



Candlewood Church



FREEDOM OF DESIRE

July 19, 2026

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BIG IDEA – We assume desire is either good (follow your heart) or bad (crucify your flesh), but it is far more nuanced; Desire isn't the enemy of freedom, unyielded disordered desires are.

Scripture Focus – I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. **Romans 7:15 NLT**

Blurb: Wanting things isn't the problem. It never was. The problem is, the pause; what shows up while waiting? **David, the giant-killer, lived that pause three times**, as a **shepherd**, as a **fugitive**, as a **king**. He got it right in the first two and catastrophically wrong in the last. **What is desire?** Oh, it is powerful, but it may not be the villain in our story. Even the Apostle Paul admitted he never fully figured out how to resolve that gap between wanting good and doing it.

Personal Story – Buying my first motorcycle.

I had the cash in my pocket. I was ready to wheel-n-deal to buy the motorcycle of my dreams. A Honda XL 125cc enduro motorcycle.



This was back in the early 80's when life was analog, slow, cash-only, handwritten paper homework, zero mental health discussions, (the only time someone saw a doctor was when something broke or had non-stop leaking out of their body. No one would just sit in their room alone, and being trapped in the house was a punishment!

I was exiting the 605 freeway on Carson to pull into the Honda Motorcycle dealership and buy my very own motorcycle. I dreamt of packing it into the back of my Ford Courier truck and driving home with it.

Let me back up a little to tell you where that love for motorcycles came from.



In 1972, my adopted Dad, feeling disconnected and knowing I was disappointed with him bought me my first motorcycle a 1970 100cc, 2-stroke, Kawasaki Dirt Bike! He knew nothing about motorcycles, so it made sense that he didn't know what he was buying. It turns out the bike was not built for motocross; it was built for dirt flat-track racing. So, it had some uniquely annoying features! The front tire was larger than the back tire. The gearing was for flat, oval racetracks, not off-road, back-hills riding.



My cousin was kind enough to take me out to show me how to ride it out behind the Prado Dam Bicentennial Mural in Corona, California. I discovered how much I hate 2-stroke engines! And, because the gearing was all wrong, I had to get a really long, fast head start just to climb the smallest of hills. If I didn't the bike would croak about halfway up because the spark plug was loaded up with oil. I had to carry extra spark plugs to trade out if I wanted to do any real off-road biking. I sold the bike after I came down a hill too fast, lost control and split my chin open when I face-planted on the handlebars.

In 1973 a friend of mine received a brand-new Honda XL 100 Enduro Motorcycle that his dad just randomly decided to buy him.

After that, I WAS SMITTEN!

I had been saving up for an Israel trip that Robin's Dad was taking, but I wanted a motorcycle more than a trip to Israel.

There I was exiting the freeway when I asked God this question ask I was exiting the freeway. "Can I buy this motorcycle?" No answer. So, I asked "Should I buy this motorcycle?" Then I heard the faint but clear whisper of God, "you can but you'll need this money for something else."

When I came to the light to turn, I had a few moments at the next light where I would either do a U turn going into the Honda Dealer or just turn left and go on home.

Remember, last week we talked about God giving us FREE WILL?

We are free to make our own choices, like the example of Moses and Pharaoh. We also talked about the idea of the power that free will comes with – we can either wield it or yield it.

The desire for the fulfillment of a childhood dream wasn't the problem. The problem was the desire and intense pause while waiting to buy the motorcycle -

no matter what God thought about it. I wanted it and that was the end of it. That desire was consuming me and overtaking the decisions to walk with Jesus.

Wanting some things isn't the problem. It never was.

The problem is, the pause; what shows up while waiting?

Today we'll look at David, the giant-killer, and how he lived out that pause three times, as a shepherd, as a fugitive, as a king.

He got it right in the first two and catastrophically wrong in the last.

What is desire?

And, why in the world would God give us the option of fulfilling our desires anyway we want?

We'll look at the Apostle Paul's response in the New Testament.

The stories in God's Word, the Bible which Isaiah says will stand forever, ("The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever." Isaiah 40:8 NLT) mean that we get a front-row seat to successes and failures of men and women's free-will decisions!

**The Bible is filled with desirous
decisions, showing us the
good, bad and really ugly.**

Let's take a balloon ride over the life of the famous Giant Killer – King David and see how David's desires drove his will and thus his decisions.

David's life actually maps cleanly onto three movements of desire, and this ties in well with week one's "yield/wield our will" discussion.



