

BEAUTY AND PLEASURE

We explore the countryside for excitement, search our souls for meaning, shop the world for pleasure. We try this. Then we try that. The usual fields of endeavor are money, sex, power, adventure, and knowledge. All too often, these beautiful pleasures promise everything, but deliver nothing. Perhaps coming to grips with our futile attempts to make something with our lives will help us clear the air and get us ready for the ultimate reality—for God.

—Introduction to
Ecclesiastes, The Message

1

How convinced are you that God really wants you to experience beauty and pleasure and joy? What does **Psalm 16:11** and **1 Timothy 6:17** have to say about this?

Do you experience God richly providing for your enjoyment, or do you struggle with enjoying healthy pleasure or play?

Why do you think God designed us as pleasure-seeking beings in the first place? What is our thirst for beauty and pleasure meant to do for us?



2

Make a list of things you do that you take pleasure in or find beautiful. Do this quickly, without analyzing yourself!

About how much time do you spend weekly doing the things on your list above?

Do your choices of pleasure make you feel more alive or more tuned out to God and others?

3

Solomon, the wisest man ever and a king of Israel, pursued all kinds of pleasure and beauty in his search for meaning. What did he conclude in **Ecclesiastes 2:1-11** and **Ecclesiastes 3:11**?

Notice Solomon didn't say that seeking pleasure was wrong—just futile as an end in itself. Why do you think that in the midst of all this pleasure Solomon was left feeling meaningless?

How do your activities and pursuit of pleasure and beauty leave you feeling? Fulfilled, empty, ashamed, meaningless, refreshed, or something else? Explain.

4

Reflection

Listen to what God may be saying to you about beauty and pleasure in your life. Talk with Him about what is feeding your soul—as well as what is numbing your soul. Is your pursuit of pleasure connecting you closer to Him and to others—or distancing you from significant relationships? If you are finding your pleasure in things that you know are sin, consider just bringing that to Him. See what He might show you or tell you.

Meditate on **Psalm 36:7-10**. Ask God to fulfill this in your life.

For deeper study, go to *Jesus' Good News Module 5, Life in Jesus: living life well*.
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