

# Enjoying God



One of the most amazing discoveries I have made over the latter part of my Christian life is the importance of enjoying God. During the 17th century a group of Christian leaders from some of the established churches in England and Scotland gathered to determine what were some of the essentials in the Christian life and practice. One of the statements highlighted was the importance of 'glorifying God and enjoying him forever!' Glorifying means 'lifting up, honouring and giving praise'.

Many religious leaders of Jesus' day rejected His words. How did most other people respond to Him?

Read Mark 12:37 \_\_\_\_\_

## Biblical examples

Read the Psalms, the book of Song of Solomon (it has a parallel meaning of the love relationship between God and His believers) along with several other examples and stories in the Bible. The importance of having a joy filled relationship with God stands out regardless of the trials the authors were encountering. Here are a few examples of joy as people encountered God:

‘Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever’ (Psalm 23:6).

‘... for the joy of the LORD is your strength’ (Nehemiah 8:10).

‘How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?’ (1 Thessalonians 3:9).

‘Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus’ (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

## God makes Himself knowable.

Deism as a philosophy became prominent during the 17th and 18th century and was based on the premise that God is aloof and is unknowable by people. It is a little like the concept of a watch maker who made a watch and sent it to a customer far away, never to encounter the watch again.

Our God however is a God who became incarnate (took human form) in Jesus and so we now know what He is like. He is knowable and before He left earth, He emphasised a lot of important principles recorded in John Chapters 13-16 about His relationship with His Father and his people.

What claims did Jesus make in John 12:44,45 and John 14:11?

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Today Jesus lives among and in His people through the Holy Spirit. The indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit gives us the closest of all relationships.

What does that mean? Read John 14:23; and 16:7.

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We don't have to earn His love as we are recipients of His love already!

## Friends with God-is it possible?

Who became the friends of God in these references?

1.        Isaiah 41:8        \_\_\_\_\_

2.        John 15:15        \_\_\_\_\_

Fostering a friendship with God is an outcome of following the principles as outlined in this discipleship booklet. It is not meant to be an arduous chore but a spontaneous delighting in the fact that we are loved, chosen, forgiven and have God's Spirit residing in us continuously. We are sons and daughters of God, adopted into His family (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:5).

Simple things like computer problems can take away our joy but Determination to turn our heart to Jesus's beauty can helps us overcome our emotional battles.

This sense of our close relationship comes about by living in an atmosphere of constant prayer, scriptural meditation, obedience to Christ and his teachings and in Christian service and witness to others. At times Christ's presence will be very real, while at other times we need to accept by faith that he will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

John chapter 15 mentions the importance of the branches of the vine remaining attached to the vine if it is to produce fruit. Believers are the branches and Christ is the vine. The branch does not struggle to remain attached to the vine, it just rests and draws upon the life of the vine.

Likewise, the Christian can by faith develop the art of relaxing and enjoying Christ. Enjoying the company of a good friend does not mean you have to talk continuously, but neither do we ignore our companion. Simply being in their company brings joy.

## **‘Dark night of the soul’**

Lastly, it’s important to mention the ‘dark night of the soul,’ a season that most, if not all, Believers go through at some point in their faith journey. This period often involves spiritual struggle and a sense of God’s absence. Throughout history, many great men and women of faith have faced this for a time. God allows these season/s, not to punish us, but to deepen our reliance on Christ, moving us away from depending solely on our emotions. During such times, reflecting on Scripture is crucial. Personally, I find that reading the Psalms, particularly Psalm 23, offers great encouragement, as the psalmist often expresses his own struggles. Psalm 23 concludes with a powerful reminder of God’s provision for us and His goodness. Additionally, speaking with a trusted friend of the same sex (to avoid inappropriate intimacy) can provide much-needed support. It’s often only after emerging from this season that we truly come to appreciate and experience God on a deeper level.

## **Conclusion**

In summary then, the best way to glorify God is to ‘enjoy Him forever!’ Greet Him when you awake in the morning and give Him each day. Let Him be your best friend.

‘For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’ (Jeremiah 29:11).

‘You make 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).