

Satisfied Series
Lie #2 – Pleasure Will Give Me Fulfilment
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Today is part two of the new series we started called **SATISFIED**. In this series we are looking at some of the lies our culture is feeding us about how to live a satisfied life.

There is an inborn need or desire to be fulfilled and satisfied in life. God has the same desire for us. He wants us to experience the abundant life in Christ.

- Our good, good father desires to bless our lives. Jesus says:

John 10:10 A thief has only one thing in mind—he wants to steal, slaughter, and destroy. But I have come to give you everything in abundance, more than you expect—life in its fullness until you overflow! (TPT)

There are two obstacles or problems we face in experiencing this abundant life.

First, Jesus said we will encounter a thief, the devil, who will try to steal our joy and blessing. He will try to destroy God’s good plan for our lives.

- And the **Second** problem is our own motives and actions.

You see - There is a **legitimate and illegitimate** way of finding satisfaction and fulfillment in life.

Last week Pastor Brian looked at the lie that says, **“Deciding for yourself is better than trusting God.”** The lie is that satisfaction and fulfillment come through being self-sufficient. Being in control. Doing things your way.

It creates the false idea that you don’t really need people or God. You become your own god. The master of your own destiny.

Today we want to look at another lie. This lie says:

Lie #2 “Your fulfilment lies in pleasure”.

The pursuit of pleasure is a short cut that leads to a dead end. Instead of pleasure, you end with regret and misery.

- Not at first, but eventually that is where you will end up.
- The deceitfulness of selfish pleasure and sin is that on the front end it is all fun but on the back end it brings pain and regret.

The **lie of pleasure** is a huge one in America. We cling to the fundamental right of "**Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness**" which is a well-known phrase in the United States Declaration of Independence.

I think our Declaration of Independence is an amazing document. Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of happiness is good **until - it turns inward, becomes self-centered, and materialistic.**

It is good until it loses its connection to Creator God. Then happiness becomes god. Pleasure becomes a futile pursuit for happiness and often leads to bondage instead.

When the pursuit of happiness becomes more important than the pursuit of God and the good of my fellowman it then becomes an idol we worship. And to a large extent that is what has happened in our nation and culture. Pleasure is our national god.

There are godly pleasures that God gives which are good, and also worldly pleasures that lead us away from God.

God is not against wealth, fun, and good wholesome pleasure. In this message, I am talking about the worldly pleasures we pursue to find satisfaction in our soul.

The problem is that sometimes we can take the very blessings of God on our lives or nation and turn them into selfish pleasures. **When instead, God blessed us and meant for us to use them to bless others and be a blessing to the nations.**

Agur, who was a contemporary of Solomon, wrote **Proverbs 30**. (OPEN BIBLES)

He understood there were **two mindsets** that could trap people.

- One was a **poverty mindset**, where people functioned out of a poor me, victim mindset.
- And the other was a **pleasure mindset**, wrapped around riches that caused people to pursue pleasures more than God. So, he writes this:

(READ) Prov 30:7-9

I think the issue in our lives is often one of balance and moderation. A **poverty mindset or pleasure mindset can both lead us away from God.**

The writer is saying we should live a life that honors and pursues God above all else. Whether we are rich or poor.

The Lie:

- 1. The lie of our culture is that the more pleasure you engage in the more satisfied and fulfilled you will be as a person.**

So, whether it is entertainment, houses, cars, food, sex, drugs, sports, money, or anything you are pursuing for happiness - **those things in themselves will never satisfy you**. In fact, they only tend to increase your appetite for them.

- Did you ever try to eat just one potato chip or chocolate cover peanut? The one, stirs your mouth to want at least one more.

Pleasure tells us, if only we had a little more we would be happy and satisfied. And on and on it goes. **Pleasure is addictive.** It affects the pleasure center of our brain which makes us want more and more. Many Americans are addicted to pleasure.

- We begin to live for it. Dream how to get more of it. Never have enough.

