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What Really Satisfies You? Proverbs 30:15-17

On a real hot day. You've been working hard or playing hard. Sweat running down your face. For me there is nothing that quenches my thirst more than an ice cold Pepsi. Just the sound of that can opening up. Pepsi. The drink that really satisfies your thirst. (Open Pepsi can and take a drink..anybody like a Pepsi right now???) What is it that really satisfies you?

For some reason God created us to be thirsty people. We have physical needs. We get thirsty and hungry and tired and sick. We have emotional needs. We long to be loved and accepted. We get lonely and discouraged. We need to laugh and enjoy. We have spiritual needs. God created in each of us a God-shaped vacuum, an empty place inside, a place that only God can fill.

With so many needs. We must admit we are needy people who long to satisfy the cries and cravings of our heart. We long for happiness. Desire purpose and value and significance. We want to please and be well-liked. We want to be loved and accepted. We want to accomplish and create and build, go to the top of our area, our profession. We desire the tools and toys and talents and treasure. We want to be beautiful and brilliant. We yearn for pleasure. Yearn to awake and satisfy the five senses God gave us to touch, taste, smell, hear and see.

We have many creative ways we pursue these longings, these cravings in order to satisfy the crying heart inside. A few years back Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfus starred in a movie called "What about Bob?" Bill Murray plays this very needy man who is terrified with psychotic fear even to step out of his home, Bob's psychiatrist Dr. Leo Marvin has been helping Bob overcome his fears, has also written a book called "Baby Steps" outlining his method to overcoming fear by conquering them one little step at a time. Bob has enjoyed some emotional growth but is extremely dependent on Dr. Marvin. When Dr. Marvin and his family go on vacation Bob has an emotional crisis and feels he must find his doctor

for help. One vivid scene in a small vacation town has Bob searching everywhere for his doctor. Yelling at the top of his lungs. Dr. Marvin...I know your here Dr. Marvin. Dr. Leo Marvin. No longer able to hide Dr. Marvin confronts Bob and tells him to go home and leave him alone. Bob gets on his hands and knees pleading...I want. I want. I need. I need. I want. I need.

We are very needy people who will go great lengths to satisfy the hunger and thirst within our souls. There are times when we find ourselves on our knees begging from someone, something to fill that aching emptiness inside. I want, I want, I need. I need. We can go to right places to fulfill those needs. We can choose to go wrong places to try and satisfy those needs. There are many ways we try to satisfy or anesthetize our empty aching need. But certain things seem to refuse to be satisfied, refuse to finally say enough. There are certain things we think will satisfy our deepest need only to find out they merely cause us more and more hunger.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs. Right in the middle of your Bible you will find the book of Proverbs. Please turn to the 30th chapter and we will be reading Proverbs 30:15-17n (READ) Great encouraging passage of scripture eh? Verse 15 described a bloodsucking leech of a man who has twin daughters "Give and Give some more" all they can think about is what they can get from other people. They are never satisfied. You can almost picture them on their needs mouths filled with candy yet crying out. I want. I want. I need. I need. Filled only an insatiable desire never to be satisfied. Born out of an arrogant folly that will never be satisfied no matter what or how much people give them. Just like their leech of a dad, they will never be satisfied.

The verse 15 goes on to heighten this feeling of dissatisfaction. Three things will not be satisfied. Four will not say, "That's enough" The poetic structure employed that says there are three, no four implies that there are many more things that never seem to be satisfied, never content, never rested, never at peace. Verse 16 outlined several word pictures of things that will never be satisfied.

Sheol, or the place of the dead, the grave will never be satisfied. The cemeteries will always have room for one more body. For those who

have lost to death a close friend, a family member they have experienced the cutting reality of death and its ever unsatisfied sting.

Next word picture of dissatisfaction; A barren woman who is unable to have children will be satisfied with nothing less than a child of her own. For those who have been there, for those who have friends who desperately want to have children but cannot...they know the ache, the longing, the desire is so very, very strong...what could possibly satisfy such longings.

Next word picture of dissatisfaction is that of the earth, dry ground similar to some of the parched soil around Palestine could never have enough water. More water. More water it cries out. It reminds me of the ground and farmers down near Kalamath Falls, Oregon who have been cut off from their water and they are screaming for more water to be released. Twice this past week mobs of farmers broke the welds on locks to release water into their canals to feed their parched soils. Dry earth can never be satisfied with enough water.

The fourth picture is that of fire. If you feed a fire it will continue to eat and devour material. It is never done. It only grows in hunger the more you feed it. The hunger growing stronger with the more fuel it consumes. Greed says more! More! and feeds on itself wanting more and more. Give. Give.

Its interesting the writer of these Proverbs included verse 17 drawing up the image of a rebel. V.17 the eye that mocks a father. One look in the eye gives away the heart of a rebel for the eyes are a window to the soul. This rebel is one who ridicules his own father, makes fun of him, mimics and imitates for destructive humor in derision. One who scorns her own mother. Mom is the object of their insults. She is despised. These words speak of the blatant rebel. Rebellion feeds on itself and is never satisfied. It too is a form of greed. What does the rebel want more of? More control. More authority. More freedom. The rebel is not content with the current position God has given them or placed them in. So the rebel sneers out Give me. Give me. More more more. I want it now. Never a thank-you. No matter how much they are handed...nothing ever satisfies the heart of a rebel. Violent dissatisfaction logically ends in destruction graphically depicted by a raven blinding the rebel eye and eagles plucking it to death.

