

Primary Objectives:

1. Recap of the Ground Covered So Far (10 min)
2. Examine Why God's Pleasure in Creation Is Not Idolatry (10)
3. Develop a Principle for How to Enjoy God's Creation (10)
4. Explore What Is at the Heart of God's Disposition Toward Us (15)
5. Address Potential Barriers to Internalizing God's Pleasure in His People (15)

1. Recap of the Ground Covered So Far

Week 1: God's Pleasure and _____.

Week 2: God's Pleasure in _____.

Week 3: God's Pleasure in _____.

Week 4: God's Pleasure in _____.

2. Examine Why God's Pleasure in Creation Is Not Idolatry

2.1. Complete the following statements based on the verse(s) provided:

1. God rejoices in the works of creation because they express _____

Psalm 104:31: May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works,

Psalm 19:1: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

2. God rejoices in the works of creation because they express _____

Psalm 148:1–5:

¹ Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

² Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts!

³ Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD! For he commanded and they were created.

3. God rejoices in the works of creation because they reveal _____

Proverbs 8:12, 27-31:

¹² “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion.

²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

²⁸ when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep,

²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth,

³⁰ then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always,

³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.

4. God rejoices in the works of creation because they reveal _____

Isaiah 40:26: Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these?

He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.

2.2. Explain why God is not an idolater like those described in Romans 1:23, based on the reasons that God takes great pleasure in his creation listed above.

Paul writes that the wrath of God is revealed against those who:

“exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.” (Romans 1:23)

Why does God’s great pleasure in creation not make him an idolater?

God is not an idolater when he takes pleasure in his works of creation because...

3. Develop a Principle for How to Enjoy God’s Creation

3.1. Revise the statement below to reflect what we should do if God is our model for how to enjoy his works of creation.

Psalms 104:31: May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works.

God takes pleasure in his works of creation because...

they point beyond themselves to God as the most glorious thing in the universe.

_____ take pleasure in God’s works of creation _____...
they point beyond themselves to God as the most glorious thing in the universe.

3.2. Psalm 104 is an extended consideration of the wonders of various aspects of our world. What does the Psalm's ending below indicate is the focal point of these observed wonders?

Psalm 104:33–35:

³³ I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

³⁴ May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord.

³⁵ Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more!
Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord!

3.3. Reflect on the following quotes from Edwards and Augustine. How might you summarize these as a “principle to live by” as it relates to how we ought to enjoy God's creation?

Edwards (speaking of earthly pleasures): *“These are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean.”* – Works, Vol 2

Augustine: *“He loves You too little who loves anything together with You, which he loves not for Your sake.”*

Principle to Live by:

4. Explore What Is at the Heart of God's Disposition Toward Us

4.1. Examine the contrast in the following verses. How do the negative statements amplify and clarify the positive statements about what God takes pleasure in?

Psalm 147:10–11:

His delight is not in the strength of the horse,
nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,
but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,
in those who hope in his steadfast love.

4.2. Share an example of a time when you took great delight in doing good to another person. What made that such an enjoyable experience?

4.3. Restate the underlined phrases in the passage below as 3 unique promises God makes to his people.

Jeremiah 32:40–41: I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. ⁴¹ I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.

Promise #1: God _____ you good.
(Rom 8:28, Ps 84:11 Isa 38:17)

Promise #2: God _____ you good.
(Deut 30:9, 2 Chron 16:9, Ps 23:6, Ps 35:27)

Promise #3: God _____ you good.
(Isa 62:4-5)

Can you think of any human examples that embody something of the intensity of God's delight in his people expressed here?

5. Address Potential Barriers to Internalizing God's Pleasure in His People.

5.1. Compare Zephaniah 3:17 with Jer. 32:40-41. What is different about God's rejoicing here?

Zephaniah 3:17:

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.

What do you imagine it would sound like to hear God singing?

5.2. Circle any "negative" words occurring in the passage below that describe undesirable states and list them in the table provided.

Zephaniah 3:11–20:

11 "On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain.

12 But I will leave in your midst a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord,

13 those who are left in Israel; they shall do no injustice and speak no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall graze and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.”

14 Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

15 The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

17 The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

18 I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

19 Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

20 At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” says the Lord.

Negatives:

How might the things in the list create barriers to experiencing God’s joy “over you” personally?

Which ones do you most relate to personally?

5.3. Review Zephaniah 3:11-20 again and note below any actions God takes to remove these barriers that threaten our ability to enjoy God’s rejoicing “over you.”

Next Week: The Pleasure of God in the Prayers and Perseverance of His People