

Sermon audio is available online – be sure to listen to the message before engaging in this talksheet.  
The sermon outline is available at the end of this talksheet.

## OPEN WITH PRAYER

### ICE BREAKERS...

- ?** **Do you have trouble believing God is really concerned with your enjoyment in life?**  
[In this life, see I Timothy 6:17. In the life to come, see I Corinthians 2:9]

### THE WORD OF GOD / DISCUSSION POINTS...

**Pleasure:** “being pleased; enjoyment (or the root word, joy), delight, peace or satisfaction.”

#### I. GOD CREATED US TO SEEK PLEASURE

**Discuss the following remarks...**

*“If there lurks in our minds the notion that to desire our own good and enjoyment is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is NO part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” - C.S. Lewis*

*The famous philosopher/theologian/mathematician, Blaise Pascal, wrote extensively about the universal drive in all people to pursue pleasure and enjoyment in life. He said the cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. In fact, he believed the will **never** takes the least step but to pursue that which is believed to bring the greatest satisfaction. He said it was the motive of every action of man, even of those who hang themselves.*

*“It is not the desire for pleasure that’s wrong in our lives, it’s the way we choose to fulfill that desire.”*

*“You are only going to do what God wants you to do, if you believe God pays better dividends than the world pays. Nobody is going to do something for nothing.”*



**Read Hebrews 12:25-26; Hebrews 12:2; Hebrews 11:6**

- ?** **How do these passages tie into seeking the greater pleasure (the greater reward)?**
- ?** **How might pursuing the greater pleasure require discipline and self-control?**
- ?** **When we give of ourselves for others, are we still pursuing the *greater* pleasure (i.e. a greater sense of joy, peace and satisfaction)? Why or why not?**

## II. WORLDLY PLEASURE IS FLEETING AND WILL NOT FULFILL

### Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-17

- What does Ecclesiastes 2:1-12 teach us about pursuing worldly pleasures?
- How “pleased” was Solomon as he tried to find pleasure “under the sun?” (see v.17)
- When does something God intended for our “enjoyment” become a “worldly pleasure?” Give a good definition of a worldly pleasure.
- Why is it that worldly pleasures (mud-pies) have such a strong attraction to believers and unbelievers alike?

## III. LASTING PLEASURE IS FOUND ONLY IN GOD

*The deepest and most enduring pleasure is found only in God. Not from God, but in God.  
That which ultimately fills the longing in our heart is none other than God Himself.  
God is the end of your search for pleasure, not the means to some other end.*

Describe some ways in which you’ve found the above statement to be true in your life?

### Read Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

- How does this verse show us that lasting pleasure is found only in God?

## IV. TAKING PLEASURE IN GOD IS COMMANDED & GIVES HIM THE MOST GLORY

### Read Psalm 37:3 and Philippians 4:4

- We don’t often think of joy as being commanded by the Lord, do we? Do you struggle with joy in your Christian walk? Explain.

### Read Romans 12:8, 11; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 1:22

- What emotions are described in these verses about serving God?
- What are the roadblocks that stand in your way when it comes to having zeal, fervency, cheerfulness and joy in your Christian walk?



## **Read Deuteronomy 28:47-48**

- ? Why do you think God is concerned about attitude as well as our actions?**
- ? As a parent, what is your reaction when your children obey you, but grumble all the while? Do they honor you when they begrudgingly carry out your wishes?**
- ? The Westminster Catechism says: “*The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.*” Do you agree with this statement? How is God glorified when we find our pleasure in Him?**



## **Read Rom 5:3, Heb 13:5, Psalm 16:11, Rom 8:28**

- ? How do these verses help us remain joyful in suffering?**
- ? How can living by the phrase “*Find the good and praise it?*” have a positive impact on your life and the lives of those around you?**

**CLOSE IN PRAYER...**



## ***Pursue Pleasure... in God***

*"All men seek 'pleasure.' This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves." - Blaise Pascal*

**Pleasure:** "Being pleased; enjoyment; delight; peace and satisfaction."

### **I. God created us to pursue PLEASURE**

*"...put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." (1 Timothy 6:17)*

*"If there lurks in our minds the notion that to desire our own good and enjoyment is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." - C.S. Lewis*

*"... No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)*

#### **3 POINTS TO REMEMBER:**

- \* Pursuing pleasure is not the same as having fun.
- \* Pursuing pleasure is not the same as pursuing happiness.
- \* Pursuing pleasure requires discipline and sacrifice.

