

"Wired for Pleasure" (Pt. 2)

Vital Signs – Pt. 9

March 19, 2017

1Tim 4:1-5

- *While both the N.T. and the O.T. contain specific boundaries and practices that steer us away from things in this world ...it would be a critical error to miss that Being Healthy Also Requires Saying YES to Pleasures!*

- 1Tim 4... is an approach by some in the 1st Century to promote a HEALTHY Christian Life—and this is not an isolated effort...

Col 2:8, 16-23 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ... 16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— 21 "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

Both of these passages are written to steer the church as it navigates the ideas of their day—in how to live a Healthy Christian Life! Both of these passages feature a common 1st Century Problem in the Quest for Healthy Spirituality—Asceticism (Dictionary.com - **rigorous self-denial; extreme abstinence; austerity**)

1Tim 4:1-5

v.1-2 ...The Spirit expressly says some HARSH things about these people!

v.3 ...who over regulate Natural Things—I'm sure for the sake of "Spiritual Things"!

Principles bear fruit. The false teachers who are here described, probably accept as one of their starting principles the thesis: Anything physical or sensuous is contaminating." Hendriksen, William, and Kistemaker, NTC

...Plato's philosophy ...GnosticismMonasticismAsceticism ...Buddhism

Here Paul, therefore, in the person of Timothy, forewarns not only the Ephesians, but all the churches throughout the world, about hypocritical teachers, who, by setting up false worship, and by ensnaring consciences with new laws, adulterate the true worship of God, and corrupt the pure doctrine of faith. This is the real object of the passage, which it is especially necessary to remark." John Calvin, "Calvin's Commentary"

If God has wired us for pleasures, then these efforts to outlaw pleasures and subscribe to extreme asceticism will be of no profit to us! Worse than that, erecting these sorts of expectations and attempts at extraordinary disconnection may actually produce in us greater sin...

"False guilt kills true joy and ruins us for fruitful ministry. Impossible obligations lead to constant failure and incurable guilt, which only serve to breed greater sin. Read that again. Impossible obligation. Constant failure. Incurable guilt. Greater sin." Joe Rigney, "The Things of Earth", p. 90

...I know there are a variety of VIEWS and DISPUTES about What Pleasures are OK for a Christian—and we can be Very Concerned to "License" the Wrong Ones ...but Read These Principles Carefully! As a Pastor, I am Equally Concerned with Setting Up Man-Made Walls and Laws that go beyond what God has made clear! ...As a Pastor, I Hear the Warnings in These verses to All Those Who Teach and Touch on How we create boundaries and steer people!!

v. 3 ... "[things] that God created to be received"

The World of Pleasure—a Step Ladder or a Stumbling Stone?

1 Tim 4:3-5 ...who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

Premise: There are PLEASURES that God created to be received not rejected.

... literally, 'which God created for participation with thanksgiving by those who believe and who acknowledge the truth' Hendriksen, William, and Kistemaker, NTC

- v.4-5 ... the key to receiving (vs rejecting) what God has created is connected to and informed by "thanksgiving" and it being "the word of God and prayer."

NOTE: these elements mean this is NOT Mindless Pleasure or Unexamined Pleasure! ...this is Informed Pleasure!! ...I get informed by God's Word about His purpose, then I seek to engage and enjoy that purpose fully in my life!!

"Thanksgiving" = Locating the Source of This Pleasure in God

"The Word of God" = Allowing the Word of God to frame the Boundaries and Purpose for all Pleasures

"Prayer" = an intentional exchange between me and God—NOT an independent act of my own design and purpose

?? - Pornography ...Lyrics ...alcohol ...food ...wealth

We are Supposed to Participate in God's Created Pleasures, and we NEED to Participate in God's Created Pleasures if we are going to Fulfill His Great Purpose for Our Lives!

Neh 9:6-7 "You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.

Neh 9:22-25 "And you gave them kingdoms and peoples and allotted to them every corner. So they took possession of the land... 23 You multiplied their children as the stars of heaven, and you brought them into the land that you had told their fathers to enter and possess. ... 25 And they captured fortified cities and a rich land, and took possession of houses full of all good things, cisterns already hewn, vineyards, olive orchards and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and became fat and delighted themselves in your great goodness.

...These things testify/give witness to God's goodness and nature to provide, supply, and bless us!

Deut 8:10 "and you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you."

These "Pleasures" and Experiences Provide us with an EXPERIENTIAL VOCABULARY for Knowing and Magnifying God!!! ...You are Wired for Awe, Amazement, Delight, Pleasure—so that the God who Transcends those pleasures has a category!!

Ps 19:1-2 The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

Ps 19:7, 10 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; ...10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Prov 24:13-14 My son, eat honey, for it is good, and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste. 14 Know that wisdom is such to your soul; if you find it, there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

- Where does this verse get its weight? ...In its ability to use the experience of Taste as a Step Ladder to something even greater!!

So, after you have "indulged" in the expanse of the heavens, their wonder, and their beauty—what do you do? Do you turn that to God and transfer the glory to Him? Do you use that as a stepping stool to gain a greater glimpse and a greater admiration of and a greater love for God???

- **The Grand Canyon** ...**the Pacific Coast Shoreline**
- God uses the experiences and "feel" of human relationships to give us an "experiential vocabulary" of what we are to anticipate and receive from HIM!!
...a Providing Father ...a Nurturing Mother ...a Bride & Groom ...a Friend

Prov 5:18-21 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, 19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. 20 Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress? 21 For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths.

...Hearing the "sanctifying power of the Word" as it pertains to sex ...here we learn about God's purpose and boundaries within which there is pleasure to be taken and enjoyed!

"a forbidden woman" (so there are "out of bounds pleasures")

"It is no shame that "a man's ways are before the eyes of Lord" as her breasts fill him at all times with delight. This is why God made her that way and him that way. In fact, that this delight in her is "before" the Lord — in the presence of the Lord — points to the truth that all our joy in what God has made is meant to be a delight in God. There is something of his glory in all the glories of the world. ...We might lose sight of this, since Hollywood has ripped the curtains off the sacred marriage bed and turned a luxuriant, holy pleasure into a cheap spectator sport. We might be tempted to think that, since sex is so sinfully misused and is so universally

undermining to the all-satisfying beauty of Christ's holiness, maybe we Christians should have nothing to do with it. Paul says the opposite. It is the world that has stolen what belongs to believers. Sex belongs to Christians. Because sex belongs to God. "God created it to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth." ...the pleasures of sex are themselves an overflow of God's own goodness. ...We are not meant to revel in his creation instead of him or more than in him but because of him, and because there is something of him in all that is good and beautiful. The heavens are telling the glory of God. We are to see it. And worship him. So it is with the breasts of our wives. The breasts are telling the glory of God, the goodness of God, the beauty of God, and more. We are to see it. And worship him. " John Piper, "Sex Belongs to Believers"

...Sex, like all other GOOD gifts from God are intended to become "Step Ladders" upon which we take appropriate delight in, so that we might have an experiential vocabulary with which to take even greater delight in God—the source and giver of good gifts! ..." (HK NTC) *literally, which God created for participation with thanksgiving by those who believe and who acknowledge the truth*

Ps 104 ...a "Step Ladder Psalm"

As a pastor seeking your Spiritual Health ...I must be careful that I teach you to delight in pleasures—and not just to Avoid Corruption, otherwise your worship will be shallow, your love for God dispassionate, and your battle with fleshly indulgence unfruitful!