

BELIEVER'S BASELINE

"DELIGHT YOURSELF IN THE LORD"

PSALM 37



Believer's Baseline: "Delight Yourself in the Lord"

Well, as summer comes to an end for us, I want you to be thinking along these lines...It proved so much better than expected. That is a delightful thing to experience when your expectations about something are exceeded, they are surpassed. I would like to have you think about a situation where that may have occurred for you, possibly this summer, something that happened and it's like, Wow, that's wonderful, that's delightful, that was amazing, that was great. That's what I'm talking about. I've had that experience. I will say you have had that experience. And if you give yourself a moment, like I'm asking you to here, you can probably come up with a couple of examples of that. So I'm gonna give you pause here to think. It exceeded my expectations.

Let me use a couple of personal examples for me, to kind of maybe age you in thinking this way. You know, about this time of the year, or maybe a little bit before, but about this time of the year, the pollen index skyrockets. And you know what that means, allergies and the effects of allergies, some of which you can hear in my throat this morning, ongoing thing for this time of the year. I went and saw a physician that I know. It was just the regular checkup thing that I've kind of tried to reintroduce into my life now that I've gotten to this point in life, it's good thing, good thing to do. So when I was there with a regular kind of routine yearly, I asked him about this kind of thing. My wife says it's because I'm dehydrated, I don't drink enough. So I've been drinking a lot more. And I still have some of this going on. And he kind of listened to me for a bit. He tends to do that. And then he said, Well, let me do this. And he wrote me this script. Let's see if I can pronounce this. I even put it out here phonetically because I know I'm going to butcher it. Do you want to say what it is? Fluticasone propionate or Flonase. Yeah, that's what it is! Anyway, I went to the pharmacy there that was on site. And I did what it said to do is I was standing in my office and just breathed it in. And I want you to know, I was completely amazed! It was like somebody threw open the window and just filled my head with fresh air when I was standing there. It was completely an amazing experience! I mean, I've had other people say well try this or try

that and you do this and you do that and not much happens but this time was like absolutely amazing! Now I am not running an ad for Flonase, it may not happen like that for you. But it did for me. It exceeded my expectations, so much better than I had expected.

And you know, there are other things I can talk about, like getting married. You know, when you think about getting married, you kind of evaluate this whole thing. And you've had so much freedom as a single. And now you're going to be responsible for somebody and make adjustments and have to think about that. And so you go into that and for me, it was like, Whoa, it was like, the fulfillment of "it was not good for man to be alone". And "he who finds a wife", Proverbs chapter 18, "finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord". It's somebody to share everything with, somebody to kind of help solve problems, to formulate projects, to carry the workload, to have fun with, it exceeds expectations. Definitely the case, I recommend it. Good thing, it's a good thing. And then this one's kind of common. As a matter of fact, there's a saying about this. If I would have known how much fun it was going to be have grandkids, I would have had them first. Yeah, you know, that is an impossibility. But nevertheless, it is the expression of exceeding the expectations. And I had the opportunity this week with our grandkids on the camping trip, playing wiffle ball and Wow, I have a whole bunch more pictures. Would you like to see them? I'll refrain. It exceeds our expectations.

Matt, you had one, I saw your hand up there a moment ago. Did you have one? (Matt speaking) "My brother and his family were taking a month long vacation to the west coast. And they weren't planning on stopping by to see us at all on a trip. But then at the last minute, they decided that they would stop near us. So we told our kids that we were going to a campground, not exactly the truth. So we decided to meet them near the dunes in Indiana. So up between Michigan City and Gary, that type of spot where they have the dunes and there's a campground up there like 20 minutes away from the dunes. And so we went up to that campground and this is a weird campground, like you drove through a bunch of commercial places to kind of get back to the campsites. So it was not exactly scenic as we're driving back there. And we basically had to distract and distract. And at one point, we're walking back towards the campsite, which is where we said we were staying, where there's a bunch of campers that are all people that basically live there during certain periods of the year. And we're the one empty lot and we're saying we're gonna set up tents there, like this is not exactly beautiful and scenic. So they're all skeptical. So we go over and we're at the playground, we're starting to walk back and we know that my brother and his family are not far away, and they drive past and my son's like, I think that's...isn't that their vehicle...isn't that their RV? And we're like, no, no, we don't know who that is. And it's funny because I hear afterwards that one of my nephews looked out the RV window and looked at that playground but didn't see us as we're walking towards them. So we walk over to the campsite and kids are a mess at this point. They're like, this is the worst getaway ever. Why are we going to some random campsite? This is not scenic. There's no pet trails, nothing. So we get over to the campsite. And my brother and family pull up and honk and all the kids are completely surprised. So the expectations were exceeded. It was a lot more fun after that. But it was death up until that point.

