

# DELIGHT

A Guide to the God Who Delights and the Life That Delights in Him

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*“The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness;  
he will quiet you by his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing.”*  
— Zephaniah 3:17

*The opposite of depression is delight.  
And the source of delight is a God who first delights in us.*

*A study for Christian fathers learning to lead from a heart  
God is renovating — not from survival energy or performance.*

## How to Use This Guide

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This guide is written for Christian fathers — men who are married, raising kids, and carrying the weight of leading a family while their own hearts are still being formed. If you have spent seasons of your spiritual life being earnest, disciplined, dutiful, and serious — and have sensed that something joyful was missing — this guide is for you. It is built on a conviction that runs through Scripture and through the best of Christian thought: that God is not a stern taskmaster to be appeased but a delighting Father who sings over His children, and that the deepest purpose of your life is to delight in Him in return — and, from that delight, to lead your family not from survival energy or performance, but from a heart God is renovating.

Ronald Rolheiser frames it starkly: the opposite of depression is delight. He observes that many sincere, hardworking, faithful people live in a chronic, low-grade joylessness — “dour, duty-bound, heavy, pressured” — and rarely experience the spontaneous burst of “God, it’s good to be alive!” that comes so naturally to children. This guide is not about manufacturing that joy. Delight cannot be forced. It is about positioning your heart where God can give it.

The structure mirrors the rhythm of careful, slow Bible study: readings organized in intentional stages, *lectio divina* passages marked clearly, formation notes from trusted voices, and journaling prompts throughout. It also adds Delight Practices — invitations to actually experience delight, not just study it.

The guide is organized in seven parts:

Part I — The God Who Delights: discovering that delight begins in God’s own heart, before it is ever asked of us.

Part II — God Delights in You: the stunning biblical truth that you are the object of God’s delight.

Part III — Delighting in God: how the Scriptures call us to find our joy and satisfaction in Him.

Part IV — The Enemies of Delight: what steals our joy — duty without love, control, manufactured pleasure, and the rut of the self.

Part V — Delight in the Ordinary: recovering wonder in the daily, the bodily, the present moment.

Part VI — Delighting in Your People: how to delight in your wife, your children, and those entrusted to you.

Part VII — Eternal Delight: the joy set before us, the wedding feast, the everlasting pleasures at God’s right hand.

### Your Daily Rhythm

**Read the passage slowly.** Let it land. You are not gathering information — you are letting the God of delight reveal Himself to you.

**Read it a second time.** Notice what stirs something in you. Joy? Resistance? Longing? That is worth paying attention to.

**Journal.** Talk to God about what you noticed. Be honest about where delight feels absent, forced, or foreign.

**Sit in silence.** Delight often arrives in the quiet, unbidden. Do not rush. Let God surprise you.

**Delight Practice (when marked).** These are concrete invitations to experience delight in daily life — with God, with your family, in the ordinary. Do them. Delight is not learned by study alone.

## Lectio Divina

### Lectio Divina — A Simple Guide

1. **LECTIO** (Read): Read the passage slowly aloud or in a whisper.
2. **MEDITATIO** (Meditate): Read it again. What word or phrase draws you? Sit with it.
3. **ORATIO** (Pray): Read it a third time. Let the word become a prayer.
4. **CONTEMPLATIO** (Rest): Read it one last time. Then stop talking. Be with God.

## Journaling Prompts

- Where do I sense delight in my life right now? Where is it missing?
- Do I believe God delights in me — or do I relate to Him mostly through duty?
- When did I last spontaneously feel, “God, it’s good to be alive”?
- What am I treating as a duty that God intends as a delight?
- Where has my seriousness, control, or striving crowded out joy?
- How can I delight in my wife and children today — not manage them, but enjoy them?

## Companion Voices

Throughout this guide you will find formation notes from writers who have shaped the Christian understanding of delight. Here is who they are and why they appear:

**Ronald Rolheiser** is a Catholic priest and author of *The Holy Longing* and *Sacred Fire*. His framing — that the opposite of depression is delight, and that real delight is the spontaneous “God, it’s good to be alive” of an undefended heart — is the spark for this guide. He warns against the chronic joylessness that afflicts even good, faithful people.

