

Nothing on Noah

Bringing Joy to our Creator

August 8, 2021

Today we're looking at bringing God joy!

What percent of your day brings God joy? Do you get that you do that?! Do you get HOW to do that? Do you think that you DO do that?



We've been talking about *allowing* that "tugboat" of God's Spirit to turn that "tanker" of our thinking, in order to follow what might be Paul's ultimate advice for not just pleasing our Father, but living fulfilling, joyful, and completely satisfying lives down here.



Do not *conform* [imitate] any longer to the *pattern* of this world, but *be transformed* [be *metamorphosed* – be changed the way a caterpillar becomes a butterfly] by the *renewing* of your mind. [which I guess makes our head the cocoon?] – Romans 12:2 NIV

So let's get this butterfly on the road, be transformed a bump, and allow the Lord to renew our mind by taking this truth to heart:

The Lord takes *pleasure* in His people ... – Psalm 149:4 NAS

Get that through your thick cocoon! We can make the mistake of reading this and thinking: well yeah, when we're in church, singing and praying and being quiet! Or, we can make the mistake of subconsciously retranslating it:

The Lord takes pleasure in His [other] people. [And puts up with me] – Psalm 149:4 NAS

But, **a big part of our created purpose is the joy and gladness and satisfaction that we bring to our Creator.** In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John says to the Lord:

You created everything, and it is for Your pleasure that they exist and were created.
– Revelation 4:11 NLT



Well Doi! Isn't that why ANY of us create *anything*? Including *people*? Because we *like 'em*? That's why Rayna and I have kids – **We LOVE loving them!** Plus, they're fun to watch ... cuz they fall down a lot- I mean like when they're learning and playing- but there is a lot of falling! I even enjoy watching them *fall* asleep.



But maybe the most fun is watching them enjoy the things we get to *give* them (which is probably why Christmas at our house ... begins in October). So, I think I kinda know how God feels.



And you know what, we've had plenty of opportunities in our life to just leave them behind – like the busy crowds of Disneyland when they're whining or a distant camping trip when they're whining or a gas station when they're whining. But we've never even considered it... and by consider it, I mean like *discussed the details*, because we really *do love* having them around!

Likewise, **God didn't have to create you; He wanted to create you!** What greater significance could you be given?! You are a child of God and you can bring pleasure to God like nothing else and like no *one* else He has ever created. And He really, really wants *you* to live with Him!



So get this through your cocoon – **He created you for your company.** So we not only have to practice an awareness of His company like Bruce said- but actually have to *believe* that **He likes hanging around the likes of us.** Because only a small portion of His pleasure comes from *watching* you.

A much greater joy comes from connecting, communicating, and interacting with you. **Bringing joy to God is called “worship”.** This is why worship (*bringing God pleasure*) encompasses so much *more* than just sitting in church, singing, and praying and being quiet!

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

Well based on my routine, that's a *whole lot* of opportunities to worship! But, how is it possible to, “do it all for the glory of God”? By realizing that you're doing it *with* Him and *for* Him. **Every moment of your life is a setup** — prompting you to choose to do *something*, for *some reason* But *also*, **Every activity except sin can be worship.** Work and rest and play all become worship when we have an awareness of His presence, an attitude of appreciation, and a desire to bring Him joy.

Know how to make the Lord smile? Surrender. I'm not just talking about that moment of surrender when we make JESUS the Lord of our life, but the daily, moment-by-moment bump-by-bump surrender that follows. It's submitting to those bumps at work, the grocery store, or on Facebook. And submitting to those bumps in His Word. It's a process we call sanctification and God only works it when we let Him — which only happens when we *want* Him — which is why **the heart of worship is surrender.** Not the type of surrender that implies defeat or loss to an enemy; but an act of submission that implies trust and obedience in a superior power. Like trusting that your coach knows better than *you*- what part *you* should play to get the team win.

[Jesus said] If any of you wants to be My follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross daily, and follow Me. – Luke 9:23 NLT

He doesn't say to put aside our *hopes* and *dreams*; He warns us to surrender those “selfish ambitions”; the ones that dishonor Him. **This type of surrender is hard work, because it requires intense warfare against my own self-centered nature!**



Do you ever feel *alone* in your desire to please God (maybe at your workplace, or school, or among your friends or family)? Well, you got nothin' on Noah- The *other* one!. In his time, he was literally the last man left on the *planet* who surrendered himself to God.

