

The Presence of Joy

Discovering the higher dimension of human experience.

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The Divine has always walked within the Natural.

The biblical narrative does not portray God as a distant observer, but as one who actively intervenes in the physical world.

Adam & Eve

Walked with God in the cool of the day.

Abraham

Encountered the smoldering covenant fire.

Jacob

Wrestled directly with the Divine.

Moses

Sustained 40 days without food; his face shone with glory.

Isaiah & Ezekiel

Saw the glory of the Lord physically filling the temple.

4 And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east. 5 And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house.

Ezekiel 43:4–5

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28 “It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 “Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Joel 2:28–29

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C.S. Lewis - Transposition

And I likewise love this internal flutter in one context and call it a pleasure and hate it in another and call it misery. It is not a mere sign of joy and anguish: it becomes what it signifies. When the joy thus flows over into the nerves that overflow is its consummation: when the anguish thus flows over that physical symptom is the crowning horror. The very same thing which makes the sweetest drop of all in the sweet cup also makes the bitterest drop in the bitter.

-C.S. Lewis, Transposition

I take our emotional life to be "higher" than the life of our sensations--not, of course, morally higher, but richer, more varied, more subtle. And this is a higher level which nearly all of us know. And I believe that if anyone watches carefully the relation between his emotions and his sensations he will discover the following facts; (1) that the nerves do respond, and in a sense most adequately and exquisitely, to the emotions; (2) that their resources are far more limited, the possible variations of sense far fewer, than those of emotion; (3) and that the senses compensate for this by using the same sensation to express more than one emotion--even, as we have seen, to express opposite emotions.

-C.S. Lewis, Transposition

The Principle of Transposition.

Definition:

Transposition occurs whenever a higher, richer reality reproduces itself in a lower, more limited medium.

The Mechanics - C.S. Lewis:

The lower medium struggles to comprehend the complexity of the higher. It lacks the vocabulary to contain it fully, but that does not make the higher reality any less true.



The Ultimate Transposition: The Word Became Flesh.

*"And the Word became flesh,
and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14)*

The Infinite God humbled Himself, condensing His richer, greater magnitude into our lower human reality. He did this so that we, existing in the lower reality, could finally know Him.



The gifts of God are irrevocable

9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11 They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

Acts 1:9–11

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7 “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

John 16:7

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Pentecost - Acts 2.

