

May 7th, 2017

APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING PT. 2

John 15:1-8

Jesus has been very methodical in preparing his disciples for his crucifixion. He spent the entire beginning of His farewell discourse comforting their *troubled hearts*—chapter fourteen. Here in chapter fifteen, Jesus is addressing their tempted hearts. They will be tempted to give up. Judas has defected. The ruling council of the Jews will soon have Jesus in their clutches. And then the persecution from the world will begin. And defection from Christ will start to look very attractive.

There have been many disciples that have given up on following Christ because the cost is so high. Paul experienced this. He said **2 Timothy 4:10** “For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.”

And you will be tempted with the same thing. As trials come, as discouragement suffocates you, as apostasy and persecution spread like a plague, and more and more people defect from Jesus Christ, you will be tempted to *give up*.¹ Jesus speaks these words in His farewell discourse in order to prevent you from falling away. That’s what He says in **John 16:1** “I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.”

But Jesus has a very interesting way of doing this. First, He says ‘You must bear fruit or you will go to hell’—that’s the meaning of v.2 and v.6. Second, He says you are completely helpless to do this on your own—v.5 “apart from me you can do nothing.”

¹ So powerful is this temptation to give up, that we are warned against it several times throughout the N.T. **Hebrews 10:35-36** “do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” **Galatians 6:9** “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” **Hebrews 12:3** “Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.” (cf. cf. 2 Peter 3:9; 2 Corinthians 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 Corinthians 15:58)

Jesus does not treat your temptation to give up by reciting Stuart Smalley to you: “You’re good enough, you’re smart enough, and doggone it people like you.” No. Jesus addresses your temptation to give up, first, by showing you how truly helpless you are. ‘If you rely on yourself like Judas did, you will perish.’ People do not defect from Jesus Christ because He is not a reliable Savior, people defect from Jesus Christ because they start to rely on themselves. That root of self-reliance must be eradicated. You are not good enough, you are not smart enough, you are not strong enough to survive this life. Apart from Christ you will fail.

If you don’t feel the weight of your helplessness you will never see the role that prayer and Scripture play in your life. That’s what Jesus offers us as the remedy for defection. Look at v.7 “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” Do you hear it? You can’t do anything—v.5, but I can do everything!—v.7. ‘So let my Word find it’s home in your heart. Read it. Study it. Bleed it. Thirst and hunger for it. And then call on my name in prayer and I will give you whatever you wish.’

That is where Jesus is taking us this morning. All our power comes from abiding in His Word, and all our provision comes from calling on Him. And this is designed to bring the Father glory and bear much fruit.

☆ The Delight of Praying From the Word

☆ The Design of Praying From the Word

The Big Idea...

Your helplessness brings glory to the Father when you go to Jesus for everything you need.

I. The Delight of Praying From the Word

Two parts to this verse: if/then

First, there is two parts to v.7 It is a conditional if/then statement. v.7 “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, [*then*] ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” To say it negatively, if Jesus’ words do not abide in you, your prayers will not be effective. Or to say it relationally, your intimate communion with Christ depends upon you knowing His word. Prayer has no passion or power if your heart is not not tuned to the frequency of His Word.

What does it mean to have Jesus abide in you?

Evangelicals are so quick to speak about having Jesus in them, but we often disconnect Jesus from His Word. But Jesus makes no such separation. Look at v.4 “Abide in me, *and I in you.*” Then again in v.5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me *and I in him*, he it is that bears much fruit.” So twice (in v.4-5) we see this this pair together: ‘Abide in me and I in you.’ When Christ abides in you, you will produce fruit. And it is on this point that verses 1-17 rest. You must bear fruit. If there is no fruit, the Father takes away the branch (v.2); if there is no fruit, the branches are gathered and burned (v.6). Therefore, it is paramount to answer the question: what does it mean to have Christ abide in you? How can you invite Christ in? How can you have Christ abide in you?

