

Session 2 Delighting in the Lord: Enjoying God (Song 2:3-5)

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I. DELIGHTING IN THE LORD

A. The Bride spoke of the delight she had in relating to the King—she declared, “Your love is better than wine” (1:2); the King “is pleasant” (1:16); “I sat down in His shade with great delight” (2:3). The Christian life includes the glorious discovery of the pleasure of knowing and loving God.

3“...I sat down in His shade with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.” (Song 2:3)

2“...for your love is better than wine...¹⁶You [King] are handsome, my Beloved! Yes, pleasant!” (Song 1:2, 16)

Well tonight I want to take a theme in the Song of Solomon of delighting in the Lord or we could use the term enjoying God or spiritual pleasure. This is a very glorious truth, it is a very foundational truth that many believers are actually not grounded in. They do not have a right view as to the pleasure that God wants to give them spiritually in their encounter with the Lord. They have wrong ideas about pleasure. This is a glorious truth and a very, very significant one as well.

Well in Song of Solomon 1-2 the bride makes these bold and powerful declarations about her relationship with the Lord. Now it is important to know that in the eight chapter love song of the Song of Solomon it is her journey. There is a progression that she is walking from sincere yet immature to she grows into deep mature partnership with the Lord throughout the eight chapters.

So it is significant that these declarations about her enjoyment of God and her revelation of God's enjoyment of her are made in Song of Solomon 1-2 at the beginning of the journey. There are two points I want to make about that, that an immature believer can experience this. This is not something for the profoundly mature, this is for everyone, the assurance that God enjoys them and the beginning of delighting and enjoying their relationship with the Lord.

It is not just duty, it is not just gritting our teeth and refusing to yield to sin or gritting our teeth and we are going to serve God in the most difficult way, we are going to do it. It is actually a relationship that is rooted in enjoyment. It is not only accessible to an immature believer, Song of Solomon 1-2. Its foundational meaning this was the area that shifted my spiritual life some years ago.

I did not know anything about Song of Solomon but when I began to enjoy the Lord and enjoy Him enjoying me that shifted my whole spiritual life when I was in my twenties. The idea that He was smiling when I was relating to Him even in my brokenness and my sinfulness and my weakness I felt His smile and His delight in me. What that does is that sets the context for me to enjoy conversation with Him. So prayer went from a rigorous kind of dutiful thing that I was committed to do to I actually enjoyed it. It is this subject of delighting, the subject of spiritual pleasure.

Well in Song of Solomon 2:3 she makes this very strong but significant confession meaning a declaration of her experience. I sat down in His shade with great delight. Again in the context of the Song she is still in the early days of her spiritual journey. She is not very mature yet but she was experiencing great delight.

Now the enemy has come along and told people that they are spiritual life is meant to be always at a distance, always hoping for a breakthrough, committed no matter what. That is true, we are committed no matter what but they do not have any sense of expectation or confidence that they actually will enjoy the Lord.

Enjoying the Lord is something that is always in the future, never in the present. They are longing, they are aching, they have pain but they do not ever enjoy Him. I will say this that a believer that cannot say, I sat down in His shade, at least with the word with delight, maybe not great delight, they will not mature deeply in the things of God or certainly not very quickly.

This was the watershed issue in my early days beginning to delight and encountering and talking to the Lord. I do not mean encounter like a powerful you know angelic visitation encounter. Everybody would appreciate that. I am talking about the little interactions with the Lord.

Look at Song of Solomon 1:2. She began to declare, Your love is better than the wine of this world. In other words the natural pleasures and even the natural privileges of this world interacting with You actually does more for my heart than those natural privileges and pleasures. This is not a faith statement, this was a statement of experience.

She goes, I might not ever of guessed it but it is true interacting with Your heart is actually better than the other good things that are happening in my life as well as the temptations in the culture. Because the wine of this world is not all only the temptation it is even the positive blessings happening in her life. She goes, no interacting with You actually has more impact on me than those things do.

Then in Song of Solomon 1:16 she declares in this poetic language of love to the King, You are handsome or the King is beautiful, Your beauty. Then she calls him, my Beloved. Then she says, yes You are pleasant. The word I would encourage to interchange, You are delightful. Jesus You are not just powerful, You are delightful. The Holy Spirit wants to reveal how delightful Jesus is not only how powerful, how wise, how consistent but the fact that He is pleasant or delightful.

The Christian life is a glorious discovery, an ongoing discovery. The Christian life is an ongoing journey of discovering the delightfulness of the King. Again more than His power, more than His wisdom, more than His sovereignty, those for sure His delightfulness. It is also discovering the pleasure even in our immaturity of interacting with His heart.

When the light goes on in our understanding and He is delightful and we do like the conversation with Him it puts us on the fast track of spiritual growth. It does not mean you will mature overnight but you are on a trajectory of increase of your spiritual life. These are not just kind of casual ideas, these are foundational ideas to our spiritual life. I so appreciate them being in the first two chapters of the maiden or the bride's journey in her early days. I want to say it again you will not mature as deeply or as quickly without this paradigm, this perspective of the Lord.