**John Piper** is the author of *Desiring God* and the architect of what he calls “Christian Hedonism” — the conviction that “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.” He argues,

against the idea that joy is optional, that delight in God is the duty and the design of the Christian life.

**C.S. Lewis (1898–1963)** in *The Weight of Glory* makes the famous case that our problem is not that we desire too much but too little — that we are “half-hearted creatures” making mud pies in a slum, far too easily pleased, when God offers infinite joy. He insists that God desires to delight in us “as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son.”

**Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)**, the great American theologian, taught that “God is glorified not only by His glory being seen, but by its being rejoiced in.” Delight in God is not a lesser response than reverence — it is the highest form of worship.

**Dallas Willard, John Mark Comer, and Richard Foster** appear as guides to the practices that make space for delight — slowing down, unhurrying the soul, celebration as a spiritual discipline, and the recovery of joy in the ordinary rhythms of an embodied life.

## Part I: The God Who Delights

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Delight does not begin with us. It begins in God. Before you are ever asked to delight in Him, Scripture reveals a God who is Himself overflowing with joy, gladness, and delight — in His creation, in His works, and supremely within His own Trinitarian life. If God were grim, demanding, and joyless, then all our religion would be the anxious appeasement of a hard master. But the God of the Bible is happy. And that changes everything.

**Formation Note:** Piper asks: *can you imagine what it would be like if the God who ruled the world were not happy — if He were given to grumbling, pouting, and depression like some giant in the sky? If God were not a happy God, he says, Christian joy would have no foundation. But the God of Scripture is infinitely, eternally glad — and He invites us into that gladness.*

### Reading 1: God Delights in His Creation — Genesis 1:1–31

Read the creation account slowly, watching for the refrain: “And God saw that it was good.” Seven times God pauses to delight in what He has made, culminating in “very good.” Creation is not a grim utilitarian project. It is the overflow of a delighting God. The sheer extravagance — the colors, the creatures, the stars beyond counting, the absurd variety — reveals a God who creates for joy, not mere function. You live in a world that God enjoyed making.

### Reading 2: Wisdom Rejoicing Before God — Proverbs 8:22–31

**Lectio Divina passage.** Wisdom personified describes being beside God at creation: “Then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.” The Hebrew word here (*sha’ashu’im*) means sheer playful delight. At the foundation of the world there was not grim labor but rejoicing, play, and delight. God created the world in a posture of joy. Spend two mornings here.

### Reading 3: The Father’s Delight in the Son — Matthew 3:16–17 and 17:5

At Jesus’ baptism, the Father’s voice declares: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” And at the Transfiguration, again: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” The Greek word translated “well pleased” (*eudokeo*) carries the sense of delight and good pleasure. Before Jesus had performed a single miracle, the Father delighted in Him. The delight came first, rooted in relationship, not in achievement. Hold onto this — it will reframe how you understand the Father’s posture toward you.

### Reading 4: God Delights in Mercy — Micah 7:18–20

“Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity... He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love.” God delights in mercy. He does not begrudgingly forgive. Mercy is His joy.

When you come to Him in repentance, you are not interrupting His irritation — you are giving Him an occasion for the thing He most delights to do.

### **Reading 5: God Rejoices Over His People — Isaiah 62:1–5**

**Lectio Divina passage.** “As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.” The image is a wedding — the height of human joy. God’s delight in His people is compared to the delight of a groom on his wedding day, gazing at his bride. You are not tolerated by God. You are rejoiced over.

### **Reading 6: The Joy of the Trinity — John 17:24–26**

Jesus prays, referring to “my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.” Before creation, before time, there was love and delight within the Trinity — Father, Son, and Spirit in eternal joyful communion. The delight you are made for is not a new invention. It is the overflow of a love that has existed forever. You are invited into the oldest joy in existence.

### **Before You Move On**

Journal: Has my picture of God been grim or glad? Do I relate to Him as a happy Father or a hard master? What would change in my daily life if I truly believed that God is the happiest being in the universe — and that His joy is the foundation of mine?