DIG DEEPER

I prepared a funeral sermonette for Josie Cruz's service at Rose Hill Memorial Park a week ago Friday. It was amazing to read Psalm 23, which was added to the book of Psalms late in David's life, just before died.

It's kind of a psalm of remembrance. I've posted the sermon in the Dig Deeper notes so you can download it.

Psalm 23 – Memories of a shepherd

When we look at a vast vista view of David's life, we could break it down into three major scenes in his life.

King David was 70 years old when he died. He reigned for 40 years, becoming king at the age of 30.



Scene 1 - Shepherd (pure desire in the pasture) likely 10 to 15 years old — The young boy, then a teen spent endless days writing songs in the pasture. His desire was toward God before it's aimed at anything else. This is desire in its native, innocent form. Psalm 27:4 ("one thing have I desired").

- The one thing I ask of the Lord— the thing I seek most— is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in his Temple. Psalm 27:4 NLT
- David was first a worshipper, writing songs and poems of how amazing God is to him.

Scene 2 - Anointed but waiting (deferred desire in the caves) likely 18-30 years old — he was anointed the future King in 1 Samuel 16, but David spent years of fleeing Saul before the throne materializes. David even has at least two chances to seize power and control his destiny early in 1 Samuel 24 and 26 but he spares Saul in the cave and the camp and refuses to harm him.

- This desire to become King was tested by delay, and it directly echoes week one's theme: David *could* have wielded his power here, but he yielded instead.



- 1 Samuel 24:6 (En Gedi Cave, David cuts Saul's robe corner instead of killing him):
"He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this to my lord the king. I shouldn't attack the Lord's anointed one, for the Lord himself has chosen him."
- 1 Samuel 26:9 (Saul's camp, Abishai wants to strike Saul with the spear):
"No!" David said. "Don't kill him. For who can remain innocent after attacking the Lord's anointed one?"
- We hear his restraint and resolve! 1 Samuel 26:11, "The Lord forbid that I should kill the one he has anointed! But take his spear and that jug of water beside his head, and then let's get out of here!"
- These were not one-time occurrences; they were a settled conviction that David held onto under real pressure. It is evidence of a yielded discipline that later collapses on the roof.

Then we get to the closing scene, the last push towards his legacy.



Scene 3 - King (disordered desires on the rooftop) David is likely in his late 40s about to turn 50 years old in — 2 Samuel 11. Same man, same desire-instinct, now with success, power and position behind it, except this time he wields what he should yield.

This becomes the collapse of the exact freedom of desire he practiced in the field and the cave; except now it was raw, hungry, & undisciplined.

- “In the spring of the year, when kings normally go out to war, David sent Joab and the Israelite army to fight the Ammonites. They destroyed the Ammonite army and laid siege to the city of Rabbah. However, David stayed behind in Jerusalem. Late one afternoon, after his midday rest, David got out of bed and was walking on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath. He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, “She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.” Then David sent messengers to get her; and when she came to the palace, he slept with her. She had just completed the purification rites after having her menstrual period. Then she returned home. Later, when Bathsheba discovered that she was pregnant, she sent David a message, saying, “I’m pregnant.” 2 Samuel 11:1-5 NLT

He saw...
He sent...
He stole!

What happened?

Couldn't God have stopped him from acting out on his desires?

Wait, didn't I say that desires can neutral, neither good nor bad?

Yes, I did.

We don't know the reasons for the desires that led to David making the decision to wield his desires rather than yield them.

We just see results. His desires were clearly DISORDERED; because of the way he acted on them. He wanted something, but would not wait to see how God would grant it to him.

David knew the truth about desires, and for much of his life, he lived this truth. He even wrote this later in his life – AFTER applying his failure of free will with Bathsheba.

“Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires.” Psalm 37:4 NLT.



[John Piper](#) says this, “you can’t enjoy a God that you are not sure is for you.”

David is the perfect example of how desire shifts over a lifetime, and how repeated choices harden into character. Eve and Adam's choice, Moses and Pharaoh's opposite choices, and now David's, all show the same pattern playing out at different speeds, some immediate, some gestational, and in David's case, both at once.

If our life were a book, we'd see that

- some desires corrupt over the whole story,
- some over a chapter, and
- some, on one page in a single conversation.

As we get into the New Testament, Paul really gives us the Holy Spirit inspired thoughts about our Freedoms of Desire – it's really hard to nail down why we do what we do!