This is where v.7 is so helpful. Instead of saying the same thing again “Abide in me, and I in you,” Jesus changes it to “If you abide in me, *and my words abide in you.*” He changes it. And this change helps us see in practical terms what it means to have Jesus abide in us: Jesus abides in us, when His word abides in us.

Jesus and the Word are not two separate realities. Jesus *is* the Word of God made flesh. “In the beginning was the *Word*, and the *Word* was with God,

and the *Word* was God...And the *Word* became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1, 14)² When the Word of God abides in you, Jesus abides in you.

What does it mean experientially to have Jesus’ words abide in you?

So then, it begs the further question. How do you let the word of God abide in you? George Müller helps answer this question. George Müller is best remembered for his prayer life. During the 19th century, in addition to the 10,000 sermons that he preached, he opened up several orphanages without ever asking for a single dime. He prayed in the millions of dollars necessary to house, clothe and feed the thousands of orphans that his organization cared for in his life time. But what you might not know about Müller was what he considered the most important thing of his life. This is what he wrote in 1881³

“I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the word of God, and to meditation on it...What is the food of the inner man? Not *prayer*, but *the word of God*; and...not the simple reading of the word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts.”⁴

Notice he says two things. 1) **It is the Word of God, *not prayer* that is the food of the inner man.** This is huge. Müller was not downplaying the importance of prayer. Probably no one in the 19th century had a greater prayer life than Müller. His point is that prayer and everything else must start with the Word of God. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (**Romans 10:17**). You will not have faith to pray if it doesn’t spring from the word of Christ.

² Romans 10:6-8 “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”

³ This is an approximation, Müller was 76 years old when he said this.

⁴ John Piper, *A Camaraderie of Confidence: The Fruit of Unfailing Faith in the Lives of Charles Spurgeon, George Müller, and Hudson Taylor*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2016), pg. 82

2) Müller pointed to the type of attention to the Word that is required. He said “not the simple reading of the word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts.”

This how branches relate to a vine. The sap flows to and fro to every extremity, to every twig, to every leaf. The branch is not a pipe for the sap to flow through but a sponge. It takes in every vitamin, every nutrient, every DNA strand, and that sap is what creates life. If the branch acted like a pipe, the branch would die.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly

Dear congregation, this is how we are to take in the Word of God. **Colossians 3:16** “Let the word of Christ *dwell* in you richly.” Dwell is ἐνοικέω enoikeō in the Greek.⁵ It means to inhabit you, to influence you, to reside within you. It’s the same word the apostle Paul uses of the the Holy Spirit. **2 Timothy 1:14** “By the Holy Spirit who *dwells* within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.” Jesus is saying ‘Let my Word inhabit you, just as the Holy Spirit has made his home in you.’ Many Christians are so spiritually impoverished because they treat the Scriptures like a fortune cookie, cracking it open, reading some random verses and then going on their way.⁶ That is *not* how you let Christ’s word abide in you. Müller says “These are God’s appointed means for the nourishment of the inner man...consider it, and ponder it...especially we should read regularly through the Scriptures, consecutively, and not pick out here and there a chapter. If we do, we remain spiritual dwarfs.”⁷

The words of Scripture are not the musings of old dead men. They are not pieces of sage advice, or stories of heroic valor. The words of Scripture are

⁵ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G1774&t=KJV>

⁶ George Whitefield had to preach against this practice in his day. He called it lucky dipping. Christians would look for guidance, and open the Bible at random and place a finger on a verse.

⁷ John Piper, *A Camaraderie of Confidence: The Fruit of Unfailing Faith in the Lives of Charles Spurgeon, George Müller, and Hudson Taylor*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2016), pg. 81

the very thoughts of the Living God. **Hebrews 4:12** “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Therefore when Jesus tells you in v.7 to let “my words abide in you,” He means ‘...do whatever it takes to continue to listen to my voice. My voice is living through the words of Scripture. Meditate on my words. Interrogate my words. Query them. Muse on them. Let Me rule over you through My Word. Let Me shape you through My Word. Let Me convict you and comfort you through My Word. Let My Word reign over every other word in your life.’

