

MONDAY MANNA

13 September 2021

DO YOU FEEL HIS PLEASURE?

By Jim Langley

What do you engage in that brings you great joy? Does your work, or other activities that you regularly pursue, bring you a sense of pleasure? I can tell you from personal experience there is nothing more exhilarating than knowing you are in God's will, doing what He wants you to do with the abilities and gifts He has given to you.

I will never forget the first time I saw the theatrical film, "Chariots of Fire." It has become one of my all-time favourite sports films, but it is also a film that documents the lives of two diverse, real-life figures. Harold Abrahams was a Cambridge man, a Jewish Englishman, and the fastest sprinter in the world in 1924, while Eric Liddell was a Scotsman, a devout Christian, and Abrahams' greatest rival in the 1924 Olympic Games that were held in Paris, France.

Abrahams was driven to achieve success, but Liddell's motivation was to serve and honour his Lord through everything he did. Fully aware that he was being called to the foreign mission field in China, Liddell also felt strongly that God wanted him to compete in the Olympics. Years later, following his death in China, these words were found in his personal journal: *"I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure."* These unforgettable words were spoken by the actor portraying Liddell in "Chariots of Fire."

I was not yet a follower of Jesus Christ when I originally saw the film with a co-worker but was greatly touched by Liddell's story. I suspect it was one of several contributing factors to my faith commitment three years later. As an athlete, I could identify with the competition between these two men. In fact, I took up jogging as a recreational pastime right after seeing the film. The film inspired me to at least attempt to feel God's pleasure as I ran.

These days I feel His pleasure in much that I do and in the person I have become through my walk with Christ. Whether it is dealing with clients in my insurance business, playing a round of golf, writing, or meeting with someone I am mentoring, I sense God's pleasure in pursuing tasks and opportunities He places before me. I say that with humility, because I know there are many others who also feel His pleasure over the course of their daily lives. My life now centres around Christ and His Spirit, guiding me through each day. Can you relate to this? *Do you feel His pleasure?*

Let's look at this idea through the words of Jesus and His disciples. Toward the end of Jesus' high priestly prayer, found in the gospel of John, we see Him praying these words to His Father in Heaven on our behalf: *"I have made You known to them, and will continue to make known in order that the love that You have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them"* (John 17:26). That love and joy can be expressed in His pleasure as we trust and follow Christ in our lives each day.

In Philippians 3:7-9, the apostle Paul declares, *"...whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."* It is apparent from his writings that Paul truly experienced God's pleasure, even in his trials and circumstances.

Let me ask you directly: Do you feel His pleasure in your life? If not, would you like to? It is available to all who come to Christ in humility and repentance, and place their trust in Him as Saviour and Lord!

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© 2021, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing "Fourth Quarter Strategies" in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

How would you define "pleasure"? Based on what we see on TV, in the movies, even in magazines and on the Internet, what would you say is the prevailing cultural view of what it means to experience pleasure?

What kinds of things bring pleasure to you in your life? Give an example or two.

Whether you are familiar with the film, "Chariots of Fire," or not, it is a depiction of a person committed to following his God – and pursuing opportunities to maximize athletic abilities. In the film, Eric Liddell states, "when I run, I feel God's pleasure." Can you relate to that in any way? Explain your answer.

Much of the typical workday is tedious, mundane, even frustrating. How do you think it is possible to "feel God's pleasure" under those kinds of circumstances?

NOTE: For more about what the Bible says about this topic, consider the following passages:

Matthew 7:21-23

Ephesians 1:5-10

2 Timothy 1:11-12

James 1:25-27

1 John 2:4-6