

10 THINGS YOU WISH JESUS NEVER SAID DON'T DO ANYTHING UNLESS THERE'S SOMETHING IN IT FOR YOU

I. ARE PLEASURE AND DUTY AT ODDS

Is it sinful to feel pleasure? Is it good to feel pleasure? What kinds of pleasure? Is it sinful to *seek* pleasure?

Does God set His will in opposition to our pleasure? In other words, when we choose to obey are we always forced to choose will power rather than reward or duty rather than pleasure?

II. DOES GOD COMMAND OUR HAPPINESS?

“Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” (Hebrews 11.6)

1. Nobody pleases God without faith
2. Faith must seek reward
3. Nobody pleases God unless they come to Him looking for reward (not something we seek *from* God but *in* God, **I Timothy 6.6, I Pet. 1.21**)

I cannot simply believe that God is a rewarder; I must believe that He rewards all who *seek* Him. If I simply see Him as a rewarder but do not seek reward in Him then I have not really acted on that faith. Knowing what He might do for one who does seek Him and actually seeking Him are as vastly different as the Temple court and the Holy of Holies. The people who remain in the courtyard and fail to push into the inner sanctuary are the religious people, the scribes who know about God's character but have not experienced it; they read of His goodness but have not tasted it; they talk of His holiness but have not been undone by it; they learn about His mercy but have not been satisfied by it; they hear of Him being a fountain but have not yet had their thirst quenched therein.

As an illustration of this, suppose you have a daughter and a man comes to ask for her hand in marriage. Suppose he tells you that your daughter is the prize of his life, his treasure, that his joy is only complete in her joy, that though he might lose everything else in the world if he still has her it will be sufficient, that her very presence is satisfying and in her he finds the greatest heights of pleasure and delight? Would you think that his pleasure in her disqualifies him from marrying her or somehow makes him selfish? Of course not. What we recognize very quickly in this illustration is that there is a way to pursue your joy in someone that honors that person and a way to pursue your joy in someone that dishonors the person. We want to pursue our joy in God in the way that honors him by showing forth His sufficiency.

It is our duty to delight. If we do not delight then we have not done our "duty" to God. This sounds so strange because we try to wall off the decisions of our will and the affections of our hearts. Look at the following Scriptures: Micah 6.8--we're not commanded to be merciful but to love mercy. In Romans 12.8 we're commanded to do "acts of mercy, with cheerfulness." In Hebrews 13.17, we're commanded to watch over souls "with joy." In 2 Corinthians 9.7 we're commanded to be a cheerful giver. In Psalm 37.4 we're commanded to "delight in the Lord." It is surely true that we often do things simply out of bare duty or that we do right things even when we don't feel like it for the sake of obedience. That is necessary at times but it is never right. We are commanded to love the Lord with all our being, not just our wills (Mark 12.30), and the New Covenant promises are promises of God for a new heart that desires Him (Jer. 24.7, Ezek. 11.19-20, Ezek. 36.26-27--read those passages). This is what I think Lewis is talking about when he says that we are far too easily pleased, namely that we're not nearly aggressive enough in our pursuit of delight, pleasure, and joy--all in God of course. Psalm 16.11--"In You is the fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forever more." So, if we have not delighted then we have not actually done our "duty." If our affections are unchanged, then we have only half-hearted obedience. That's why I say that delight is necessary for duty, not only as a by-product but as the prerequisite.

III. A LOOK AT SOME SPECIFIC VERSES

1. Knowing Christ

Philippians 3:8: Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

2. Missions

Mark 10:23-31: And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴ And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is¹ to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." ²⁸ Peter began to say to him, "See, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹ Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

3. Ministry to the Poor

Luke 12:33: Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.

Luke 14:12-14: He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers¹ or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

4. Money

Hebrews 13:5: Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

5. Worship

Psalms 100:1-2: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! ² Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

6. Giving

Acts 20:35: In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

7. Loving Enemies

Luke 6:35: But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

Until you seek your happiness in God, you will not get your holiness from God; until you find your satisfaction in God, you will not get your sanctification from God; until you delight in God; you will not do your duty to God; until you find God glorious, the world will not see Him as glorified. We think that God calls us to choose between obedience and happiness but the real choice is between small joys and majestic pleasures, temporary excitements and eternal delights.