*"he [Moses] was looking ahead to his reward." (Hebrews 11:25-26)*

*"Jesus... for the joy set before him he endured the cross." (Hebrews 12:2)*

*"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him **must believe** that He exists and that **He rewards** those who earnestly seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)*

### **II. Worldly pleasure is FLEETING and will not FULFILL**

*"I thought in my heart, 'Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.'" (Ecclesiastes 2:1)*

See Solomon's story in Ecclesiastes Chapter 2...

*Laughter (v.2); drinking (v.3); work/achievements (v.4); servants, relaxing (v.7); wealth, entertainment, sex (v.8); wisdom (v.12)*

*"I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure." (Ecclesiastes 2:10)*

*"So I hated life!... All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind." (Ecclesiastes 2:17)*

*"The world has an inconsolable longing. It tries to satisfy the longing with scenic vacations, accomplishments of creativity, stunning cinematic productions, sexual exploits, sports extravaganzas, hallucinogenic drugs, ascetic rigors, managerial excellence, et cetera. But the longing remains. What does this mean?" - John Piper*

*"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." - C.S. Lewis*

### III. Lasting pleasure is found only in GOD

#### KEY POINT:

*We never put man's pleasure above God's glory – we put our pleasure in God's glory. Our quest is not merely joy - it is joy in God. Our quest is not simply pleasure – it is finding pleasure in God.*

*"A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, **for without Him, who can eat or find enjoyment?**" (Ecclesiastes 2:24-25)*

*"God has placed eternity in the heart of man" (Ecclesiastes 3:11)*

*"Rejoice in the Lord **always**. I will say it again: **Rejoice!**" (Philippians 4:4)*

### IV. Taking pleasure in God is COMMANDED and gives Him the most GLORY

*"Because you did not serve the Lord your God **joyfully** and **gladly**... you will serve (your) enemies..." (Deuteronomy 28:47-48)*

#### Q) Why is God so concerned about our joy that He commands it?

*Because a person has already made a god out of whatever he finds the most pleasure in.*

*"The chief end of man is to glorify God and **enjoy Him forever.**" – The Westminster Catechism*

*"Delight yourself in the Lord..." (Psalm 37:4)*

*"Never be lacking in **zeal**, but keep your **spiritual fervor**, serving the Lord." (Romans 12:11)*

[See also I Peter 1:22; Hebrews 13:17; Romans 12:8]

### HOW CAN I REMAIN JOYFUL IN SUFFERINGS?

*"**Rejoice** that you participate in the **sufferings** of Christ, so that you may be **overjoyed** when his glory is revealed." (I Peter 4:13)*

*"...we also **rejoice** in our **sufferings** because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope will never disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our hearts..." (Romans 5:3-5)*

#### 1. Because God is with you.

*"I will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5)*

*"In His presence is fullness of joy." (Psalm 16:11)*

#### 2. Because God has a plan for you.

*"...in all things God works for the good of those who love Him."  
(Romans 8:28)*

#### 3. Because God will help you.

*"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1)*

### WHAT DO I DO WHEN MY HEART IS NOT INTO IT?

#### 1. Confess your sin of joylessness.

#### 2. Look for joy and goodness from the Lord's hand.

*"Find the good and praise it."*

#### 3. Pray earnestly that God would restore the joy of obedience.

#### 4. Do the outward dimension of your duty, in hope of rekindling joy.