

- Several weeks ago we began examining different worldviews and how they relate to the truth of how God sees the world.
 - We are doing this because every single person has a worldview – a framework through which they see the world and make decisions.
 - We all see the world different I can prove it.
 - I want you to picture taking a vacation. Let's say at least one week and preferably two.
 - What does that look like for you?
 - Vacation should be a time for going to a place, a city you've never been to, exploring, going to museums, state parks, learning, seeing monuments, being curious.
 - How many of you?
 - The rest of you? Sitting on the beach doing nothing. Eating a lot.
 - We all see things differently.
 - Much of these things are harmless. They are not right or wrong.
 - But there many other beliefs, worldviews, that creep into our thinking that are damaging. They are prevalent in the world around us and they just naturally begin to color our thinking.
 - We saw in Romans 12:2, which is kind of the theme verse for this whole series, that we are to not be conformed to this world, or its way of thinking, but rather be transformed by the renewing of our mind.
 - We are either going to absorb or live our way into what we believe or we will choose and develop our worldview to a different standard.
 - The best barometer we have for doing this is what God has said in his word.
 - The terms we are using to describe these worldviews are not found in Scripture. The terms themselves have often been coined many years later, but the attitudes and behaviors that they describe have been around for a long time and were well known to the writers of the Scriptures.
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- The worldview we are examining today is Hedonism. What pops into your mind when you hear this word? Food? Sex? Drink? Maybe you can't say what pops into your mind. 😊
 - This entire worldview is encapsulated in a well-known phrase that every one of you have heard or said.
 - "If it feels good, do it!"
 - Or, "If it feels good, keep doing it" or "Nothing is wrong if it feels good" or "Do what makes you happy."
 - Hedonism is a school of thought that argues that pleasure (in the sense of satisfaction of desires) is the primary or most important good. A hedonist will strive to maximize their net pleasure.
 - This is not a new worldview.
 - Archeology has uncovered writings going back to thousands of years before Christ, in Egypt, the Sumerians, the Greek philosophers that all espoused the idea that to avoid all these problems, just focus your life on what makes you feel good, is the best thing.
 - To make this worldview or philosophy acceptable, we add a little sentence to it.
 - "As long as it doesn't harm anyone else . . ."
 - It could be with money (getting the latest and best of . . .), love and sex (whatever feels right), politics and ideology, sports (either participating or cheering for), work (being successful and rich), family (having the perfect family), food (eating whatever I want whenever I want), fame (being recognized by your friends, peers).
 - There is part of us that wants to simply do whatever makes us happy but many of us have been taught that this is the total opposite of following Jesus.
 - It leaves us in a conflicted position.

- Didn't Jesus tell us that we could be full of joy? Weren't we created to enjoy pleasure? After all, Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden. Do you know what the word Eden means? "Eden" means – "delight."
 - But following Jesus often doesn't seem all that delightful. Or pleasurable.
 - Read the bible? Don't even understand most of it. Not much of a reader anyway.
 - Pray? Feels like talking to myself. I fall asleep anyway.
 - Forgive others? It feels better to be angry.
 - Fast? Yeah right.
 - Save myself until marriage? Really? Sex is fun and really doesn't harm anyone.
 - Put other people first and serve? That is a lot of work and I'm busy.
 - And so we try to follow God AND pursue pleasure. Sometimes it seems to work. Other times we get caught up in things that leave us feeling guilty and ashamed. We work hard to follow God but we see the "fun" that everyone else is having, and so we end up with a middle of the road, largely mundane and joyless existence.
 - What are we to do?
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- To help us understand this, we are going to go back in the Old Testament. To the life of one of the most famous kings that Israel ever had.
 - He was king over the golden years of Israel, when the nation was at its largest, when it had the most influence it has ever had on the world stage.
 - He was the son of another famous king, David, and his name was Solomon.
 - Solomon's reign started very different than it ended.
 - Solomon was not the oldest son, so he was not supposed to be king after David. He was the son of David and Bathsheba, the woman who David had killed a man to get as his wife.
 - One of his older brothers led a rebellion against David and was killed.
 - When David was about to die, another older brother actually got some key leaders to crown him king, but it was a whole mess of intrigue because they did not tell David. He invited all his brothers but not Solomon. He did not invite the prophet who spoke for God or the captain of the king's guard.
 - They knew that Solomon was supposed to be king. But Solomon was only a teenager, and his life was in danger from all this.
 - So they told David, they got some key people together, they made Solomon king before David was dead. He got David's blessing the people saw this and followed David's lead and celebrated Solomon.
 - After David died, Solomon tried to get everything solidified, and in the process, he had a big celebration where he honored God, sacrificed many burnt offerings, focusing the people on God.
 - And that night, the most amazing thing happened. God appeared to Solomon and asked him the most amazing question. "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."
 - The enormity of this question is staggering.
 - He could have asked for anything. Power, family, money, fame, long life. Instead, he famously asked God for wisdom to be a good leader.
 - God answered him in spades. Wisest man. God gave him wealth, possessions and honor like no king ever had or ever will again.
 - That's how his life went. He was rich. The country was rich. We are told that silver was so plentiful that it had no value – only gold.
 - He spent much of his life pursuing value and significance.

- And being the wisest man to ever live, Solomon wrote about it. He wrote Proverbs which a collection of wise sayings. He also wrote a little book called Ecclesiastes. In this book he described his life and his view of life. Listen to what he said – it is so amazing.

Ecclesiastes 2:1 I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. 2 "Laughter," I said, "is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?"

3 I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly – my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives. 4 I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. 5 I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6 I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. 7 I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. 8 I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well – the delights of a man's heart. 9 I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. 10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. 11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

- He immersed himself in pleasure. He lived the definition of Hedonism. He pursued pleasure. And it left him empty. Why?