So much better than expected. So much better. Of course you know all these things, like Matt was explaining, have their challenges to them. Nevertheless, even in simple things, we have expectations. I didn't expect much, but my wife makes this tortellini soup and it's really good. And pizza, you go to some pizza place and it's like WOW! Or La Palma's has reopened now and their seafood enchilada is like, better than I ever expected. So there's lots of things.

(Another person in the congregation speaking) "It was at work and one of my residents did not receive their newspaper. And there was a big to do about it. I said, Okay, I'll go grab one for you real quick. I found the newspaper they wanted and unexpectedly saw my son on the front page! The title of the article was called Runners To Keep An Eye On In 2021. So if I wouldn't have ran and gotten this newspaper for my resident, wouldn't have even known he was in the newspaper. It was really cool. So then I had to buy like four newspapers for the family."

Yep, absolute, exceeding expectations, we have them. It does happen, we do. And in Psalm 37, God talks to us, from David, about this, for your whole life. Turn with me, if you would, to Psalm number 37. Psalm 37 was written by David, as he states very clearly in the psalm, when he was old. He says this, Psalm 37, verse 25, "I have been young, and now am old." This is David talking, as he writes this psalm, "yet I have not seen" and he goes on to describe something here that exceeds the expectations. He lays it out for us here. That's how this psalm was brought into existence for us. Psalm 37 gives us what I call the believers baseline. You know what a baseline is, right? We're here at the end of summer, not quite the end of baseball season. With my grandkids this week, we had a sandlot, pick up wiffle ball game, and one of them didn't know about the baseline. And as they were coming from first to second, you know, there is a line that your suppose to stay on, but they went out and about and around because I had the ball between first and second, you see. And it was all over. The believers have a baseline, this is where we operate from. Capture the flag has a similar thing. There's a baseline, if you're familiar with that game, and when you venture out to make these excursions and capture, you have to run to get back behind the baseline to win. That's what I'm talking about. The believers baseline that we operate from. Medicine has it too. Sometimes they'll tell you, I need to run these tests so I have a baseline. And then in your chart, when something happens they've got a baseline for how you normally function. This is the believers baseline. I want you to know, this is the baseline that we have. And this baseline, properly run, coming here, operating from, it's going to exceed expectations. But you do have to stay on the baseline. You do have to get here, to this home base and operate from there.

The believers baseline, here it is, stated forthrightly in this, "Delight yourself in the Lord". What is presented here for us in this amazing psalm, working from our baseline, proves to exceed our expectations. If we do. The New Testament makes that clear. It says this. "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly", that's exceeding expectations, "than all that we ask", like in prayer, "or think" that's possible with God, "according to the power at work within us," this is what we operate from, "to him be glory in the church", that's the believers, that's us, "and in Christ Jesus", because this is how it's achieved, "throughout all generations," throughout ALL generations, not only for time, but "forever and ever". That is Ephesians 3:20 and 21. It's about much better than you and I have expected. And by the

way, I left out one word that ends this Ephesians passage. It's this. Amen. That's what ends these verses. So be that! That's the case. That's real. Amen. Amen.