## Part II: God Delights in You

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This is the part that may be hardest to receive. It is one thing to believe that God delights in creation, in His Son, in mercy. It is another to believe that God delights in you — specifically, personally, as you actually are. For the man who has built his life on responsibility, achievement, and earning his place, this truth can feel almost offensive. You did nothing to earn this delight. You cannot increase it by performance or decrease it by failure. God simply delights in you. Let these passages dismantle the lie that you must be useful, productive, or impressive to be loved.

### Reading 1: He Sings Over You — Zephaniah 3:14–17

**Lectio Divina passage — spend at least three mornings here.** “The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.” Read this slowly, and put your own name in it. God rejoices over you with gladness. God quiets you with His love. God sings over you — loud singing, the song of a delighted Father. This is not who you wish God were. This is who He is.

**Formation Note:** *Many men cannot receive this because they have only ever experienced love as something earned. If your own father’s approval was conditional, distant, or absent, the idea that God sings over you with delight may feel foreign or even false. Sit with the discomfort. The Spirit wants to make this real not just in your theology but in your chest — and part of what He is doing is reshaping the kind of father you will be to your own children.*

**Delight Practice:** *Read Zephaniah 3:17 aloud, slowly, three times. The third time, pause after “he will exult over you with loud singing” and simply sit. Do not analyze. Let yourself be sung over. If it helps, place a hand over your heart. Receive what you cannot earn.*

### Reading 2: Delighted In, Not Merely Pitied — Psalm 18:19

“He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me.” David — a man with massive failures — says God rescued him because God delighted in him. Not because David was useful. Not because David performed. Because God delighted in him. The Hebrew word *chaphets* means God inclined toward David, took pleasure in him, leaned in his direction.

**Formation Note:** *Lewis writes in *The Weight of Glory*: “To please God... to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness... to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son — it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is.” Delighted in, not merely pitied. Let that distinction land.*

### Reading 3: The Father Runs — Luke 15:11–24

Read the prodigal son again, but this time watch the father’s delight. The son rehearses a speech about becoming a hired servant — he assumes the best he can hope for is a working relationship. But the father runs, embraces him, and throws a feast. “Let us eat and celebrate.” The father’s response

to the returning son is not grim acceptance. It is delight, celebration, joy. This is how God receives you — not with a performance review, but with a party.

**Heart Check:** *Do I come to God expecting to negotiate the terms of a working relationship, like the son rehearsing his speech? Or do I let myself be embraced and celebrated? What would change if I believed God runs toward me?*

## **Reading 4: You Are God’s Treasured Possession — Deuteronomy 7:6–8 and Exodus 19:5**

“The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession.” And: “You shall be my treasured possession among all peoples.” The Hebrew word (*segullah*) refers to a personal treasure, a prized possession kept close. God did not choose His people because they were numerous or impressive — He chose them because He set His love on them. You are God’s treasure. Not His project. Not His employee. His treasure.

## **Reading 5: Engraved on His Hands — Isaiah 49:14–16**

**Lectio Divina passage.** When Zion says “The Lord has forsaken me,” God responds: “Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.” God’s delight in you is not sentimental — it is permanent, engraved, unforgettable. When you feel forgotten, return here.

## **Reading 6: Chosen and Adopted in Love — Ephesians 1:3–6**

“He chose us in him before the foundation of the world... In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace.” Before the world was made, God chose you in love and planned to adopt you as a son. Your adoption was not a backup plan. It was God’s delight and pleasure from before time began.

## **Reading 7: The Beloved Disciple — John 13:23 and 21:20**

John refers to himself not by name but as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” This was John’s deepest identity — not apostle, not author, not pillar of the church, but the one Jesus loved. Imagine living so secure in Jesus’ delight that it becomes the name you call yourself. What if your truest identity is not husband, father, provider, or leader — but “the one Jesus loves”?

**Heart Check:** *If I had to describe myself the way John did — by Jesus’ love rather than my roles or accomplishments — could I? What keeps me from resting in “the one Jesus loves” as my deepest identity?*

## **Before You Move On**

Spend a full morning here before moving on. This is the foundation of everything that follows. You cannot delight in God until you have received His delight in you. Journal honestly: Do I believe God

delights in me? Where do I still feel I must earn it? Ask the Spirit to make Zephaniah 3:17 real in your bones.