B. The Lord is beautiful and so delightful. David exhorted people to delight themselves in the Lord.

4“Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Ps. 37:4)

Paragraph B., David he understood that God delighted in him. He said that in Psalm 18:19. He goes, the Lord delivered me because He delighted in me. David said that after a season of compromise and he had repented when he could have been negotiating, oh Lord if you will forgive me one more time I promise I will never do it. He said Psalm 18:19, Lord the reason You delivered me because You actually delight in me. Then later David writes, delight in the Lord. The reason David called us to delight in God because he knew God delighted in him even in his weakness.

Well Isaiah 62:4, the famous declaration. God says, in that day you will be called Hephzibah, the Lord delights in you. One of the prophetic declarations over the people of God is God wants to declare, I delight in you. This will set you on an entirely different journey if like David you could receive those words. Because the enemy will resist that at every, at every step. The enemy does not want you to buy into the fact He delights in you until you deserve it somehow which you never will. He wants to keep you in shame, condemnation, confusion, and all kinds of anxiety about your relationship with Him.

David said, I challenge you, Psalm 37, delight in Him. Make it a goal in your life you are going to go down that journey of understanding that He delights in you. Doing the things in your spiritual life they are very simple just interacting with Him and according to the Word and talking to Him about His delightfulness.

C. There is nothing more powerful or pleasurable than when God reveals God to the human spirit.

“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him” (John Piper).

Paragraph C., there is nothing more pleasurable, there is, God has given, is the author of many pleasures. The devil counterfeits many pleasures but God is the actual author of the pleasures. I will tell you this, there is nothing more pleasurable to the human experience than when God reveals God to the human spirit. When God the Holy Spirit I am talking about just subtle small impressions.

We are reading the Word, we are not always reading the Word when it happens but when a little moment of inspiration or God the Holy Spirit is revealing God the Father and God the Son and their beauty, their power, their delightfulness, their kindness. There is nothing more pleasurable to the human experience than when God reveals God to the human spirit. The reason that is so important to buy into because this is part of the pathway of delighting in the Lord is putting ourselves in a situation where we are interacting with the truth about God's heart. We are interacting with regularly, not one here one there at a conference, at a seminar but it is a part of our everyday life.

Of course around here because this is one of the core messages people hear it all the time. Knowing how to echo what I just said is not the same thing as being determined you are going to interact with His heart according to the delightfulness, the reward of God reveals about Him.

Many believers they know technically there is nothing more pleasurable and actually nothing more powerful than when God reveals God to the human heart. They still do not prioritize it in their schedules and in their lifestyle. They believe it technically but it does not enter into the actual way they spend time and the language they speak to God.

Because in my early days I began to buy into this. Now certainly I could have done it more, I am not making myself an example, I am just giving a testimony. In my early days in my twenties I go, God I am buying into the fact that You are beautiful, You are delightful, You like me. I am going to fill my mind and my vocabulary with You, my conversation around these subjects. They did not, I did not naturally gravitate to them. Meaning when I would say them to the Lord these ideas it was kind of like they repelled off of me. I still felt condemned and dull and guilty. I kept talking to the Lord.

Wherever something about God's heart was made clear in the Scripture, His delightfulness, His kindness, His tenderness, the way He felt about me I would stop and thank Him for it. I would not just underline it and move on. I would say, I go, Jesus You delight in me, thank You. I would pause and I would linger there. Then I would go to the next response. I would say, Holy Spirit show me more about this. Then I would go back and say, Jesus thank You that You are gracious, that You plan good things for me, just whatever Bible verse I was reading. I would interact, I would get it into my language with God. I made sure I had time in my weekly routine to where I could interact with God that way whether I felt it or not. Over time I began to feel it more and more. I began to say, this is amazing, I am delighting in Him. This is like really happening.

Because I remember when I was about eighteen and nineteen at the university I was trying to grow in prayer. I was leading a university Bible study so I was really involved in the work of investing in others and in the kingdom and trying to disciple some young men. I was a young man myself eighteen, nineteen but I got a couple other freshmen at the university and they were new believers.

Because I have told the story many times, I hated prayer ugh. I did not like Bible study at all, the Bible was so confusing. Prayer was bad. The worst of all was fasting. The only thing I really liked was meetings, I liked meetings particularly if they had good music and cute people but anyway.

Going to Paragraph C. No I liked meetings but I did not like talking to God. So it just kind of repelled off me. I would read the Bible: confusing, prayer boring, and dull. I had this idea and of course it came from the Lord that these things are really true about His heart, the way He felt about me. If I would talk to Him about Him, about them that is a way of delighting in the Lord. I would actually thank Him for those truths one by one. He loves me, He has good plans for me, He forgives me, He provides for me. Whatever statement about the way He acts towards me and feels.

I would say, thank You. Then I would ask the Holy Spirit to show me more. That is how we practically delight in the Lord actually. Over time I remember when it began to dawn on me, I actually like this. I go this is a miracle, Mike Bickle likes prayer a little bit. Oh my gosh this could get amazing. Because I thought I would be the only guy it would never work for.

I approached it without having any great teachers to teach me how. Just simply thanking Jesus for those things in His heart, whatever showed up in the Bible I just read the Bible systematically, just read it through and asked the Holy Spirit to show me more. I would just journal little thoughts that came to me and little by little I began to really like it. Oh I was so happy when it dawned on me, I could actually like talking to God. This is like a miracle. The Bible would be interesting to me and not just boring.

