

## #282 "The God of Pleasure"

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Satan has a monopoly not on pleasure but upon sinful passions and lusts that satiate a fallen flesh but which cannot satisfy the human heart. This is because God has set eternity in the hearts of mankind (Ecclesiastes 3:11), and part and parcel to eternity with Him are pleasures forever. As Psalm 16:11 says, "You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever." In other words, it is not Satan who created the concept of pleasure because his purpose is to steal, kill, destroy, pervert, distort, and to keep people from finding real pleasure in knowing Jesus Christ (John 10:10). Eternal life is knowing Jesus Christ through faith in Him and His sufficient atoning work on the cross (John 17:3). That He rose from the dead demonstrated that He is stronger than sin, death, and the devil, and He guarantees eternal bliss for those who belong to Him. He is a guarantor Who cannot lie or fail concerning a coming paradise for those who are washed clean by His blood.

This earth is not now what it was created to be. God created an earthly paradise in the Garden of Eden. There was no curse, no sin, no evil lusts, and no death. Work was fun and fulfilling, Adam's relationship with Eve was pure, whole, and pleasurable, and both Adam and Eve could walk and talk with God personally. Creation was at peace, and Adam and Eve could live among God's creatures in peace and harmony with no fear. Abundant fruits and vegetables didn't need genetic modification or pesticide, but, in addition to having 100% nutrition, they were meant to be pleasurable to the taste buds which God put on their tongues. There was no killing, violence, distrust, or danger. Eden was paradise on earth, but an even better paradise awaits in heaven (Luke 23:43). A new heaven and a new earth will be made where no sin or death exist, Satan will be cast away in hell forever, and the wonders of God's creative genius will be everywhere to behold, explore, and enjoy. The New Jerusalem, the dwelling place of God's people in eternity, will be beautiful, radiant, pure, and glorious, for Christ will be there personally providing light and companionship to His people. The paradise to come will trump the paradise of the past. Utopia only exists in Christ's eternal kingdom, and it cannot happen while sin and Satan are around. But paradise and pleasures forever await the believer, and they are worth waiting for.

A false god of pleasure would advocate all kinds of pagan practices, immorality, an emptying of the mind, or an escape of the mind (James 5:5, 2 Peter 2:13). The world constantly broadcasts a message of dulling the mind as the pathway to pleasure and excitement. However, the true God of pleasure (Ecclesiastes 8:15) wants His people to be enraptured with Him most of all and to recognize that only His genius and eternal wisdom make eternal pleasure possible. Even now on earth despite sin, death, and the curse, glimpses of God's glory are seen in what has been made (Psalm 19:1-2). The heavens declare His glory and point to something eternally wonderful. It is God Who thought up existence. It is God Who created the world and all that is in it. It is God Who made the stripes on tigers and zebras, and it is God Who designed for the eagle to soar. It is God Who thought up gravity, atoms, every element,

genetics and DNA, and all that science reveals about what God has already designed. It is God Who designed man with the ability to reason, to think, to process logic and language, and to be able to communicate with others. It is God Who created the very concept of beauty and the ability of humans to behold it and marvel. It is God Who created relationships, family, and the ability to connect at the soul level with another. It is God Who thought up sex and intimacy in marriage and made it pleasurable. It is God Who thought up the joy of children (Genesis 18:12), and it is He Who shapes them in the mother's womb. It is God Who created music and Who gifted people to be able to express depth of feeling and wonder of sound through instruments and voices to ears that can hear and appreciate what the sound waves carry. It is He Who gave eyes to see every color of the prism which refracts light, something He also created and which the best minds cannot well explain. It is God Who created sunrise and sunset, green pastures and quiet waters, beaches, palm trees, and exotic coves. He is the author of pleasure, and He is the finisher when it comes to creating pleasures forever.

The end of wicked pleasures is death and pain (Proverbs 21:17, Ecclesiastes 2:9-10), and the wicked will not inherit true pleasure because only with God is eternal paradise possible (2 Thessalonians 2:12). Taking God out of the equation makes genuine, lasting, soul-satisfying, God-delighting, heart-rejoicing, heaven-gratifying pleasure impossible (1 Timothy 5:6, 2 Timothy 3:4). **Pleasure for pleasure's sake is emptiness (Ecclesiastes 2:1-2) and a trap (Luke 8:14).** *Pleasure and the worship of God go together (Psalm 112:1), and this is why worshipping Him is the highest form of pleasure that there is. It is a life that is hidden with Christ in God which can enjoy God's genius and good and perfect gifts to the fullest. Without God, the puzzle pieces of life don't form a unified whole, and pleasure will always be a mere abstraction of what is supposed to be oh so real.*

To live without Christ makes no sense, but living with Him now and forever is the centerpiece of knowing, feeling, and experiencing pleasure. Satan distorts pleasure to whet sinner's appetites (Titus 3:3), but the saints trace genuine pleasure back to a genius God Who they will worship forever in eternal bliss.