

# Psalms 40:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

## Analysis

**I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.** This verse expands the commitment of verse 7, revealing the internal motivation for obedience. David doesn't merely comply with God's will grudgingly; he 'delights' (chafatzti, חָפַצְתִּי) in it. This same word appeared in verse 6 regarding what God desires—creating beautiful reciprocity: God delights in obedience, David delights in obeying. Mutual delight characterizes healthy relationship with God.

The Hebrew chafetz (חָפַצְתִּי) means to take pleasure in, to desire, to find satisfaction in. David's obedience isn't dutiful obligation but joyful desire. This reflects the transformed heart that God promises in the new covenant: 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts' (Jeremiah 31:33). When God's law moves from external command to internal desire, obedience becomes delight rather than drudgery.

'Thy will, O my God' (retzoncha Elohai, רְצוֹנְךָ אֱלֹהֵי) identifies obedience's object and relationship's foundation. Ratzon (רְצוֹן) means will, pleasure, desire, purpose—what God wants accomplished. David commits to God's agenda, not his own. The possessive 'my God' emphasizes personal relationship—this isn't abstract deity but David's covenant God to whom he belongs and owes allegiance.

'Thy law is within my heart' (vetoratecha betoch me'ai, וְתוֹרַתְךָ בְּתוֹךְ מִעֵי) describes internalized obedience. Me'ai (מֵעֵי) means inward parts, bowels, inner being—the seat of emotions and will. God's law isn't merely external standard David

reluctantly follows but internal reality shaping desires, motivations, and choices. This is Ezekiel's prophecy fulfilled: 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh' (Ezekiel 36:26).

Hebrews applies this verse to Christ, who perfectly embodied internal, delighted obedience to the Father's will. Jesus said, 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me' (John 4:34). In Gethsemane, facing crucifixion's horror, He prayed, 'Not my will, but thine, be done' (Luke 22:42). Christ's obedience wasn't reluctant submission but willing, though costly, embrace of the Father's redemptive plan.

## **Historical Context**

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The contrast between external law-keeping and internal heart obedience runs throughout Scripture. Moses commanded, 'Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart' (Deuteronomy 6:5), establishing that true obedience involves affection, not merely action. Yet Israel repeatedly demonstrated the human tendency toward external compliance without heart transformation—keeping rituals while harboring rebellion.

The prophets consistently called for heart circumcision and internal transformation. Jeremiah contrasted Israel's covenant failure (broken because external only) with the coming new covenant where God would write law on hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-33). Ezekiel prophesied God replacing stony hearts with hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26-27). These prophecies recognized human inability to self-generate heart obedience and promised divine transformation as gracious gift.

By Jesus's time, Pharisaical Judaism had developed elaborate external law-keeping while often missing the law's heart. Jesus repeatedly confronted this hypocrisy: 'Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me' (Matthew 15:7-8). He called for heart transformation, teaching that evil actions flow from evil hearts (Matthew 15:18-19).

Paul's theology centers on this internal transformation through the Spirit.

Christians don't merely try harder to obey external law but are transformed by the Spirit who writes God's law on hearts and empowers obedience from within: 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son... that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Romans 8:3-4). This is Psalm 40:8 realized—God's law within hearts, producing delight in His will.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. Do you genuinely 'delight' to do God's will, or is your obedience primarily duty-driven?
2. What evidence exists that God's law is 'within your heart' rather than merely external obligation?
3. How can you cultivate deeper delight in God's will and ways?
4. In what areas might you be practicing external compliance without heart transformation?
5. How does Christ's perfect internal obedience model and enable your own heart obedience through the Spirit?

## Interlinear Text

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לַעֲשׂוֹת	רְצוֹנְךָ	אֱלֹהֵי י	חִפּ צִדְתִּי	י ת וְרִתְּךָ	בֵּית וְךָ	מִעֵי:
to do	thy will	O my God	I delight	yea thy law	is within	my heart
H6213	H7522	H430	H2654	H8451	H8432	H4578

## Additional Cross-References

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**Romans 7:22** (Word): For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

**John 4:34** (Parallel theme): Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

**Psalms 119:16** (Word): I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

**Psalms 119:24** (Light): Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.

**Psalms 119:47** (Word): And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.

**Jeremiah 15:16** (Word): Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

**Psalms 119:92** (Word): Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

**Psalms 112:1** (Word): Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

**Jeremiah 31:33** (Word): But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**Proverbs 3:1** (Word): My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: