

# Delighting in the Riches of God's Word

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please turn with me in your Bibles to Psalm 119 and verse 14. Psalm 119 and verse 14.

In the way of your testimonies, I delight as much as in all riches. In the way of your testimonies, I delight as much as in all riches.

When the nation of Israel was at its height, during the reigns of King David and King Solomon, it was marked by prosperity, security and joy.

The people of Israel were at their most joyful in God when they and their kings were most faithful to God. And at these high points, there was celebration and there was feasting and there was much joy.

Anyway, this is the way that faithful joy in God works. It is always found in the way of joyful faithfulness to God.

[ 1 : 08 ] By contrast, when the nation of Israel was at its lowest during the days of its captivity, it was marked by slavery, poverty and gloom.

As the writer of Psalm 137 reminds us, by the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion. The people of God were least joyful in God when they were least faithful to God.

There's a strong connection in these truths, being faithful to God and rejoicing in God. And simply put, Psalm 119 verse 4 is that well-established, biblical, theological, historical and experiential truth put into prayer.

That our joyful, our faithful joy in God grows as our joyful faithfulness to him grows. And so these, Psalm 119 from verse 9 to 13 record the determination of the psalmist to obey God's word.

But lest we think that relationship to God's word is somehow cold and clinical and legalistic, Psalm 119 14 records for us how as he sets his way toward obedience, the psalmist's heart is filled with joy.

[ 2 : 33 ] He says, in the way of your testimonies, I delight or I rejoice as much as in all riches. There is, you see here, an unbreakable connection between joy and obedience.

The more joyful the psalmist is in God, the more he walks in the way of God's word. The more the psalmist walks in the way of God's word, the more joyful he becomes in God.

If there is no joy in your Christian life at the moment, could it be that perhaps there is some aspect of your life where you are not walking in God's ways?

That's a challenging question for all of us to answer and outwith the bailiwick of tonight's study. Let's get into the nuts and bolts of this verse in two ways. Rejoicing and reckoning.

Remember, faithful joy in God is always found in the way of joyful faithfulness to God. First of all, then, we have rejoicing.

[ 3 : 44 ] In the way of your testimonies, I delight, the psalmist writes. The psalmist declares to God that he delights in the ways of God's testimonies.

That if there's one place in this dark world where he's going to find true and lasting joy, it's going to be here in the way of the word of God.

Let me suggest three areas in which this rejoicing works. First of all, rejoicing in word. Rejoicing in word.

When I was a young Christian back then, we were concerned about what we called the marks of grace. The marks of grace. Namely, things to which you could point in your life which indicated that you were now a Christian.

And one of these was that you had a new love for the word of God. That within you, there was a new enthusiasm for the Bible. For reading about Jesus and the gospel and for learning the truths of its great doctrines.

[ 4 : 53 ] So when I became a Christian, I began to devour the Bible. I loved nothing more than spending time in the book of Philippians. Copying it out in pencil on spare pieces of A4.

Taking notice of every word and every comma in the book of Philippians. I'm not unique. Many people I know saw the same mark of grace in their own lives.

They became lovers of the word of God. Over the years, I'm not always sure that I've consistently nurtured the same love for scripture. It has waxed and waned in direct proportion to my spiritual enthusiasm at any one time.

Am I alone in this? I don't think so. Are there others among us whose love for scripture is perhaps not what it once was? And I guess I'm asking the question, do you love your Bible?

You enjoy reading the glorious prophecies of Isaiah and the comforting words of a son. Do you like to read the testimonies of the gospels and to engage in the logic of Paul in his letters to the churches?

[ 6 : 06 ] It is a very well spent evening when we spend it devouring the word of God. Perhaps if tonight your love for scripture is waning, you need to make this a special matter for prayer.

Lord, help me to delight in your word. Rejoicing in word. Second, rejoicing in action.

In action. The exact words of the psalmist are, in the way of your testimonies, I delight. In the way of your testimonies. Now, when the psalmist is using the words, the way, he's speaking of what we might call the way of life or conduct.

In fact, the psalmist is talking about how he puts the word of God into practice in his life. And so we say we delight in the gospel, but do we delight in living a gospel shaped life?

It's one thing to get up in the morning as I used to do as a student in Aberdeen and copy the Bible out in a notebook. It's another thing to control your temper. Or to forgive someone who's really hurt you.

[ 7 : 16 ] It's one thing to love reading and studying the Bible, but it's another thing to delight in putting it into practice. But that's what the psalmist says that he delights in.

Not just in the mere study of the word of God, but in its doing. One example of this, perhaps, concerns how in challenging times like these, we cling to the promises of God.

We cling to the promises of God. We've got God's assurance that he's with us through thick and thin. And yes, which of us doesn't rejoice when he reads the promises of his presence with us in the scriptures?

But the doing of it, that's another matter. Hourly faith in the intimate presence of our heavenly father with us.

