

Quest For Joy

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Did you know that God commands us to be glad?

"Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:4)

1) God created us for his glory

"Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth,... whom I created for my glory" (Isaiah 43:6-7)

God made us to magnify his greatness - the way telescopes magnify stars. He created us to put his goodness and truth and beauty and wisdom and justice on display. The greatest display of God's glory comes from deep delight in all that he is. This means that God gets the praise and we get the pleasure. God created us so that he is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.

2) Every human should live for God's glory

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

If God made us for his glory, it is clear that we should live for his glory. Our duty comes from his design. So our first obligation is to show God's value by being satisfied with all that he is for us. This is the essence of loving God (Matthew 22:37) and trusting him (1 John 5:3-4) and being thankful to him (Psalm 100:2-4) It is the root of all true obedience, especially loving others (Colossians 1:4-5).

3) All of us have failed to glorify God as we should

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

What does it mean to "fall short of the glory of God?" It means that none of us has trusted and treasured God the way we should. We have not been satisfied with his greatness and walked in his ways. We have sought our satisfaction in other things, and treated them as more valuable than God, which is the essence of idolatry (Romans 1:21-23). Since sin came into the world we have all been deeply resistant to having God as our all-satisfying treasure (Ephesians 2:3). This is an appalling offense to the greatness of God (Jeremiah 2:12-13).

4) All of us are subject to God's just condemnation

"The wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23).

We have all belittled the glory of God. How? By preferring other things above him. By our ingratitude, distrust and disobedience. So God is just in shutting us out from the enjoyment of his glory forever. "They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

The word "hell" is used in the New Testament twelve times - eleven times by Jesus himself. It is not a myth created by dismal and angry preachers. It is a solemn warning from the Son of God who died to deliver sinners from its curse. We ignore it at great risk.

If the Bible stopped here in its analysis of the human condition, we would be doomed to a hopeless future. However, this is not where it stops...

5) God sent his only son Jesus to provide eternal life and joy

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..." (1 Timothy 1:15)

The good news is that Christ died for sinners like us. And he rose physically from the dead to validate the saving power of his death and to open the gates of eternal life and joy (1 Corinthians 15:20). This means God can acquit guilty sinners and still be just (Romans 3:25-26). "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). Coming home to God is where all deep and lasting satisfaction is found.

6) The benefits purchased by the death of Christ belong to those who repent and trust him

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out" (Acts 3:19). "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

"Repent" means to turn from all the deceitful promises of sin. "Faith" means being satisfied with all that God promises to be for us in Jesus. "He who believes in me," Jesus says, "shall never thirst" (John 6:35). We do not earn our salvation. We cannot merit it (Romans 4:4-5). It is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). It is a free gift (Romans 3:24). We will have it if we cherish it above all things (Matthew 13:44). When we do that, God's aim in creation is accomplished: He is glorified in us and we are satisfied in him - forever.

Does this make sense to you?

Do you desire the kind of gladness that comes from being satisfied with all that God is for you in Jesus? If so, then God is at work in your life.

What should you do?

Turn from the deceitful promises of sin. Call upon Jesus to save you from the guilt and punishment and bondage. "All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). Start banking your hope on all that God is for you in Jesus. Break the power of sin's promises by faith in the superior satisfaction of God's promises. Begin reading the Bible to find his precious and very great promises, which can set you free (2 Peter 1:3-4). Find a Bible-believing church and begin to worship and grow together with other people who treasure Christ above all things (Philippians 3:7).

The best news in the world is that there is no necessary conflict between our happiness and God's holiness. Being satisfied with all that God is for us in Jesus magnifies him as a great Treasure.

"You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." (Psalm 16:11)

Scriptures References

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37)

This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. (1 John 5:3-4)

Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his [1]; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. (Psalms 100:2-4)

...because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints—the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel... (Colossians 1:4-5)

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. (Romans 1:21-23)

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. (Ephesians 2:3)

Be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror," declares the LORD. "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. (Jeremiah 2:12-13)

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:25-26)

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. (Romans 4:4-5)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:24)

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. (Matthew 13:44)

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. (Philippians 3:7)

Appearances of the word "hell" in the New Testament

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. (Matthew 5:22 Jesus speaking)

If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. (Matthew 5:29 Jesus speaking)

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. (Matthew 5:30 Jesus speaking)

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28 Jesus speaking)

And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell. (Matthew 18:9 Jesus speaking)

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. (Matthew 23:15 Jesus speaking)

"You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? (Matthew 23:33 Jesus speaking)

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. (Mark 9:43 Jesus speaking)

And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. (Mark 9:45 Jesus speaking)

And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, (Mark 9:47 Jesus speaking)

But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. (Luke 12:5 Jesus speaking)

In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. (Luke 16:23 Jesus speaking)

The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. (James 3:6 James speaking).

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; (2 Peter 2:4 Peter speaking)

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