



# Sermon Growth Guide

**September 14, 2025**

**Desires of the Heart**

**Psalms 37:1-9**

**Key Verse:** Psalm 37:4 “Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

**Big Idea:** The deepest desires of our heart—love, acceptance, purpose, companionship—are only fully met as we walk with Jesus.

## Foundations

We live in an age of constant offers promising happier, more fulfilling, more prosperous lives. Advertisements, articles, and podcasts create hunger for what we don't have while dulling our gratitude for what we do. It's a tough culture in which to address discontentment. One of the great things about the Psalms is that, though written thousands of years ago, their truth is still relevant. God is unchangeable, and so it seems, is human nature. Like the Israelites, we are tempted by power, prestige, and prosperity.

Psalm 37, like Psalm 1, is a psalm of wisdom. Both warn God's people against being deceived by the worldly success of the wicked. It can be confusing and frustrating to see evil prosper while flaunting both wealth and disregard for God. But as Eugene Peterson paraphrases: “Don't bother your head with braggarts or wish you could succeed like the wicked. In no time they'll shrivel like grass clippings.” This is a reassuring picture. Both psalms also give us an action plan: delight in God. Be still. Trust. Dwell. Dwelling is more than residing—it's a place of safety, protection, and belonging. Don't fret. Don't get angry. Plant yourself by streams of water, grow, and be fruitful, waiting patiently for God's timing. As N.T. Wright notes, the Psalms teach us humility and hope. God is still in charge. “Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

## Understanding God's Word

As a group, read Psalm 37: 1-9. Compare it to Psalm 1. What similarities do you see? Why do you think “trusting God” is commanded before “and do good.” (37:3) What might have been the desires of one's heart that the psalmist is writing about? Do you see a correlation between verses 3 -4 and verses 5-6? How does fretting lead to evil? (37:8). If time allows, look up Psalm 23:6, Psalm 27:4, Psalm 27:5 for a fuller picture of the word dwell.

## Applying God's Word

Do you find yourself envious of those who ignore God's commands yet seem to get ahead? (37:1) How do you delight in the Lord? (37:4) What are the desires of your heart? (37:4) Does Augustine's prayer, “Order my loves,” bring you hope—or some anxiety? Consider the order of your loves. Be honest. What do you truly love? Where is it hardest to “commit your way to the Lord”? Has walking with Jesus met your deepest desires? If not, reflect together on how that might change.

## Witnessing God's Word

In the sermon, Tim referenced Bruce Springsteen's song Everybody's Got a Hungry Heart. In the third stanza Springsteen sings, “Everybody needs a place to rest. Everybody wants to have a home. Don't make no difference what nobody says. Ain't nobody likes to be alone.” Our world is hungry, tired, and lonely. We know where our deepest desires are truly met—only in Jesus. What a great time to invite someone into your church home, whether it's MomCo, a GTW class, Alpha, Marriage Mingle, or Sunday worship. Who in your life is hungry, tired, and lonely?

Os Guinness, whom I deeply admire, has said we are now in a civilizational moment. Civilizations rise and fall. Western Civilization is now deciding, will we stay firmly seated on our foundational values, or will we topple over? Whether you knew the name Charlie Kirk or not before his assassination on Wednesday, I know you in the rising generations did. None of us knew the name Iryna Zarutka, or the kids at Evergreen High School. This has been a hard week for our nation. It does feel like a watershed moment, a time to check in with one another, pray deeply, have serious conversations and turn to Jesus. Come what may, we build our lives on the firm foundation, the rock, as Jesus says, the Word of God which we hear and obey. Stand up for the value and dignity of every human life, every person, made in the image of God. The Kingdom of God is not here yet. This world is not as it should be. The Kingdom has not yet arrived; but it is on the way. Jesus has guaranteed it. He is putting all things right. And we are rehearsing for the Kingdom right here, doing our level best to live it out.

David says do not fret at evildoers, even when they seem successful in their evil schemes. God is on the throne. God is over all. Nobody likes to look like a fool. Isn't that true? Abigail says I have a high capacity for finding the quickest line at the store, or TSA. I just hate to pick a line and watch the person who was behind me get through first. We don't want to look like a fool in our race to gain what we want or what we need, but sometimes we are chasing the wrong things. That's what David explores in this Psalm. Interesting, isn't it? Here's a prayer, a song, from King David, from about 3,000 years ago. It could have been written yesterday. Why do the evil prosper?

This is a new series, How to Get What You Want, looking at the longings of the human heart. Those longings are not so different whether you are King David 3,000 years ago, a disciple in Jerusalem, or sitting in Colorado Springs today. There are things we

all need and desire and want. We are hungry. To quote Bruce Springsteen, "Everybody's got a hungry heart." There is an empty place inside, a God-shaped whole as some have said, that we try to fill. There are needs and desires inherent to the human condition. We all want to be loved, we all want to be in control, we all want to make a difference. We long for purity, peace, and justice. When these go unmet, we look for alternative means to satisfy. Proverbs 13:12 says, "Hope delayed makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life." I want that tree of life, desire fulfilled. How does God deal with our desires? How do you get what you want? How will you satisfy the Desires of the Heart?