The Day of Pentecost: A New Encounter

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Acts 2:1–4

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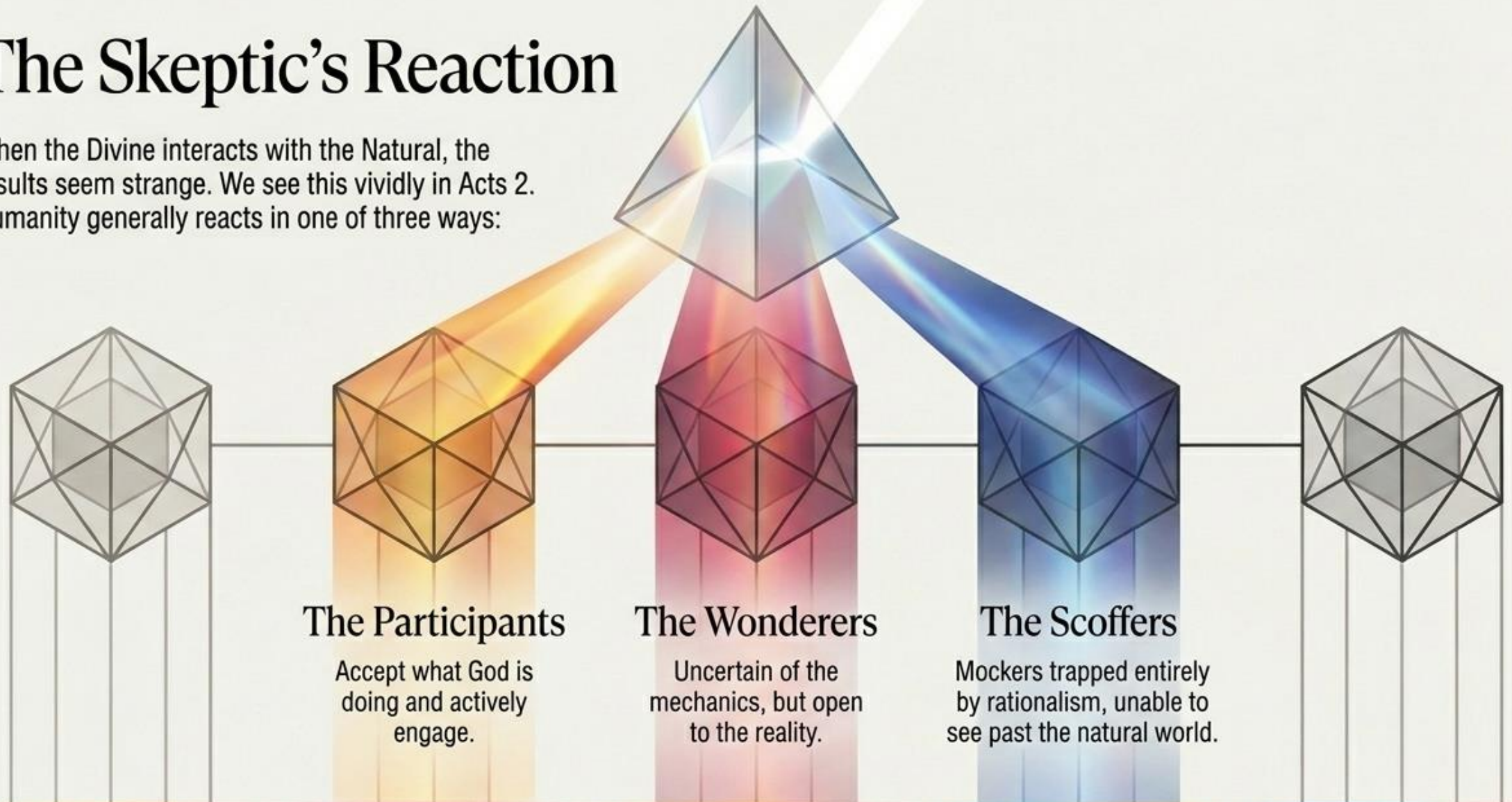
When a higher reality hits a lower reality, it appears strange.

"I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind..." (Joel 2:28)

The events of Pentecost (Acts 2) sounded chaotic and strange to the natural ear. We should not expect the Divine interacting with the Natural to produce only normal, familiar human results.

The Skeptic's Reaction

When the Divine interacts with the Natural, the results seem strange. We see this vividly in Acts 2. Humanity generally reacts in one of three ways:



“The sceptic’s conclusion that the so-called spiritual is really derived from the natural... is exactly what we should expect.” — C.S. Lewis

We now see that if the spiritual is richer than the natural (as no one who believes in its existence would deny) then this is exactly what we should expect. And the sceptic's conclusion that the so-called spiritual is really derived from the natural, that it is a mirage or projection or imaginary extension of the natural, is also exactly what we should expect; for, as we have seen, this is the mistake which an observer who knew only the lower medium would be bound to make in every case of Transposition. The brutal man never can by analysis find anything but lust in love;...It is no good browbeating the critic who approaches a Transposition from below. On the evidence available to him his conclusion is the only one possible.

Everything is different when you approach the Transposition from above, as we all do in the case of emotion and sensation or of the three-dimensional world and pictures, and as the spiritual man does in the case we are considering.

-CS Lewis

Perspective dictates your perception of the spiritual.



The Scoffer

Approaches entirely from below. Sees only the natural medium, doubts anything else is possible, and mocks what God is doing.

The Wonderer

Uncertain and confused by the strange physical manifestation, but maintains an open posture.

The Participant

Approaches from above. Accepts that the spiritual is richer than the natural, and engages directly with what God is doing.

Joy & Enjoyment in God

Presence of God (the higher dimension) – transposed in our experience (the lower dimension) is joy and pleasure.