## Part III: Delighting in God

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Now the direction reverses. Having received God’s delight in you, the Scriptures call you to delight in Him. This is not a grudging duty added to your already full life. It is the invitation to find your deepest joy, satisfaction, and pleasure in God Himself — not merely in His gifts, but in Him. This is the heart of what John Piper calls Christian Hedonism: that God is most glorified in you when you are most satisfied in Him.

**Formation Note:** *Piper’s central claim, drawn from Edwards, Lewis, and Scripture: the pursuit of joy in God is not optional or secondary. “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.” Delight in God is not selfishness — it is the very thing that honors Him most. Just as a husband is honored when his wife delights in him rather than merely doing her duty, so God is honored when we delight in Him.*

### Reading 1: Delight in the Lord — Psalm 37:3–7

**Lectio Divina passage.** “Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” This famous verse is often misread as a promise that God will give you whatever you want. But the truth is deeper: when you delight in God, He becomes the desire of your heart. The Hebrew word (*anag*) means to be soft, pliable, tender — to abandon yourself to enjoyment. When the Lord is your delight, the desire He fulfills is the desire for more of Him.

**Heart Check:** *When I read “delight yourself in the Lord,” do I treat it as a transaction (delight so I get what I want) or as the goal itself (God becomes what I want)? What would it look like for God Himself to be the desire of my heart?*

### Reading 2: Fullness of Joy in His Presence — Psalm 16:5–11

**Lectio Divina passage.** “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” Note the words: fullness of joy, pleasures forevermore. The Christian life is not the renunciation of pleasure but its redirection to its true source. The deepest, most lasting pleasures are found in God’s presence — not apart from Him.

### Reading 3: Taste and See — Psalm 34:8

“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.” Taste is experiential, not theoretical. You cannot know the goodness of God by studying it any more than you can know the sweetness of honey by reading about it. You must taste. Delight in God requires moving from analysis to experience — from knowing about His goodness to tasting it.

**Delight Practice:** *This week, before you open your Bible to study, spend the first two minutes simply enjoying God. Not reading, not analyzing, not planning. Just say: “You are good. I want to taste it.” Then sit. The study can wait two minutes. Taste first.*

### Reading 4: My Soul Thirsts for You — Psalm 63:1–8

“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.” David’s desire for God is visceral — thirst, fainting, hunger. “My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food.” This is delight language: God as feast, God as the satisfaction of the deepest appetites of the soul. Do you hunger for God like this? If not, ask Him to give you the hunger.

### **Reading 5: One Thing I Ask — Psalm 27:4**

“One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.” David reduces all his desires to one: to behold the beauty of God. For a man with many responsibilities and many wants, this is a striking simplicity. One thing. To gaze on God’s beauty. What would it mean for your scattered desires to be unified into this one?

### **Reading 6: Delight in His Word — Psalm 1:1–3 and 119:14–16**

“His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.” And: “I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.” The blessed man does not read Scripture as duty but as delight. If your time in the Word has become dutiful drudgery, this is an invitation to ask God to restore the delight — to make His Word again “sweeter than honey” (Psalm 19:10).

**Formation Note:** *Comer and Foster both warn that even good spiritual practices can become joyless performance when they are driven by obligation rather than love. The antidote is not to abandon the practices but to recover their purpose: communion with a God who delights in you. Discipline exists to create space for delight, not to replace it.*

### **Reading 7: Rejoice in the Lord Always — Philippians 4:4–7**

**Lectio Divina passage.** “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” Paul writes this from prison. Joy in the Lord is not dependent on circumstances — it is anchored in God Himself, who does not change. This is the secret of a delight that cannot be stolen by hardship: it is rooted not in what is happening to you but in who God is.

### **Before You Move On**

Journal: Where do I currently seek satisfaction that God intends to provide in Himself? Have I believed that the Christian life is mostly renunciation, or have I grasped that it is the redirection of desire to its true source? What would it look like to pursue joy in God this week — not as duty, but as the thing that most honors Him?