Summary

That is the first part of v.7—the “if” part. The way to abide in Christ and have Christ abide in you is to let His Word abide in you. And if that happens, then v.7 continues “ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

Ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you

Jesus statement is so sweeping that it is hard to take in His words without taking considerable pause. “Ask *whatever you wish* and it will be done for you.” So what does Jesus mean here? Consider our overall context. Jesus says this statement after He has laid down two massive truths. **Truth #1:** unless you bear fruit you will perish (v.6) **Truth #2:** you cannot do anything apart from Jesus (v.5). So what will you pray for if *those words* abide in you? “Jesus produce fruit in me. I will perish without you.”

We know that Jesus had *fruit bearing* primarily in mind because of what He says in v.8 “By this my Father is glorified, *that you bear much fruit* and so prove to be my disciples.” When John says “*by this*”, I believe he is connecting what our praying with His giving. The Father is glorified when we pray for fruit, AND He is glorified when He gives it to us.

But there’s another clue that Jesus means for us to pray for fruit. Look at v.16 “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should

go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.” Follow Jesus’ logic. He says “I’ve chosen and appointed you to bear fruit, *so that* (purpose clause) when you pray for supplies (fruit) in my name, the Father will provide them.” What is prayer for? Fruit bearing. Jesus chose us to bear fruit in the world, and when you pray for that, He promises that it will be given to you. Prayer only breaks down when you pray wrongly. **James 4:3** “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”

Does this mean we are not supposed to pray for whatever we wish?

Therefore, since it’s clear that we are supposed to pray for fruit (which God-willing we will look at next week), does that mean that we shouldn’t pray for whatever we wish? Look at **v.7** again “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, *ask whatever you wish*, and it will be done for you.” When the words of Jesus abide in you, it will produce universe shifting desires in your heart. Your problem is *not* in having grander desires than God can grant. Your problem is having too small of desires. Imagine for a moment that your spouse is dying. How should you pray for him/her in light of v.7?

George Müller faced this problem twice. His first wife, Mary Groves, whom he was married to for thirty-nine years, died when he was 64; his second, Susannah Sanger, whom he was married to for twenty-three years died when he was 90.⁸ When Mary was struck with rheumatic fever, Müller’s heart was close to broken. How did George pray for her? He prayed that she would be healed, on this condition—that it would be good for both Mary and him, and that the Father would be glorified. His deepest prayer was that he would be satisfied in God no matter what happened.⁹ His prayer was rooted in **Psalm 84:11** “For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. *No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.*” He tells us the source of his strength:

⁸ John Piper, *A Camaraderie of Confidence: The Fruit of Unfailing Faith in the Lives of Charles Spurgeon, George Müller, and Hudson Taylor*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2016), pg. 67

⁹ *ibid*, pg. 72

“If it is really good for me, my darling wife will be raised up again; sick as she is. God will restore her again. But if she is not restored again, then it would not be a good thing for me. And so my heart was at rest. I was satisfied with God. And all this springs, as I have often said before, from taking God at his word, believing what he says.”¹⁰

Mary died. And in his deep sorrow over her death, Müller was able to thank God for enabling him to rest satisfied in God’s dealings.

You can pray like this if Jesus’ Word abides in you

For Müller, the second half of **John 15:7** absolutely came true when Mary died “...ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” He received exactly what he prayed for. His deepest most profound desire was that He received whatever the Vinedresser thought was best, and that He would be satisfied (howbeit sorrowful) in His decision.