Joy

A radiant, overflowing experience.



Pleasure

A deep, satisfying delight.

8 O taste and see that the Lord is
good; How blessed is the man who
takes refuge in Him!

Psalm 34:8

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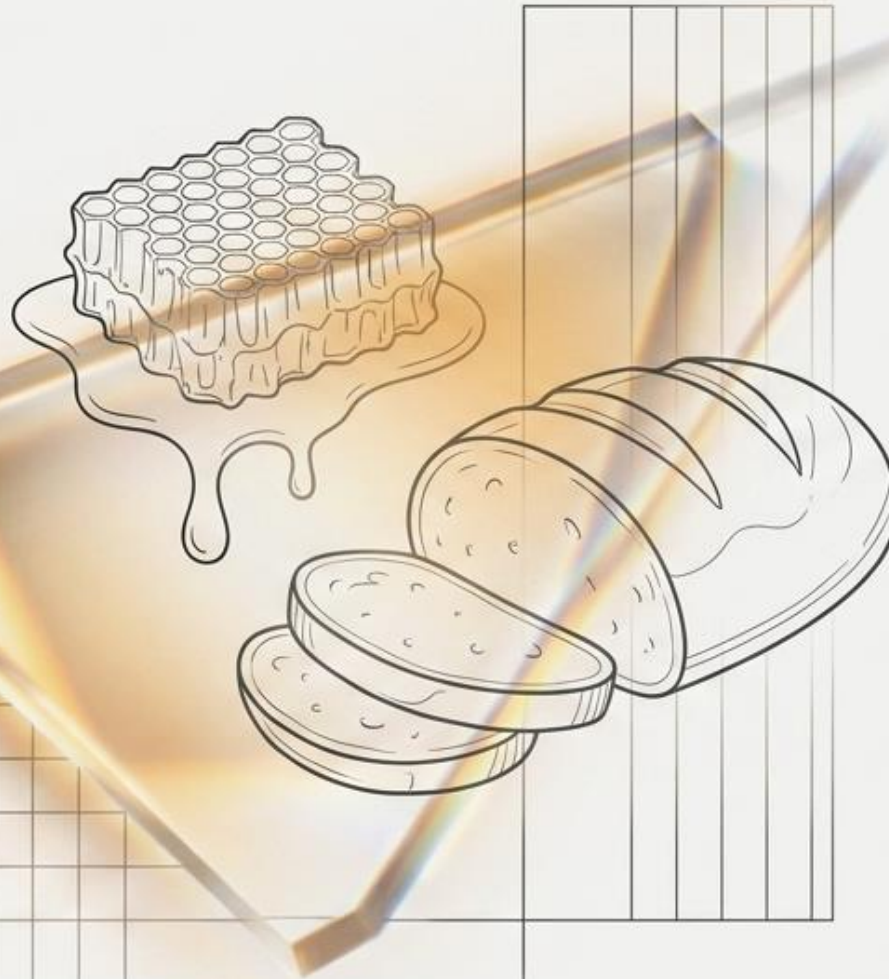
103 How sweet are Your words to my
taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my
mouth!

Psalm 119:103

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Feasting on the Divine

Scripture repeatedly frames encountering God not as an intellectual exercise, but as a sensory feast.



1. The Metaphor of Tasting

"O taste and see that the Lord is good." (Psalm 34:8)

"How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey." (Psalm 119:103)

2. The Mandate to Abide (John 6 & 15)

Jesus shockingly commands us to abide in Him for one explicit purpose: "So that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

53 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. 54 “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 “For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56 “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood **abides** in Me, and I in him.

John 6:53–56

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11 “These things I have spoken to you
so that My joy may be in you, and that
your joy may be made full.

John 15:11

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6 For You make him most blessed
forever; You make him joyful with
gladness in Your presence.

Psalm 21:6

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11 You will make known to me the
path of life; In Your presence is
fullness of joy; In Your right hand there
are **pleasures forever**.

