

Dear friend,

I know a young teen that can tell me the names and personal history of each member of her favorite music group. She knows the names and lyrics to all their songs. She has “studied” this group because she loves them. I know an adult man who can tell me the roster of his favorite baseball team along with significant statistics of most of the players. He knows the teams record and can tell me the details of their most recent game. He has “sought” to know his team because he delights in it. I know another man who can name all the plants in his garden and what kinds of things are necessary for each plant to flourish. He knows when each will bloom. He has “learned” about these plants because he finds pleasure in their beauty. Every person has studied something out of delight in it. Whether it’s TV shows or books or stores or food or places or hobbies or historical events or any number of other things in this marvelous creation, all of us have learned about those things that bring us pleasure.

Psalm 111:2 says, “Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.” On one hand everything that is part of this creation is a part of God’s work. Paul says about the Lord in Romans 11:36, “All things are from him and through him and to him.” In Ephesians 1:12 he says that God is the one “who works out all things in conformity to the purpose of his will.” And the Psalmist (24:1-2) says, “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.” Therefore, we are to see God’s workmanship in all things. It is good to study and learn about every part of this creation out of our delight in God’s work. Here is the ultimate reason behind all education. This ought to be the motive of every student who is a Christian for why they study and of every Christian for why they study any subject or object or event.

However, in Psalm 111 the psalmist is not thinking about the great works of God in creation. He is particularly thinking about God’s great works of salvation. For the nation Israel that meant studying God’s work or rescuing them out of their slavery in Egypt, giving them the law at Mt. Sinai, taking them through the wilderness and giving them the Promised Land. The Israelites were to study or to seek after the meaning and glory of these great saving events because they were delighted with this evidence of God’s saving power.

For Christians, we see all of the great, saving works of God in the OT as pointing to and being fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We know that the great saving works of God reach their climax in Jesus and the salvation he has provided. We are delighted with Jesus and all that he has accomplished for us and therefore we study the doctrines of Christ and of his saving works. We are learners of Jesus Christ because we are impressed with him and his mighty works for us.

The word that is translated “studied” in the ESV or “pondered” in the NIV is most often translated with the word “seek”. “Great are the work of God, they are sought by all who delight in them.” There is a passion in the heart of the Christian to understand and know about the great works of God in Christ. Reading the Bible, memorizing Scripture, learning the catechism, talking with other Christians about doctrine, listening to sermons, reading theologically oriented books, going to Bible studies are all delightful tasks to the Christian. Just as gardeners love learning about their plants because their plants give them pleasure, so Christians love to learn about Christ because Christ gives them pleasure. You don’t study the works of God because

you're trying to impress God or other Christians. You don't study first so you can teach others. You study because you can't help yourself. You enjoy God's saving work and so you seek to understand and learn about it.

Are you "seeking/pondering/studying" the great works of God in Christ? If you are not, why not? The primary reason we do not study the works of Christ is not because we lack discipline but because we lack delight. Our failure to learn is due to weak hearts, not weak minds. Everyone studies the things they delight in. If you are not pondering the works of God then confess your lack of delight in the works of God. Ask God for a heart that delights in his work in Christ and then go read your Bible, go to a Bible Study, talk with your child about the catechism question. This is the happy task of all who love Christ.

Studying for delight,