## Part IV: The Enemies of Delight

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If God delights in us and calls us to delight in Him, why is delight so often absent? This part names the enemies of delight — the forces that crowd out joy even in the lives of sincere, faithful people. For the driven, responsible, serious man, these enemies are especially subtle, because they often masquerade as virtues. Duty, control, seriousness, and self-focus can all wear the mask of godliness while quietly strangling the joy God intends.

### Reading 1: Duty Without Delight — Revelation 2:1–5

**Lectio Divina passage.** Jesus commends the Ephesian church for their hard work, perseverance, and doctrinal vigilance — and then says: “But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.” You can do everything right and lose the love. You can be theologically sound, morally serious, hardworking, and faithful — and have abandoned the delight. Jesus calls this a fall: “Remember therefore from where you have fallen.”

**Heart Check:** *Have I become like the Ephesian church — doing all the right things while having quietly abandoned my first love? Where has duty replaced delight in my walk with God?*

### Reading 2: The Older Brother — Luke 15:25–32

The prodigal’s older brother never left home, never squandered his inheritance, always obeyed — and he is furious, joyless, and unable to enter the celebration. “These many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command.” He has reduced sonship to servanthood, relationship to duty. And it has made him miserable. The father pleads: “Son... it was fitting to celebrate and be glad.” The older brother is the patron saint of joyless faithfulness. Beware of becoming him.

**Formation Note:** *Rolheiser observes that we can be “hard working, honest, church going, duty-fulfilling folks” and “never experience a burst of joy.” All our goodness can be “too work-driven, duty-driven, and compulsive” to leave room for delight. The older brother did everything right and felt nothing but resentment. Faithfulness without delight curdles into bitterness.*

### Reading 3: The Tyranny of Control — Luke 10:38–42

Martha is “distracted with much serving” and “anxious and troubled about many things.” Mary simply sits at Jesus’ feet, delighting in His presence. Martha’s service is good — but her need to control, manage, and orchestrate has stolen her joy and made her resentful of her sister. Jesus gently corrects her: “One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion.” The controlling heart cannot delight, because delight requires letting go.

**Heart Check:** *Where is my need to control — the environment, my family, the outcome — stealing my capacity to simply be present and delight? Am I more often Martha (managing) or Mary (delighting)?*

## Reading 4: Manufactured Pleasure vs. Real Delight — Ecclesiastes 2:1–11

Solomon tries to manufacture joy through achievement, pleasure, wealth, and accomplishment — houses, vineyards, gardens, treasure, every desire granted. And he concludes: “All was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained.” Manufactured delight is exhausting and empty. Real delight cannot be forced or purchased.

**Formation Note:** *Rolheiser names this precisely: too often we try to crank up joy by working hard at pleasure, meeting life with the attitude “I’m going to have a good time, whatever the cost!” But what we produce is seldom joy. “For most adults, excess is a functional substitute for delight.” The harder we chase joy, the more it eludes us. It must be received, not manufactured.*

## Reading 5: We Are Far Too Easily Pleased — Jeremiah 2:11–13

“My people have... forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.” The tragedy is not that we want joy — it is that we settle for so little of it. We drink from broken cisterns when the fountain is right there.

**Formation Note:** *This is Lewis’s most famous insight: “Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” The enemy of delight is not desire — it is settling for too little.*

## Reading 6: Anxiety and the Joyless Heart — Matthew 6:25–34

“Do not be anxious about your life.” Anxiety is a thief of delight. The anxious heart cannot enjoy the present moment because it is consumed with managing the future. Jesus points to the birds and the lilies — creatures that do not toil or worry, yet are clothed and fed by the Father. The call to “consider the lilies” is a call to recover delight in a God who provides, so that anxiety loses its grip.

## Reading 7: The Rut of the Self — Philippians 2:3–4 and 2:14–15

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” And: “Do all things without grumbling or disputing.” Self-focus is a prison, and grumbling is its native language. Rolheiser’s phrase captures the joyless life perfectly: “Be it ever so humdrum, there’s no rut like my own.” The self-absorbed life, however comfortable, is a rut that excludes delight.

