

Striving for Satisfaction (Lust of the Flesh)

September 17, 2017

1 John 2:15-16 ESV

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world.

LUST OF THE FLESH

*The compulsion to strive after SUCCESS, SECURITY and SATISFACTION
in the flesh (self-effort) apart from God.*

SUCCESS

- GOD'S DEFINITION and MEANS OF SUCCESS is FOOLISHNESS TO MAN.
- SUCCESS WITH GOD is measured by OBEDIENCE, NOT (apparent) RESULTS nor CIRCUMSTANCES.
- SUCCESS is found ONLY IN THE WILL and PURPOSES OF GOD, NEVER IN THE WISDOM and STRENGTH OF MAN.

SECURITY - we strive for security in PROVISION and PROTECTION

Psalm 33:16-19 ESV

16 The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

17 The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love,

19 that he may deliver their soul from death [PROTECTION] and keep them alive in famine [PROVISION].

Jeremiah 17:5-8 ESV

5 Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD.

6 He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.

7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD.

8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit."

Matthew 19:16-26 ESV

21 Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

22 When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

23 And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.

STRIVING FOR SATISFACTION

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 ESV

1 I said in my heart, "Come now, **I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself.**" But behold, **this also was vanity.**

2 **I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?"**

3 I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine--my heart still guiding me with wisdom--and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life.

4 I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself.

5 I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees.

6 I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees.

7 I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem.

8 I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man.

9 So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

10 **And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil.**

11 Then I considered **all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.**

*"I remember a summer in which I said, "It is the ocean I need," and I went to the ocean; but it seemed to say, "It is not in me!" The ocean did not do for me what I thought it would. Then I said, "The mountains will rest me," and I went to the mountains, and when I awoke in the morning there stood the grand mountain that I had wanted so much to see; but it said, "It is not in me!" It did not satisfy. Ah! I needed the ocean of His love, and the high mountains of His truth within. It was wisdom that the "depths" said they did not contain, and that could not be compared with jewels or gold or precious stones. Christ is wisdom and our deepest need. **Our restlessness within can only be met by the revelation of His eternal friendship and love for us.**"*

--Margaret Bottome, 1827-1906, founded the International Order of the King's Daughters and Sons

SATISFIED THROUGH INTIMACY WITH GOD

Philippians 4:4 ESV

4 **"Rejoice (chairō - to be happy, content, be glad, be well, thrive) in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."**

"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." --The Westminster Shorter Catechism

"God is most glorified in me when I am most satisfied in Him." --John Piper

"The truth is, though, that we cannot glorify God, either by our lives or by worship, unless we are enjoying Him. How could you praise someone whom you don't enjoy? How could you genuinely seek to honor someone by your conduct merely out of a sense of obligation?"

--Jerry Bridges, I Give You Glory, O God

Psalm 63:1-3 ESV A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

“The first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day is to have my soul happy in the Lord.”

— George Müller

“According to my judgement the most important point to be attended to is this: above all things see to it that your souls are happy in the Lord. Other things may press upon you, the Lord's work may even have urgent claims upon your attention, but I deliberately repeat, it is of supreme and paramount importance that you should seek above all things to have your souls truly happy in God Himself! Day by day seek to make this the most important business of your life. This has been my firm and settled condition for the last five and thirty years. For the first four years after my conversion I knew not its vast importance, but now after much experience I specially commend this point to the notice of my younger brethren and sisters in Christ: the secret of all true effectual service is joy in God, having experimental acquaintance and fellowship with God Himself.”

— George Müller

Psalm 27:4 ESV

4 One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze (*chazah - contemplate with pleasure, "to see as a seer in the ecstatic state", behold*) upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire (*baqar - to inspect, admire, seek, look for; NASB "meditate"*) in his temple.

We all have an abundance of desires, but if you could only be granted one desire in life, what is the one thing that is non-negotiable and can never be forfeited?

Psalm 36:7-9 ESV

7 How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

8 They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.

Sin loses its grip on the one who enjoys and is satisfied in God!