How do you get to where Müller was? Let Christ’s Word abide in you. Let it shape your desires. Let it shape your prayers. Müller could pray like that because **Psalms 37:4** had become a reality to him. “Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” Therefore He was able even to subordinate his prayers for his wife’s health to whatever God thought best. And he knew down in the deepest part of his soul that because of Jesus Christ “*No good thing does [God] withhold from those who walk uprightly.*” (**Psalms 84:11**)

Prayer is *mainly* for finding satisfaction in God

When you pray from the fullness of the Word dwelling within you, you will get everything that you ask for. Because your prayer life will be set on fire to ask for the biggest things in life: “Lord do whatever it takes for me to find all my joy in you. Lord do whatever it takes to sanctify me. Lord do whatever it takes to help me love your people and spread your gospel. Do whatever it takes Lord for your church to bear fruit. If heartbreak will cause your name to be

¹⁰ *ibid*, pg. 68

exalted, then I trust you Lord.” Those are the prayers that Jesus says He will absolutely answer.¹¹ “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

II. The Design of Praying From the Word

Praying for fruit is *mainly* about God’s great glory

Let’s look at v.8 “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” Recall our context. You must bear fruit or you will perish (v.6). But you cannot do anything on your own (v.5). Therefore pray to the Father, and He will give you everything you ask when my words abide in you (v.7). And now v.8 “By this my Father is glorified.” Do you see the design now? Our helplessness highlights God’s honor. Our paralysis parades God’s praise. John Piper gives a helpful analogy:

“Suppose you are totally paralyzed and can do nothing for yourself but talk. And suppose a strong and reliable friend promised to live with you and do whatever you needed done. How could you glorify your friend if a stranger came to see you? Would you glorify his generosity and strength by trying to get out of bed and carry him? No! you would say, “Friend, please come lift me up, and would you put a pillow behind me so I can look at my guest? And would you please put my glasses on for me?” And so your visitor would learn from your requests that you are helpless and that your friend is strong and kind. You glorify your friend by needing him and asking him for help and counting on him.”¹²

That is how God is glorified in our prayers. We pray because of the reality of v. 5: “Apart from me you can do nothing.” Prayer is the confession of that. Prayer says “God I am weak, but You are wealthy. I am poor, but You are powerful. I am foolish, but You are faithful. No goodness dwells in me, but You

¹¹ cf. 1 John 5:14-15; 1 John 3:22

¹² John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of A Christian Hedonist*, (Colorado Springs, CO.,: Multnomah Books, 2003), pg. 160-161

are goodness itself. I am insufficient but You are all-sufficient.” Word filled prayer glorifies the Father because it says “I am needy and You are the only need-provider.” The giver gets all the glory.

Objection: Should we not pray for earthly things?

I can imagine at this point, someone may say “Is there any room for praying for earthly things? Can I not pray for lost keys, or skinned knees, or for marriages to hold together, or for my finances, or my health, or for relationships to be restored. Is it ok to pray for earthly things? Yes. Jesus tells you to pray for your daily bread (**Matthew 6:11**). And we see lots of examples in Scripture of people praying for a multitude of different things. The church prayed for Peter’s release from prison (**Acts 12:5**). Jacob prayed to the Lord that he would be rescued from his brother Esau (**Genesis 32:9-12**). Nehemiah prayed to know how to respond to King Artaxerxes (**Nehemiah 2:4**). So it’s right to pray for earthly things. You ought to pray for these things. But all these things must be subordinated to one thing: the Father’s glory.

The Father’s glory is the single dominant all defining explanation for every event under the sun.¹³

The Father’s glory was the reason the man was born blind in **John 9:3** “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

¹³ That’s why Müller found so much success for the orphanage. He purposely never asked for money. And he gives the reason why: “the chief end of this Institution...is to raise another public testimony to an unbelieving world, that in these last days the Living God is still the Living God, listening to the prayers of His children, and helping those who put their trust in Him; and in order that believers generally may be benefited and especially be encouraged to trust in God for everything they may need, and be stirred up to deal in greater simplicity with God respecting everything connected with their own particular position and circumstances; in short, that the children of God may be brought to the practical use of the Holy Scriptures, as the word of the Living God.” John Piper, *A Camaraderie of Confidence: The Fruit of Unfailing Faith in the Lives of Charles Spurgeon, George Müller, and Hudson Taylor*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2016), pg.

The Father's glory was the reason Lazarus died. **John 11:4** "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

The Father's glory was the reason Peter was martyred the way he was. **John 21:19** "This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God."