**Formation Note:** *Rolheiser’s surprising prescription: joy and delight are a by-product of acting like God acts — of selflessness, generosity, and self-giving love. “When we act like God, we get to feel like God. And God is never depressed.” The way out of the rut of the self is not more self-care but more self-giving. Delight is found on the far side of love poured out.*

## Before You Move On

This part can be convicting. Do not let it become another occasion for joyless self-criticism — that would be missing the point entirely. Journal with grace: Which enemy of delight is most active in me — duty without love, control, manufactured pleasure, settling for too little, anxiety, or the rut of self? Bring it honestly to God, and ask Him to restore your joy.

## Part V: Delight in the Ordinary

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Rolheiser observes that delight is most often found not in extraordinary moments but in ordinary ones — “walking home from work, driving my car, washing dishes, getting out of bed, eating a meal with my family.” The spontaneous “God, it’s good to be alive!” usually comes in the middle of an ordinary day. This part is about recovering delight in the daily, the bodily, the present — the very places where the driven, future-focused, accomplishment-oriented man is most likely to miss it.

### Reading 1: This Is the Day — Psalm 118:24

“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” Not some future day when everything is in order. Not the day you imagined. This day — the ordinary, imperfect, unremarkable one in front of you — is the day God made for rejoicing. Delight is available now, in this day, not in some better day to come.

### Reading 2: Consider the Lilies — Matthew 6:28–30 and Luke 12:27

**Lectio Divina passage.** “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Jesus invites you to stop and notice beauty. The lily does not strive — it simply receives sun and rain and grows. There is a kind of delight that only comes when striving stops and you actually notice the beauty God has scattered everywhere, including in your own backyard.

**Delight Practice:** *This week, deliberately stop once a day to notice something beautiful — a sunset, your child’s laugh, the taste of your coffee, the feel of cool air. Do not photograph it or post it. Just notice it, and say silently, “Thank you. It’s good to be alive.” This is the practice of delight in the ordinary.*

### Reading 3: Eat Your Bread with Joy — Ecclesiastes 9:7–10

“Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do.” After all his searching, Solomon lands on a simple, profound conclusion: receive the ordinary gifts of daily life — food, drink, work, relationships — as gifts from God, with joy. The ordinary meal, eaten with gratitude, is a sacrament of delight.

### Reading 4: The Body and Its Pleasures — 1 Timothy 4:1–5 and 6:17

Paul warns against those who forbid good things as if denial were holiness, declaring instead that “everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.” And: God “richly provides us with everything to enjoy.” God is not against pleasure — He invented it. The taste of food, the warmth of the sun, the laughter of friends, the embrace of your wife — these are gifts to be enjoyed with thanksgiving, not suspected as distractions from holiness.

**Formation Note:** *Lewis wrote that physical pleasures are “the faint, far-off results of those energies which God’s creative rapture implanted in matter when He made the worlds.” Every*

*legitimate pleasure is a beam of glory tracing back to the God of delight. To enjoy them with gratitude is to worship. To despise them as unspiritual is to insult the Giver.*

### **Reading 5: The Practice of Sabbath — Exodus 20:8–11 and Mark 2:27**

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” Sabbath is God’s built-in rhythm of delight — a weekly command to stop producing and simply enjoy: enjoy God, enjoy rest, enjoy family, enjoy being rather than doing. For the man whose worth is tangled up in productivity, Sabbath is a weekly act of resistance and a weekly recovery of delight.

**Formation Note:** *John Mark Comer writes extensively about Sabbath as the antidote to a hurried, joyless life. The unhurried soul has room for delight; the hurried soul does not. Sabbath is not a reward for finishing your work — it is a discipline that declares your work is not your worth, and that delight is your birthright as a beloved child.*

### **Reading 6: Celebration as a Discipline — Deuteronomy 16:13–15 and Nehemiah 8:9–12**

God commanded feasts — actual parties — as part of the rhythm of His people’s life: “You shall rejoice in your feast... so that you will be altogether joyful.” And when the people wept at hearing the law, Nehemiah told them: “The joy of the Lord is your strength. Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine... do not be grieved.” God commands celebration. Joy is not optional decoration on the Christian life — it is commanded discipline.