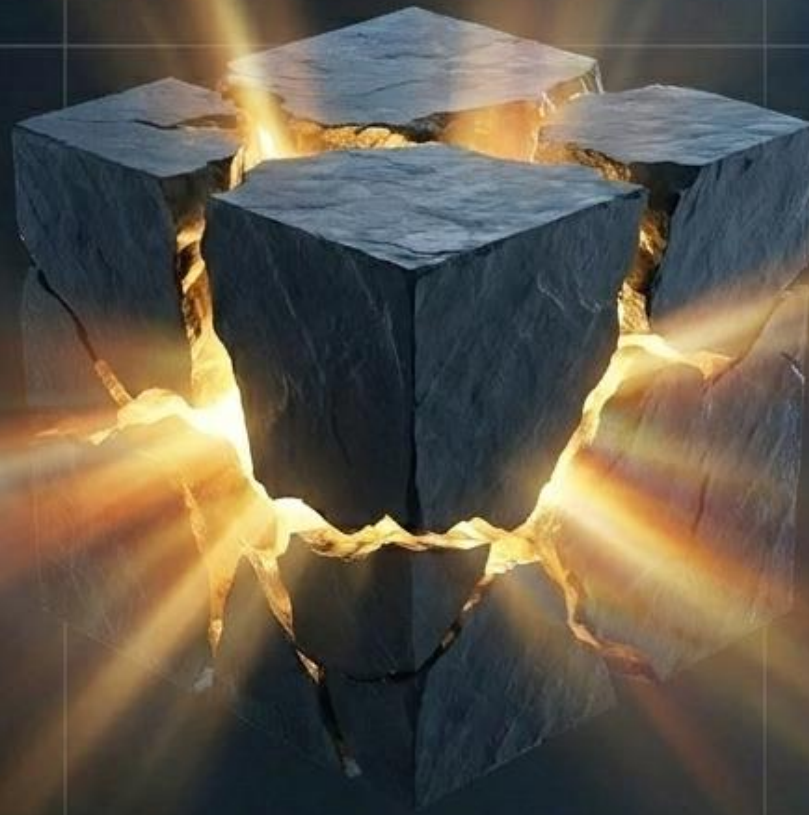
Psalm 16:11

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Why are so many modern believers deeply joy-deficient?

The Trap: Rationalism

Dictates that reason is the ultimate test of knowledge. It reduces worship to a sterile duty and removes the heart from faith.