Helping us, supporting us, comforting us. In my younger years, I was an avid golfer. I used to love reading about golf and golfers, but nothing quite matched up to golfing, to doing it.

[ 8 : 29 ] To going out there onto the course, swinging the club and hitting the ball. And in the same way, this verse is calling us to the Christian maturity, not just of putting into practice the scripture we so love.

But to love putting into practice the scripture. Perhaps, perhaps even praying, Lord, help me to delight in putting your word into practice in my life.

Rejoicing in word, rejoicing in action, and then rejoicing in God. Rejoicing in God. Rejoicing in God. As I've said before, as we've gone through this psalm, ultimately, the reason we delight in the word of God, and we pursue conformity to the word of God, is that we delight in God himself.

As Christians, he is our highest joy and our greatest delight. When we see him as he is in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, we cannot but be joyful.

We delight in each of his glorious attributes and find our greatest joy in the cross, and especially in the resurrection of our Lord. There's nothing to replace it.

[ 9 : 53 ] No silver, no gold. No theory or learning. No silver, no silver, no gold.

Living, vital communion with him. The Pharisees were very good at this kind of subterfuge. And unfortunately, we can be its masters also.

Whom do you hope to find in scripture? And whom do you hope to please in your obedience? Not yourself, surely. But God himself.

The fountain of all perfections. Our heavenly father. It's what Jesus calls in his high priestly prayer, knowing God.

He says, this is eternal life. As a Christian, to know God. As a Christian, to know God is to delight in God.

[ 11 : 25 ] To exalt in God. To rejoice in God. There is no higher calling. There is no more desirable thing for the Christian than to see the face of Jesus.

To know the heart of Jesus. To be loved by Jesus. And to love Jesus in return. This is the Christian's first love. And the Christian's first love.

And the Christian's last love. Knowing Jesus. It really is our great delight. And high joy. So if you're looking for joy in these dark times.

Find it in the word of God. In obeying the word of God. But in these and through these. Find your joy in God and his gospel itself.

This is very far from the language of legalism. It's the language of love. And the language of joy. Rejoicing.

[ 12 : 24 ] Secondly. Reckoning. Reckoning. In the way of your testimonies. I delight. As much as in all riches.

As much as in all riches. There is in the mental and emotional processes of the psalmist. A kind of reckoning. A certain logic.

Namely that he delights in the way of God's word. As much as in all riches. For him. The way of God's word.

Knowing God. Is more valuable than anything else he has. Other people count their gold.

He rejoices in God and his word. For him the most valuable currency in life isn't pounds and pence. But in knowing Christ.

[ 13 : 22 ] He would rather give up everything he has. Rather than give up the experience of God in his life. And I guess this all comes down to what is precious to us.

I suppose. Imagine with me one of those undiscovered Aboriginal tribes in the Amazon rainforest. And ask yourself.

What did they use for currency? What did they buy and sell with? If you showed them gold. They might laugh at it and consider it rubbish.

They might use monkey dung as their currency. I don't know. I'm being serious. This is how silly the whole thing is. Wealth measured in terms of gold is a social construct.

Particular to us. But in objective universal terms. Gold is of no more value than monkey dung.

That's how ridiculous it is to measure our value and significance as human beings by the amount of gold we possess.

[ 14 : 31 ] Why not monkey dung instead? But the value of God's word is not a social construct to us. It is objectively valuable to all Christians all over the world.

For through it and from it we come to know the God who is absolute and universal truth, love and delight. Gold comes and goes.

But the word of God endures forever. When she was captured by Nazi soldiers and sent to a concentration camp, the Dutch girl Corrie ten Boom was happy enough to leave all her worldly possessions behind.

But she hid her Bible so she could have it with her all the time. You can buy a Bible for five pounds on the internet. You can download one for nothing online.

But its value cannot be calculated. Because in it and from it and through it we come to know God and his gospel of reconciling grace.

[ 15 : 41 ] And there's a sense in which this too is an upward cycle. Just like faithfulness and joy. So is placing a high value upon the word and our joy in the God whom we meet in his word.

The more we meet Christ in scripture, the higher the value we attach to scripture. The higher the value we attach to scripture, the more we meet Christ in scripture.

And this is where we really need to be as Christians if we're to both experience joy in our Christian lives and to be contagious in our love for the word of God.

In this upward cycle of valuing the word of God and knowing Christ through his word. That's why the word of God was, that's why the nation of Israel rather was at its height during the reigns of King David and King Solomon.

Because it was then that God's word was valued and God was known. And that's why the people were filled with joy. A minister friend of mine says, it's not rocket science.

[ 16 : 56 ] And it really isn't. A love for the word of God is both a mark of this and the foundation of our faithful joy and joyful faithfulness in the Christian life.

A love for the word of God.

A love for the word of God. In the way of your testimonies, I delight as in all riches.