And the Father's glory was the reason that Jesus was crucified for sinners. **John 17:1** "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,"

Therefore, pray for earthly things. But chiefly pray that whatever God decides to do, whether He decides to restore your health, or no; whether He decides to restore your marriage, or no; whether He decides to rescue that relationship or not, that He would be honored, and you would rest satisfied in Him. That is the fruit that God is aiming at.

Self-denial is not impoverishment but a postponement to greater joy¹⁴

Jesus refuses to leave it there. He refuses to let you walk away from these words thinking that you must sacrifice your joy on the altar of God's glory. These things are not to be separated. Look forward to v.11 "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." When we subordinate our desires to God's glory, we are not sacrificing a greater joy for a lesser joy. When the Father exalts Himself in our life, that is the greater joy. That's why Müller could preach this at his own wife's funeral:

"The Lord is good, and doeth good," (Psalm 119:68) "all will be according to His own blessed character. Nothing but that, which is

¹⁴ Müller said "Self-denial is not so much an impoverishment as a postponement: we make a sacrifice of a present good for the sake of a future and greater good." John Piper, *A Camaraderie of Confidence: The Fruit of Unfailing Faith in the Lives of Charles Spurgeon, George Müller, and Hudson Taylor*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2016), pg. 80

good, like Himself, can proceed from Him. If he pleases to take my dearest wife, it will be good, like Himself. What I have to do, as His child, is to be satisfied with what my Father does, that I may glorify Him.”¹⁵

“And so prove to be my disciples”

That’s the type of fruit that *proves* we are Jesus’ disciples. That’s how v.8 ends. “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and *so prove to be my disciples.*” When you abide in Jesus, and His words abide in you, and you pray and produce fruit that glorifies the Father, you are not earning a spot on the vine. Paul said “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh” (**Romans 7:18**) Rather you are proving that the Vine has made you alive. v.3 “Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.” v.16 “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.”

That’s how the Father is glorified. You bear much fruit, in spite of v.5 “apart from me you can do nothing.” Why? Because Christ’s word abides in you, and you prayerfully depend upon Him for your every need.

Application

Our Doctrine: Failure to pray is always a sign of self-reliance

This is the absolute implication of Jesus’ words. v.7 “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” Why does Jesus say this? v.5 “...apart from me you can do nothing.” He tells you to pray *because* you are helpless on our own. If you don’t call on Him in prayer, you’re telling Jesus ‘No, I got this. I can handle this Jesus. I’m not as helpless as you make me out to be.’ Prayerlessness is not *merely* a mishandling of priorities, it is pride. Prayerlessness is one of the chief signs of the reprobate. David says in **Psalm 14:4** “Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread *and do not call upon the Lord?*” **Jeremiah 10:25** “Pour

¹⁵ *ibid*, pg. 68

out your wrath on the nations that know you not, *and on the peoples that call not on your name,*" (cf. Hosea 7:7) Why do the reprobate refuse to pray? Because they see no need of the Lord.

If you say, "I'm too busy to pray...I just don't have time." You are simply agreeing with the doctrine. You're saying "I have too many things to do, that require my effort. If I give time to prayer, I'm giving less time to my effort. The only person that is dependable is me.' The Puritan Thomas Brooks said

"What are all those businesses that are upon your hands, [compared] to those business and weighty affairs that lay upon the hands of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Daniel, Elijah, Nehemiah, Peter, [and] Cornelius? And yet you find all theses worthies exercising themselves in private prayers...Now certainly, sirs, your great businesses are little more than zeros compared with theirs."¹⁶

If you are busy, that is all the more reason to pray to God and ask for help. Nobody was more busy than Jesus Christ when He ministered on earth. And yet what did He do? He often went away for whole evenings to spend time with the Father in prayer (cf. Luke 6:12). Jesus was not self-reliant. He depended upon time conversing with the Father. And so do you.

Dear congregation, the quickest way to give into the temptation to defect from Jesus Christ is to start to rely on your own strength. Having your prayer life consist merely of throwing up 10 second prayers to God, is like texting while driving. You're going to crash. "Apart from Christ you can do nothing."