People are searching for satisfaction of the needs of their heart. Someone referred me to an article by a New York author who was tired of meaningless hook-ups and tried to find her higher power: "I've wanted a higher power to provide that same narcotic delight one feels in the early stages of a relationship. In those rare white-light moments when I have felt a holy bliss, I've quickly purchased a candle or crystal, hoping to pocket the feeling." Melissa Broder. She wandered into a church in Paris trying to hear from God. Nothing landed. People are searching. If I can't have true peace, at least I'll try yoga. If I can't be pure, at least my food and water can be. If I can't be valued deeply, at least I can have a thousand likes on Instagram. If I can't find justice the way I like it, I'll swing for politics—or, God forbid, for violence. If I can't have lasting legacy, at least I'll try for a solid bank account. These are good desires, true desires, but we chase the wrong things to satisfy them. How to get what we want? There are a lot of crystal shops in town. Or you can go on Etsy and pay someone to cast a spell for you. That's real. It's a multi-million dollar business. It isn't working. None of that is working. David thought others were getting what they wanted, and he was being left behind. "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." (Psalms 37:1-2) It

might look like their line is moving faster, like their spells are working, or like evil ways and schemes win the profits, but the truth is evil doesn't win. Cheaters never prosper. Flowers in Israel can be pretty, but a hot wind burns them down in a day. Some people look like they are doing awesome in all the wrong ways, for doing all the wrong things. They are like cut flowers detached from life, the colors won't last. So, as for you who know the Lord, "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture." (Psalms 37:3)

"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." (Psalms 37:5-6) You won't be a fool in the end for doing it God's way. It reminds me of that Proverb: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6) Wait for God to act. "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." (Psalms 37:7) You don't need to worry. Don't give yourself over to negative thoughts that ultimately just eat away at you from the inside. Don't give in to envy. Don't succumb to resentment. "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." (Psalms 37:8-9) Though everyone around you might be living as if there is no God, remember that there is. God is in heaven. God is on the throne. God will act and set things right.

The most prominent person in the world, the most successful business leader, the most powerful personality, the greatest and most adored actor, the strongest and fastest NFL player, they are all, all of them, living on borrowed time. I don't know who your heroes are. Taylor Swift. Travis Kelce. Justin Bieber. Now I'm just naming people.

Vladimir Putin. Elon Musk. Jeff Bezos. Maybe it's someone a lot closer. Maybe it is someone you work with or interact with almost every day. You see how they thrive, how their career got propelled beyond yours, and you just wonder what shortcut they took, what cheat code they used, how they got there while you stay here, and you are tempted to start to believe that we are living in a world without God, where there is no judge. The greatest and most powerful among us are still under the all-powerful, sovereign rule of God. They are nothing more than mortal men and mortal women living on earth under God's just and sovereign and immortal rule. They live on borrowed time and borrowed space, borrowed from the common grace of God that sustains all of us by his will and for his purpose. God will set it right in the end.

But we skipped a verse. "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalms 37:4) What do I do with the desires of my heart? Take delight in the Lord. The Hebrew means "enjoy the deliciousness" of God; delight in the very taste. Like, "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him." (Psalms 34:8) Delight in God. That is more than trust or faith or enduring belief, more than remembering that God is there and will act even when it looks like he is not and has gone silent. Delight. Enjoy. Love God and God will give you the desires of your heart! We did it! If you show enough delight in God, you will get what you want! Think so? Not exactly. In the words of coach Lee Corso, "Not so fast my friends." But that's what it says, isn't it?

We can go two directions here, just with the text, with what it says. God will give you the desires of your heart. That could mean, and does mean, God will give good things to you. God will. Your whole life is filled with gifts from God. God loves to give good gifts to us. Jesus one time was teaching in Matthew 7 and said, "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or

if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7:9-11) Yes, God gives. Yes, prayer changes things. Yes, God bestows blessings on us as we seek him for them. But it also means something else. If you put your delight in God above all things, your heart will change. God will give you new, different desires. God will give you the desires of your heart, new desires, for new, good, godly things. You were wanting a snake, wanting a stone instead of bread. You didn't know it, but you were wanting the wrong things. God will give you a desire for bread, and bread that satisfies, the bread of life. See that?

Augustine of Hippo, church leader in the early church and a great theologian and philosopher, he prayed to God, "ordinate in me caritatem." Order my loves. Set my loves in order within me. He believed we needed to go a little deeper than just saying, "God, give me what I want." We need to trust God to change what we want. "God, make me want what you want me to want." Make me love you above all things, and love other things in a right order, a right priority. When a heart goes disordered, horrible things can happen. Let me love the right things. Let me want the right things. This, church, is actually how to get what you want. This is how you land at the Tree of Life. This is how you arrive at a desire fulfilled. You let God change what you desire. How do I do that?

It is possible to change. Did you know that science has made it possible to make you like kale? It's true. It's called "taste bud training." Because your taste buds regenerate every two weeks, all you have to do is eat kale every day for two weeks and, ideally, don't eat anything else that tastes good for all that time, and then you will like kale. Something like that. I'm not an expert. But the point is made. We can change. Our wants, our desires, what pleases us, what comforts us, it can change. Turn from false satisfaction to what truly satisfies. "Come,

all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare." (Isaiah 55:1-2)

Where is the tree of life? Where do all these desires actually land, actually find fruition, resolution? Jesus. "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." (John 7:37-38) Come to me, says Jesus. "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35) Don't take a stone to eat. Don't want a stone. Turn to me, says Jesus. "I am the true vine" (John 15:1) Says Jesus. You don't need to live cut off from the source of life, cut off like cut flowers, like cut grass, just waiting for all the color and life to fade away. "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved." (John 10:9) I am the Good Shepherd. I am the resurrection. I am the way, the truth, the life. What do you want? How do you get what you want? Turn to Jesus.