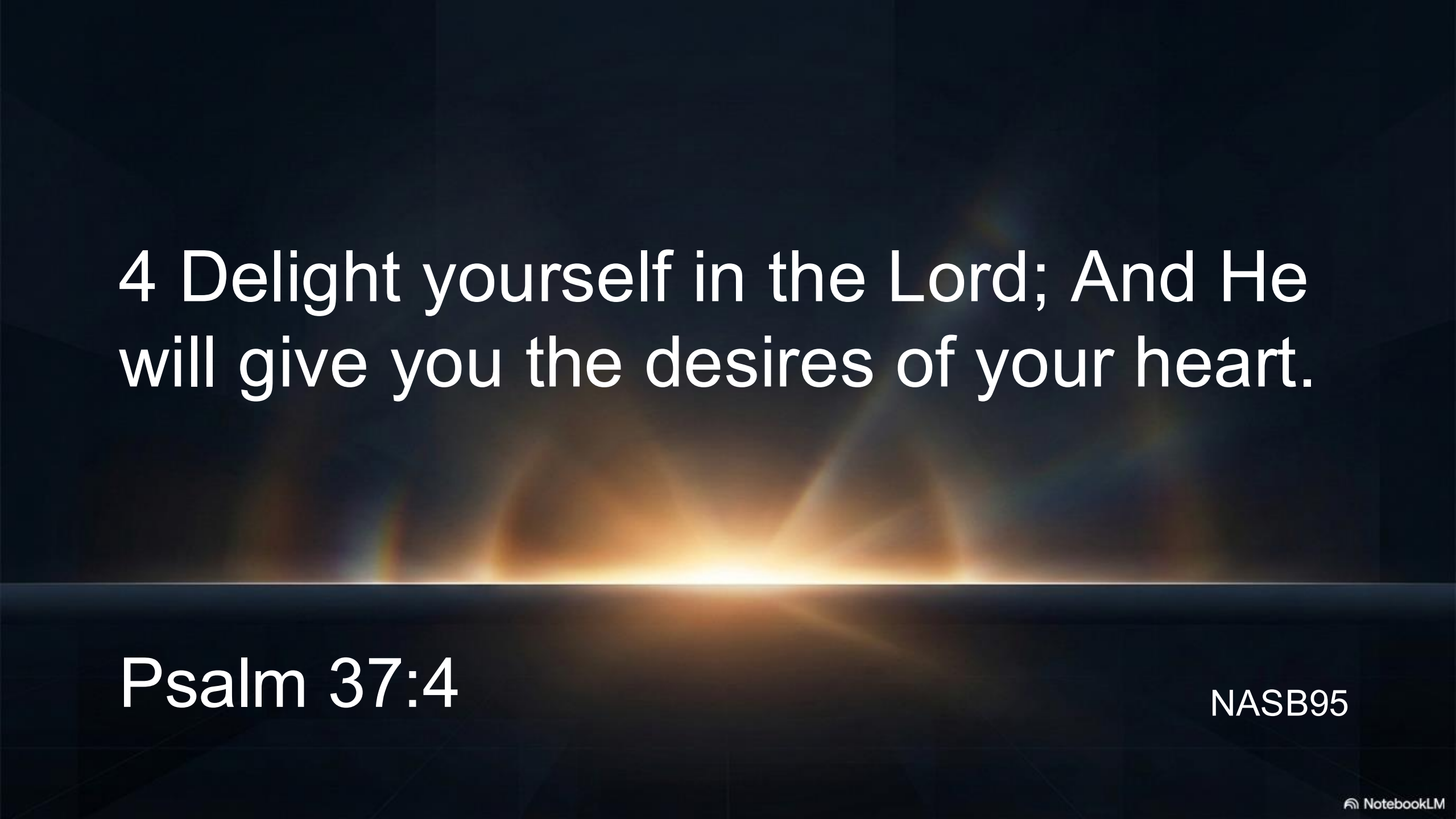


The Truth: Spiritual Affections

Fundamental human impulses and spiritual affections take precedence over pure logic. (Jonathan Edwards)

The Insight: You do not check your brain at the door to experience God. You are simply attaining a higher dimension that human intellect alone is too small to contain.

