

Lesson 1: The Pleasure of God and Our Happiness

Primary Objectives:

1. Relate Our Spiritual Disposition to the Purpose for the Class
2. Compose a Bullet Point Resume for God (and assess what it does and doesn't tell us)
3. Examine the Relevance of Scougal's Observation about the "Worth of a Soul"
4. Begin to Build a Bridge and Get Focused for Greater Joy in God

1. Relate Our Spiritual Disposition to the Purpose for the Class

1.1. Consider the following statements. Which one do you identify with most?

1. I have little enthusiasm for the things of God, struggling with any real motivation.
2. I am somewhat interested in spiritual things, but more of a halfhearted spectator.
3. I am committed to my faith, plugging away in my spiritual walk, but not experiencing much joy or satisfaction in my relationship with God.
4. I am excited about knowing God and the spiritual growth trajectory I'm on.
5. I am enjoying a deeply satisfying relationship with God; never been better!

Which one do you think the teacher of the class identifies with most?

1.2. Study the following verses and **circle** every occurrence of the word "your" and **underline** the word or phrase that immediately follows each.

Psalm 63:2-3:

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.
Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

Psalm 84:10:

For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Psalm 16:11:

You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

What do these verses point to as desirable?

1.3. Formulate answers to the following questions as you listen to why this class is being offered:

1. What do you anticipate will be a positive outcome for your personally as a result of participating in this class?
2. What are you the least excited about regarding the class based on the introduction?
3. What questions, if any, do you have at this point regarding the purpose and approach of this class?

2. Compose a Bullet Point Resume for God (and assess what it does and doesn't tell us)

Assume for the moment that God is applying for the position of “**Chief Executive of Global Operations**”, and he has asked you to put together a bullet point resume for him.

Based on the following verses list some of the key work experience and skill sets God possesses that might pertain to the position.

Yahweh's Work Experience and Skill Sets:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Psalm 33:6: By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

Jeremiah 10:12: It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.

Daniel 2:21: He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

Isaiah 46:9–10: For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done.

Psalm 139:7–8: Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

Psalm 50:10–11: For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. ¹¹ I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine.

Psalms 90:2: Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Exodus 14:21: And the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Nehemiah 9:11: And you divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land, and you cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters.

2 Chronicles 7:13: When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people,

Acts 17:26: And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,

If you were going to ask someone out on a date or pursue a friendship, what would you rather have in hand: A copy of their resume? Or a copy of their personal bio or FB profile? What important things might be missing from a resume?

3. Examine the Relevance of Scougal's Observation about the "Worth of a Soul" (as it pertains to God.)

Consider the following words by Henry Scougal in the book The Life of God in the Soul of Man:

"The worth and excellency of a soul is to be measured by the object of its love."

Do you agree with that statement? What causes you to admire or regard a person highly?

How is assessing what is admirable about a person based on what they take pleasure in *different* than assessing a person merely by what they do?

4. Begin to Build a Bridge and Get Focused for Greater Joy in God

4.1. Building a Bridge for Greater Joy in God

For Christians there are two basic things we desire in life:

1. We want to _____ in life.

Psalms 90:14: Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

2. We want to _____ in life.

1 Corinthians 10:31: So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

What is the bridge from our desire to be happy and glorify God to the things that God takes delight in?

Henry Scougal, *Life of God: As divine love doth advance and elevate the soul, so it is that alone which can make it happy. The highest and most ravishing pleasures, the most solid and substantial delights that human nature is capable of, are those which **arise from the endearments of a well-placed and successful affection**. – i.e. those placed in God*

IF it is true that the greatest source of happiness and fountain of pleasure is God himself. (*In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.* - Ps 16:11.)

THEN the more we grasp the worth and excellence of God in the things he takes delight in, the more we will experience happiness in God and honor him as the greatest treasure in all the universe.

4.2. Getting Focused for Greater Joy in God

How do we get there. What needs to happen for us to move from where we are to experiencing greater joy and satisfaction in God?

Underline the following words in the verses below: *unveiled, beholding, image, light, shone*.

What do these words indicate about how our hearts are engaged and transformed by the glory of God?

2 Corinthians 3:18: And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:6: For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Think of a time you wanted take a photo of something. What are some essentials to getting a good picture? What challenges can arise that keep you from getting a clear picture?

Translate those observations in some practical implications for how we go about seeing the worth and excellence of God with greater clarity?

Next Week: The Pleasure of God in His Eternal Son