That's **our doctrine**: Failure to pray is always a sign of self-reliance. Therefore our duty...

¹⁶ Thomas Brooks, *The Secret Key to Heaven: The Vital Importance of Private Prayer*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 87-88)

Our Duty: 'Get yourself happy in the Lord through His Word'

Müller insisted upon the importance of John 15:7. Remember what he said?

“I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the word of God, and to meditation on it...What is the food of the inner man? Not *prayer*, but *the word of God*;...¹⁷ The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished.”¹⁸

What does this look like? Consider three ways to get yourself happy in the Lord through His Word.

Memorize the Word

The Psalmist says in **Psalm 119:11** “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” The Hebrew word for “stored” can be translated treasure.¹⁹ Memorizing is treasuring. If someone offered you a combination to a safety deposit box which contained millions of dollars, and you had to memorize it in order to get the money, you would memorize. How much more the Words of the Living Christ? Memorizing is not a trivial exercise. Memorizing is treasuring.

Meditate on the Word

This is implied in v.7 “If...my words *abide* in you” ἐνοικέω enoikeō in the Greek.²⁰ Meaning, “let my Word inhabit you, influence you, reside within you. There is a powerful affect that happens when our mind mentally chews on the

¹⁷ John Piper, *A Camaraderie of Confidence: The Fruit of Unfailing Faith in the Lives of Charles Spurgeon, George Müller, and Hudson Taylor*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway, 2016), pg. 82

¹⁸ John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of A Christian Hedonist*, (Colorado Springs, CO.,: Multnomah Books, 2003), pg. 357

¹⁹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H6845&t=KJV>

²⁰ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1774&t=KJV>

Words of Christ. David says in **Psalm 39:3** “My heart became hot within me. As I *mused*, the fire burned;” David was saying “as I reflected...as I was absorbed in thought”²¹ then my heart became hot—the fire burned. Intimacy with Christ comes when the Words of Scripture come alive to the heart through musing on them.²²

Pray the Word

This is where many Christians fail. Reading *and* prayer. If you were to ask which is more important, it would be like looking out the window at 30,000 feet and asking, “Which wing is more important, the right or the left?” God gives us Scripture so we can enter into a holy argument with Him. “Lord your Word says “Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4) That is your express will. And John says that in **1 John 5:14** “This is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.” ‘So Lord give me delight in you. Help me to see you as glorious though my circumstances are gloomy. Cause me to see oh God that whatever comes from your Sovereign hand, it is only good. You can only do good things. And therefore cause me to delight in whatever you have planned for my life.’

“Reading, and memorizing and meditating on the Bible is the central act of Christian existence” If you are looking for a great resource on how to get into the Word, check out John Piper’s new book “Reading the Bible Supernaturally”

That’s our **duty**: Get yourself happy in the Lord through His Word. Therefore our delight...

²¹ http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=muse

²² “When the Biblical words of Jesus abide in [your] mind, [you] hear the very thoughts of the Living Christ...and out of that deep listening of the heart comes the language of prayer.” John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of A Christian Hedonist*, (Colorado Springs, CO.,: Multnomah Books, 2003), pg. 175

Our Delight: No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly

When Müller's later recounted the last moments with his wife Mary, this is what he said

“The last portion of Scripture which I read to my precious wife was this: “The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11) Now, if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have received grace, we are partakers of grace, and to all such he will give glory also. I said to myself, with regard to the latter part, “no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” —I am in myself a poor worthless sinner, but I have been saved by the blood of Christ...”

Dear congregation, God does not withhold any good thing from those who have trusted in Him. He has given You His only Son. **Romans 8:32** “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” He has given you His Son! How can he fail to give you every other good thing? So when your wife dies, or when your health fails, or your bank account is zero, trust that even these things are good things *ultimately* from the Father. These will ultimately be used to draw you nearer to the cross. Nearer to Christ. Nearer to glory.

Communion: "Neither height nor depth"