



Links Players

Journey of Faith - God's Pleasure

By faith, Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5, ESV)

This sport we love brings us immense pleasure and, at times, intense pain. Watching Rickie win after a long drought was, well, pleasurable. Seeing Rory go birdie/birdie on 17 and 18 to win the Scottish Open pleased many people, not the least of which was Rory and his family.

There is nothing remotely like the pleasure of “striping” one down the middle off the first tee. Very few things bring as much pleasure as compressing a five iron to 4 feet when your partner is out of the hole. Even though fleeting, few things elicit as much pleasure as knocking it stiff, especially when the putter is a tad balky.

I'm not sure we can precisely quantify a “pleasure–pain theory” for golf, but everyone who plays the game intuitively knows it's real. Play awful for seventeen holes, then stripe a drive, knock it to two feet, drain the putt on the last hole, and somehow you go home singing, “The sun will come out tomorrow, tomorrow, bet your bottom dollar...”

Contrary to a humanistic attempt to maximize pleasure and minimize pain without referencing God, Scripture teaches something entirely different. When someone reorients their life around pleasing God, they quickly discover unspeakable pleasure not only in a personal relationship with God but also a deep and genuine pleasure in the things he created.

Said another way, if anyone pursues lasting pleasure in anything without Christ, they will never find it. On the other hand, discover the pleasure of living to please Christ, and then a treasure chest of pleasures from his creation will be opened to you, golf included.

The reason Enoch was commended was because he brought pleasure to God. That's extraordinary! Sadly, there is a corollary to this—we can also “grieve the Spirit” (Ephesians 4:30).

Unless you deny that the Holy Spirit is God, then grieving God, sadly, is a real possibility. That said, the good news is that we can please him. And nothing honors or pleases God more than by trusting his word—the Bible calls this faith.

With Paul, let's say, “We make it our aim to please Christ.” (2 Corinthians 5: 9). To achieve that, the follower of Christ must know his will. To know his will, we must know “...the faith that was once for all delivered to the Saints”—the revelation of himself and his purposes exclusively found in Scripture (Jude 1: 3).

Prayer: Father, you've told your secrets to your friends. Cause us to listen closely as you speak to us through your word.

READING - Hebrews 11:5; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Ephesians 4:30

1. What about this game brings you deep and lasting pleasure? What about this game brings you the most pain?

2. Knowing that God likens our relationship to him as analogous to the one with our earthly fathers, what about your life pleases him, and what grieves him?

3. Discuss how faith in Christ and his word is relevant to overcoming those areas that displease him. Application: Resolve to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to walk in Christ's triumph.