This morning, in Psalm 37, God unfolds for us the two options that we have in staying on our baseline and experiencing in life exceeding expectations. Here's option number one: Fret yourself. That's option number one. It stated right here, look at Psalm 37 verse one, "Fret not yourself", but the option is that you do fret yourself. The direction is not to fret yourself, but the option is to fret yourself. Let me just read through this a little bit, verses 1, 2, "Fret not yourself because of evildoers. Be not envious of wrongdoers, for they will soon fade like grass and wither like green herbs." And he goes on I want you to notice in verse 7 and 8, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him, fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself." As a matter of fact, he says this over three times in very short notes. As a matter of fact, commentators say this is the primary message that's laid out for us here in this psalm, to fret not yourself. Our option number one is to fret yourself. And there's a lot that comes from that.

The other option is this: Delight yourself. Verse 4-7a, "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your justice as the noonday. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him, fret not yourself." These verses, 1-8, form the thrust, the hortatory, the exhortation, the strong urging, that David after simmering on this for years of life, years and years, "I have been young and now I am old", states to us as the believers baseline. As a matter of fact, this "Delight yourself", he repeats three times. Verse 11, "But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in the abundant peace." Verse 23, "The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way." Three times repeated, both of these, and these form the thrust of what Psalm 37 has for us as the believers baseline, so your life exceeds expectations. And I want you to know that this is what God's says, the same God who said, "Let there be light", and it happened, says this through David to have it happen. And it comes to your hands.

So let's investigate this thing a little bit. Option number one, fret yourself. To fret is to do what? What is this thing, to fret? To worry, to obsess over. It's literally, and this is from the best lexicons, to grow warm, meaning to get all heated up, annoyed, irritated, angry, frustrated. What words do we use? Frustrated is a word that we use for getting angry. It's said like this, This really annoys me. And the option is to get all heated up, to get all worked up, to fret. Stuart Briscoe, was a pastor up in Milwaukee. I remember going up to Milwaukee, Wisconsin a couple of times to preach. The folks in this congregation talked about the church that Briscoe was at, Elmhurst, there in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and the ministry that he had there, he was well known. Stuart Briscoe wrote on Psalm number 37 in his book, What Works When Life Doesn't. And he said this, "Few things are more infuriating than...When you look at some of the people in high places, you know they got there by shady means and they stay there by even shadier tactics, and nothing can be done about it." And you know, Stuart Briscoe wasn't writing about 2020 COVID, he wasn't talking about the elections or 2021. He wrote this in 1976. Can you imagine, it is going on then? 1976. Hey, do you know when David wrote this? David was born in 1050 BC

and he died in approximately 970 BC. You see, there's been some annoying things going on for a long time. What is it to get annoyed? It's when you go over and over the news and the irritating things about what the left is doing or what the right is doing or what the efforts are doing and how this is shaping up politically and you get annoyed. Stuart Briscoe 1976, David in 1050 BC. This isn't new and the Word of God stays the same. Matter of fact, it has been forever settled in Heaven. Every word of God is tried. Before he sent it, it's tried and tested and prove true.

Option number one: Get all worked up, get all worked up over what? Look at what this says, and by the way, he said this three times. And in these three times, he said it imperatively. He said it is an imperative. What does that mean, it's an imperative? It's a command, this is a "to do". This is like big, don't fret, do not fret. And the option is to fret. But to fret over what? Look at verse number one, to fret over this, "Fret not yourself because of evildoers." People say, "You know the way the world is now, the way the world is now. And the kids that are growing up now, when I was young it wasn't this way." But can I tell you this, there have been evildoers just the same since David's time, some of the tactics, some of the techniques have changed. Some of the things they appeal to are different. He didn't jump on the internet and have that exposure 24/7, but I want you to know, the same evildoers were present, which means this. Folks that bring injury, that bring harm, what they're doing in your estimation is detrimental, evildoers. Look at verse number seven, where he says, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him. Fret not yourself", that's the imperative, "over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!" What's on the left?! What's on the right?! What are they doing?! Do you know what they're doing?! Do you know what the platform is of this national convention?! Evil doing, imperative, Fret not yourself over these devices. Verse eight, I don't think I need to explain this much, "Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!" Refrain from it. Refrain from evildoers. Verse nine, "For the evildoers shall be cut off. But those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land." That starts to hint at the exceeding expectations here.

