

# Pleasure

One of the things that people all over the world are seeking is pleasure. This includes both the righteous and the wicked. People love pleasure and want to obtain it (just as they hate suffering and want to avoid it).

The Bible has a lot to say about pleasure. Since this is something that so many people are trying to obtain, it makes sense to see what God has to say about this topic.

## The Pleasures Of Sin

First of all, Christians must *never* pursue the pleasures that come from sin. It's true that some sins do bring pleasure, but sin is *always* wrong. We must never choose pleasure over God. That is strictly forbidden:

**2 Timothy 3:3-5:** “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

Those who love pleasure more than they love God are wicked, not righteous. Such people may appear to be godly, but in reality they're not. Their actions prove that they love pleasure more than God because otherwise they wouldn't have sinned against Him in the first place. Christians must never choose sin

over God, and we must also avoid those who seek the pleasures of sin.

God is pleased when we choose to suffer for Him instead of giving in to sin and its fleeting pleasures. Moses was a great example of this. He choose to suffer with God's people when he could have had an easy life:

**Hebrews 11:24-26:** “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”

When Christians suffer for God, it's only for a season. One day the suffering will end and God will greatly bless us. Jesus promised that there's a great reward in store for those who choose to suffer for Him instead of yielding to sin:

**Matthew 5:11-12:** “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

In a very real way, the Christian life is about choosing to accept persecution in this world so we can inherit everlasting life in the world to come. It's difficult to pursue God instead of pleasure, but the reward for doing so is everlasting.

There are only two choices available. Those who reject God and choose to live in sin may experience many pleasures, but one day they'll die and be cast into Hell. From that point on they will be tormented day and night forever. They may have obtained

pleasures in the short term, but in the long term they'll experience nothing but agony and torture.

However, those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus may suffer greatly in this life, but in the life to come they'll experience everlasting joy in a perfect world that will never see war, or disease, or suffering, or death:

**Revelation 21:1-4:** “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

The righteous may sacrifice many pleasures in this life for the sake of God, but we will have endless pleasures in the world to come.

The Bible never says that sin doesn't bring pleasure. Instead it teaches that the pleasures of sin aren't worth having. It's far better to suffer now for the sake of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

## **The Pleasures of This World**

There are many pleasures in this world that are *not* sinful. However, those pleasures aren't satisfying:

**Ecclesiastes 2:1:** “I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.”

No matter how much food you eat, your hunger will never be satisfied – eventually you'll become hungry again. That's the problem with worldly pleasures! Those who love silver and gold will discover that they can't be satisfied with those things, no matter how much silver and gold they obtain:

**Ecclesiastes 5:10:** “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.”

But it's even worse than that. Those who love the pleasures of this world are in danger of becoming poor, because they spent their money on things that are incapable of satisfying them:

**Proverbs 21:17:** “He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.”

If you seek pleasure by buying things then you'll have to keep buying them – and that will get expensive very fast. Since the pleasures of this world don't last, you'll have to keep buying more things in order to experience pleasure. The type of happiness that you can buy is short lived.

It *is* possible to be truly satisfied, but the things of this world weren't intended to do that. Any satisfaction that they bring will be fleeting at best. It's unwise to spend your life seeking the things of this world in the hope that you'll find lasting pleasure and satisfaction. Those who live that way are considered to be dead in God's sight:

**1 Timothy 5:6:** “But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.”

If you truly seek lasting satisfaction and happiness, you must go beyond this world to something far greater. Otherwise you'll never find it.

## **The Pleasures of God**

God commands us to spend our life seeking Him, not seeking pleasure. The greatest commandment of all is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength:

**Mark 12:29-30:** “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.”

No one can serve two masters. We can't spend our life pursuing the things of this world (in order to obtain the pleasures that come from them), and also pursuing the things of God. It must be one or the other. Those who pursue the things of this world will never be satisfied with them. However, those who pursue the things of God will be greatly blessed. In fact, they'll be fully satisfied:

**Psalm 36:7-8:** “How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.”

Walking with God can be difficult, but it won't be difficult forever. One day we'll enter a much better world and experience endless joy:

**Psalm 16:11:** “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

It's not that pleasure itself is a bad thing, but rather that we must seek it from the right source. Instead of seeking pleasure from the things of this world, we must instead seek God with all our hearts. If we do that then we'll find tremendous joy that will last forever. However, if we don't then we'll never find what we're looking for.

## The Things That Please God

Although the wicked may take pleasure in sin, God does not. He's not evil and He doesn't love wickedness:

**Psalm 5:4:** “For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.”

God also doesn't take pleasure in the death of the wicked. Instead He takes pleasure when they repent of their sins:

**Ezekiel 18:23:** “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?”

**Ezekiel 33:11:** “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his

way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

God takes great pleasure in those who fear Him and have put their trust in Him:

**Psalm 147:11:** "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."

**Psalm 149:4:** "For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation."

It's not the death of the wicked, but rather their repentance that pleases God.

In conclusion, the Bible doesn't teach that pleasure itself is a bad thing. Instead it teaches that the things of this world are incapable of satisfying us, and the only place to find everlasting joy is in God. He alone can satisfy us! Those who seek Him with all their hearts may suffer in this life, but one day our suffering will be replaced with great joy. That's the way we're called to live.