**Formation Note:** *Richard Foster, in Celebration of Discipline, names celebration as one of the central spiritual disciplines — not a frivolous add-on but an essential practice. “Celebration is central to all the Spiritual Disciplines,” he writes. “Without a joyful spirit of festivity the Disciplines become dull, death-breathing tools.” Joy is not the reward for discipline; it is the air the disciplines are meant to breathe.*

### **Before You Move On**

Journal: Where in my ordinary daily life am I missing delight because I am too hurried, too focused on the future, or too busy producing? What would it look like to recover Sabbath, celebration, and simple gratitude for the bodily gifts of daily life? When did I last genuinely feast — not just eat, but celebrate?

## Part VI: Delighting in Your People

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The God who delights in you, and in whom you delight, also invites you to delight in the people He has given you — your wife, your children, your friends, those you lead. For the man wired toward vision, responsibility, and improvement, this is a particular challenge: it is easy to manage your people, evaluate them, lead them, and worry about them — and hard to simply delight in them. This part is about recovering the capacity to enjoy the people you love rather than merely steward them.

**Formation Note:** *There is a profound difference between managing your family and delighting in them. The managing heart asks: Is this going according to plan? Are they behaving? Am I shaping them well? The delighting heart asks: Aren't they wonderful? Isn't it good to be alive with them? Your family can feel the difference instantly — between a father who is evaluating them and a father who is enjoying them.*

### Reading 1: Rejoice in the Wife of Your Youth — Proverbs 5:18–19

**Lectio Divina passage.** “Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth... be intoxicated always in her love.” God commands delight in your wife — not just faithfulness, not just provision, not just leadership, but rejoicing, intoxication, delight. This is a command to enjoy her, to be captivated by her, to take pleasure in her. When was the last time you simply delighted in your wife rather than coordinating logistics with her?

**Heart Check:** *Do I delight in my wife, or have I reduced our relationship to partnership and logistics? What would it look like to “rejoice in the wife of my youth” this week — to enjoy her, not just manage life with her?*

**Delight Practice:** *This week, do one thing for your wife that has no purpose except delight — not solving a problem, not improving the household, not advancing a plan. Just delighting in her. A note, a walk, an undistracted hour, a question about her heart. Enjoy her with no agenda.*

### Reading 2: Children Are a Gift and a Joy — Psalm 127:3–5 and Psalm 128:1–4

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward... Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them.” And: “Your children will be like olive shoots around your table.” Children are described as a reward, a blessing, an arrow, a flourishing olive shoot. They are gifts to be enjoyed, not just responsibilities to be managed. The image of children around the table is an image of delight, abundance, and joy.

**Heart Check:** *Do I experience my children primarily as a joy or primarily as a responsibility? When I am with them, am I present and delighting, or am I managing, correcting, and worrying? What would my kids say — do they experience their father's delight?*

### Reading 3: Jesus Delighted in Children — Mark 10:13–16

When the disciples tried to keep children away, Jesus was indignant: “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them.” And he “took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.”

Jesus — with the weight of the world on Him, on His way to the cross — stopped to hold children, to bless them, to delight in them. He was never too busy or too serious for the joy of a child. Neither should you be.

**Delight Practice:** *This week, get on the floor with your kids and play with no agenda — no teaching, no correcting, no improving. Just delight in them and let them delight in you. Notice what it does to your heart. This is a spiritual practice, not a distraction from one.*

### **Reading 4: The Father's Delight as Your Model — Luke 15:20–24**

Return to the prodigal's father once more, now as your model of fatherhood. He runs, embraces, celebrates. His son had failed spectacularly — and the father's response was delight, not evaluation. This is the kind of father you are called to be: one whose children experience his delight more than his disappointment, his embrace more than his assessment. Your children will form their image of God partly from you. Let them see a delighting father.

### **Reading 5: Friendship and Delight — 1 Samuel 18:1–3 and Proverbs 27:9**

“The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” And: “Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.” Delight is meant to be shared in friendship. The man who has no friends to delight in — who has reduced all his relationships to family logistics and work — is missing one of God's great gifts. Who are the friends you simply enjoy?

### **Reading 6: Delight Poured Out in Love — John 15:9–13**

**Lectio Divina passage.** “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love... These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” Jesus' stated purpose is that His joy would be in you and your joy would be full. And the path to that fullness is love — abiding in His love and laying down your life for others. The deepest delight is found not in self-protection but in self-giving love.

