the nature of our prayers. The prayers I hear have to do almost exclusively with having good health (or getting better when we or someone else is sick), succeeding at our jobs, passing a test ... Where are the prayers that we might be kept from sin, that we or those close to us might become more godly, that we might be able to live better for God or get to know God better? We need the Bible to clarify our true danger.'<sup>15</sup>

In v. 109 he uses the word "continually" to speak of his danger, a constant perpetual precarious state, but as it's been points out, 'he did not become so wrapped up in his troubles, so concerned about his life that he forgot everything else. No, exactly not so. Rather, recognizing that he was continually in such a vulnerable position drove him to God's **law**. Like all that we have been saying throughout this exposition of Psalm 119, trouble, risk, sickness, persecution – whatever negative comes into a [Christian's] life – ought to make him think all the more of the Bible and its promises ... for the days ahead to think differently about trouble, to cause him to turn to the Bible for God's help in hours of crisis'<sup>16</sup> Verse 110 certainly was written in an hour of crisis.

<sup>110</sup> The wicked have laid a snare for me,  
Yet I have not gone astray from Your precepts.

This trap or snare for birds or other creatures had a base and two nets that could spring up and trap the victim. They were often camouflaged and baited. The hunter would wait for his prey beyond the range of its senses. Other types of traps referred to in Psalm 119 included pits where animals might walk across that look like ground, and might have some bait. In the movie "Swiss Family Robinson," the boy sets a trap like that to catch a tiger, which may have been similar to how this OT word and practice was used. Of course, here the writer of Psalm 119 uses this analogy for he feels his enemies want to trap him like an animal.

Spurgeon says he ‘was not snared, for he kept his eyes open, and kept near his God. He was not entrapped and robbed for he followed the King’s highway of holiness, where God secures safety to every traveller. He did not err from the right, and he was not deterred from following it, because he referred to the Lord for guidance, and obtained it. If we err from the precepts, we part with the promises; if we get away from God’s presence, we wander into the wilds where the fowlers freely spread their nets. From this verse let us learn to be on our guard, for we, too, have enemies both crafty and wicked. Hunters set their traps in the animals’ usual runs, and our worst snares are laid in our own ways. By keeping to the ways of the Lord we shall escape the snares of our adversaries, for his ways are safe and free from treachery.’<sup>17</sup>

Again the second half of the verse is key: he stayed with God’s Word to avoid the traps and temptations of his enemies. Our Lord Jesus modeled this masterfully with the greatest enemy and tempter in Matthew 4 (wielding the battle sword “it is written”).

We need supernatural strength for supernatural warfare, and it is found in this supernatural book, the sword of Scripture. It says of Apollos in the book of Acts, he was “mighty in the Scriptures.”

God tells Joshua “be strong and very courageous [how?] be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you” (Joshua 1:7)

Paul says in Ephesians 6, “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.” And how do we appropriate this supernatural strength? He concludes: “take up the Sword ... the Word of God”

Kent Hughes points out: ‘If Christ, the Divine Man, in battling Satan while here on earth did so with the sword of the Word, how much more do we frail men and women need to wield that same sword if we are to be victorious? ... Face the truth – we are at war, and our razor-sharp weapon is God’s Word, and we are fools to keep it in the scabbard simply because our culture says it cannot cut ... How much better it is to obey God ... How do we do this?’

First, by *reading it*. It is amazing that a Christian can imagine that he or she can live a Christian life without regularly reading the Bible, for that is impossible! Our minds are such that we do not retain what we need to know. They need to be refreshed again and again ...

Second, we take up the sword by *meditating* on it. This is the secret of God’s great warriors. Hudson Taylor ... (Psalm 1:1-3).

Third, the sword is grasped for effective battle through *memorization* ... [If we want to be strong in the Lord for the battles ahead] Let us grip the sword firmly through diligent study! ... Now we must reach out our hand and “Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the *word of God*” and raise it to him in worshipful salute ... Soldiers of Christ arise and put your armor on!”<sup>18</sup>

***The writer of Psalm 119 knew as well as anyone in Scripture that it is here we find our source of supernatural light and strength...***

### **#3. Supernatural Joy**

<sup>111</sup> I have inherited Your testimonies forever, For they are the joy of my heart.

Strength and joy flow naturally together, in fact, in Nehemiah 8:10 it says “the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

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

His affections of joyful delight gave him strength in his affliction. When we are physically weak, then we are spiritually strong. And when our natural resources and even emotions are depleted and we can find supernatural joy in our heart, this glorifies God much.

<sup>111</sup> I have inherited Your testimonies forever, For they are the joy of my heart.

An earthly inheritance is not forever. The treasures here on earth can have moth or rust destroy or thieves break in and steal, but treasures in heaven and from heaven endure forever. The Word of our God abides forever, and it gives abiding joy this verse says.

But notice though heart emotions come and go, he is not passive but must *pursue* as well

<sup>112</sup> I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes Forever, *even* to the end.

In other words, my heart has joy in Your Word ... but I must incline it still more, cultivate my joy more in Scripture to obey it. I hope you don't think that this writer's love, joy, and delight in God's Word just magically happened without effort or prayer

His love and delight was a conscious choice (that's biblical love)

Psalm 119:16 I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word.

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

Also, notice how often his statements of delight include prayers

v. 35 Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it.