I look back about forty years later and I go, oh Lord that was the turning point right there. I did not know it was even in Song of Solomon. It is not an accident this reality is in the early part of her life because she never would have matured without it.

I like what John Piper says, God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. God is most glorified in us because we are more responsive. When we are satisfied in Him our heart opens in many other ways and many implications to this reality.

II. THE SUPERIOR PLEASURES OF THE GOSPEL

- A. God is the author of pleasure. He created us to enjoy physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual pleasures. Our longing for pleasure is part of our created design, and it must be satisfied. Satan did not invent the idea of pleasure. He perverted pleasure and offers empty substitutes that never satisfy.

Roman numeral two, because we are talking about delighting in the Lord, the great delight of interacting with Him. I sat under His tree with great delight, under His shade with great delight. Let's look at the subject of what I call the superior pleasures of the gospel.

Again Paragraph A., God is the author of pleasure, He created us to enjoy physical pleasure. Now the enemy he perverts it, he counterfeits it. The original physical pleasures were created and thought up by God. God thought of them, not the devil. The devil perverted them but God thought of them. Physical pleasure was God's idea, that is what kind of person He is, that is what kind of personality He has. He came up with that idea. Is that not amazing? That is our leader forever. He was really into that. He liked physical pleasure that is why He built it into the human design.

There are mental pleasures, there are emotional pleasure, and again there are spiritual pleasures. Since our longing for pleasure is part of our created design we have to be satisfied or we are going to be broken. We cannot repent away our longing for pleasure. We need to pursue it the right direction. The spiritual pleasures are the most powerful and dominant. They are the most elusive on the front end but they are the most prevailing and powerful once they begin to unfold in our individual lives.

B. The greatest pleasures available to the human spirit are spiritual pleasures that come to us when God reveals God to our spirit. This exhilarates our heart at the deepest levels.

C. I refer to the “superior pleasures of the Gospel.” These pleasures include the beauty of Jesus and the beauty and glory He gives the redeemed as those who know, love, and reign with Him forever.

17“Your eyes will see the King in His beauty...” (Isa. 33:17)

Paragraph C., I refer to the superior pleasures of the gospel. They include the beauty of Jesus, I mean His beauty, the way that He loves, the way that He thinks, the way that He speaks. When we find little phrases in the Word of God, just phrases that give us just small insights into how He is those are all a part of the beauty of Jesus.

Isaiah prophesied Isaiah 33, your eyes will see the beauty of the King, the King in His beauty. That is a prophecy for the generation the Lord returns. Your eyes will see the beauty of the King. Of course that is our topic we are going to look at a little bit more next week. The pleasure of the gospel is rooted in the beauty of Jesus, how He thinks, how He talks, the way He is.

Also the beauty and the glory that He has given the redeemed. We are the ones, the way He has set up the relationship the way we know Him, we love Him, we reign with Him, we partner with Him, all of that is part of the beauty of God, part of the pleasures. When we understand these and we do not just underline them in our Bible but they get into our language when we talk to God. We say these phrases to Him and thank Him for them and think on them, ask the Holy Spirit for insight.

D. All human beings have a longing for pleasure and fascination which is by God's creative design. Understanding these two longings is foundational to pursuing holiness in a biblical way.

Paragraph D., all human beings have a longing for pleasure. Song of Solomon is highlighting these in Song of Solomon 1-2. We have a longing for fascination. The human spirit was created, the human experience was designed by God that we long for fascination. We want to be awestruck, that is what the secular entertainment industry has picked up on, human beings want to be awestruck, they want to be filled with wonder.

The Holy Spirit says, I have more knowledge about that Man, I know everything about Him. I will guide you to Him if it is a priority in your life. It is not just giving it time because a lot of believers will give the Lord time but it is refusing the enemy's lies when the enemy lies with condemnation and shame and hopelessness and despair. We say, no no that is not who He is, that is not who I am, that is not my inheritance. This is who I am to Him, this is what He says, this is the confession of my mouth before Him. I am not just giving in to darkness, dullness, depression, and condemnation. It is not just taking more time with the Lord, that is a part of it as well but it is actually what you do in that time with the Lord.

All human beings long for pleasure and fascination because of God's creative design, He simply made us that way. We cannot repent of it and get free of it, we only, we have to satisfy it. The understanding of these two longings is foundational to the pursuit of holiness. Again that is why these two are in the early part of the book. Of course they show up throughout the book as well but they are emphasized in the early part.

I want to mention two books that talk about the logic of human pleasure under God's design and leadership. One of my dear friends Sam Storm has wrote a book, you can get it on the internet called, *Pleasures Forevermore*. Sam Storms, he is a brilliant Bible teacher. He studied the subject of God's pleasure in people. It is a tremendous logical presentation of why pleasure, the pursuit of pleasure in God is radically important though many believers think it is something you are supposed to repent of instead of something we are supposed to pursue. *Pleasures Forevermore* by Sam Storms.

The other one, *Desiring God* by John Piper, *Desiring God*. These two books they move in the same direction though they have a lot of differences, I mean cover different areas. They develop the logic of why pleasure in God is critical and not just casual.

