

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

Psalms 119:35

A Delightful Path

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IS IT ANY WONDER that those without Christ look so contemptuously on those of us with Him? Is it at all surprising that they might, at least, scratch their heads with befuddlement over the philosophies and ways of the redeemed?

In most instances of life, we require no additional incentive or encouragement to do something we find “delightful.” If we love to read, no one need talk us into opening the covers of a book. If we love ice cream, no one need twist our arm to consume an inviting bowl. If we delight in the company of any man or woman, no coercion is necessary for us to spend time with them.

Yet the psalmist writes,

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commandments,
For I delight in it.

Psalms 119:35

He asks the Lord God to *make* him do something in which he finds delight! Why? Why would we require God’s intervention to do something we supposedly find so pleasurable?

Can we safely conclude, based on his writings, that the apostle Paul had a passion for The Way—the way of Christ, the way of the gospel—indeed, for Christ Himself? Wasn’t it his passionate love of Christ that sustained him through abuse, torture, shipwreck, imprisonment and eventually

execution for what he believed? The answer is yes on both counts.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:14-19

Even with that, however, this same person bewails his persistent battles with the flesh.

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the

very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Romans 7:14-20

The unredeemed do not suffer this battle, for the flesh to them is a familiar, comfortable home. So the paradox of needing God’s help to do something they enjoy—the flip-side of what Paul describes: persistently doing what we hate—is foreign to them.

For the redeemed, however, it is a familiar, ongoing battle. Our flesh has ceased to be a comfortable home, but has become a cloying, excruciating burden—like bearing a fifty-pound backpack during a steaming late-July hike. Once the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in a born-again life, the flesh becomes an uncomfortable, at times insufferable weight upon our shoulders.

The psalmist reminds us that because we are in Christ, we delight in the path He has set before us. His ways are a pleasure, they are rewarding, they are delightful. Yet so long as we remain on this side of heaven, we sometimes need God to coax us in that direction. More than that, sometimes, because the flesh still calls to us, He needs to grab us by the ears and pull us, *make* us do those things which are a pleasure and delight—for our joy, and His ultimate glory.