So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. Romans 7:14-17 NLT

“Desire is powerful, but it may not always be the villain in our story. Even the Apostle Paul admitted he never fully figured out how to resolve that gap between wanting good and doing it.

James tells us in James 1:14-15 that desire informs our decisions.

Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

Even when our desire to be good, to do good, is what we want, we still struggle!

Listen to Paul's raw honesty, "I don't really know myself?"

How can the Apostle Paul write that?

Paul uses the word, "ginóskó," which is Greek word for both knowledge and perception.

Paul isn't saying he lacks information about what he's doing, he's saying "I do not recognize it in its true nature."

He watches himself act and the action doesn't compute as belonging to the man he understands himself to be.

Paul isn't confused about facts; he's alienated from his own behavior.

He can name it, describe it, track it in real time, and still not *recognize* it as his.

That gap between naming and recognizing is where the vulnerability actually lives.



DIG DEEPER - Practice Awareness – more in Dig Deeper Notes below.

OWN Method to practicing awareness.

- **O** - Observe -
 - **W** - Welcome -
 - **N** - Name -
-

This is where we live with our beliefs, our desires and behaviors. It's not a conflict of belief; it's a **conflict of synchronizing belief with behavior**.

**"Conflict of synchronizing
belief with behavior"**

Whether that means we are saying, "**I don't endorse what I'm doing**," or "**I don't recognize myself in it**," **it is the struggle of being a sinful human**.

We assume desire is either good (follow your heart) or bad (crucify your flesh), but Paul's more interesting than that. Desire isn't the enemy of freedom, "disordered" desire is.

The real question isn't "do I have desires" but "what is desire pointing at, and have I noticed it's pointing the wrong way before it's too late to redirect."

Paul gives us hope.

All that he knew, all that he learned, yet he still was vulnerable enough to tell us – I have not arrived at solving this dilemma!

Romans 7 isn't Paul looking back with the soft perspective of old age the way 1 Timothy's "chief of sinners" reads, this is a man near the height of his intellectual and missionary output, already humbled enough to say plainly that wanting the good and doing the good are two different things he hasn't mastered.

This wasn't an old, tired Paul confessing weakness, it was Paul at the peak of his ministry, still admitting the gap between his will and his doing never closed on its own.

SUMMARY

In my simple story of wanting to buy my dream motorcycle, I chose it because, whether I bought it or not, no one would judge me for sinning against God. It wouldn't have been a clear act of disobedience. And, I doubt it would have destroyed my life and my future by that one decision. But right before I committed to buying it, I paused and asked God His opinion, what did He want for me?

In David's life story we see the three major scenes in his life and how he handled his decisions, desires and responses.

- David perping on Bathsheba, seen first as a desire story before it was sin story: It does not begin with "David was evil" but "David was idle," and idle desire drifts toward whatever's nearest."
- In Paul's life we see behind the scenes in this mystery of his decisions. We don't know if Paul was writing about his sin or his affliction, but I'm glad he was honest about it.

- Romans 7:15-20 — "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." This is Paul's own confession, it's very human, and the only villain to point at is just our own willful sin. Paul is looking in the mirror and telling us what he sees.

If you want more on this, the Apostle James goes into detail about our desires, where they come from and why we wrestle with them.

See the Dig Deeper notes on James 1:14-15.

APPLICATION

- When it comes to freedom to act on our own desires, what have we learned from God's Word today?
- From David's story, where do you recognize your own desires and the results of choosing your own will over God's best for you?
- Like David, have your decisions started out virtuous but drifted into being too relaxed in "idle moments?"
- Paul was honest about his and our struggle, "we know" but "don't do" what is right. Do you understand, we're in constant need of help IN decision making?

Prayer for practicing the pause.

If you need help to OWN your desires and decisions.

- **OBSERVE** - Can we name that one desire we've been feeding without examining?
- **WELCOME** – Can we open that difficult door that puts a pause on our decision?
- **NAME** – Can we name where this actual hunger is coming from?

Finish the sentence "I don't fully understand why I keep desiring _____."

Who is one person you could share that with this week?

SCRIPTURES

Psalms 27:4 NLT

The one thing I ask of the Lord— the thing I seek most— is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in his Temple.

1 Samuel 24:6 NLT

"He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this to my lord the king. I shouldn't attack the Lord's anointed one, for the Lord himself has chosen him."

1 Samuel 26:9 NLT

No!" David said. "Don't kill him. For who can remain innocent after attacking the Lord's anointed one?"

1 Samuel 26:11 NLT

The Lord forbid that I should kill the one he has anointed! But take his spear and that jug of water beside his head, and then let's get out of here!