E. The call to holiness is a call to the *superior pleasures of being fascinated* by the revelation of Jesus.

Paragraph E., the call to holiness is a call to the superior pleasure of being fascinated by the beauty of Jesus. Meaning the call to holiness is not about gritting our teeth and making sure we do not yield to bad things that is. Now we do need to repent and sometimes we need to grit our teeth. Sometimes we need to have this, I mean fierce resolve but that will not hold up over time. If all that we have is a resolve to not yield we will yield over time. We have to have something higher than the inferior pleasures of sin. We have to have a superior pleasure that we are experiencing even a little bit. It is not always profound but a little bit of this will go a long way.

F. The Spirit escorts the redeemed on a “divine treasure hunt” into the beauty of Jesus. The Spirit takes what Jesus possesses and the things Jesus is thinking and feeling, and the Spirit declares them to us.

¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (Jn. 16:14)

Paragraph F., John 16:13 says, Jesus speaking, the Holy Spirit will guide you to truth. Then verse 14 He says, the Holy Spirit will take what is mine, He will give it to you. The Holy Spirit has been given to escort us into the truth that, I call it the great treasure hunt of life. Into the vast treasury of the beauty of Jesus, the Holy Spirit says, I will take you on the journey if you want to go on it. It is going to take some time, you got to make time for Me. Of course many of you have done that but it is more than that it is the way we interact with Him when we have time.

Again the enemy's biggest most successful tactic accusation, unbelief, dullness, shame, accusation, condemnation, it is all the same kind of roots things. We have to resist them and say what God says about His heart and say what God says about our hearts before Him.

III. JOY AND PLEASURE COME FROM GOD’S PRESENCE

A. David described God’s heart, and leadership as being full of joy and pleasure. God’s throne is the epicenter of joy and pleasure for the universe. God is a happy God with happy holiness.

¹¹In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forever. (Ps. 16:11)

²⁷Honor and majesty are before Him; strength and gladness are in His place. (1 Chr. 16:27)

Top of page two, where does pleasure originate? Where does pleasure come from? Well of course you already know. God is the author of pleasure, we made that statement. David describes God's leadership, he also describes God's heart as being full of joy and full of pleasure; that is a radical idea. David I call him a theologian of God's emotions, a theologian of God's heart. This was a, kind of a watershed breakthrough. David says, I want to tell you, I know by the Holy Spirit that in God's presence around His throne, His throne is the epicenter of joy for the whole created order. There is more joy near the throne of God than any other place. Do not reduce joy to just giddiness. I do not mean giddiness; that is not what I mean. I mean something profoundly deeper and more pervasive. Because some people have joy and they think of you know that five minutes, that one worship service and everybody did this and that. That is kind of joy, there is joy in it but do not limit it to that, that is not what I mean. There is something, it is a deep reality that involves some fun moments but far beyond that, far beyond that.

The throne of God, God's presence is the epicenter of it. At the right hand of God, right at the throne that is the source is God Himself of pleasure forever, for pleasure. A lot of people are raised up believing all pleasure is of the devil. They try to live a pleasure free life.

Now there are sinful pleasures, there is the counterfeit, the perversion of God's pleasures. They try to live a pleasure free life and they end up, they cannot move forward in God because we were created to discover He is pleasant and delightful. That He delights in us and we are created to go on a journey of delighting in Him.

Delight and pleasure and great delight is core to our foundation and future in our spiritual life.

Look what David went on to say in 1 Chronicles 16. Honor and majesty are before God, before His throne. Gladness, strength and gladness are in His place. So God has honor, they are worshipping Him as the worthy one. He has majesty, this majestic beauty about His presence and personhood. There is strength, oh so much power.

David said, not only majestic beauty and power and strength, He has gladness. From Him proceeds gladness. Again the bride in the early journey of the Song is learning this. Our God is a happy God. He has called us to a happy holiness. Again I do not mean giddy but our God is a happy God. He has delight, He is smiling when He is relating to us.

Some people think when God relates to us He is either mad or sad. Like when He relates to me they think in their individual life, He is mad at me, I am in trouble or He is not mad but He is grieving, He is just sad all the time when I relate to Him. He goes, well here we go again, okay I will cover you again.

Beloved I got good news for you the throne of God is the epicenter of gladness, pleasure, joy. It comes out of His being, He is the author of it, He is the source of it. He wants it in our relationship with Him. It is a different perspective than some people are raised up in their Christian traditions.

B. The “river of pleasures” includes the Holy Spirit revealing the beauty of God to the human spirit.

⁸*You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. (Ps. 36:8)*

Paragraph B., David went on to say, I mean David he really got a hold of this subject of delight and gladness and pleasure in God. He said in verse 8, I encourage you to pray this for your life. I remember when I put this on my prayer list for my heart. David prayed, he said, Lord You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. He is using poetic language and He is talking about interacting with God's heart.

He goes, God interacting with Your heart is to drink from the river of Your pleasure, Your beauty, Your kindness, Your delightfulness, the way You talk to us, the way You interact with us, the way You plan our future, the way You want to be with us, the way You have qualified us by the Spirit of glory to reign with you, to be Your eternal companion. Oh God that just touches my heart, David was saying.

Lord You cause them to drink from the river of Your pleasure. I encourage you to put your name on that, this verse. Make it a prayer request for you. David recognized the power of spiritual pleasure, he grasped it. He recognized how important it was.