**Formation Note:** *This connects back to Rolheiser's core insight: delight is the by-product of acting like God — of selfless, generous, self-giving love. When you pour yourself out for your wife, your children, your friends — not out of grim duty but out of love — you will find, on the far side, the spontaneous joy of “it feels good to be alive.” Jesus promises exactly this: lay down your life, and your joy will be full.*

### **Before You Move On**

Journal: Where have I been managing my people instead of delighting in them? What would change in my home if my wife and children experienced my delight as the dominant note rather than my evaluation, correction, or worry? How can I pour myself out in love this week in a way that produces joy rather than depletion?

## Part VII: Eternal Delight

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Delight is not only for now — it is the eternal destiny of those who belong to God. Every taste of joy in this life is a foretaste of an unending delight to come. This final part lifts your eyes to the joy set before you: the wedding feast, the everlasting pleasures, the face of God, the eternal celebration where every tear is wiped away. The delight you experience now is the first sip of an ocean you will one day swim in forever.

### Reading 1: The Joy Set Before Him — Hebrews 12:1–2

**Lectio Divina passage.** “Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Even Jesus was sustained by delight — “the joy set before him.” The cross itself was endured for the sake of a coming joy. If joy sustained Jesus through the worst suffering imaginable, then joy is not a frivolous thing. It is the fuel of faithfulness.

### Reading 2: Enter into the Joy of Your Master — Matthew 25:21

“Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your master.” The reward for faithfulness is not merely rest or reward — it is joy. And not just any joy, but the very joy of God Himself: “the joy of your master.” You are invited to enter into God’s own delight, to share in the gladness that has existed within the Trinity from before the foundation of the world.

### Reading 3: The Wedding Feast — Revelation 19:6–9

“Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come... Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” History does not end in a courtroom or a classroom. It ends at a wedding feast — the supreme image of joy, celebration, and delight. You are invited not as a servant but as part of the bride. The story of everything ends in a party.

### Reading 4: Every Tear Wiped Away — Revelation 21:1–5

**Lectio Divina passage.** “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” This is the end of all that steals delight — death, mourning, crying, pain. What remains is the unbroken presence of God with His people. The depression that Rolheiser describes, the joylessness, the heaviness — all of it wiped away forever. Only delight remains.

### Reading 5: Pleasures Forevermore — Psalm 16:11 and Revelation 22:1–5

“In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” And in Revelation’s final vision: the river of life, the tree of life, the face of God, and His people who “will reign forever and ever.” The eternal state is not static or boring — it is fullness of joy and pleasures

that never end and never diminish. The best delight you have ever tasted is a faint shadow of what is coming.

**Formation Note:** *Lewis ends *The Weight of Glory* pointing to this: “The whole man is to drink joy from the fountain of joy.” What we now experience as physical and emotional pleasure are merely “the faint, far-off results” of God’s creative joy. One day we will drink at the fountainhead itself. The delight you are learning to receive now is training for an eternity of joy.*

## **Reading 6: Come to the Waters — Isaiah 55:1–3 and Revelation 22:17**

**Lectio Divina passage — close the guide here.** “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters... Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? ... Delight yourselves in rich food.” And the Bible’s final invitation: “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ ... Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.” The whole of Scripture ends with an invitation to come and be satisfied — to stop spending yourself on what does not satisfy and to receive the delight that is freely given. Come.

### **Closing Practice**

When you have finished this guide, spend a final morning in reflection. Go back through your journal. Notice where God has begun to restore delight — in Him, in the ordinary, in your people. Write a letter to God, not asking for anything, simply delighting in Him — telling Him what you have come to enjoy about who He is. Then go and live as a man who knows he is delighted in, and who is learning, daily, to delight in return.

And the next time you are walking to your car, or washing the dishes, or eating dinner with your family on an utterly ordinary evening, may you be caught by surprise — may something well up in you, unbidden, and may you find yourself saying, with the spontaneous joy of a child: “God, it’s good to be alive.”

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*“In your presence there is fullness of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*

— Psalm 16:11