2 Samuel 11:1-5 NLT

In the spring of the year, **when kings normally go out to war, David sent Joab and the Israelite army to fight the Ammonites.** They destroyed the Ammonite army and laid siege to the city of Rabbah. However, **David stayed behind in Jerusalem.** Late one afternoon, after his midday rest, David got out of bed and was walking on the roof of the palace. **As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath. He sent someone to find out who she was,** and he was told, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." Then **David sent messengers to get her;** and when she came to the palace, **he slept with her.** She had just completed the purification rites after having her menstrual period. Then she returned home. Later, when Bathsheba discovered that she was pregnant, she sent David a message, saying, "I'm pregnant."

Psalms 37:4 NLT

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires.

Romans 7:14-17 NLT

So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.



DIG DEEPER NOTES



Comparison of **1980 America vs. 2026 America.**

The **GenX vs. GenZ** lens.

Big picture

1980 was an analog, local, slower, institution-shaped world.

A GenX kid grew up with landlines, broadcast TV, printed newspapers, paper maps, physical cash, handwritten schoolwork, in-person church/community life, and parents who often let kids roam with little tracking.

2026 is a digital, networked, monitored, personalized, unstable world.

A GenZ young adult lives with smartphones, algorithmic media, online identity, constant connection, remote work options, digital banking, political polarization, mental health language, and a much more fragmented sense of authority.

The core difference: **GenX grew up trying to get access to information. GenZ grew up trying to survive the flood of it.**

1. Home life: from household independence to household connectivity

1980 home

The 1980 home was centered around **shared spaces**: one family TV, one home phone, one newspaper, one stereo, one kitchen table, and often one car for teen freedom. Privacy existed because people were simply unreachable once they left the house.

Home computers were not yet normal. The Census Bureau reported that in **1984**, only **8% of U.S. households had a computer**; adult home computer use was mostly limited to word processing, games, and job-related use. ([Census.gov](https://www.census.gov))

2026 home

The 2026 home is a **digital command center**: smartphones, streaming, smart TVs, laptops, tablets, home Wi-Fi, online banking, app-based shopping, food delivery, digital calendars, security cameras, and constant messaging.

Pew reported in 2026 that most U.S. adults now say they have **home broadband** and **smartphones**, based on its 2025 survey data. ([Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org))

GenX vs. GenZ experience

A GenX childhood had more boredom, more unsupervised time, and fewer records of mistakes. A GenZ childhood has more stimulation, more tracking, more digital permanence, and more social comparison.

Plainly: GenX had more physical freedom; GenZ has more informational freedom, but less psychological breathing room.

2. Office/work: from clock-in stability to flexible instability

1980 office

The 1980 office was paper-heavy: typewriters, filing cabinets, memos, fax machines, receptionists, switchboards, office mail, Rolodexes, face-to-face

meetings, and fixed work hours. Career paths were more likely to be tied to a company, a trade, a pension, or a clear ladder.

Women were already in the workforce in large numbers, but the workplace still carried stronger assumptions about male breadwinners, female clerical roles, and limited flexibility.

2026 office

The 2026 office is digital, hybrid, and platform-driven: email, Slack/Teams, Zoom, cloud documents, project-management apps, AI tools, cybersecurity, remote work, contract work, and a weaker line between work and home.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that **22.6% of workers teleworked or worked at home for pay in March 2026**, and the telework rate had ranged from **21.5% to 23.0%** over the prior year. ([Bureau of Labor Statistics](#))

GenX vs. GenZ experience

GenX entered work expecting bosses, offices, hierarchy, and “paying dues.”

GenZ entered work expecting flexibility, digital tools, values alignment, mental-health boundaries, and faster feedback.

Plainly: GenX adapted to technology at work; GenZ assumes technology is the workplace.

3. Health: from acute-care culture to wellness/mental-health culture

1980 health culture

Health in 1980 was more doctor-centered and less information-saturated.

People relied on physicians, family advice, Reader's Digest-style health articles, and local hospitals. Smoking was more socially accepted. Fitness was growing, but wellness culture had not yet become a major identity marker.

Mental health carried more stigma. Anxiety, depression, trauma, ADHD, autism spectrum concerns, and addiction recovery were discussed far less openly in everyday life.

2026 health culture

Health in 2026 is more data-driven and consumer-facing: wearables, calorie/macro tracking, genetic testing, online portals, telehealth, mental-health apps, therapy language, podcasts, supplements, and constant health information online.