C.The Holy Spirit causes rivers of living water to flow in the heart of a believer (Jn. 7:37-39).

D.Spiritual pleasure is what motivates us to abandon the lesser things and give ourselves to Jesus.

E.Our longing for these pleasures is satisfied *in part* in this age and *in fullness* in the age to come. Even though these are God-given pleasures, they are temporary and need to be repeatedly received.

Paragraph E., our longing for this pleasure is only partially satisfied in this age. A little of this will go a long way. Do not sell out to a life of standing at a distance hoping one day but never ever getting a breakthrough at a heart level of enjoying God.

Yes the fullness of this is in the age to come but the part that is ours in this age is so substantial. This love song of Song of Solomon of course with the theology of David in the book of Psalms, they go together because Solomon was David's son. It is profound how it shifts our perspective or paradigm. I use the word paradigm and perspective interchangeably.

F.In small measures, the Spirit inspires and tenderizes our heart momentarily. These subtle flashes of glory are to be a regular part of our relationship with God. Over time, they change us emotionally.

G.We are liberated from the *inferior pleasures* of sin by experiencing the *superior pleasures* of the beauty of Jesus. We will not overcome the darkness of immorality, bitterness, or pride by focusing on it; we do not decrease darkness in us by focusing on darkness. We must change our focus to be preoccupied with gaining more of the *“light of the superior pleasure of the revelation”* of God.

Paragraph G., this is now, I am talking about holiness. We are liberated from the inferior pleasure of sin by the superior pleasure of the beauty of Jesus. Again when I mean His beauty I do not mean just that His appearance is beautiful, it is. His appearance is stunning, majesty, awe, awesome, awe striking. Eyes of fire, face like the sun, tenderness and power and beauty and majesty. I mean in His face, in His being, in His presentation, in His appearance.

John who knew Him best, John the beloved apostle fell like a dead man before Jesus when He appeared in His splendor before him in Revelation 1. So I mean the beauty of Jesus, I do not mean just His appearance, I mean

the way He thinks, the way He feels, the way He relates to us, what He says about our future with Him, about our present with Him, the present tense.

When we experience the superior pleasure of that that equips us to resist the inferior pleasure of sin. If we do not have the superior pleasure, I mean a little bit of it. I do not mean you got to be so deep in it. I mean a little bit of this will equip your heart to resist the inferior pleasures of sin. This will equip us when we are training young believers as well.

When I am helping a young believer I want them to buy into this, I want them to get this concept. Because a lot of believer they get the assurance of heaven, they grit their teeth unsuccessfully and resisting a lot of temptations. They try to do some sacrificial work and hang on to heaven. There are elements of goodness in that, some of that but it is not enough.

H. The best way to overcome darkness is to turn on the light. No one seeks to remove the darkness in a room by opening a window to throw out buckets of darkness. They simply turn on the light. The way to decrease darkness in our lives is to focus on increasing the amount of light we enjoy.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (Jn. 1:5, RSV)

Paragraph H., John 1:5 the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. The light overcomes the darkness. Here is what I mean by this principle, the best way to overcome darkness is to shine the light. I mean if the room is dark you do not open the window and try to get a bucket full of darkness and pour it out the window. You turn the light switch on, light overpowers darkness every time.

A lot of people they are battle against lust or an addiction they are trying to put all their effort on driving the darkness out and they do not put much effort on growing in light. I encourage them focus on growing in the light. That superior pleasure even the introduction of it will equip their heart to say no to many other things that they were powerless to say no to, many other things that they were powerless to say no to.

So instead of just kind of facing down lust or anger or bitterness like you know staring it down. I am not yielding, I am not yielding, no no. Then anger and lust and bitterness or covetousness it keeps coming. No no no, I am not yielding, I am not yielding. The Lord taps us on the shoulder and says, turn your attention this way. Come after the beauty of Christ Jesus. Then as you are going after it turn around and say, no to the temptation while you are pursuing the light. That approach will yield fruitfulness in our spiritual lives.

I. We sin because we believe that it will provide a pleasure that is superior to obeying God. The power of temptation rests on a deceptive promise that sin will bring more satisfaction than living for God. Scripture calls this the deceitfulness of sin or deceitful lusts (Eph. 4:22; Heb. 3:13).

²⁵...choosing to suffer affliction...than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. (Heb. 11:25)

J. John Piper says, “Sin is what we do when our hearts are not satisfied with God.”

Top of page three, no let's go down to bottom of page two. Let's, I just want to, I saw this Paragraph J., this John Piper quote again. It is a different one. Sin is what we do when our hearts are not satisfied in God. I do not know that we in this age we get fully satisfied to where it cannot increase. I do not think that is how it really works but we can get substantially satisfied but there is always an element where there is a groan. There is always an element where we need more. The bit that we get, the measure we get is substantial in terms of shifting our heart.

Sin is not as nearly as attractive when we are on the pathway of growing in satisfaction. I do not mean totally satisfied, we are on the pathway of delighting in Him. Sin is not nearly so powerful at the heart level. Again whether it is immorality, whether it is bitterness, whether it is anger, whether it is any other kind of compulsive addicting behavior that grips our heart.