I. The benefits of pleasure are short lived.

- The feelings and benefits of doing what makes us happy are real, but they simply do not last. The pursuit of pleasure has only short term results.
- Solomon moved from one thing to the next.
- None of these things satisfied him.

10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil.

- There was certainly delight in the action and activities themselves. But it ended there. There was nothing that lasted longer than this.
- Accomplishing a goal. Going to a concert. Good golf round. Having a drink. It feels good in the moment, then gone.
- Sometimes it lasts longer than others, but never forever. This is the problem with the pursuit of pleasure. Because the benefits are short lived;

II. We end up consumed by our own desires.

- If it feels good, do it. Who is the primary recipient of this philosophy? Me!
- Everything Solomon did here was for himself.
- The entire account that he wrote is filled with "I", "Me", "Myself".
- When we live pursuing what feels good, then when the feeling wears off, we want to do it again. We begin to develop an appetite.
- The problem with the pursuit of pleasure is that there is no such thing as: "As long as it doesn't hurt anyone else." We are not islands.
- It impacted others. It used others. He talks about slaves, servants, a harem. Solomon's pursuit of pleasure impacted a lot of people in a lot of ways – some positively, some probably negatively.
- Our actions always involve others.
- When we begin to read the account of Solomon's life, we find that all his wealth, all his women, all his stuff, all his power, led to problem after problem.

- He even knew this.

Proverbs 21:17 Whoever loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and olive oil will never be rich.

- When we are consumed with pleasure it leads us to disillusionment and unfulfillment.
- We know this with our children. Their entire life is wrapped up in themselves and what they want to do and what makes them feel good.
- From a baby (who simply cries until he gets what makes him feel better) to young children who are about eating what they want, playing with what they want.
- What happens when this is indulged?
- Money problems. Poor health.
- It not only leads to problems for us, but ends up causing problems for the people we care about the most.
- When doing what feels good is our primary goal, we end up being consumed by the desires of the things we think will give this to us.

III. It results in insignificance.

- When you consider the most influential people in history, there is always something more than just themselves.
- When you consider the most influential people in your life, the reason they were influential is because they were not just about themselves, but about you.

11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

- All the things he accomplished in the pursuit of pleasure, all the experiences, all of what it did for him, were pointless.
- This is amazing because some of what he did was good for others. Even the stuff we do that benefits others can be insignificant if the goal in what we do is simply pleasure for us.
- All the energy expended, all the good and bad decisions made in the pursuit of pleasure – meaningless! No point. Insignificant.
- The ultimate reason is that we die. Life is not permanent.
- Solomon not only pursued pleasure, but many other things to find happiness and satisfaction in life. And at the end of it all, probably towards the end of his life, he wrote a summary / conclusion that encapsulates all of this.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind.

- A life lived without God is pointless. A life lived where God is not at the center will leave you empty. Put him and his ways first.
- Here is the truth that I want us to grab hold of today. The truth that Solomon discovered and a truth that Jesus himself reiterated over and over when he came.
- **WHEN YOU PURSUE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, HE WILL SATISFY.**
- When we desire God with all our hearts, we will know pleasure beyond anything this world has to offer.
- The problem is not that we seek pleasure; the problem is that we seek pleasure from “counterfeit gods” instead of from Jesus.
- In the Bible God does not condemn people for seeking happiness but for seeking it from sources other than Him

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 2:13)

- They tried to find satisfaction, pleasure and happiness in things that don't work.

- The picture is wonderful. Of abandoning a stream of water that never stops flowing with clean, tasty water, for pits in the ground that hold stagnant water that leaks out and always ends up empty.

- Solomon had forgotten the very thing his father had taught him.

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)

- Pleasure comes in God's presence. It's a paradox.
- When we are all about doing what feels good, we will never be satisfied. We will never have enough, do enough, experience enough.
- The pursuit of pleasure is an appetite that can never be satisfied.
- Yet when we pursue God with all our heart, we end up more satisfied than we could get through anything else.

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:11)

- He said this in the midst of a discussion of staying close to him.
- The key to pleasure and joy is Jesus.
- Paul said he learned the secret of being content in any and every situation. The secret was his pursuit and connection to Christ. Not his pursuit of pleasure.

- It is so easy for this to creep into our lives.
- Are you struggling to kick a persistent sin, a behavior that you fall back into over and over. The reason you do is because it doesn't satisfy. You do it, you feel guilty and you say it will never happen again, but then time passes, you long for that temporary feeling, and here we go again.
- Do you find yourself running hard all the time? Working 60-70 hour weeks? Do you find yourself thinking about that next car, the next vacation, the next purchase for your house, the next experience? Is it all about the weekend?
- Listen to me teens. I have spoken with many, many people over time. And they would all tell you the same thing. When you do what feels good, whether it's a relationship that your parents tell you not to have, parties with all that goes with it, spending all your time on sports or the arts, if you make your decisions exclusively because it feels good, it will always lead to regrets. You will wish it had gone differently. You have a chance to do it differently from the beginning.

- **WHEN YOU PURSUE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, HE WILL SATISFY.**

- We enjoy what we value. The more we value something, the more we enjoy it.
- Hedonism is simply the pursuit of pleasure. Where the thing we want most is to maximize what feels good no matter what.
- But this is so temporary.
- It's a road that ends up with us being consumed by myself.
- It leads us to a life that is insignificant.
- But I will make a guarantee. I can make it because Jesus made. Because I have seen it. Because I have experienced it.
- So pursue pleasure. But pursue it in the right place. In Jesus.
- "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." (John Piper)
- Do you want pleasure that lasts? That is not reliant on our circumstances? That gives power and leads to a significant life in the eyes of God?

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

- **WHEN YOU PURSUE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, HE WILL SATISFY.**