We are needy people aren't we. With so many needs...with so many wants. What can possibly satisfy? Where do you pursue your satisfaction? The same writer of Proverbs, Solomon, the wisest and richest man of his time...possibly of any time, wrote another book called Ecclesiastes. In it he speaks of his pursuit of satisfaction. With ultimate resource of time and money he tries all the things we try to find satisfaction. He builds and creates. He rises far above his peers in power and fame and popularity. He builds buildings, families. Yet he finds no satisfaction in ambition, success or fame. He tries to satisfy with the sensual gathering thousands of beautiful women at his beck and call...but finds no satisfaction. He tries all manner of drink and food and anything pleasurable to pour into his body and yet finds no satisfaction. Unlike most of us...we can think of things, possessions, vacation time, more power...things that are held out to us like an elusive carrot dangling before our insatiable desires. They are out of our reach so we think if we can just get to them we will find satisfaction. But Solomon like no one else had the ability, power, and time to try it all. He reached the carrot, ate them all up and pronounced. Nothing satisfies. It's all vanity. He was the first to state emphatically for all of us to learn from. I tried, and I tried and I tried but I could get no satisfaction.

What are you striving after thinking it will bring true satisfaction and fill up that aching need? Your need to be liked. Need to please people. Need to be accepted and loved. Need to be touched and cared for? Are you trying out a few cheap substitutes thinking they will satisfy? Need for recognition? ambition? more control? influence? power? need to have more stuff? tools toys? talents treasure? Brilliance and beauty? What have you decided will bring you satisfaction that you are continuing to chase. This morning I will tell you. None of it will bring you satisfaction. You may be so good, even like Solomon, you may even catch that elusive carrot you are chasing next year. five years from now. And as you sit down to munch into your carrot you will discover with sickening reality how it doesn't taste near as good as you hoped. It will never satisfy. It will always feed on itself and want more, more, more.

We are needy people. All of these cravings in the human heart cry out to be satisfied. God created us with needs, designed us to be pleasure seekers. That is not sinful in itself. God in fact created many

things for our pleasure. Its only when we find our pleasure in unrighteousness that we get ourselves into trouble. Its when we chase after sin to satisfy our pleasure that gets us into trouble. But we have a tough time seeing that up front. Sin is so attractive. Sin appears so inviting. It appears so promising that it will satisfy our needs right now; immediately without hardly any work at all. At first look sin seems to give us the biggest bang for the buck.

Why do we sin? Have you ever thought about that? We sin because sin produces an immediate pleasure that attempts to satisfy our cravings, our needs. Its is physical rush, an emotional rush. We sin because we believe that it will provide us with a pleasure superior to the pleasure of obeying God. We sin because we are convinced that it will satisfy more than God. We sin because we enjoy the pleasure that sin has to offer. The power of temptation rests on our believing a deceptive promise that sin will brings us more satisfaction than living in obedience to God. Sin is incredibly deceitful. The writer of Hebrews 3:13 says "encourage each other lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Sin is deceitful. It promises great and lasting satisfaction....but never comes through in the long run. Up front it can be filled with pleasure...but then comes the nasty, ugly aftertaste and churns your gut and soul with acid.

John Piper says that sin is what we do when our hearts are not satisfied with God. Let me say that again. Sin is what we do when our hearts our not satisfied with God. God has offered us ultimate satisfaction. The ultimate thirst quencher is not Pepsi. It is found resting in God and God alone. Yet we are half-hearted creatures that fool around with alcohol and sex and ambition and buying more and more stuff...when infinite joy is offered to us. C.S. Lewis likens this to a child who has been living on the streets in the slums of the raw city his whole life. Picture walking up to him and offering the boy a ticket to an all-expense paid vacation to go to the beach. He would stay at a five star hotels, eat in the finest of restaurants, sleep on a comfortable clean, dry bed. He could spend his days swimming in the ocean, frolicking in the ocean waves and making sand castles on the beach. Yet the dirty boy takes the ticket from you, places it in his bag among all the other things hes collected to use as a pillow at night. Stays in that large cardboard

box. Instead of choosing to go with you to eat milkshakes and hamburgers and ice cream, he chooses to sleep in an alley and eat spoiled meat he has gathered up from the trash. Instead of choosing to make castles in the sand, he stays to make mud pies and eat them for dessert. When we refuse the satisfying enjoyment that God has to offer we are just like that boy. Each day we have a choice to make. We can either say yes or no to the world. Yes or no to sin. From where we are living in the slums of the world it can look pretty tasty. Especially if we have never even been out of our town, never know what the beach looks like. Sin looks like it will satisfy. It looks tasty to us...but in fact it's spoiled meat. It's molded bread. It's mud pie for dessert.

