

Appendix

Appendix

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How To Be A Great Group Participant

Please be the kind of group member that everyone enjoys.

- There are four days of "homework" each week. Please interact honestly with the "homework" so that you can comprehend and share your thoughts at each group meeting.
- Show up on time for the group meetings and participate freely without dominating.
- Resist trying to teach others or trying to fix / change them. Nobody likes a "know-it-all."
- Make every effort to connect with those in the group through authenticity and the practice of curiosity. Curiosity is a mindset that allows us to ask good questions and seek understanding of others, and it prevents us from being self-focused. When we walk into the group and curiosity is in play, we ask, "Is there someone here I can encourage or who needs a friend to listen?"
- Try to apply what you are learning to your life so that you develop **CONVICTIONS**. A conviction is superior to preferences in that convictions lead to a changed life - something a preference cannot do.

What Do We Mean By "FULL DELIGHT?"

In the pursuit of the FDFD life, it is important that we understand what is meant by "FULL DELIGHT."

Option One: A **FEELING** that is most closely associated with pleasure; the unbridled satisfaction of a desire, something that makes me happy, something fun.

Option Two: A life of **FLOURISHING** —spiritually, relationally, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

Key Truth: No one can attain either option by focusing their life on attaining delight / joy / happiness. It is a **BY-PRODUCT** of a life lived in harmony with God's purposes. In other words, when His desires become my desires, I **THRIVE**. When I find my joy in what brings Him joy, I **THRIVE**. This is called by some, "Christian Hedonism."

Perhaps one of the most important questions that a human being can ask and be able to answer is this: "Why am I here?" Or, "Is there a purpose for my life that has been given to me or am I free to make up my own?" People are free to choose their own purpose for living, but at the same time, they are free to **MISS OUT** on a life of thriving. When we exercise our freedom to align ourselves with God's purposes, we are free to find and experience the life of delight that God intended for us all.

A Thumbnail Explanation of the Gospel

First, God Created | The Garden was the dwelling place of Adam and Eve, and it was a place of flourishing. They had everything they needed for a full and meaningful life. And they enjoyed a friendship with God that was marked by TRUST.

Then, God Commanded | He commanded Adam and Eve not to eat from one tree—The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This was symbolic of his AUTHORITY. As long as they didn't eat from the forbidden tree, they were living in submission to God, TRUSTING that what He commanded was also good for them.

But, Man Rebelled | This is referred to as The Fall. Satan tempted Adam and Eve with the idea that God was holding out on them and that He did not have their best interest at heart. In a word, he could not be TRUSTED. Adam and Eve TRUSTED the Serpent instead of TRUSTING God and, at that moment, they died spiritually. For the first time, they experienced fear, insecurity, and a desire to blame others (victimhood). Fellowship with God was broken because of their sin. Not only that, but they passed on this proclivity to rebel against God's authority to every single human being born after them.

So, God Rescued | Jesus Christ came to earth to save mankind from the consequences of their sin. His death on the cross was a demonstration of love to all mankind in that he took their place and died on their behalf, paying the penalty for the sins of all who would believe.

And, Man Must Respond | When we recognize Jesus for who He really is and we acknowledge our need for Him, we can TRUST Him and His sacrifice as the solution to our sin problem. In gratitude and out of a desire to honor Him, we grow in our TRUST

and start to resemble Him in our character. We begin to do for others what He did for us (love). **Our TRUST in Christ leads us to a fulfilled and joyful life. In a sense, the curse of the Fall has been reversed.**

Comparing and Contrasting The Gospel With Religion and Irreligion

Gospel =

- A worldview in which God maintains a central place in my devotion and loyalties. In this worldview, I exist to serve God and His Kingdom purposes as defined by Jesus.
- My goal is to learn to trust and love Him more completely and, in this way, to bring honor and glory to Him.
- In this Gospel mode, I don't earn anything from Him. I simply receive from him. I am acceptable and loveable blessed on the basis of my relationship to Christ.

Religion =

- A worldview in which I maintain a central place in my own devotion and loyalties. In this worldview, God exists to serve me and my dreams.
- My goal is to obligate God through good works and devotion, believing that He owes me whatever I have "earned" from Him in regards to salvation, blessings, or favor.
- In this religious mode, if anything good happens in my life, it is because of my success in performing religious duties that make me acceptable and loveable to be blessed by God.

Irreligion =

- A worldview in which I maintain a central place in my own devotion and loyalties. In this worldview, there is no God to appeal to or I consider Him irrelevant. I am on my own to determine my own meaning and purpose in life.
- My goal is to get for myself whatever it is that will make my life meaningful and happy according to my subjective ideas.
- In this Irreligious mode, I must earn or take everything I get from others or from the world. Everything depends on my own abilities to do what is necessary to gain the power, acclaim, affection or whatever it is that will give me what I think I need.

Understanding The Old Covenant in Contrast to The New Covenant

The Mosaic Covenant was a promise given to Moses for the people of Israel. It was for a limited amount of time (until the New Covenant was employed), for a limited group of people (the Jews), and for a specific purpose (to draw all nations to the worship of Jehovah).