Life expectancy has changed, but not as dramatically as daily health culture has. AP reported that CDC data put U.S. life expectancy at **79 years in 2024**, a record high after the COVID-era decline. ([AP News](#))

GenX vs. GenZ experience

GenX often grew up with “shake it off” parenting and less emotional vocabulary. GenZ has more language for anxiety, trauma, boundaries,

neurodiversity, and therapy; but also lives under more digital pressure, body-image pressure, and social comparison.

Plainly: GenX often undernamed pain; GenZ often overprocesses it. Both have blind spots.

4. Politics: from shared national media to polarized identity politics

1980 politics

In 1980, politics was certainly intense: Reagan vs. Carter, inflation, the Cold War, the Iran hostage crisis, energy anxiety, moral debates, and distrust after Vietnam and Watergate. But most Americans still received news through a limited number of shared gatekeepers: network TV, newspapers, radio, and weekly magazines.

Public trust had already fallen hard. Pew notes that by **1980**, only about **one-quarter of Americans** expressed high trust in the federal government after Vietnam, Watergate, and economic struggles. ([Pew Research Center](#))

2026 politics

Politics in 2026 is more constant, more personal, more algorithmic, and more hostile. News is no longer just consumed; it is performed, shared, reacted to, and used as identity signaling.

Pew reported in 2024 that only **22% of Americans** said they trust the federal government to do what is right “just about always” or “most of the time.” ([Pew Research Center](#)) Pew also found that Democrats and Republicans in Congress are farther apart ideologically than at any point in the previous 50 years, with far fewer moderates than in the early 1970s. ([Pew Research Center](#))

Social media also changed the news environment. Pew reported that **half of U.S. adults** at least sometimes get news from social media, and among social-media news consumers, concern about inaccuracy rose from **31% to 40%** over five years. ([Pew Research Center](#))

GenX vs. GenZ experience

GenX watched politics through evening news and newspapers. GenZ experiences politics through feeds, clips, influencers, memes, outrage cycles, and identity communities.

Plainly: GenX inherited distrust of institutions; GenZ inherited distrust plus 24/7 digital amplification.

5. Business and money: from local commerce to platform capitalism

1980 business culture

Business in 1980 was more local, physical, and relationship-based. Banking happened at a branch. Shopping happened in malls, department stores,

catalogs, grocery stores, and local shops. Entertainment was bought or rented physically: records, tapes, VHS, movie tickets.

A business needed location, inventory, staff, phones, ads, and distribution. Customer complaints were slower and usually private.

2026 business culture

Business in 2026 is platform-driven: Amazon, app stores, online reviews, social media marketing, influencers, payment apps, subscriptions, AI tools, data analytics, targeted ads, and same-day delivery expectations.

The biggest business shift is not just e-commerce; it is **friction removal**. Everything is easier to buy, subscribe to, finance, compare, review, and cancel; or sometimes, very hard to cancel.

GenX vs. GenZ experience

GenX learned money through cash, checks, bank tellers, paper bills, layaway, and balancing checkbooks. GenZ learned through debit cards, apps, subscriptions, Venmo/Cash App, online investing, buy-now-pay-later, and algorithmic ads.

Plainly: GenX had less convenience but more friction; that friction sometimes protected them. GenZ has more financial tools but more ways to leak money quietly.

6. Social life: from neighborhood presence to networked identity

1980 social life

Friendships were local: neighborhood, school, church, sports, scouts, work, and extended family. Social status was visible but limited. Embarrassing moments usually stayed local unless someone had a camera.

2026 social life

Friendships can be local, online, global, parasocial, anonymous, or algorithmic. Identity is curated through posts, photos, videos, follows, comments, and group chats.

The upside is connection across distance and niche communities. The downside is comparison, performance, loneliness, and the pressure to constantly self-present.

GenX vs. GenZ experience

GenX had more private awkwardness. GenZ has more public self-consciousness.

Plainly: GenX could disappear for a few hours. GenZ is expected to be reachable.

7. Education: from memorization and libraries to search and AI

1980 education

Students used textbooks, encyclopedias, libraries, card catalogs, handwritten notes, overhead projectors, filmstrips, chalkboards, and in-person instruction. Research required effort and physical movement.

2026 education

Students use laptops, tablets, online portals, Google, YouTube, digital textbooks, AI tutors, plagiarism detectors, learning apps, online classes, and instant sources. The key change is not that students know more; it is that they can retrieve more. The hard skill has shifted from **finding information** to **judging information**.