Now I need to point this out to you. For God's people, this is not only possible, but it's probable. He doesn't say three times, as an imperative, to not let yourself get all worked up over this, not to do it. He doesn't say that because he doesn't need to, every word is tried and forever settled. We need this because it's not only possible for you to do that but it's probable, you probably will. And this is why we need our baseline. This is why we need to operate from our baseline. Because, he says, what this gives into. Notice what he says in verse eight, what this gives into. Notice with me, verse eight, "Refrain from anger and forsake wrath!", from getting all worked up. We used to call it, when I was a kid, getting all hot and bothered. Do you remember that statement? It was all hot and bothered, that's what he's talking about here. Don't get all hot and bothered because this fretting tends only to what? "To evil", it tends to this. It goes here, it gives in to evil, it tends to injury, it tends to bring harm. This isn't just for David in the Old Testament times but for us aslo in the New Testament time. James 1:20 says this, "For the wrath of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." Paul said it too. Romans 12:21, "Do not be overcome by evil. When you tend to fret, get all hot and bothered. You're adding to the evil." Evil is what it tends to, injury and harm, to you and to others. Don't be overcome by evil. When you're overcome by evil like that, you're adding to the evil. Don't be overcome by evil. Romans 12:20 and 21, overcome evil with what's beneficial, with what's good.

This is option number one. Is there any questions on this option? Does anybody have confusion as to what he's saying about this option? It's pretty clear, isn't it? These are like no uncertain terms from the man who, over time, had put this together and wrote about it and gave us. God's unerring word in all matters of life and all matters of practice. This is what he says. Now, the Lord's point, calm down. Verse 2, "For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb." You can calm down because I AM. The Lord has this under control. He's got it under control. Verse two tells us that, it's soon going to be taken care of. So when you're all worked up, when you're heated up, when you're hot and bothered, when you got yourself going, when you've been bringing in the news this way, and reflecting on the evil that's around you and how it's unfolding like this, and how people are getting away from it. It's what Dr. Briscoe said was infuriating, even for those in high offices. Look ahead, "they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb." Yeah, but it's what they're doing now that I'm stirred up about! The Lord has this under control. He's taking this, and them with what they're doing, somewhere. Do you know that even Satan, the most diabolical and evil of personalities that we can know, is under the Lord's control. And The Lord is taking him, and those who he effects like Job, somewhere. So calm down. Look ahead.

And there's another means, look to The Lord, which is option number two: Delight yourself. Delight yourself, verse number four, "Delight yourself in the Lord". To delight yourself is to what? What is it? You did really good with fret yourself. Let's see how we do with delight yourself. What is delight yourself? Enjoy, exactly right. First of all, it's an imperative. This too, is a direction from the Lord, a "to do". It's to involve yourself in a manner that generates joy, happiness, merriment about pleased satisfaction. You're enjoying it, enjoying, enjoying yourself, you get involved with a manner that generates this happy with, this joy, this merriment about this satisfaction, this pleasure. And by the way, folks, this is an imperative. Did I say that? I think I said that. Right? Yeah, I said. This is what the Lord says it is a "must do". This is the believers baseline. It is a "must do", not to get all worked up about the evil that you see and the manner in which you go at looking at it. You know, there was a book I had, The Long War against God, that was the name of the book. And I read this book, it was a book about evolution, and the embracing of evolution in the world. And every time I did, my wife said, Why do you read that book? I said, because it's the truth! It's a truth! And she'd say, It's not doing any good. And you know what? I had to put the book down. I had to leave the book alone. Because the possibility was more than a probability, it's exactly what I was doing, getting all fretted up. You know, that's one of the things about marriage that is the challenge. I mean, it exceeds expectations, but they really help you with where you live, you know that? And by the way, that goes both ways. Okay, we're good with that. It's two ways. We're good with that. It's both ways. Okay? Good. The imperative here, the imperative is to involve yourself with the Lord in such a manner that it generates enjoyment in this time, in the now that we're living in, the here and the now. David said it in 1050 BC, Stuart Briscoe noted how we get angry in 1976. This is for all time. And according to this psalm, on into forever. You are to involve yourself with the Lord in such a way that it generates this enjoyment in him. This enjoyment is in the Lord in His person, in his plan, in his say, in his acts, in what he's doing. This delight yourself is an imperative. It means you, involving yourself. And it's you, involving yourself in the One who said, I Am, Who I Am, always and forever, what you need. You're involving yourself there.