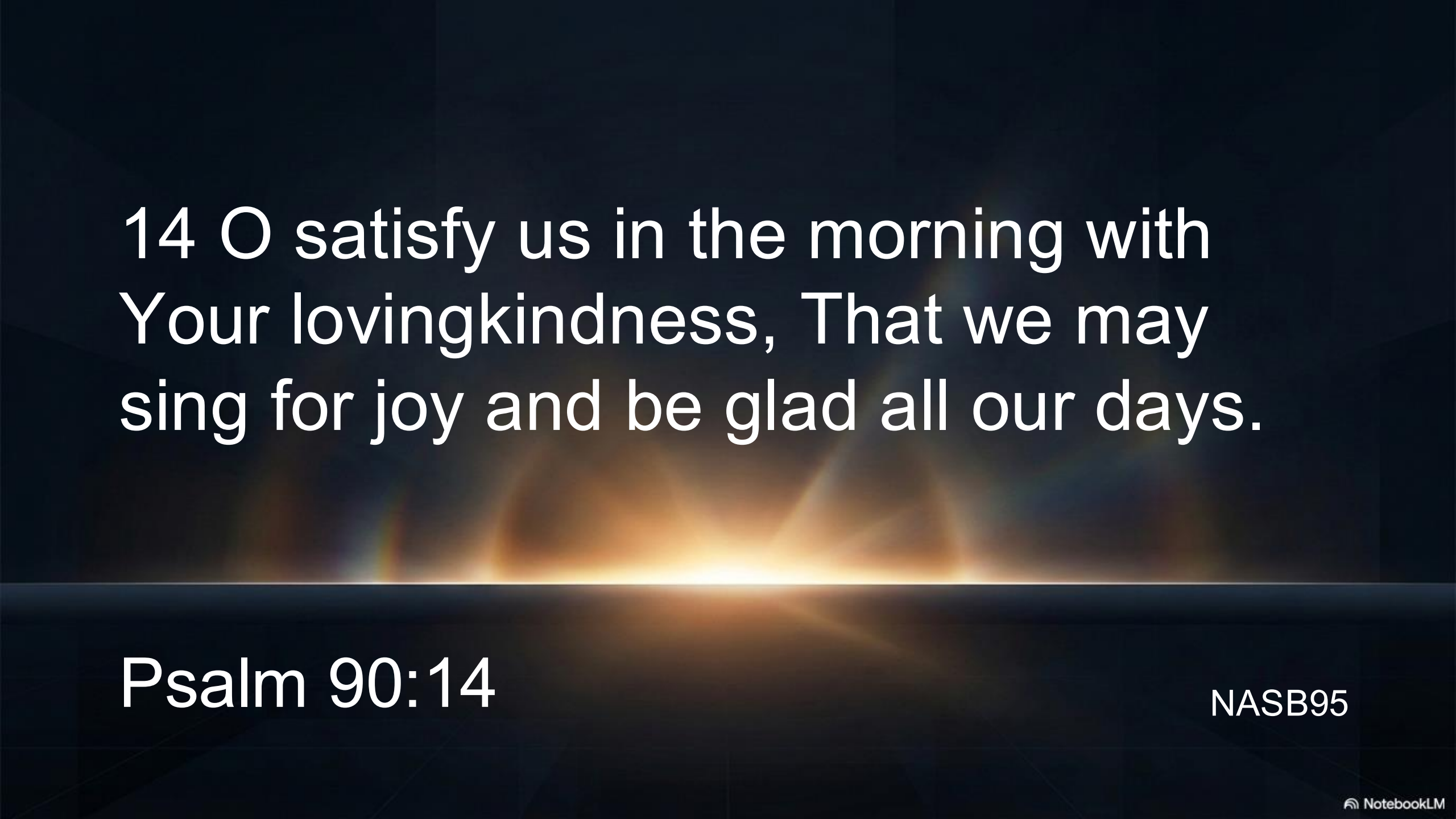
Incomprehensible
vs.
Overcomprehensible



4 Delight yourself in the Lord; And He
will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:4

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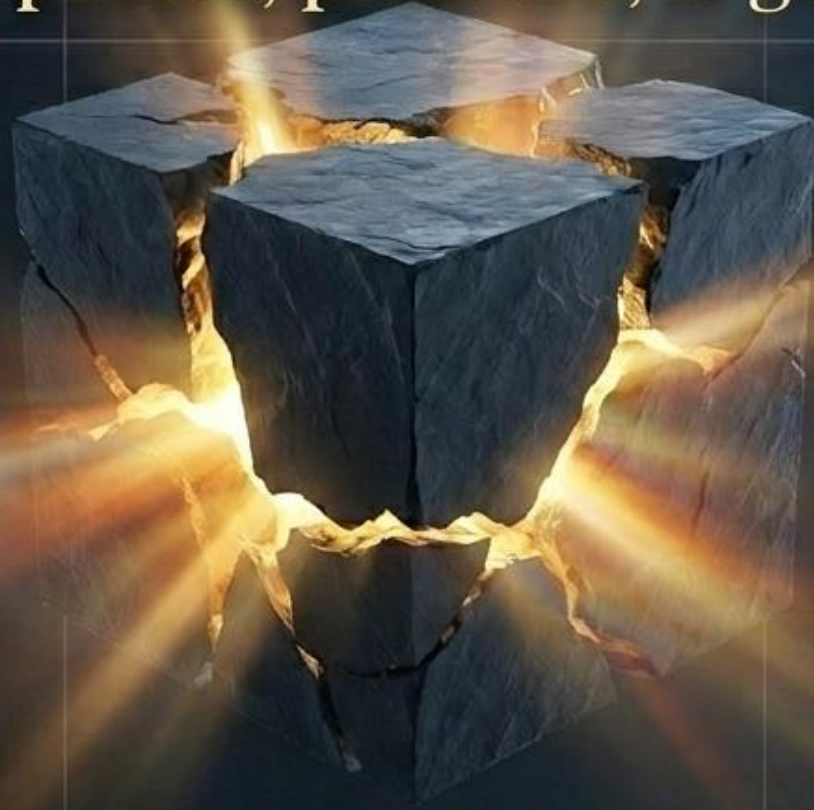


