





# Loving God:

## Seeking Happiness in Him



### Definition of Loving God

- To love God is to self-sacrificially commit oneself
  - to delight in Him,
  - to rejoice in serving Him,
  - to desire continually to please Him,
  - **to seek one's happiness in Him,**
  - to thirst day and night for a fuller enjoyment of Him.




### Happiness: A Universal Search

- **Thomas Jefferson**

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.


~Declaration of Independence



### Happiness: A Universal Search

- **Blaise Pascal**


All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Regardless of the different ways they try to find it, they are all looking for the same thing. It is the reason some go to war, and that others avoid it. The will never takes the least step but to achieve this objective. This is the motive behind every action of man, even of those who hang themselves.



### Happiness: A Universal Search

- **Thomas Boston**

Man is a creature that desires happiness, and cannot but desire it. The desire of happiness is woven into his nature, and cannot be eradicated. It is as natural for him to desire it as it is to breathe. ... Nothing but an infinite good can fully satisfy the desires of an immortal soul. ...



### Happiness: A Universal Search

God is all good, ... [and] all that is good is in Him; so that the soul, finding Him [equal] to its desires, needs nothing besides Him; and therefore should not, and cannot, fully rest in any person or thing but God, who alone is able to satisfy all its desires, and afford it that happiness which it earnestly pants after.

## Happiness: A Universal Search



- **John Wesley**

"[God] made all things to be happy. He made man to be happy in Himself. He is the proper center of spirits. ... Many indeed think of being happy with God in heaven; but the being happy in God on earth never entered into their thoughts. ... You are made to be happy in God."

## Our Problem with Happiness



- **John Piper, *Desiring God***

"The root of our sinfulness is the desire for our own happiness apart from God and apart from the happiness of others in God. ... Pride is the passion to be happy contaminated and corrupted by two things: 1) the unwillingness to see God as the only fountain of true and lasting joy, and 2) the unwillingness to see other people as designed by God to receive our joy in Him."

## The Biblical View of Happiness



- **Psalm 146:5** Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the LORD his God,
- **Proverbs 3:13** Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding;
- **Job 5:17** " Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.

## The Biblical View of Happiness



- **Proverbs 14:21** He who despises his neighbor sins; But he who has mercy on the poor, happy *is* he.
- **Romans 14:22** Do you have faith? Have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

## The Biblical View of Happiness



- A careful study of the biblical words translated 'happy' shows that biblical happiness is ...  
the satisfaction or contentment that comes from attaining what is good from God's perspective.

## A God-Intended Quest



- Happiness: The Motivation for Obedience  
Deut. 5:33 – You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess.

### A God-Intended Quest



- **Deuteronomy 22:6-7** " If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days.

### A God-Intended Quest



- **Deuteronomy 5:16** ' Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.
- **Psalm 128:1-2** Blessed *is* every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.

### A God-Intended Quest



- These verses are teaching us that God wants us to be happy!
- In fact, He has given us commands specifically to help us achieve happiness in Him.
  - Deuteronomy 10:13 keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good.

### A God-Intended Quest



- God wants to satisfy us  
**Psalm 81:13, 16** "Oh, that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways! ... He would have fed them also with the finest of wheat; And with honey from the rock I would have satisfied you."

### A God-Intended Quest



- **Isaiah 58:10-11** *If* you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall *be* as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

### Seeking our Happiness in Him



- We pursue our happiness in God by pursuing the things that He says will make us happy.
- Seeking our happiness in God is not looking to God to pour out happiness on me.
- It is trusting God that what He says is best for us really is best, and then passionately pursuing those things for His glory.

## Seeking our Happiness in Him



- Biblical Examples

– **Moses:** Heb. 11:24-26

24 By faith Moses, ... refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,  
25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,  
26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

## Seeking our Happiness in Him



- **David:** Psa. 36:7-9

7 How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.

8 They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.

9 For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.

## Seeking our Happiness in Him



– **Jesus:** Heb. 12:2 –

looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

## Seeking our Happiness in Him



- “If you love God, then you are happy in God.”