K. The call to holiness is the call to enjoy God by living fascinated. The battle for holiness is the battle to be preoccupied with the right thing; it is won in the pursuit of the spiritual pleasure that comes from enjoying God. The way forward in holiness is to be preoccupied with living fascinated in God.

Paragraph K., the call to holiness actually is the call to enjoy God. We think of holiness as do not do bad things. The call to holiness, the battle is, the battle for holiness is the battle to be preoccupied with the right things. If we are preoccupied, I do not mean again totally where there is no room for darkness or failure. I mean but our main preoccupation is the beauty of that Man. We have a vision for it, we are going to grow in it, we know how to grow in it. Again it is pretty simple, we just read the Bible where it tells us parts about His heart and His beauty and His ways we stop and say thank You. Holy Spirit show us more, just kind of muse around that and just journal little thoughts here and there and go over those passages over and over and you will grow in the revelation of His beautiness, I mean of His delightfulness and His beauty.

The way forward in holiness is being preoccupied with the right thing. This is overlooked by many sincere believers. I mean they love Jesus but they are not preoccupying, their approach is not to grow in the light, their approach is to resist the darkness and get the depression to leave. Yeah we want the depression to leave but go after the light. That is what the Song is telling us, is giving us this prominent place of delightfulness and pleasure.

It must have a rightful and even prominent place in our spiritual life, in our mindset of what we are aiming at, what we are spending time to grow in. The Song reveals this to us as do many other passages in the Old and New Testament.

IV. THE KING IS PLEASANT (1:15-16)

A. We see two foundational truths. First, the King declared that she was fair or beautiful to Him. Secondly, He revealed His affection for her as the one He called “My love,” or “the one I love.” The beauty that God possesses is the very beauty that He imparts to His people (Isa. 61:3).

¹⁵Behold, you are fair [beautiful], My love! Behold, you are fair [beautiful]! (Song 1:15)

Top of page three, she has this kind of epiphany in Song of Solomon 1:15-16. She sees how the Lord views her. Beloved the reason we delight in Him in verse 16 because we know He delights in us which is verse 15. In verse 15 you can read the notes on your own, she begins little by little to buy into the fact He says, you are beautiful and I really like you. She is going, well Lord I am still young, my spiritual life, I got unsettled issues in my life. Verse 15, the Lord says, you are beautiful to Me. I look at you through the lens of grace and I like you a lot. You are My beloved.

That is the subject we looked at last week. We get this foundation, we get this confession, we get in this pathway. When the devil tells us opposite we are just not going to camp out on the lies of shame and accusation and guilt and just wallowing in the darkness. This is just how it is with me, no He says I am beautiful in His eyes. He looks at me through the lens of the cross and grace. I am the one He loves, He has affection; that is verse 15.

B. The King's personality is pleasant or pleasing to the Bride. When we see Jesus as beautiful and pleasant, then we enjoy our relationship with Him more, and then obedience seems reasonable.

¹⁶You are handsome [beauty of the King], my Beloved! Yes, pleasant! (Song 1:16)

Then Paragraph B., verse 16, then she now is equipped to say, You are beautiful, I see Your beauty. Then this love poem, the word is handsome. The phrase I want you to see, yes You are pleasant. The phrase would be, You are delightful. Beloved Jesus is indescribably delightful not just powerful but delightful, but powerful, really powerful.

V. THE BRIDE DEEPLY ENJOYS HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KING (2:3-5)

A. The Bride declared that the King is the apple tree who refreshes her heart spiritually (2:3).

³Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my Beloved among the sons [human race]. I sat down in His shade [resting in grace] with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.

⁴He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner [leadership] over me was love.

⁵Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. (Song 2:3-5)

Roman numeral five, go a few verses past Song of Solomon 1:16. We find ourselves in Song of Solomon 2:3-5. She elaborates, she develops what was stated in Song of Solomon 1:16. You are delightful Jesus. The King is delightful. Now she unpacks it a couple of verses later, Song of Solomon 2:3-5. This is one of the great passages in the Bible. There are some other ones, not in Song of Solomon, where she is just declaring what she is viewing. Again she is still in her immature years. She is not a mature apostle, she is still in the early days. She is going to stumble some in the book.

As a matter of fact in Song of Solomon 2 she stumbles a little bit later but this does not invalidate this foundation that is being built in her life. Again if you know the journey of the Song and the whole progression of what is happening each chapter she is maturity and gaining more ground in her spiritual life.

Look what she says about the King verse 3, like an apple tree among the trees so my Beloved the King, the one I love, He is like that among all of the men, all the human race. There is none like Him. He is like the unique apple tree, the refreshing one. He has a way about Him that refreshes me because of who He is. There is none like Him among all the trees of the forest, among all those of the sons of men.

In verse 5 it is clear that the apple is a reference to His refreshing nature. She said, I sat down in His shade. This is verse we started the session with this kind of explosive declaration. I sat down in His shade with great delight. It is this idea that delight is meant to be part of the relationship. It is the idea that we are meant to enjoy Him enjoying us, we are meant to. The great delight is our inheritance, not just in the age to come but to delight in Him is our inheritance in this age.