14 O satisfy us in the morning with
Your lovingkindness, That we may
sing for joy and be glad all our days.

Psalm 90:14

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We aren't convinced that pursuing our own joy,
happiness, pleasure, is good.



Piper's Journey to Joy and Delight in God

All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.

-Blaise Pascal

Piper's Journey to Joy and Delight in God

If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that 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.

-C.S. Lewis

Piper's Journey to Joy and Delight in God

There once was in man a true happiness of which now remain to him only the mark and empty trace, which he in vain tries to fill from all his surroundings, seeking from things absent the help he does not obtain in things present. But these are all inadequate, because the infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God Himself

-Blaise Pascal

Is it selfish to be motivated by your own happiness?

The Duty Trap (Kant & The Stoics)

Belief: To do something good because it makes you happy ruins its goodness.

Result: Worship becomes a dry obligation. Seeking pleasure is viewed as selfish, utilitarian, and mercenary.



The Pascal Reality (Blaise Pascal & John Piper)

Belief: *All men seek happiness... This is the motive of every action.* (Pascal)

Result: Seeking happiness is not a sin; it is the law of the human heart, much like gravity.

Insight: It is unbiblical and arrogant to presume that we are worshiping God if we find no God-exalting pleasure in Him. (Piper)

The Architecture of True Joy

The presence of God
manifests in our human
experience as
overwhelming joy
(Lewis's Transposition)

We are fundamentally
designed to pursue
our ultimate joy
(Pascal/Piper)

The Synthesis:
Therefore, pursuing the presence of
God and pursuing your own greatest joy
are the exact same pursuit.

We are commanded to
pursue the presence of God

Show Me Your Glory



Moses

He had more of God than anyone on the planet. He spoke with Him personally. Yet, he was entirely unsatisfied. His posture was to violently press in for more.



The 70-Year-Old Woman

Lived a lifetime of quiet, duty-bound religion. Her realization at the end: "No one ever told me there was more to be had."

Which posture will define your faith?



Seek the Lord

13 'You will seek Me and find Me
when you search for Me with all your
heart.

Jeremiah 29:13

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Seek the Lord

4 Seek the Lord and His strength;
Seek His face continually.

Psalm 105:4

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Seek the Lord

6 Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.