The pleasures of God are like the vacation to the beach. They are a banquet set before us, once tasted are filled with succulent lasting satisfaction that deliver us from the emptiness of seeking earthly pleasure and the enslaving sin. We are freed from the dominance of sin and short term deceptive promises of satisfaction by simply delighting in God. The secret to Satisfaction? What is it? The secret to ultimate satisfaction is to become satisfied with God. To pursue enjoyment of God. Psalm 16:11 "In Thy presence is fullness of joy. At Thy right hand there are pleasures forever." To win the battle of sin is to enjoy God. The secret to conquering sin is to become satisfied with God. Satisfaction comes when we allow ourselves to be enticed by God's holy affections and enjoy His presence.

When I say holiness. I refer to obedience to God. Following His way of life and not our own. Holiness. Living rightly conjures up all sorts of images of a grit-your-teeth kind of masochistic life, striving to fulfill a list of do's and don't's filled with threats and prohibitions. Preachers will typically use shame and fear to motivate people to keep these lists of do's and don't's. Fear of exposure. fear of being caught, shamed, humiliated. Embarrassment to family etc. etc. But despite all these warnings there is still not enough power to keep us from resisting the pleasures of sin and seeking its short-term satisfaction. The allure of the immediate pleasure of sin is more powerful than the fear of our long-term consequences. It simply drives us to become more creative in hiding our sin from others. Hearing harsher louder more ranting sermons isn't going to change us.

We begin to change when we begin to long to enjoy the pleasure of holiness. Have you ever thought about the sheer pleasure, the freedom, the release, the contentment, the peace of holiness. That is the satisfaction in God that is incredibly attractive. Our pursuit for God is not a legalistic grit your teeth keep a list of does and don'ts. Our pursuit for satisfaction is, our struggle for holiness is actually a pursuit to stay satisfied with God. We will stay committed to holiness when it flows from the beauty and pleasure we experience of living our lives unto God. When we experience the far superior pleasure of living our lives to God, it will seek us to long for more and more of the pleasure that is found in Him and be less and less enamored with the pleasure of the world. The things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

Holiness is a superior pleasure that transcends anything that sin has to offer. We waste our time striving to fulfill our own satisfaction in earthly pleasures. We find ultimate satisfaction by delighting in God free from the domination craving and insatiable urge of sin.

John Piper says that God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. We will also be most satisfied in life when our satisfaction comes from God. God is not a pleasure killjoy. God's call for us to "Be holy as I am Holy" is not designed to keep us away from pleasure, but to experience pleasure as He has rightly designed it. Not the cheap knock-off substitute that sin has to offer. That never satisfies. I have never heard anyone addicted to the cheap substitute of porn say, Boy, once I found porn, it really satisfies all my deepest longings. Never. All I hear is what a wretched enslaving task master it is that wants more and more and more and never satisfies. I have never talked to people who have accumulated a lot of wealth and stuff and hear them say, Boy I'm glad I finally got all these things, homes, boats, lands, bank-accounts, they really satisfy. I've never talked to an alcoholic who says, I have got to tell you ever since I've discovered alcohol it's been the best thing my life has been so great and satisfying ever since. No..the cheap substitutes never satisfy.

But God has created us as pleasure seekers as we find pleasure in the things that please Him. As we discover the incredible pleasure of holiness. Holiness is not a drudgery. If that is all you have ever experienced, then you have never gotten out of the slums. you are still

pulling out spoiled meat from the trash bins of life. That is not the ultimate satisfaction that God has to offer. God's holiness calls us to and releases infinite and perfect pleasure forever. In God's presence there is fullness of joy..at His right hand there are pleasures forever.

So how can we begin to pursue the secret of satisfaction? How can we begin to enjoy the pleasure of holiness and find our satisfaction in God. **First** we need to admit our need. We are needy people. He has created us with need so we will turn to Him in dependence. So stop fighting it. Turn to God in dependence in the middle of your need. **Second**, recognize the futility of our past attempts. Confess areas where you have failed to enjoy Him, failed. Maybe you have looked at holiness in a grit your teeth sort of way, instead of the source of ultimate pleasure and satisfaction. Maybe you have believed the subtle lie that sin can really satisfy more than following God. It's not about working harder or doing more. God calls us to a perfect rest while we work like a dog. Yet, hard work is fun when it's filled with purpose and satisfaction. Matthew 11:28 "Come unto me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my load is light." His grace is sufficient for us for in our weakness He is actually made strong.

Third, Reflect on the pleasure and freedom that holiness brings. I Timothy 6:6 "Godliness when coupled with contentment is great gain. Go out on a date with God. Take a walk. Meditate on the sheer beauty and pleasure of a holy life with God. Allow at least this one thought to permeate your mind. Enjoy the sheer pleasure of holiness and the satisfaction it brings. True satisfaction is only found in God.

In his book *Pleasures Evermore*; Sam Storm writes. "We must swallow up the flicker of sin's pleasure in the forest fire of holy satisfaction. The only thing that will ultimately break the power of sin is a passion for Jesus. The only thing that will guard me from being entrapped by sin is becoming entranced by Jesus. Are we becoming entranced by Jesus. Is He becoming your satisfaction? For God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. We are most satisfied in life when our satisfaction comes from God.