

When I was young, the rules that my parents set forth for me didn't always make sense. Even though I was a relatively compliant child, their instruction would seem burdensome, at times. I was almost sure that the rules were designed to hold me back and be an obstacle to my fun. And now that I'm the dad, I know my kids feel the same way some days!

No matter the source of the instruction, the thought of rules tends to get an immediate negative reaction – a desire to push against them, testing the limits. I mean, how many of you have driven 5 over the speed limit today? 😊

The Lord's commands in the scriptures are often viewed the same way – as an inhibitor to keep us from thriving, rather than a blessing to cause us to thrive. So, when we see the statement from David in Psalm 119:52 that says, "When I think of your rules from of old, I take comfort, O Lord.", we may not immediately identify with him.

The key is knowing the character and the nature of the one giving the instruction. If my kids understood that my motivation is not that I take pleasure in making things hard for them, but that I love them, desire their good and can see things that they can't, my instruction to them would be more welcome. It may even be sought after!

Likewise, if our focus is on understanding the character and nature of God as David did, then we will be able to join David in his delight in the instruction of the Lord. David knew that the Lord: has made us (119:73); is good and does good (119:68); is our portion (119:57); teaches us and keeps us from going astray (119:66-67); and has steadfast love toward us (119:64). This is why David so embraced the word of the Lord. He knew that the instruction was for him – and for us – a guardrail to keep us from destruction, rather than a cage to keep us from fulfillment.

This year I pray that our view of hunger for and submission to the scriptures is elevated as we more clearly understand the character and the nature of the One who has spoken!

"I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word." 119:15-16

-Pastor Chad