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

His personal responsibility and resolve is always reliant on God but still active. If God is at work in us, we will work hard as well by His strength. Paul says "I strive, according to [God's] power"

The end of v. 112 is his pledge to obey Scripture "*Forever, even to the end.*" We want to finish well, like the Apostle Paul. The word "end" can refer to reward as well. I'm reminded of the chief end of man, as our spiritual forefathers described it: our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. That is our resolve as well as our reward, our duty as well as our delight.

The joy of v. 111 is essential. Even of Jesus Himself, it says He "for the joy set before Him endured the cross" – He endured the cross, not because He enjoyed the pain of the nails and the thorns and far beyond that, the punishment and wrath of God upon Him the sin-bearer – He endured the cross for the joy set before Him.

There is great joy, Luke 15 says, in the presence of the angels in heaven, when one sinner repents. In that chapter and context, it is God the Father Himself rejoicing in heaven before the angels with great rejoicing, when salvation takes place. The joy of the Father is pictured in the joy the father of the Prodigal Son expresses when his repentant son comes humbly home. Are you such a son?

‘Many, indeed, are satisfied with far too low a standard of spiritual enjoyments. It is comfortless to live at a distance from our Father's house, when we might be dwelling in the secret of his presence, and rejoicing in the smiles of his love. But let us not charge this dishonourable state upon [God]. Let us rather trace it to its true source—[our lack] of desire ... of faith ... of prayer ... of diligence. What infinite need have we of heavenly influence! What gracious encouragement to seek it! The way was blocked up—mercy has cleared the path, opened our access—"The golden sceptre is always held out." (Esther 5:2.) Earnest prayer will bring a sure answer. The blessing is unspeakable.’<sup>19</sup>

Seeking satisfaction and happiness is not our problem; C.S. Lewis said our problem is we are far too easily pleased (with cheap substitutes). We are like the prodigal son, eating the corn husks that are leftover from the pigs, wallowing with the swine, when if we would just come to our Father His arms are open wide and a great joyful feast is ready, with fatted calf and all the trimmings to feed our soul!

Isaiah 55:2-3 (NASB95) <sup>2</sup>“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.** <sup>3</sup>“**Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live ...**

There is delight in listening to the Lord, hearing Him in His Word, true satisfaction and life-giving joy, sustaining nourishment for our souls when our heart is inclined and our will has bowed humbly before God. Isaiah 55 goes on speaking of the abundant mercy and great joy that accompanies repentant seeking of God’s Word:

Isaiah 55:6-7 (NASB95) <sup>6</sup>**Seek** the LORD while He may be found; **Call** upon Him while He is near. <sup>7</sup>Let the wicked **forsake** his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have **compassion** on him, And to our God, For He will **abundantly pardon.** ... <sup>10</sup>“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; <sup>11</sup> **So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty,** Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it. <sup>12</sup>“For you will go out with **joy** And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into **shouts of joy** before you, And all the trees of the field will **clap their hands.**

God’s Word does not return void. And I pray and trust God that it is not going forth this morning without accomplishing the purpose God desires, and one of those purposes in that passage is your joy, delight, rejoicing, hearts and hands glad in God, all creation even.

If Jesus is not yet your Lord, I pray you will **seek** him as your only satisfaction and portion, **forsake** the empty passing pleasures of sin, and pursue eternal glories and delights, call out to Christ in humble faith today, and enter into the joy of your master, in whose presence is fullness of joy, pleasures forevermore. There is great joy in heaven in the presence of angels when one sinner repents. Trust in Christ, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, and you will glorify God and begin to enjoy Him forever today.

If you already know the Lord, delight yourself in the Lord. God is glorified in you when you are happy in Him. If you are already serving the Lord, serve the Lord with gladness. And seek to be a joy to others, for the glory of our God, and for our good.

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- <sup>1</sup> As cited by Woodrow Koll, *Ephesians*, p. 79.
- <sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post\\_Tenebras\\_Lux](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post_Tenebras_Lux)
- <sup>3</sup> George Zemek, *The Word of God in the Child of God*, 247-248.
- <sup>4</sup> R. L. Strauss, (1979). *How to Really Know the Will of God*. p. 167-170, inserted. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.
- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.mountzion.org/fgb/Fall94/FgbF4-94.html>
- <sup>6</sup> <http://www.thescripturealone.com/Psalm119-16.htm>
- <sup>7</sup> John Ker, *The Psalms in History and Biography*, p. 148.
- <sup>8</sup> Lockyer, *Psalms: A Devotional Commentary*, 580-81.
- <sup>9</sup> Barry E. Horner. *The Pilgrim's Progress - An Outlined Commentary*. [www.bunyanministries.org](http://www.bunyanministries.org)
- <sup>10</sup> C. H. Spurgeon's *Autobiography*, Curts & Jennings, 1899, Vol. 3, p. 276-277.
- <sup>11</sup> Jay Adams, *Counsel from Psalm 119*, p. 91.
- <sup>12</sup> James Boice, *Psalms*, 3:1027-28.
- <sup>13</sup> Moll, *Psalms*, p. 592.
- <sup>14</sup> Scroggie, *Psalms*, p. 184.
- <sup>15</sup> Boice, 1028-29.
- <sup>16</sup> Adams, 92-93.
- <sup>17</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*.
- <sup>18</sup> Kent Hughes, *Ephesians*, chapter 28.
- <sup>19</sup> Charles Bridges, *Psalm 119*, p. 103.