

How Do I Pleasure in God?

John 15:1-11

Overview

Should We Pursue Pleasure?

- The short answer is, “Yes, we should pursue pleasure in God.”
 - This makes sense as we are created in God’s image and God pleasures in himself.
 - Additionally, God pleasures in his creation as it declares his glory so we too should pleasure in God’s creation (in all its fullness) as it points us to God’s glory
- The Psalms in particular describe being joyful in God (cf. 5:11; 9:2; 43:4; 67:4; 68:3; 70:4; 89:15-16; 105:3)
- Other passages also clearly describe being fully delighted in God (cf. Hab. 3:17; Mt. 13:44; Rom. 5:11; Phil. 3:8)
- In fact, joy in God is commanded and therefore anything less is sin (cf. Ps. 32:11; 37:4; Lk 6:23; Phil. 4:4)
 - Anything less than pursuing pleasure in God is sin.
 - Pursuing pleasure in God is not just commendable, but commanded.
- God wants our joy to be full, and he has done everything necessary, at the cost of his eternal Son Jesus, to captivate us with what will make us eternally happy (cf. Ps. 16:11; 1 Peter 3:18).

How Do We Pursue Pleasure in God?

- Realize joy is a gift from God (John 15:11)
 - Jesus is saying, “I’m teaching you about the vine, and about abiding in me and praying and about fruit bearing SO THAT you will enjoy all that I enjoy with the very joy with which I enjoy it.”
 - This kind of joy is having such a supreme delight in God, such a sweet taste of God, that pursuing ultimate pleasure in anything else becomes sour to your soul’s taste buds.
- Realize true joy does not come apart from Christ (15:1-6)
 - Just as a branch cannot bear fruit apart from the life/nutrients of the stem, neither can we produce anything of eternal/spiritual value apart from Christ
 - Those who remain apart from Christ will receive the judgment of God
 - On the cross Jesus bore the judgment of God that we have the fullness of joy in God
- Realize true joy comes from abiding in Christ (15:4-10, 12)
 - We abide in Christ by abiding in his word (v. 4, 5 7)
 - We abide in Christ when we abide in word-shaped prayer (v. 7)
 - We abide in Christ when we obey his commands, specifically the command to love one another (v. 9-10, 12)

Questions

Discussion Starter: In the mid 20th century, Martin Lloyd Jones wrote: *“The greatest need of the hour is a revived and joyful Church...Nothing is more important ... than that we should be delivered from a condition which gives other people looking at us, the impression that to be a Christian means to be unhappy, to be sad, to be morbid, and that the Christian is one who ‘scorns delights and lives laborious days’... Christian people too often seem to be perpetually in the doldrums and too often give this appearance of unhappiness and lack of freedom and of absence of joy. There is no question*

at all but that this is the main reason why large numbers of people have ceased to be interested in Christianity.” Does your group agree or disagree? Why?

1. Read some/all of these verses: Psalm 16:11; 37:4; Habakkuk 3:17; Matthew 13:44; Luke 6:23; Romans 5:11; Philippians 3:7-8; 4:4. What do these verses tell us about joy and its place in the Christians life?
2. Based on your answers above, is it biblical to say that not pursuing our greatest joy is sin? Why do we so often settle for a lesser joy than offered to us in God?
3. What do we do when we know we should find joy in serving God but don't?
4. Read John 15:1-11. What does verse 11 tells us that we will enjoy things with the very with which Jesus enjoys them. In other words, joy comes from (is a gift) God to us. Why is it important to understand this in our pursuit of joy?
5. Verses 4-6 say that apart from Christ we can do nothing, and that includes having joy. How would you respond to someone who says they do have joy apart from Christ?
6. What is the connection between abiding in Jesus and God's word? What are practical ways we can abide in God's word?
7. What is the connection between abiding in Jesus and prayer? What are practical ways we can abide in prayer?
8. What is the connection between abiding in Jesus and loving one another? What are practical ways we can do love one another?

Accountability Question: *Identify ways you are actively abiding in Christ and/or ways you, by God's grace, would like to further abide in Christ.*