~ John Wesley

## Definition of Loving God



- To love God is to self-sacrificially commitment oneself
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  - to desire continually to please Him,
  - to seek our happiness in Him, and
  - **to thirst day and night for a fuller enjoyment of Him.**

## Inflame Your Desire for God



- **Jonathan Edwards**

“Persons need not and ought not to set any bounds to their spiritual and gracious appetites.” Rather they ought “to be endeavoring by all possible means to inflame their desires and to obtain more spiritual pleasures.

## Inflame Your Desire for God



... Our hungerings and thirstings after God and Jesus Christ and after holiness cannot be too great for the value of these things, for they are of infinite value. ... [Therefore] endeavor to promote spiritual appetites by laying yourself in the way of allurements.

## Inflame Your Desire for God



... There is no such thing as excess in our taking of this spiritual food. There is no such virtue as temperance in spiritual feasting."

## Thirsting for a Fuller Enjoyment



- **David's Desire**

Psalm 27:4 One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.

– Possible background: 1 Sam. 20-22. Running for life. Chased by Saul's army. Hemmed in by hostile Philistines. Parents had to leave. In danger of betrayal.

## Psalm 27:4 – David's Desire



- "behold" = "to see with satisfaction, to experience."
- "beauty" [יָפֵי] = "the quality or qualities in something that gives pleasure to the senses or pleurably exalts the mind or spirit."
  - What qualities in God "pleurably exalt" our minds or spirits when we think of them?

## The Beauty of God



- The holiness of God is beautiful.
  - He is completely pure (Hab. 1:13). His intentions are pure. His plans are pure. His words are pure (Psa. 12:6). Everything God does is pure (Psa. 18:27).
  - No wonder He invites us to worship Him in the beauty of holiness! (Psa. 29:2; 96:9; see also 1 Chron. 16:29; 2 Chron. 20:21)

## The Beauty of God



- His name is lovely (Psa 135:3)
  - God's name = His character, who He is
  - All of God's characteristics are lovely and worthy of our gaze.
- "inquire in his temple"
  - ≠ seeking God's will
  - = contemplate and meditate on God's person, His works, and His word.

## Tozer on Gazing upon God



- “Is not this gazing upon God for special persons such as monks or ministers who have by the nature of their calling more time to devote to quiet meditation? I am a busy worker and have little time to spend alone.” I am happy to say that the life I describe is for everyone of God’s children regardless of calling. It is, in fact, happily practiced every day by many hard working persons and is beyond the reach of none. Many have found the secret of which I speak and,

## Tozer on Gazing upon God



- without giving much thought to what is going on within them, constantly practice this habit of inwardly gazing upon God. Even when they are compelled to withdraw their conscious attention in order to engage in earthly affairs there is within them a secret communion always going on. Let their attention but be released for a moment from necessary business and it flies at once to God again. This has been the testimony of many Christians.

## How to Practice Gazing on God



1. **Prioritize** being in God’s presence – “one thing have I desired and that will I seek”
2. **Practice** focused contemplation on the beauty of the Lord
  - Focus your mind on the beauty of the Lord and meditate on who He is, what He is like, what He does, and what He has promised.

## How to Practice Gazing on God



3. **Praise** God publicly for his goodness – remember praise completes our enjoyment. (27:6)
4. **Respond** positively to God’s invitations to spend time with Him – (27:8) “thy face Lord will I seek
5. **Wait** courageously for the Lord to meet with you and meet your needs. (27:13-14)

## Thirsting for a Fuller Enjoyment



- **David’s Thirst**  
Psalm 63:1 O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.  
2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.  
3 Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

## Thirsting for a Fuller Enjoyment



- **Sons of Korah**  
Psalm 42:1-2 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?  
– Setting: The author was depressed and overwhelmed.

### Thirsting for a Fuller Enjoyment



- This kind of genuine longing cannot be manufactured or drummed up. It flows from a heart that truly finds its enjoyment, its happiness, its pleasure in God.
- When God is our exceeding joy (Psa. 43:4), we thirst for more of Him.

### Thirsting for a Fuller Enjoyment



- “O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still.

### Thirsting for a Fuller Enjoyment



Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, that so I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, ‘Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.’ Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long. In Jesus’ name. Amen.” (~Tozer)

### Thirsting for a Fuller Enjoyment



- Thirsting day and night
  - Human desire for anything rises and falls.
  - We should not expect to thirst without ever being satisfied.
  - But we should never be satisfied if we no longer thirst.
- **God’s Promise:** Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

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