

## **Prayer and Fasting at the Beginning of August 2018**

Again, today, you may want to fast from some routine part of your life that by avoiding that behavior you can focus more on your relationship with God in prayer.

You might open your time of prayer in asking the Lord to guide your time and to help you be open and honest with Him. Remember that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit desire to hear from you.

The prayer team at Intown, often reads Psalm 37:4 and believe that the words of King David are a good starting point for our First Monday of prayer and fasting. Here's how the verse reads:

***Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.***

This sounds poetic and easy, if we were living in a perfect world with no challenges and no disagreements with our neighbors this would be simple. So, it might surprise you that David penned these words in the midst of a much larger Psalm on the treacherous world he was living in. If we expand from verse 4 and read verse 3 before and verse 5 afterward, here's what we read:

***Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.  
Take delight 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 do this:***

Still, this doesn't sound too bad. The focus on delight is expanded to include trusting in the Lord and doing good and we should commit our way to the Lord – who doesn't want to do that? Not sure about all the implications, but I want to do what God thinks is best.

If we expand the context just a few more verses what does the picture look like? Let's go back to verse 1 and forward to verse 10. Here's the picture:

***Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong;  
for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.  
Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.  
Take delight 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 do this:  
He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like  
the noonday sun.  
Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people  
succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.  
Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.  
For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the Lord will  
inherit the land.***

OK. So, delighting in the Lord may not be as simple as we first thought! This sounds a bit more like the world in which we live in 2018. So, David's words were inspired for us to apply all of these thousands of years later. The Holy Spirit can guide us in the same way that David was guided.

At the heart of this Psalm is still this call to love and worship – Delight! Instead of fretting, we should delight in the Lord. Our theme for the day is Delight in the Lord.

Delight has to do with happiness and pleasure. So, when we talk about finding our delight in the Lord, David is calling us to find our happiness in experiencing a relationship with God that overcomes all of the cares of the world. If we fret – which only leads to evil, he says – we will never be happy with the current circumstances we find ourselves in.

Where do we find our happiness? List a few things that bring you pleasure and happiness.

What do you often fret or worry about? Try to be as specific as possible.

What happiness do you find in your relationship with God? What areas do you worry that God isn't meeting your expectations or that you wish the Lord would work differently in?

As you talk to God about your lists, ask about how you can find more delight in Him and learn to trust Him more with all that is going on in your life.

As you move into a time of more prayers on behalf of others, you may want to use some of these themes to guide you.

Pray for your close friends and family. August has become a time for new beginnings for many of us. The beginning of the school year and church year are major milestones in our journeys. For sure, let us pray for our communities of faith and learning as we enter another year. Let us give thanks to the Lord for His goodness and mercy. Let us ask for the Lord's protection and guidance as we make important decisions and give our efforts to valuable endeavors. Let us delight in the Lord that we might grow in becoming more like Jesus.

Pray for the needs of your extended family and acquaintances.

Pray for your neighbors and co-workers or fellow students.

Pray for those who lead you in following Jesus at Intown Community Church or other communities you are a part of.

Pray for those who are suffering.

Pray for the beginning of a new school/church year and for God's guidance and pleasure to be seen in our lives.

Pray for one person you believe God may be calling you to love to life through gospel restoration. Pray for that person today.

Follow the Spirit in any areas that were brought to your mind or heart as you have reflected on David's Psalm and your domain. Ask the Lord for clarity and patience for yourself and those closest to you.

Give thanks to God for hearing your heart and the restoration He is doing in you.