GenX vs. GenZ experience

GenX had to remember more. GenZ has to filter more.

8. Media and entertainment: from scarcity to endlessness

1980 media

Entertainment was scheduled: Saturday morning cartoons, prime-time TV, movie theaters, radio, records, cassettes, newspapers, magazines. If you missed a show, you missed it.

2026 media

Entertainment is on-demand, personalized, portable, and infinite: streaming, podcasts, YouTube, TikTok, gaming, social feeds, audiobooks, and AI-generated content.

GenX vs. GenZ experience

GenX shared a narrower culture. GenZ lives in micro-cultures. GenX had “everybody watched that.” GenZ has “my algorithm showed me that.”

9. Moral and cultural authority: from institutions to the self

This may be the deepest shift.

1980

Authority flowed more from institutions: family, church, school, government, news anchors, doctors, bosses, police, and civic organizations. Not everyone trusted them, but they still shaped the room.

2026

Authority is fragmented. People trust podcasts, influencers, online communities, private research, lived experience, experts they agree with, and peer networks. Institutions still matter, but they no longer automatically command trust.

Plainly: 1980 asked, "What do the authorities say?"
2026 asks, "Who do I trust, and does this align with my identity?"

Biggest differences summarized

Area	1980 GenX Experience	2026 GenZ Experience
Home	Analog, shared devices, more unsupervised time	Digital, connected, tracked, personalized
Work	Office-based, hierarchical, paper-heavy	Hybrid, digital, flexible, always reachable
Health	Doctor-centered, less mental-health language	Wellness, therapy language, telehealth, self-tracking
Politics	Shared media, lower-speed conflict	Polarized, algorithmic, constant outrage cycle
Business	Local stores, cash/checks, physical ads	Platforms, apps, subscriptions, targeted marketing
Social life	Local, private, slower	Online, public, curated, always-on
Education	Libraries, memorization, textbooks	Search, AI, digital portals, source evaluation
Media	Scheduled, scarce, shared	Infinite, personalized, fragmented
Authority	Institutional	Decentralized and identity-filtered

Bottom line

A **GenX life** was shaped by limits: limited channels, limited access, limited supervision, limited choices, limited documentation.

A **GenZ life** is shaped by overload: unlimited content, unlimited comparison, unlimited connectivity, unlimited shopping, unlimited opinion, and very little silence.

The tradeoff is stark: **GenX had more room to grow up privately. GenZ has more power, more access, and more pressure than any young generation before it.**



Thoughts on Psalm 23 – Memories of a shepherd, fugitive & king.

Psalm 23:1-6 KJV – David, towards the end of his life, remembered all the way back to his beginnings.

He was a simple shepherd for his father, Jesse's sheep. It was in these early days, when time had no end and the days were marked by two moments, sunrise and sunset. This is how God describes the passage of time in Genesis 1:5, "the

evening and the morning were the first day." So, the Jews start their day each evening. David spent his days writing songs (75 of them are recorded) and singing them. This Psalm was inserted into the book of Psalms at the end of his life.

You know how it is when sometimes you remember more from the early years of your life than your later ones? The stories of our seniors are rich and nostalgic, full of drama, trauma and flavor – I think they're spicy!

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

The first part of the song washes over us like a beautifully painted picture of the shepherd taking extraordinary care of his flock. David tells us he has also has a shepherd – the Lord, using God's personal name, Yahweh, used in Genesis 2:4, but given to Moses in Exodus 3:14–15.

- **David, now playing the part of a sheep says:**
 - I had no wants. Because Yahweh cares for me.
- When I am stressed or overwhelmed, Yahweh makes me rest in green pastures.
- When the desert life threatens my thirst, my desires, my needs, Yahweh leads me to still waters - *mei menuchoth* (מֵי מְנוּחוֹת), literally "waters of rest" or "waters of repose."
 - Interesting fact about sheep that I did not know.
 - Sheep are genuinely afraid of moving or turbulent water. A heavy, wet fleece can trap a sheep in a current, and sheep instinctively won't drink from swift-moving water even when thirsty. A shepherd has to find (or make) a calm pool, a backwater, an eddy, or a slow seep, somewhere the flock can drink without panic. So the implied contrast is "safe, still water" versus "water that's there but the sheep can't safely drink from it."
 - Even as a Pastoral shepherd, I have to remember that not everyone is comfortable to the speed of massive change, so I need to look for "still water" ways to allow people to feel safe while resting.
- When life itself is overwhelming, spinning and overtaking my thoughts and feelings, Yahweh is there to restore my very soul.