Psalm 37:4 ESV

4 Delight (*anag - to be happy about, take exquisite delight in, to be pampered*) yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

THE DELIGHT TEST: am I just as content and happy without the desires of my heart as I am with the desires of my heart?

If I am not as content and happy without, then I am not delighting in the Lord and the desire(s) of my heart is an idol that I've erected before God.

If I am not as content and happy without, then God cannot give me what will only distract and divide me from Him even further.

HOW TO ENJOY GOD AND BE SATISFIED IN HIM

"This intercourse between God and the soul is known to us in conscious personal awareness...It is conscious: it does not stay below the threshold of consciousness and work there unknown to the soul...but comes within the field of awareness where the man can know it as he knows any other fact of experience."

--A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*, "The Glorious Pursuit"

1. **Worship** reminds me that it is all about Him, not me.

Matthew 6:9-10 ESV

*9 Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, **hallowed be your name.***

10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

- *Worship resets my motive and purpose for life from serving myself to serving God.*
- *Worship transports me from the kingdom of self into the Kingdom of God.*
- *Worship resets my vision from what is seen to what is unseen.*
- *Worship resets my motive from using God to knowing God.*
- *Worship resets my purpose from my agenda to God's agenda.*
- *Worship resets my focus from me and my circumstances to God and His sovereign purposes.*
- *Worship resets my heart from depression and fear to unspeakable joy and peace.*

2. **Repentance**

One of the worst consequences of sin is that it defiles the conscience and you feel the very literal separation from God's presence. You feel the darkness and the depression of the disconnect in your fellowship with God.

Psalms 32:1-7 ESV A Maskil of David.

1 Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

*3 **For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.***

4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

*5 **I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.** Selah*

6 Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.

7 You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah

1 John 1:7-9 ESV

*7 **But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.***

8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

3. Surrender

Anything in your heart or life that is not surrendered to Jesus' lordship is an idol erected against him. And He refuses to share His glory with another god.

Ezekiel 20:1-7 ESV

1 In the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me.

2 And the word of the LORD came to me:

*3 "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD, Is it to inquire of me that you come? **As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I will not be inquired of by you.***

4 Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge them? Let them know the abominations of their fathers,

5 and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day when I chose Israel, I swore to the offspring of the house of Jacob, making myself known to them in the land of Egypt; I swore to them, saying, I am the LORD your God.

6 On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands.

7 And I said to them, Cast away the detestable things your eyes feast on, every one of you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.

*8 **But they rebelled against me and were not willing to listen to me.** None of them cast away the detestable things their eyes feasted on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.*

4. Separation from the World

When you have a friendship (relationship by some commonality) with an unbeliever, you need to ask, what do we have in common?

Don't be deceived. The commonality of that relationship will be the conduit of corrupting influences and spirits. You will find yourself less and less able to sense, know, and enjoy the presence of God.

Being a friend with darkness is to forfeit your fellowship with the light.

1 Corinthians 15:33 ESV

*33 **Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."***

James 1:27 ESV

*27 **Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this:** to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and **to keep oneself unstained from the world.***

James 4:4 NASB

*4 You adulteresses, do you not know that **friendship with the world is hostility toward God?** Therefore **whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.***

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 ESV

14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Therefore **go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,**

18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

5. Solitude

"Modern civilization is so complex as to make the devotional life all but impossible. It wears us out by multiplying distractions and beats us down by destroying our solitude, where otherwise we might drink and renew our strength before going out to face the world again.

"Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still" is a wise and healing counsel, but how can it be followed in this day of the newspaper, the telephone, the radio and the television?"

-- A.W. Tozer, "Of God and Men" 1960

"It is in lonely solitude that God delivers His best thoughts, and the mind needs to be still and quiet to receive them."

--Chuck Swindoll

"I have shown you the power of silence, how thoroughly it heals and how fully pleasing it is to God. It is by silence that the saints grew. It was because of silence that the power of God dwelt in them; because of silence that the mysteries of God were known to them."

--Father Ammonas

Psalm 46:10-11 ESV

10 **"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"**

11 The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

Psalm 63:1-8 ESV A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

4 So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.

5 **My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,**

6 **when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;**

7 for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.

8 **My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.**