I want to share with you something written by a guy who has dedicated his life to advancing this message of Psalm 37, to delight yourself in the Lord. His name is John Piper and in his book, *Desiring God*, he writes, quoting CS Lewis, "God in the Psalms is the 'all satisfying object'. His people adore him unashamedly for the 'exceeding joy they find in him' (Psalm 43:4) He is the source of complete and unending pleasure." Then he quotes Psalm 16:11, "In thy presence is fullness of joy; in thy right hand there are pleasures forever." Delight yourself, involving yourself in such a way that this joy is generated, that this happiness in what God is doing in the midst of an evil and adulterous generation, is generated. Delight yourself in what he is accomplishing, his way. We delight ourselves not in that the adulterous generation, but in him and what he's doing. John Piper wrote a book on this, which I've used frequently, very successfully, in the lives of some people. It's called *The Dangerous Duty of Delight*. It's a dangerous duty, it's a duty, because it's an imperative. It's a dangerous duty, because it involves you, yourself, getting yourself involved in it, it doesn't happen automatically. It doesn't fall down on you. It's not like our salvation, which is a free gift, through faith in Jesus Christ. Amen. We get that as a free gift. We put our trust in Him, His death, burial and resurrection, and we have a free gift of heaven forever. Amen. I just receive it. But this is an involvement. It's a dangerous duty. The danger of it is that God, as the giver of every good and perfect gift, that's what James says, every good and perfect gift, some of which exceed our expectations, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variance or shadow of turning. He's consistent on that. He's giving those gifts, good and perfect gifts. And he calls us in Timothy, to richly enjoy. He's given us everything richly to be enjoyed. He calls us to enjoy the gifts he richly gives, to enjoy that pizza, that La Palma seafood enchilada. By the way it's better with flour tortillas than it is with corn tortillas. I just thought I'd let you know that. okay, it's better. It's better. You can enjoy this and it exceeds expectations.

And here's the danger of it. That we replace the giver with the gift. It's like opening a Christmas that somebody gives you, this beautiful expensive gift, and you just take it and say, Oh I love this! I love this! I love this! Thank you so much gift for coming into my life. I love this! And we forget about the person who gave you the gift. It's a dangerous duty. Because the gifts are to take us to the giver. And to bring from us a joy about who he is, in his person and his plans and in his saying and his acts, and in his giving. It's dangerous duty. It's a dangerous duty. It's a dangerous duty, because it's also a duty. It's not like, Oh, I'll see if I want to do this or not. For God's people, this is our baseline. This is where we operate from. It's a duty he calls us to. But man, when I've GOT to, it sure zaps the joy out of it. It's dangerous. It's dangerous. You know, it's kind of like me at night saying to my wife, Do I HAVE to give you a kiss? Of course, I HAVE to give a kiss! But if it's going to be that way. Well, that really is impressive. You know, I think she'd probably do this, Right here on the kisser. That's why it's a dangerous duty, it's a duty, it's an obligation. This is what we are to do. This is our baseline. But it's dangerous because the gifts can get in the way of the giver. And duty can be like, Hi, ho, hi, ho. It's off to work I go, (said in a bored, lethargic tone) It's dangerous.

So let me add this: To delight yourself in the Lord involves what? David's going to tell us. First, it involves this, verse number three, "Trust in the Lord", it's to rely on him, have confidence in him, to put faith in I AM, above what you think and how it's coming across to your heart right now. Put trust in I AM "and do

good", do what's beneficial, "dwell in" your place, "the land", dwelling in the land "and befriend faithfulness.", cultivate this faithfulness, cultivate in yourself this kind of trust, it involves this. It involves, look at verse number five, "Commit your way to the Lord". This idea of commit is very interesting. It's in the New Testament, it means to roll over on him, roll over on him all the things in your way that are frustrating, are irritating, are aggravating, that are provoking me, they get me all hot and bothered, roll those over on him. Roll them over on him. Roll them over on him. You know, I'm thinking right here. That'd be a good message, to talk about how do that, we roll them over. But I don't have time for that.