The pursuit of pleasure is often a mirage. It is often just out of our reach. When we think we have found it we find it wasn't what we thought it would be, so we keep pursuing. **Thinking it will bring us happiness and success.**

More and more riches and things do not produce lasting happiness. I could read you a long list of rich and famous people who died very miserable.

I came across this fascinating article written by Michael Shreeve, a millennial young leader in the business world. He is writing to millennials but it's good for all of us. The title of the article is: **Pleasure is a Dangerous Lie.** He writes:

"I really don't want to sound like a grumpy old man (I'm not even 30 yet), but I think that the biggest problem with my generation is their undying belief that "pleasure is King". Or that pleasure is even a good thing.

There is a difference between the pursuit-of-pleasure and the pursuit-of-good things.

What (we) need to learn is: Pain is a metric of success. Pleasure is a metric of failure.

You will never see an Olympic runner cross the finish line free of sweat, with a smile on their face, calmly breathing.

You will see them grimacing in pain, sweat drizzling down their nose, and probably grunting (or screaming) as they cross the finish line.

That's what winning looks like.

I'm not saying that self-flagellation is the key to achieving your dreams. I'm also not saying that you shouldn't have joy in your life. What I am saying is:

The constant pursuit of pleasure is the constant pursuit of mediocrity. Of laziness. Of self-centeredness. Of backsliding. The opposites of building something.

If success was about pleasure, then everyone would be successful.

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This speaks to our overall culture today. **But here is the counterbalance to this.**

Here in Lancaster County where there is a strong work ethic, our problem sometimes is that we get too caught up in our work. **We work hard to have more things hoping they will satisfy us.**

Millennials sometimes want pleasure without hard work. But we can also feel we deserve it because of our hard work.

- **Both groups can be in an unhealthy pursuit of pleasure.**

So, how do I know if I have been affected by this cultural lie of pleasure?

Red Flags:

2. **Red Flags: If you find yourself driven. If you feel like you are stressed out by the fast pace of life. If you find your interest in church and spiritual things waning. If you find yourself constantly dissatisfied with what you have. If you are constantly looking for the next high, the next big event, the next vacation. These are all red flags that you may have been infected by the cultural lie of pleasure.**

God wants us to be able to enjoy each day. To live in his joy in the now moment, not some future dream we are pursuing.

There is an abundant life of joy each person can experience no matter how little or how much wealth they have. It is not dependent on things but on our relationship with a God who loves us and delights in us each day.

Only God can truly satisfy. With his living water you don't thirst again. If we begin thirsting for earthly pleasure it may be a sign that we have stopped drinking at the living well. Jesus described what he has to offer to the woman at the well.

John 4:13-14 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Only Jesus can bring lasting satisfaction to our lives. Only He can satisfy!

To wrap up this message let me suggest a few things that will help protect us from this lie and pursuit of pleasure.

Healthy Habits/Guardrails:

3. **To protect ourselves and our loved ones from the lie of pleasure we need to be honest and re-order our lives around the things that really matter.**

- **Our relationship with Christ** - personal time with God – listening and obeying what he is telling us
- **Our relationship with our spouse and family** – In the pursuit of pleasure and even good things we often neglect those close to us.
- **Serving the church and people God has placed in our lives** – The first thing to often suffer in the pursuit of pleasure is our availability to serve the church and the people around us. We are too busy pursuing other things.
- **Using our gifts and abilities to make the world a better place** – The pursuit of pleasure causes us to ask, “What is in it for me”? Instead of what can I do to help others? Where am I needed? How can I take God’s blessing in my life and be a blessing to others?

4. When our lives bring pleasure to God we will find his joy and happiness overflowing in our lives. Then we will feel complete and satisfied.

Only God can meet that deep need for satisfaction and fulfillment in our core being.

Ps 63:5 You satisfy me more than the richest feast. I will praise you with songs of joy. (NLT)