Deuteronomy 28:9-10 | *The LORD will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways. 10 Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will fear you.*

Isaiah 42:6 | *"I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles..."*

Note #1: The Mosaic Covenant employed the promise of both "blessings" and "curses."

If the nation of Israel worshiped God exclusively (this included all that God told them to do as worshipers of Him; that is, they were to trust God exclusively for their protection and therefore were forbidden from making treaties with other nations, and they were not to intermarry with the wives of those who worshiped other gods), He would bless them with prosperity, peace and land.

Deuteronomy 7:9-11 | *Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. 10 But those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction; he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him. 11 Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today.*

Deuteronomy 29:9 | *Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do.*

If they failed to worship Jehovah exclusively and hold to the other commands of the covenant, they would become poor, be enslaved, and lose their land.

Deuteronomy 28:15 *However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...*

Note #2: The practical implications of the Old / Mosaic Covenant was that the Jews expected blessings when they acted righteously.

Psalms 128:1-2 | *Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways. 2 You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.*

Proverbs 13:21 | *Misfortune pursues the sinner, but prosperity is the reward of the righteous.*

Note #3: By the time Jesus came on the scene, most Jews believed that their eternal destiny (as well as material prosperity) was determined by their own righteousness. They confused and mixed the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenants.

Mark 10:24-26 | *The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." 26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"*

John 9:1-3 | *As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

Romans 10:1-4 | *Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. 2 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. 3 Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.*

Question: As Christians, what is our relationship to the Mosaic / Old Covenant?

Answer: We live under the New Covenant, and therefore, we are not promised the blessings or curses associated with obedience to the Law.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (cf. Hebrews 8:8ff.) | *"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them*

by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. 33 "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my covenant law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Luke 22:20 | *In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."*

Hebrews 9:15 | *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

Note: The foundation to a "religious" mindset is the same confusion that plagued the Jewish Christians in the early church. Instead of living life under the New Covenant, they mixed faith in Christ with their Old Covenant way of believing.

Some thought that they needed to add works of righteousness to their faith in order to be saved.

John 6:28-29 | *Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" 29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."*

Acts 15:5 | *Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses."*

Galatians 5:2-4 | *Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. 3 Again I declare to every man*

who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. 4 You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Others thought that if they lived good enough lives, that God would bless them.

Hebrews 8:13 | *By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.*

Question: Can a Christian “earn” blessings (prosperity / health / etc.) in this life by their obedience?

Answer: No. The moment we were redeemed; we were blessed in Christ. The kind of blessings we now receive are spiritual in nature. This is not to say that there will not be rewards in heaven (but that is for a different discussion).

Ephesians 1:3 | *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*

Question: So why does this matter?

Answer: It matters that we understand and live our Christian lives as New Covenant believers so that we do not fall under the religious bondage of trying to earn blessings from God.

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 *Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

The “Idolatry-Detector” Test

From J.D. Greear’s book, *Gospel*

What one thing do you most hope is in your future? Career success? A certain salary? Getting married? Children? Being successful? Being loved and respected by your colleagues?

What is the one thing you most worry about losing? What is the one thing that you could not imagine living without? Your family? Your job? The love of your spouse? The respect of your kids? Influence among your peers?

If you could change one thing about yourself right now, what would it be? Would you lose thirty pounds? Would you change your looks? Your marital status? Your job? Your zip code?

What thing have you sacrificed most for? Sacrifice and worship almost always go hand in hand. What have you worked the hardest for? To get that scholarship? To obtain the perfect body? To land that job? To be the best in your field? To get to a certain income level?

Who is thee in your life that you feel like you can’t forgive, and why? An ex-husband ruined your reputation and the best years of your life? Your wife who cheated on you and publicly humiliated you? An irresponsible or unethical partner who ruined your business? A close friend who stole your boyfriend? A drunk driver who killed your child? (Note: There is nothing wrong with deeply regretting, deeply, the loss of any of those things. When you cannot forgive someone, however, it is usually because you feel that they took something from you that you depended on for life, happiness, and security. They stole something from you that you think can never be replaced, therefore, you cannot stop hating them for it.)

When do you feel the most significant? When do you hold your head up the

highest? What is there that you hope people find out about you? Do you constantly mention your job, or the job you think you're going to have when you graduate, or the school you got your degree from? Are you always looking for ways to show off your house, your car, your kids, your body?

What triggers depression in you? That you kids never call? The fact that your marriage doesn't look like it will ever get any better? Is it that you have reached a certain age and you still aren't married? Is it when you feel you don't get the recognition you deserve? (Note: Often depression is triggered when we deemed essential to life and happiness is denied to us.)

Where do you turn for comfort when things are not going well? Do you bury yourself in work in order to numb the fact that your wife ignores you and your kids are drifting away from you? Or perhaps you find escape in the arms of another lover, porn, or drugs. Do you overachieve in order to deflect from the fact that you are still a disappointment to someone you care about? Do you find comfort in food? In pleasure?

Perhaps the most important prayer we will ever be able to pray is this: "Dear God, Your presence and approval are all I need for everlasting joy."

If you can pray this and mean it you are well on your way to turning off the switch that has made our hearts an Idol Factory.