And there is an outcome to this, see verse number six, he says this, he will act. He will act on it. Verse six, "He will bring forth your righteousness", what's right for you, "as in the light" of the day. He'll bring it forth as the light, as it's supposed to be at noon day, he'll bring the fourth that vigorously in your life. You know, yesterday I was mowing the grass. I mowed it from 10:36am to 1:06pm. I was able to do it in two and a half hours rather than three. That's good. But I want you to know, it was right over the noon day. And you know what I found out about the noon day? It was bright and hot! Yeah. That's what we're talking about. There, where it's bright and hot. And he's saying God's going to bring forth your righteousness, the right for you, just like. This is what you're going to see when you roll it over on him, casting all your anxieties on him, 1 Peter 5:7. It is you, as much as possible, living at peace with all men, because you're leaving space for God. Folks, this is our baseline that we operate from. This is the baseline that we're to live our lives from.

Option number one or option number two. And I want you to see where this goes, where this goes has a result, Be still and know that I'm God, calm down. And here's the outcome, to delight yourself tends to exactly what? Now, right now, what does it tend to now in your life? Look at what David says, verse 4b. "And he", this is I AM, Yahweh, I Am Who I AM, "will give you the desires of your heart". This is a result, not a reward. This is an outcome. This is what happens in this baseline, the desires of your heart. When you're delighting yourself in the Lord, in who he is, his person, his ways, what he says, what he does, how he's working this, what he's accomplishing, the good that he's achieving, it ends up with the desires of your heart. Not any foolish thing we could ask for, James Bouce says, but it's Him, in charge. It's the longing of your heart. People take vacations, they go to sporting events. They do all kinds of things to make life enjoyable. Here, this, this delighting in Him, with achieve a satisfaction. Oh, there's competition. There's challenges. Just like in those things that exceed expectations here. But it's Him giving the desire of your heart.

The conclusion. Be assured, now, right now, this is what I AM will do. Verses one through eight are the instructions of this psalm. Option one is about fretting. Don't do it. Option two is to delight yourself. Do it. Those are imperative. Here's what I AM is going to do to handle all your frustrations. He's got it under control, he can handle this, roll it over on him. In verses 9 through 40, he spells out clearly, in no uncertain terms, what I AM is going to do. And David even gives two personal testimonies about what he has seen in his life. I AM, here is what he does with those who are delighting in him and here is what he does with the evildoers that are irksome here, and you're hot and bothered about, here is what he does. And I'm not going to take the time to do this. As a matter of fact, I'm going to challenge you and

then I'm going to end with this suggestion. Here's the suggestion. The challenge is read through this and see what he says, over and over, that I AM does with his own people, see what he does with those evildoers. See what he's going to do. Some of it will shock your socks off, okay, but it's going down. It's going down. Trust him, trust him. David's testimonies are there, he sees it. Look at this, is for you. Here's the suggestion. The next time that you're managing your life, looking at the news, looking at the world around, and the problems that are here, and you've got prayer requests, and there seems to be so many needs concerning sin, and the lost, the next time that's all going down and you're hot and bothered, pick up Psalm 37. Read it again, the believers baseline and delight yourself again in I AM, always and forever, what you need. In what he's doing, what he's up to, in what he says, in his plans. He knows the plans he has. We don't. He does. Pick it up. Pick it up when you're hot and bothered and irritated. Boy, if my wife heard this, let me tell you, this would be flying around our house, she would be saying, You know, you really need to be in Psalm 37. You really need to spend some time in Psalm 37. Okay, I surrender. I need Psalm 37.

Father in heaven, we come before you. And we ask you, Lord, we ask you by your grace, that you would operate in our lives, help set that in motion intentionally on our part, even as we choose to sing this morning. In Jesus name, amen.