- When I get stuck in ruts or repetitious patterns of habits that may be harmful, it's Yahweh that uses his staff to get me out of the common ruts on the road and back into the good, right way of His ways. A reflection of Psalm 40:2, "pulls us out of the deep muddy pit and sets our feet on solid ground."

But in verse 4 of the Psalm, David gets serious about a dark and foreboding occurrence in the life of a shepherd and his sheep. The Psalm shifts from third person ("he leads me," "he restores me") to direct second-person address ("you are with me") right at verse 4, the valley of the shadow. The darkest image in the psalm. Because life is more than just us getting into trouble, it's also about things outside of life, outside of our control coming after us!

- **David is talking about a real valley in Israel.**
 - The place itself: Wadi Qelt. It's a real gorge running between Jerusalem and Jericho, roughly 15-17 miles, dropping from about 2,500 feet above sea level near Jerusalem to over 800 feet below sea level at Jericho. It's a serious descent through narrow limestone terrain, and the walls are so steep that sunlight is scarce and dangers lurk in the hidden corners in parts of the gorge, even at midday in places. In this spots, the sun never reaches the floor!" It was historically, a dangerous place for travelers who wanted to take a shortcut on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho... bandits and wild animals hid in the caves and gorges of the wadi. David fled through Wadi Qelt as an adult king, running from Absalom (2 Samuel 15:23-16:14). And, it's the same road Jesus sets the Good Samaritan parable on. [SeektheLambA Glad Diary](#)
- This "shadow of death" experience is exactly why this Psalm is both loved and quoted at funerals!
 - Notice, at the end of the Psalm 23:4-6, there is no mention of rescue! There is only the mention of God's presence being WITH us – "for thou art with me."
 - So, I will fear no evil.
 - God's own rod and staff comfort me.
 - Two different tools, two different jobs. The Hebrew distinguishes them clearly. "Rod" is *shebet* (שֵׁבֶט), a sturdy wooden club used as a weapon to fight off wild animals who might have hoped to make an easy meal out of an otherwise defenseless flock of sheep. David's own account to Saul, going after a lion and a bear that had carried off a sheep, is the concrete referent behind that word. "Staff" is *mishenet* (מִשְׁעָנָה), a different root tied to leaning and support, meaning a staff is used for support, like a cane or walking stick. Practically, it's a long, slender stick, often hooked at the tip, used primarily to direct the flock... if a sheep became trapped in a precarious position, the shepherd would loop the curved end of the staff around the neck of the sheep

and retrieve it back to safety. So: rod fights off outside threats, staff manages the sheep's own tendency to wander or get stuck. One handles danger from without, the other handles trouble from within. [Ancient Hebrew Research Cen](#)

- The comfort isn't anchored to a completed act of deliverance. It's anchored to presence plus visible capability. The sheep isn't comforted because it watched the shepherd win a fight; it's comforted because the shepherd who is walking beside it right now is carrying the means to fight, and has the character to use them, whether or not he ever has to.
- There are real enemies – and God is not one of them!
 - Who is the Shepherd?
 - Who is the enemy, the thief waiting in the shadows of death and sorrow?
 - WHO IS THE THIEF? Jesus told us who he is and what his focus is towards you – to steal, kill and destroy. He's a liar, a fake, a fraud!
 - Many of you have blamed God for what has happened in your life or what has been done to you. STOP IT. Let me tell you straight out – you've blamed the wrong one! God is for you, not against you. God loves you; He doesn't hate you or want to ruin your life. You've believed a LIE if you think your life is a wreck because of God!



[Giving You The Desires Of Your Heart](#) click for all 76 references.

76 Bible Verses about our desires and God granting them to us – under obedience and willful submission to him!

Psalms 37:4-6 ESV Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

Psalms 37:4 ESV Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

1 John 5:14 ESV And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.

John 15:7 ESV If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.



Paul's dilemma of knowing vs doing in Romans 7:15

What the Greek actually says

The verse reads *ho gar katergazomai ou ginōskō*, "for what I am producing/carrying out, I do not know." The direct object of *ginōskō* is *what I am doing* (his own action), not *himself* as a person. So "I don't know myself" is closer to a paraphrase or theological extension than a literal translation, worth flagging if you want to stay textually precise, though I'll get to why the extension isn't unreasonable.

