

How Do We Get the Pleasure and Joy of God? – Broken Religion 2

How do we get the pleasure and joy of God?

How do I please God and taste and know the joy of God in an ongoing way?

Some of us have spent a part of our lives (*maybe a little to a lot*) in church: believing, hoping what we do pleases God.

- **Some of us have given our time to teach others.** We have wiped noses, cleaned bottoms, ate a lot of bad pizza, opened our homes to tons of people, studied a lot of lessons, given some good ones and given some bad ones.
- **Some of us have given our money.** We have helped turn on lights, paid for a lot of wipes & bad pizza, sent church planters & missionaries across the world, & helped purchase these buildings or others like them.
- **Some of us have taken one for the team.** We have taken the blame for others over promises and failures, we have lost friends who were hurt by leaders or members, we have shed tears because many were sent to go start other churches or works. *And in all these things – we believed & hoped they would please God and give us His joy.*

My question for you is - Has it worked? Have you truly known the ongoing pleasure and joy of God in all your efforts in church? Most of us – would say – my efforts have not brought me the ongoing pleasure and joy of God!

Others of us – on the other hand have spent the greater part of our lives – out of the church knowing what we were doing didn't please God and we really didn't care.

- **We've sought to find pleasure and joy in others.** We tried romance, marriage, friendship, partnership, friends with benefits, partners without benefits, twosomes, threesomes, and other things know one would imagine.
- **We've sought to find pleasure and joy in good times.** We have partied like its 1999 in 2016, we have partied with fun people & boring people. We've traveled, tried new hobbies, & joined new groups, all to find pleasure in good times.
- **We've sought to find pleasure and joy in success.** We have done everything in our power to achieve enough to say – I'm happy. We have gone to school, earned degrees, work 14 hour days, endured crummy bosses and climbed the ladder to be our own boss. *And in all these things – we hoped we would find the pleasure and joy we longed for.*

My question for you is the same - Has it worked? Have you found the ongoing pleasure and joy you were looking for? Maybe you are here today – because it hasn't worked out so well.

What's crazy? Whether you have spent your life in or out of the church – we can both agree that our efforts to find ongoing pleasure and joy don't work so well. As we look at Broken Religion and the True Gospel of Jesus I believe God wants to help us answer one question today...

How do we get the pleasure and joy of God?

01. Who is Paul?
02. How do all other gospels and the gospel of Jesus answer this question?
03. What do these answers mean for you/me?

01. Who is Paul?

Paul was born and raised a Jew in town called Tarsus (modern eastern Turkey). He studied Jewish Law and becomes a religious ruler called a Pharisee who sought to know the pleasure of God in all he knew and did for God. After Jesus' death he began to lead out in the persecution of Christ followers – believing this would please God. It was brutal. Arrests, beatings, stonings – all in the name of God believing all this was pleasing to God. Then, literally in a flash, his life does an about face after Jesus supernaturally appears to him on his way to arrest and kill more believers. He goes from brutally killing Christ followers – to being one.

He then begins a journey of learning the gospel of Jesus from Jesus. There is not specific clarity on where Paul is for how long. What is clear? Paul is alone for many years learning and being healed by God. The gospel of the Jesus became the all-consuming message of Paul that he preached to others and himself. He would spend the rest of his life – declaring this gospel and ironically enough – he would be killed for following Jesus. He is writing this letter or book because the truth of the gospel of Jesus is under attack. And of those things Paul is trying to defend, one of those things he is trying to be very clear about – is how we please God and know His joy. For there were 2 distinct things being taught which in Paul's mind was a matter of life and death. Let's look the differences together. **7**

02. How do all other gospels and the gospel of Jesus answer this question?

All other gospels:

- Give us the wisdom of man – *contrary to God's word.*

14 And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

“The traditions of my fathers” – reference to the oral law of the Jews that were man’s additions to God’s given law. These traditions started as commentary, then became law. They perverted the true gospel.

All other gospels that preached in the church are simply a distortion of the gospel of Jesus.

- All other gospels teach that all people are basically good.
- All other gospels teach and we please God by doing the good he asks us to do.

The gospel of Jesus:

- Gives us the supernatural plan of God – **THE message of God’s word.**

Galatians 1:11-12, 15 (ESV) 11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. **God’s word declares God’s supernatural plan from beginning to end. It is THE message.**

15 But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me,

Ephesians 1:4 (NLT) Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

- Whole of scripture says, we were created for the joy of God. His presence – is joy for He is joy!
- Whole of scripture says, our sin made us unpleasing, unrighteous and separates us from God and his joy.
- The plan would have to come from God because our situation was humanly hopeless. We cannot make ourselves right with God. **Only God can redeem us to Himself and his joy.**

“I love it when plans come together.” Douglas MacArthur. He wrote in his memoirs – most of my best and worst plans “came together” in the midst of the battle or war we were in. They were made up as we went.

He led our nation to victory in WWII. Hailed a hero – he made it up as he went. This isn’t our God. He is not winging it as he goes. He has had a plan, by his own will and wisdom for eternity past to return us to His joy.

All other gospels:

- Give us the wisdom of man.
- Enslave us to the approval of others to get God’s pleasure and joy.

