

Sermon Outline: “Desires That Don’t Betray You”

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Key Text: Psalm 37:4 – *“Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”*

I. INTRODUCTION – THE QUESTION OF DESIRE

A. Framing the Central Issue

- The persistent theological question is **not whether humans desire**, but **whether desire can be trusted**.
- Desire itself is not sinful; **disordered desire is the problem**.
- Augustine: *“The human problem is not loving the wrong things, but loving the right things in the wrong order.”*
 - Over-attachment to secondary things
 - Under-attachment to primary things (God, righteousness, relationships)

B. Examples of Disordered Desire

- Rest becomes neglect
- Pleasure becomes addiction
- Entertainment replaces devotion
- Scrolling, shopping, gaming vs. prayer, Scripture, relationships

C. Desire Is Trained, Not Neutral

- Cognitive neuroscience confirms: **desire is shaped by repeated attention**
- Hebrews 5:14 – “By constant use, have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil”
- 1 Peter 4:2 – Not living for human desires, but for the will of God

Key Principle:

Desire is not static. It is formed, trained, and directed.

II. CONTEXT OF PSALM 37 – WHEN THE WICKED PROSPER

A. Historical & Emotional Setting

- Written to believers watching:
 - The wicked prosper
 - The righteous struggle

B. God’s Counterintuitive Command

- Not “suppress desire”
- Not “deny longing”
- Not “disconnect emotionally”
- **But: “Delight yourself in the Lord.”**

C. The Nature of Delight

- Not a feeling you fall into
- **A posture you practice**
- Intentional, sustained joy in God

D. Habakkuk 3:17–18 – The “Yet” Faith

- Even with total loss... **“Yet will I rejoice in the Lord.”**
- Delight as a practiced posture, not a circumstantial reaction

Thesis Statement Introduced:

If your delight is right, your desires won’t destroy you.

III. THE PROBLEM – UNTETHERED DESIRES

Truth #1: Untethered desires will always sabotage your future

A. Desire Is Not Harmless

- James 1:14–15 – Desire conceives sin, sin brings death
- Desire without God = **driver with no destination and no brakes**

B. Biblical Case Studies

- **Samson** – strength without restraint
- **Esau** – appetite without inheritance
- **Judas** – gain without glory
- **Saul** – comparison without contentment

C. Saul's Downfall (1 Samuel 18–19)

- David's success triggered Saul's insecurity
- Saul's desire turned horizontal instead of vertical
- Comparison led to:
 - Jealousy
 - Fear
 - Impatience
 - Violence
- Outcome:
 - Destroyed relationships
 - Wasted energy
 - Lost kingdom
 - Died isolated

Key Warning:

If God is not your delight, your desires will draft you into battles you were never called to fight.

IV. THE SOLUTION – DIVINE RECALIBRATION

Truth #2: Delight in the Lord recalibrates what you long for

A. God Doesn't Just Grant Desires—He Generates Them

- Psalm 37:4 does not say:
 - Delight → ask → receive
- It says:
 - **Delight → He gives the desires**

God shapes the heart before He fills the hand.

B. Delight Reorders Affection

1. David

- From shepherd to worshiping king
- Even after Bathsheba, he ran **back** to God, not away

2. Mary & Martha (Luke 10)

- Mary's delight produced patience and attentiveness

3. Moses (Hebrews 11)

- Refused Pharaoh's palace
- Chose God's people over fleeting pleasure

4. Paul (Philippians 3)

- Counted everything loss for knowing Christ
- Appetite matured from status to surrender

5. Hannah (1 Samuel 1–2)

- Desire for a child purified into desire to please God
- Shifted before her situation changed
- Fulfilled without bitterness or pride

Key Insight:

God doesn't always change the situation first—He changes what we crave.

V. THE DELAY – MERCY IN DISGUISE

A. Why God Withholds or Delays

- Some prayers would have:
 - Broken you
 - Corrupted you
 - Destroyed you
- James 4:3 – Asking amiss to spend on pleasures

B. God Preserves Futures, Not Just Grants Requests

- Doors delayed = lives saved
- No in 2025 = preparation for 2026

Powerful Line:

God saves us not only from unanswered prayers, but from answered prayers that would have ruined us.

VI. THE TRANSFORMATION – DESIRE MADE SAFE

Truth #3: A God-shaped desire will never betray God's purpose

A. What Happens When God Becomes Your Joy

1. You stop chasing what looks good but leads nowhere
2. You stop settling for substitutes
3. You stop asking God to bless what He never authorized

B. Delight Precedes Desire

- The order matters:
 - **Delight → Desire → Fulfillment**
- God fills the heart first so the gift doesn't replace Him

C. The Heart's Tension

- Jeremiah: The heart is deceitful
- Ezekiel: God gives a new heart
- Psalm 37:4 lives in this tension

The verse is not transactional. It is transformational.

VII. THE CHRISTOLOGICAL FULFILLMENT – JESUS AS THE PERFECT MODEL

A. Jesus and Sanctified Desire

- Did not desire escape → desired obedience
- Did not desire comfort → desired completion
- Hebrews 12:2 – “For the joy set before Him...”

Joy = Delight in the Father's will

B. The Cross and Resurrection

- Love constrained Him, not nails
- Resurrection proves:
 - A heart fully delighted in God cannot be defeated—even by death

C. What Christ Now Gives Us

- A new heart
- Disciplined desires
- Resurrected longings

VIII. PROPHETIC DECLARATION – 2026 AND BEYOND

A. Why 2025 Didn't Work

- Not punishment—**preparation**
- Not rejection—**refinement**

B. What 2026 Will Release

- What was withheld has now been processed
- What was delayed has now been purified
- What once would have inflated pride will now produce praise

Key Declaration:

What you're about to receive will not destroy you, because it has passed through God's process.

IX. CLOSING EXHORTATION

A. The Final Promise of Psalm 37:4

- God will give:
 - A heart that won't betray you
 - A future that won't collapse
 - A joy that won't die

B. Final Call

- Clear your heart
- Make room for God
- Delight yourself in the Lord

Closing Truth:

*We're not mourning what didn't happen in 2025—
we're thanking God it didn't, because 2026 will be safer, purer, and stronger.*