Isaiah 55:6

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Seek the Lord

8 When You said, “Seek My face,” my heart said to You, “Your face, O Lord, I shall seek.”

Psalm 27:8

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The Great Exchange

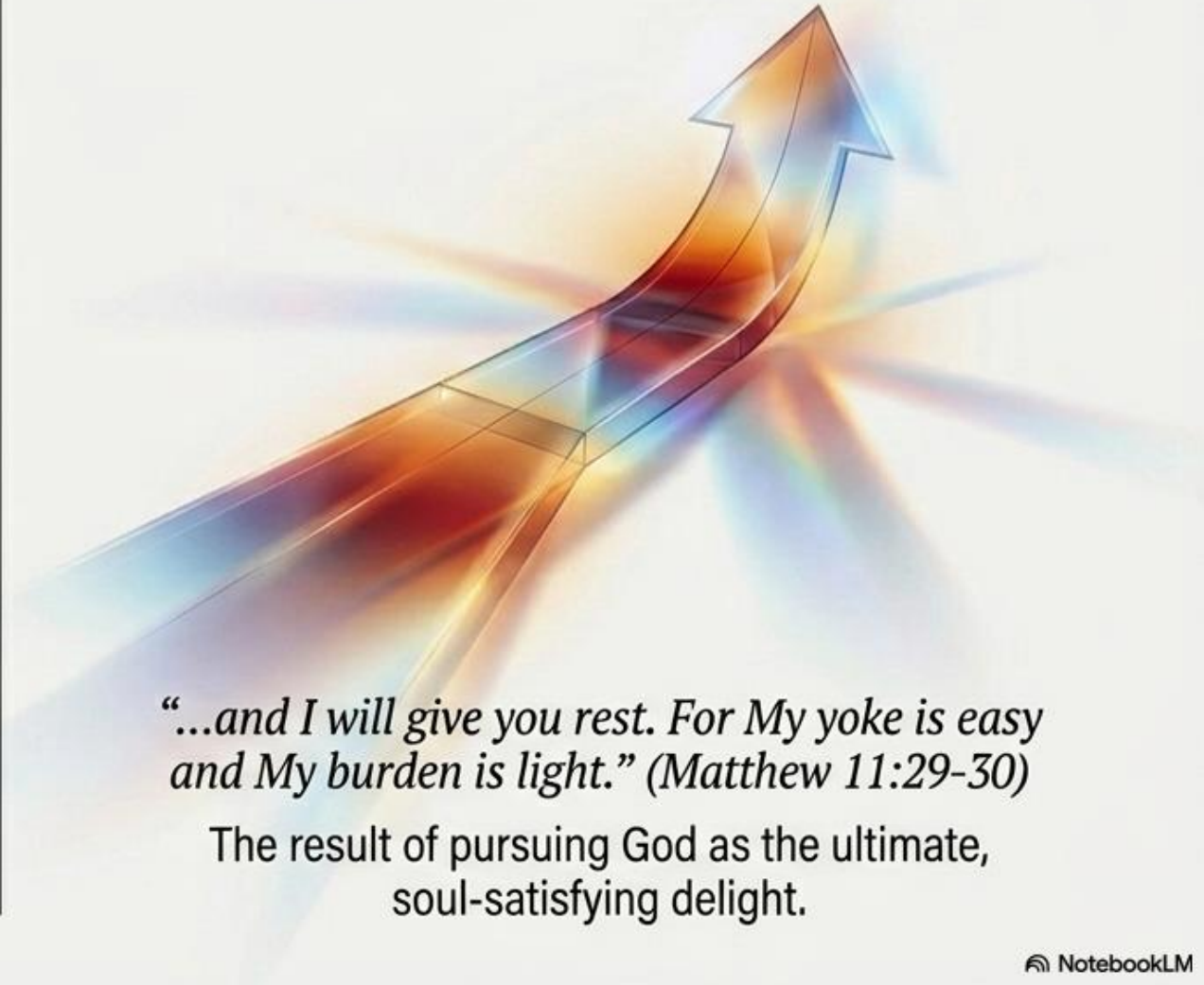
The Exhaustion of Duty



“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden...” (Matthew 11:28)

The result of trying to sustain faith through pure rationalism and joyless obligation.

The Promise of the Presence



“...and I will give you rest. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:29-30)

The result of pursuing God as the ultimate, soul-satisfying delight.

2 Serve the Lord with gladness; Come
before Him with joyful singing. 3 Know
that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who
has made us, and not we ourselves; We
are His people and the sheep of His
pasture. 4 Enter His gates with
thanksgiving And His courts with praise.
Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

Psalm 100:2–4

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The Presence of Joy

Where the infinite intersects the physical.

A Dual Meaning

- ✧ **Presence:** The state of being.
(Is joy present in your life?)
- ✧ **The Presence:** The Divine Almighty.
(Where the Lord is present, joy is present.)

O Taste and See (Psalm 34:8)

*When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You,
'Your face, O Lord, I shall seek.' (Psalm 27:8)*

Stop treating worship as a dry intellectual duty. Give yourself permission to relentlessly pursue the higher dimension of joy.

**In Your presence is fullness of joy.
(Psalm 16:11)**

Time of worship and seeking.