Verse 4, He brought me to the banqueting table. His leadership over me, His banner, the idea of banner and leadership you could use it as interchangeably. I have written a little bit on that, you could look at that on your own on the notes. I will not go over it. His banner, His leadership over my life. I can see it now what I thought was the Lord abandoning or the Lord forgetting me I see now the banner over His leadership in my life. He is always working from love and He is always working for love. Love is His motive, He is working from and love is His goal, He is producing it in me.

Beloved when the enemy comes to you and says, God has forgotten you, nothing is working right. You can use the New Testament phrase, God works all things together for good. You could use an Old Testament phrase, His banner over me comes from love. He is motivated by love and His goal is, He is producing love in me. Things are not easier, I do not necessarily have more money right now, I do not necessarily have more comfort and more honor in the eyes of men but I know one thing I am growing in love, I am experiencing His love. I am, my life is being focused on love for Him and for others and receiving from Him. The sum impact of His leadership over my life is love, I see it.

Then in verse 5 she cries out, sustain me, refresh me, I want more of this. Refresh me with apples, in other words with, she is in the poem she said, liken Him unto an apple tree. I want the refreshing, I want more of this. It is like the rich get richer, the more you touch this the more you want of it. The less you touch it the more satisfied you are without it. I know believers, they go, you know things are okay, I am going to go heaven when I die, things are not so bad. I go, vision way too low, way too low.

I want to be sustained, I want to be refreshed. I want this, because this enjoyment in the Lord we touch it for moments then we got to renew it and we grow in it. Sometimes it is three steps forward, two steps back, three steps forward but we are gaining ground over the months and years.

Again many believers because they do not touch this they are very content to live without it. Like David said in Psalm 34:8, taste and see the Lord is good. If you taste this you are going to and you see there is a greater inheritance in your walk with God, there is a greater possibility, there is a greater vision of what God wants for you. You taste and you see a bigger possibility, a bigger vision of how you can interact with Him, there is more. David said, taste and see. You taste a little bit, your vision, your appetite increases. The rich get richer then you taste more then you want more. Then you taste more and you want more. You are not content without more. You break into the verse 5 prayer, sustain me, refresh me. I want this over and over and over again.

B. *Apple tree*: The apple tree is defined as that which refreshes (2:3a, 5). As we rest in God's grace under the shade of the cross, and as we pursue loving Jesus, we find delight in God's presence.

C. *Sat down*: As we sit before God, we experience more of the delight of His presence (2:3b)—the Word becomes a delight, and His presence is sweet to those who faithfully sit before Him.

³I sat down in His shade with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. (Song 2:3b)

D. *His shade*: The cross is the only tree that can shade us from the scorching heat of our sin and guilt. We only enjoy the shade of God's presence by resting in the shade of Jesus' cross. We cannot rest in our achievements by relating to God based on our spiritual maturity.

E. *Jesus' banner*, or leadership, over her life led her to experience and express His love (2:4). Jesus' plan for each of us is to lead us to God's banqueting table—the place we celebrate His love for us and ours for Him. The ultimate fulfillment of this “table” is the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7). We can enjoy tokens of the *wedding table* in this age by the power of the Word and Spirit.

⁴He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner [leadership] over me was love. (Song 2:4)

F. **Banner**: In the ancient world, armies marched in battalions under a flag or banner. The banner over our life is Jesus' leadership, which leads us to grow in love. God's first priority—or His *banner purpose*—for our life is greater than giving us more physical comfort, money, ministry influence, etc. His banner over our life is that we would grow in understanding and impartation of His love.

G. The Bride cried out for greater encounter with God's love (2:5). She became sick with love. She cried out to be sustained by experiencing a greater measure of His love, Presence, and Word.

⁵***Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick. (Song 2:5)***

Let's go to the top of page four. She says, sustain me, refresh me. Paragraph G., I am lovesick, verse 5. She is lovesick. Now again this is the poetic language of a love song. What it means in everyday practical spiritual life, it does not have sexual connotations to it but she is experiencing the joy of delighting in Him. She is experiencing the pleasure of feeling His delight in her without her earning it. Because beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.

Because of who He is in His redemption He sees beauty in you that you do not see. I love the phrase, I tell the Lord, I want to just enjoy You enjoying me and I will just go with it. I do not want to argue about it, I do not want to present my case with the devil why I am disqualified for you to enjoy me. I am not joining his team in the name of humility. I am going to enjoy You enjoying me. That is my story and I am sticking with it. It is written, there it is.

When the devil comes with a different story say, no. Well she is sick with love, she is preoccupied with this interchange, I mean the interchange of His heart. She wants more what He thinks and how she interacts with Him is preeminent in her mind, it is not secondary, that is what, she is sick with love. She goes, I want the first commandment first, I want it. There is nothing I want more than this.

I have seen some people take the phrase lovesick and they will do some funny things with it that are not really related to them and Jesus. I have seen people do, you know make some weird applications. What it really means is she is sick with love saying, I must have more of this interchange with Your heart. I want to see more, I want to feel more, I want to give more. I am preoccupied with the first commandment being first. I am not okay with it being second because it is so delightful.

Yes You are worthy of my love but it is delightful, it is the way I am created. I was created for love, I was created by You for love. It is the only way it works and it is so delightful to get in this way. I break it down a little bit, it is the spiritual pleasure of just taking the Word and speaking it back to Him and feeling just moments of the Spirit's presence. I do not mean all day, every day.