Why *ginōskō* and not *oida*

Greek has two common verbs for "know," and Paul is choosing the more loaded one. ***Oida* is settled, factual knowledge, knowing information as a static possession. *Ginōskō* is experiential, relational, recognitional knowing, the knowing that comes through encounter and grows over time** (it's the same verb the Septuagint uses for Adam "knowing" Eve, and the one Jesus uses in John 17:3 for knowing the Father). A.T. Robertson's gloss on this exact verse is precise: **Paul isn't saying he lacks information about what he's doing, he's saying "I do not recognize it in its true nature."**

He watches himself act and the action doesn't compute as belonging to the man he understands himself to be.

That's actually a stronger, more specific claim than generic self-ignorance. **Paul isn't confused about facts, he's alienated from his own behavior.** He can name it, describe it, track it in real time, and still not *recognize* it as his. That gap between naming and recognizing is where the vulnerability actually lives.

This is where we live with our beliefs, our desires and behaviors. It's not a conflict of belief; it's a **conflict of synchronizing belief with behavior.**

Whether that means we are saying, **"I don't endorse what I'm doing,"** or **"I don't recognize myself in it,"** it is the struggle of being a sinful human.



Practice Awareness

OWN Method to practicing awareness.

- **O - Observe** - This is the beginning. We are to pay attention and observe what is going on in us with genuine curiosity, in a stance of no judgment and no condemnation. We are to be present to the way we are showing up in a given moment: what we are thinking, what we are feeling, what we are sensing, how we are acting or reacting. We see ourselves – with eyes that actually see with honesty and humility. Are we anxious? Are we defensive? Are we tense?
- **W – Welcome** - Welcoming the awareness of how we are showing up in a given moment **does not mean accepting or condoning our unhelpful behavior or our inappropriate thoughts and reactions.** It means adopting a humble posture of learning and opening our internal space for revelation and discernment. This is often counterintuitive. Our automatic reaction to unpleasant thoughts and emotions is rejection, not embrace. However, those thoughts and emotions may be the vessels of God's revelation for us. Only an attitude of openness will help us learn and heal. If we adopt a posture of learning instead of a posture of moral judgment and self-condemnation, we open a window for learning.
- **N– Name** - This is the time to name what is behind your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Vancin reminds us that *to name is to know*. Knowing what is going on inside of us allows us to identify those old patterns of making unconscious meanings and living as if they are the “truth” about ourselves, others, and the world. This awareness allows us to identify our learned behaviors, our autopilot, our defensive routines, our anxiety, etc. Naming them allows us to identify and focus on what we are really dealing with. As Jesus often identifies the demon by asking his name, we are to identify our own internal “demons” by naming them. We are not implying here that we have demons inside of us; we are not posing a theological argument about demons. We are only using a metaphor for the importance of being able to name and expose what is going on inside of us.



Our will and desire

Scripture generally treats desire as *prior* to will's choices. James 1:14-15 traces the sequence explicitly (desire conceives, then gives birth to sin), and Genesis 3:6 shows Eve's will acting only after she "saw" and "desired."

Augustine's whole ordo amoris framework runs on this too: rightly ordered loves produce rightly ordered choices, not the other way around. **So the will doesn't originate the want, it ratifies or resists it.**

Here's more for your own study:

THE GREEK WORD BEHIND "DESIRE" — EPITHYMIA

The Greek word translated "desire" in James 1:14-15 is epithymia, meaning a strong longing or craving. The word itself is not sinful; it is the same term used for Jesus' desire to eat the Passover with His disciples (Luke 22:15) and Paul's desire to depart and be with Christ (Philippians 1:23). Of its roughly thirty-eight New Testament uses, most carry a negative sense, but the negative charge comes from the object of the desire, not the word itself. James uses it almost as a parent: desire conceives, and gives birth to sin, and sin, when full grown, gives birth to death.

For further study: Blue Letter Bible, entry G1939, epithymia — blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1939/kjv/tr/0-1

AUGUSTINE AND THE ORDO AMORIS

Ordo amoris, "**the order of love**," is Augustine's term for the idea that **virtue is not simply loving good things, but loving them in the right order, with God first**. He makes his case most fully in City of God, Book XV, chapter 22, where he writes that a brief and true definition of virtue is that it is the order of love. His well-known illustration involves a man who loves his gold more than justice; the fault, Augustine says, is never in the gold, it is in the order the love has been placed. A good desire, elevated above its proper place, becomes the corrupting one. For further study: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, City of God, Book XV, chapter 22 — ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.iv.XV.22.html