The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that *every* inclination of the *thoughts* of his heart was *only* evil *all* the time. ... But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. [Not a high bar, *but still!*] – Genesis 6:5, 8 NIV

He found favor in the eyes of the Lord. *How?* **Turns out it's the simple, unselfish things that make God smile.** For instance 1) **Noah loved God.** He *really* loved Him.

Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. – Genesis 6:9 NLT

Noah knew the difference between religion and relationship. *This Noah* was raised in a more formal church and as a kid I struggled to separate religion from relationship. It isn't that God enjoyed the liturgy, and the candle-lighting, and the hymns, and the robes and reciting, and all the ceremony; but he wanted a relationship with the people doing that stuff.

I now realize that **God only enjoys the ceremony to the degree it helps us connect with Him.** Because if it doesn't, he don't want it. But He *loves* it to the degree it helps *us* express *our love*. Because He *loves* loving us ... but He really loves *us* loving H ... And *I* love telling *you* how much He loves loving *you*... *loving Him!* At the end of the day, we have to go beyond the *check-list love* (prayed, read, went, and gave), and give God what every good parent desires from their children: *heart-felt, reciprocated love*. Turns out it's the simple unselfish things that make God smile: Noah loved God *and* 2) **Noah trusted God.**

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. – Hebrews 11:7 NAS

But I like how the Message paraphrases this scripture:

By faith, Noah built a ship in the middle of dry land. He was warned about something he couldn't see, and acted on what he was told. – Hebrews 11:7 MNT

God has asked us to build a reputation of faith in the middle of whatever "dry" and faithless environment we find ourselves in; by trusting Him. Know when trust is put to the greatest test? When I can get *my way* by compromising my conscience. And I am an expert at this. Because I know *exactly* where I'm most vulnerable *and* just how far I need to tip the scales to justify *my way*. You know that too... **nobody's better at deceiving you than you!**

But this is when the rubber meets the road; revealing whether I will put my trust in the will of *God*, or the will of Noah, *this Noah*. I may not like what's going on ... I may not understand what's going on ... but I must choose to stand firm and believe that He is in *control* of what's going on!

That Noah trusted God most when it didn't make sense ... simple, unselfish things that God loves: Noah loved God, he trusted God, but Noah nails it again when 3) **Noah obeyed God**. He *acted* on what He trusted. Rubber meet road. And not only that but –



Noah *did* everything *exactly* as God had commanded him. – Genesis 6:22 NLT

I mean if you're going to obey, isn't that the best way? But these were some *very* specific instructions he was given:

Make a boat from resinous wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Construct an opening all the way around the boat, 18 inches below the roof. Then put three decks inside the boat – bottom, middle, and upper – and put a door in the side. – Genesis 6:14-16 NLT

And after Noah recovered from some marathon notetaking, there it was: God gave him a *blueprint*! And likewise, **He's given us some very specific instructions in His Word, and a blueprint to follow in His Son**. It's like He wrote down all the directions and then said, "Okay, now I want to show you what all of this information looks like, when it's actually lived out in a human body!"

Obedience isn't about gritting our teeth and following the rules; it's about gladly, willingly, following the Ruler. Turns out it's *still* the simple, unselfish things that God loved about Noah: real love, trust, and obedience. *And* Noah knocks it out of the park when 4) **Noah praised God**. When it came to *appreciating* God, Noah did it old school!

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and sacrificed on it the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose. And the Lord was pleased ... – Genesis 8:20-21 NLT

There are two ways to please the Lord with appreciation: **we can adore Him for who He is, and we can thank Him for what He's done**. Because God smiles when we express our adoration *and* our gratitude. And as we learn to surrender day-by-day, bump-by-bump, our focus will change, from how much pleasure *I* am getting out of this life, to how much pleasure *God* is getting out of my life. A big part of our created purpose is the joy and gladness and satisfaction that we bring to our Creator. Which is why the Apostle Paul said:

So we make it our goal to please Him ... – 2 Corinthians 5:9 NIV

If we're going to live out that goal for ourselves, we must understand that **the heart of worship is surrender**. So which selfish ambitions are you still holding onto? And we gotta remember that **we have the capacity to make God smile**. So what currently needs the most renewing in your cocoon: love, trust, obedience, or appreciation? And mostly we must understand that **we were planned for God's pleasure**. So what percent of your day would you LIKE *to bring* God joy?