

## The Resolutions of Jonathan Edwards

**Resolution #45:** Resolved, never to allow any pleasure or grief, joy or sorrow, nor any affection at all, nor any degree of affection, nor any circumstance relating to it, but what helps religion.

### Anchor Text: Philippians 3:8

1. An important distinction
  - a. I fear that some might read this entry and draw a faulty conclusion... notice that Edwards does not cast off pleasure or grief or joy altogether
    - i. The point here is not that we should NEVER experience or entertain grief
      1. If it were the resolution then Jesus would have been guilty of violating this precept Himself!
    - ii. The goal here is to ensure that everything ultimately terminates on love of God and neighbor as defined by true religion (see last week's lesson)
2. How these affections might harm religion
  - a. You will notice that Paul's statement in Philippians 3 includes many "good things"
    - i. He was faithful to the covenant
    - ii. He was zealous for the law
    - iii. He was a descendant of Abraham (physically and, ultimately, spiritually)
  - b. In many ways, we could argue that Paul had affections for religion... but a Christless religion
  - c. In the same way, Paul had joy but it was joy in persecuting Christ (see Acts 8-9)
    - i. These affections were leading him away from the truth and, therefore, they were to be cast off
  - d. In the same way, many of our affections can have a detrimental impact on our lives
    - i. We can love that which is either carnal OR love something to the exclusion of Christ (idolatry)
    - ii. We can grieve the loss of our earthly lives
    - iii. We can take pleasure in sin
  - e. Many of us have a proclivity to embrace carnal affections or sources of grief

- i. Some of us can grieve so much as to make that which we mourn our idol
- ii. Some of us can love an activity or a person or a pursuit so much that it clouds out the love of Christ

### 3. How affections motivate true religion

- a. The goal of the affections is to terminate on Christ
- b. This is the point that Paul is making in Philippians 3:8
  - i. All of what motivated him before was disposed of for the purpose of knowing and loving Christ
  - ii. In a real sense, Paul was stating what Edwards had said prior
  - iii. His affection for false religion needed to be abandoned but this does not mean that his affections were abandoned!
- c. Instead, Paul simply replaced that which was wrong and ungodly with that which was good
  - i. Now, Paul did not pursue his identity in his heritage or religious deeds but in his relationship with Jesus
  - ii. Jesus became the very goal of his being and, in this way, his affections were redirected and stirred towards that which was, and is, good!
- d. In the same way, we must “fan into flame” our love of Christ
  - i. When we love Jesus, we will:
    - 1. Long to be faithful to Him
    - 2. Treasure Him above all things
    - 3. See His goodness in all the gifts He gives
    - 4. Refuse to pursue that which would disappoint or grieve Him
    - 5. Love that which He loves
  - ii. These things grow as we consider the beauty and worth of Christ and, when they grow, the affections for that which would take us away from Christ continue to wane