H. **Lovesick**: The truth conveyed by the term “lovesick” speaks of the joy of delighting in God's beauty, feeling the spiritual pleasures of the Word, feeling the Spirit's presence on our heart, and understanding what it means to be loved by God. This can also be referred to as “the fullness of joy” (Ps. 16:11). Paul's heart was exhilarated—he was “lovesick” for God. He gave up everything—his position and prestige—he considered it as rubbish; it meant nothing to him (Phil. 3:8).

⁸***I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ...for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ... (Phil. 3:8)***

In Philippians 3:8, Paul talked, he described what the Old Testament, this phrase lovesick he says it very different but it is the same idea, it is the same reality. He goes, I will lose everything for the sake of the excellency, the beauty of the knowledge of that Man's heart, the excellency of who He is, what He does. It is so excellent, I will remove anything that hinders that flow in my life; that is lovesick from the Song of Solomon language. He goes, I would suffer the loss of all things.

He stepped out of his career. It is not bad to have a career, I am not anti-career. I think careers are good. Paul had a unique apostolic calling from his mother's womb that was bigger than his career. He did not know anything about it until he met the Lord. He says, I will lay aside my prestigious position and career. I want to be with You where You are, do what You do, say what You say Lord.

Somebody might say, Paul you are amazing, your dedication is amazing. He goes, amazing? It is rubbish. Do not compare what I gave Him with who He is and what He gave me. Do not compare it, it is rubbish, no false humility. What I gave Him does not compare to what that Man fully God gave me and the way He longs for me. It is incomparable, it is rubbish. That is the language of lovesickness.

I have said to the Lord over the years, I said, Lord let me see what Paul saw and I could be dedicated in the way he was. I cannot do what he did, we all have different callings. I go, let me see what he saw and I can respond like he responded. The key to Paul's response of dedication was that he saw the excellencies, he saw the beauty of the Man. The Man was fully God, fully Man and delightful, pleasant. Paul could say, I sat under His shade with great delight. I got to have more. Sustain me, refresh me, I want to grow in this, I am lovesick.

VI. THE GLADNESS OF THE KING

A. The delight and gladness of the King in the Bride and her activities (Song 3:11; 4:13, 16; 7:6, 13)

*11“...see King Solomon...on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart.”
(Song 3:11)*

Roman numeral six, it is not only that He is pleasant. I love this phrase in Song of Solomon 3:11, see the King on the day of His wedding, the day of the gladness of His heart. Beloved the King in the love song is King Solomon and the spiritual application is King Jesus. The day of His wedding, we are talking about the marriage supper of the Lamb is the day of the gladness of His heart.

The gladness of the Bride, the response of gladness flows from the revelation of His gladness. He is glad about marrying her. I go, Lord I would not be that glad about marrying me, I just would not. He goes, I am. I am glad that you are My eternal companion collectively in the Bride. I am glad about that coming to full light in that day, I am glad about it.

Well Lord, ugh do the math. You did Genesis 1, I messed up a lot of times, how is this going to work? See the King on the day of His wedding, the day of the gladness of His heart. He is glad that you said yes, that is called the day of the gladness of His heart when your union with Him comes to full light. Beloved I do not want to wait until then to start getting into the flow of this. It is worth it now, it is worth it now. Well amen and amen. We are going to end with that.

Let's stand before the Lord. Lord I want to be lovesick in that sense. The excellency of who You are, I want a vision for it. I want more of it. I am not content just to be anointed and have a ministry. I want You, I want to interact with You, it is my inheritance.

I want to invite people to come forward that you are saying in your heart, I want to set my life on this trajectory, I want to go after this. I mean we are going to do all the service and all the connecting with people, all that stuff, it will flow out of this. I am going to have a vision, I am going to reestablish the vision of the delightfulness of interacting with this Man.

The Lord is saying, I want to establish you in that in a new way. King David said, all the days of my life I want to gaze on His beauty. He said, all my days. David had some bad sinful days but he kept signing back up, signing back up, signing back up, signing back up. Beloved today is the day to sign back up. Oh how we love You Lord. Oh how we love the way You love us. Oh I love the way You love me Jesus.

B. God has gladness, delight, and joy in His people. His capacity for gladness is infinite in measure and eternal in duration. He designed humans in His image, with a great capacity for gladness.

4“...the Lord delights in you...⁵And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.” (Isaiah 62:4–5)

C. One common perspective is that of a *God who is mostly mad or mostly sad when we relate to Him.*

1. How does God feel most of the time? How does He feel when He looks at you?
2. Our view of God’s emotions affects how we approach and relate to God.

D. Jesus walked in the anointing of gladness more than any man in history (Heb. 1:9; Ps. 45:7).

⁹God has anointed You [Jesus] with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. (Heb. 1:9)

E. Gladness and joy are at the center of Jesus’ personality. Jesus imparts His joy to His people through feeding on His Word unto transforming their emotions so that it becomes their joy.

¹¹These things I spoke...that My joy may remain in you...that your joy may be full. (Jn. 15:11)

F. God’s end-time restoration of His people flows from His heart of rejoicing and gladness.

¹⁷The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. (Zeph. 3:17)