Galatians 1:13-14 (ESV) 13 For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. 14 And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

To keep his right standing before God – Paul had to do religious things according to the “traditions” of his fathers (oral law). The more he did these things, the more he advanced in Judaism. All of his advancement ultimately rested on the approval of his life and actions by others. *And this advancement – led to the brutal murders of many Christ followers. Religion has hurt many of you. You don’t trust church, pastors, Christians, or God. I am sorry – but much of what has hurt you is broken religion. A distortion of the gospel of Jesus.* **Broken religion – is not the gospel of Jesus or result of good people gone bad. Broken religion is the result of broken people believing and passionately living a false gospel. And it always results in people being hurt and God defame.**

The gospel of Jesus:

- Gives us a supernatural plan of God.
- Declares only in Christ’s supernatural redemptive work do we get and know the pleasure and joy of God.

Galatians 1:15-16 (ESV) But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, Whole sentence hinges on one idea – God was pleased. Why?

Other gospels say – we do pleasing things or don’t do unpleasant things – God is pleased. God says – I am pleased with you by “GRACE”. Grace is the gift of God’s pleasure in the justice and mercy shown Jesus for us. Billion Dollar debt gone. Cool – but that is a just a pardon – a gift that is great but you are always reminded of your failure to get in debt. A pardon doesn’t remove guilt and shame. God put all his justice on Jesus to give you all his mercy. In his death you are not pardoned – you are made right, pleasing so you can come back to God and know His joy. That means all your good can never be pleasing to God. It is not justice for your great sin – rather, it is a bribe. And, all your bad cannot outdo the justice of God he laid on Jesus. **Jesus is alone the pleasure of God and we have him thru faith in His work. In Christ we get the promise of all of scripture – what we were created for ...**

Psalms 16:11 (ESV) In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Living to please another is something we all know in one way or another. I watched a dad go through circus gyrations

to please an unpleased baby. Parents you know what you did. All to please her. But it often doesn't stop as an infant. The fit in the Disney Store – parents looked away. The teenager who cater to their every whim, the boyfriend who gets anything he wants, the spouse or friend who walks all over us because we so desperately want to please & know joy, a moment of happiness.

- **Frees us from the slavery of approval in others.**

Galatians 1:16-21 (ESV) 16 was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. 19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. 20 (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Why did God keep Paul from the apostle's immediate approval?

God was doing two things. 1) Showing all this gospel was from God alone. *Accusation: he got it from others.*

2) God was completing Paul's freedom from the slavery of approval. *God freed Paul from others approval in the work of Christ – no more need, no more shame, no more guilt. However, he knew Paul's old sinful nature still desired this approval – so He spent the first years of Paul's life teaching him his approval in Christ was more beautiful and powerful than his approval found in others. Freedom in Christ is real. We no longer need others approval to find God's pleasure and joy. BUT – we live everyday tempted to go back. We stay free not just by being set free – but by believing our freedom is better than our captivity.*

All other gospels:

- Give us the wisdom of man.
- Enslave us to the approval of others to get God's pleasure and joy.
- **Reveal I am the greatest treasure.**

Galatians 1:13-14 (ESV) 13 For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. 14 And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

All the focus of broken religion – other gospels – is on me. *What can I do for my success, my happiness. Everything about broken religion says I am ultimately the most important one who alone can bring me joy.*

The gospel of Jesus:

- Gives us a supernatural plan of God.
- Declares only in Christ's supernatural redemptive work do we get and know the pleasure and joy of God.
- Frees us from the slavery of approval in others.
- **Reveals God as the Greatest Treasure.**

Galatians 1:22-24 (ESV) 22 And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23 They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." 24 And they glorified God because of me. *They were declaring – look, God is the greatest treasure!* 20

Why? Because a man who had been murdering their friends and family to please God – was now saying, I was wrong – our works cannot please God. Jesus did and in Him we can be pleasing to God and really know His joy.

How do we get the pleasure and joy of God? The gospel of Jesus says God is that joy, the greatest treasure and it is a gift available only by the work of Jesus – an eternal plan that frees us from believing our joy is in others.

02. What do these answers mean for you/me?

If you are seeking to find the pleasure and joy of God in anything but Christ's supernatural redemptive work:

- You will fail to find the pleasure and joy of God.
- You will enslave yourselves to the approval of others.
- You will make yourself the greatest treasure.

What do you and I do?

Repent – Ask God to help you turn from finding pleasure or joy in anything by Christ and for believing *He is not joy.*
> Turn to Christ our joy who has pleased God for us forever.

Philippians 3:4-7 (ESV) 4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe

of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

1) **See and believe your efforts as nothing and turn from them.**

Why could Paul count them as nothing. He had a huge resume, but he also had a huge resume killer. He killed and murdered people. It made him realize all he had done was really nothing. It matter nothing in the scope of pleasing God. Can you say this about your efforts – that all of them are nothing – only Christ and what He did matters. Count them as nothing – because they are. They cannot make you right with God and bring you into the joy of His presence. If you see them as good and believe you must sacrifice or act humble to count them as nothing – then you are still trusting in your efforts. Today ask God – help me believe I all have done does not gain me an ounce of your pleasure. Help me believe Lord you are pleased with me fully in Jesus and his work alone.

“Sometimes God lets us come to the end of ourselves – the end of our self obtained, self redeemed joy -in order for us to enjoy more of him.” “Enjoy” Trillia Newbell

Philippians 3:8 (ESV) 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. ... 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ,

2) **See and believe Christ and His efforts as everything, the Greatest Treasure – that alone bring you the pleasure or joy of God.**