

“Dealing with Pleasure”

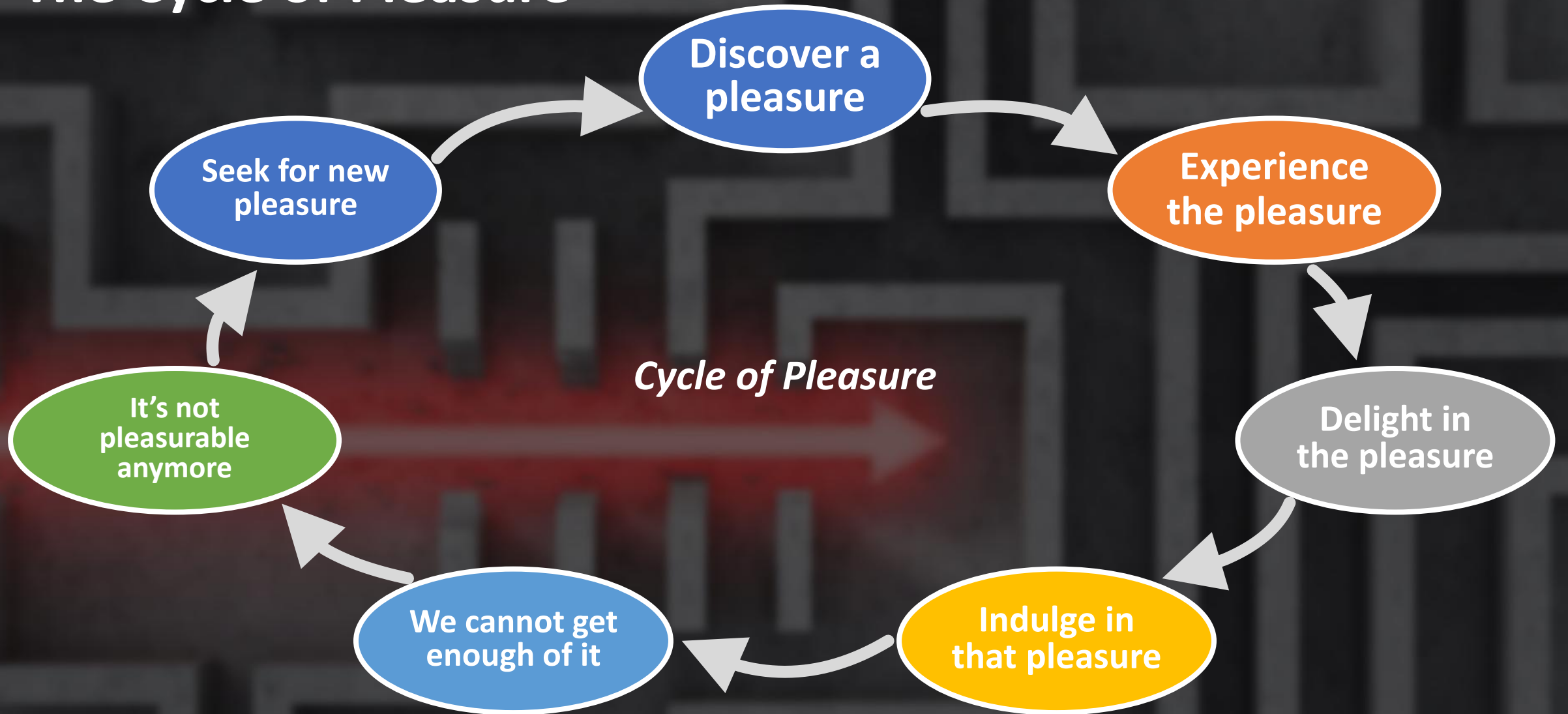
Definition of Pleasure

Genesis 2:8-9 NIV

⁸ Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹ The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees **that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.**

Pleasure is simply anything that looks good and feels good

The Cycle of Pleasure



**“We pursue, we cling, we cry
for more, more, more, but
we are never
satisfied...because we are
made for God.”**

A.W. Tozer

Romans 8: 5-9 NIV

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you.

PURPOSE

This word decides the means to the end of pleasure. It decides the longevity of satisfaction derived from it. It is what conveys the actual moral compass that guides our decision of pleasure

Dr Grace

1. Solomon-Exploring Pleasure

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 NIV

I said to myself, “Come now, *I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.*”² ... *And what does pleasure accomplish?*”³ I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—*my mind still guiding me with wisdom.* I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives.⁴ I undertook great projects...⁹ I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. *In all this my wisdom stayed with me.*¹⁰ I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure.¹¹ Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, *everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.*

2. Nehemiah- Limiting Pleasure

Nehemiah 5:14-19 NLT

¹⁴ For the entire twelve years that I was governor of Judah...neither I nor my officials drew on our official food allowance. ¹⁵ The former governors, in contrast, had laid heavy burdens on the people, demanding a daily ration of food and wine, besides forty pieces of silver. Even their assistants took advantage of the people. But because I feared God, I did not act that way. ¹⁶ I also devoted myself to working on the wall and refused to acquire any land. ¹⁷ I asked for nothing, even though I regularly fed 150 Jewish officials at my table, besides all the visitors from other lands!... Yet I refused to claim the governor's food allowance because the people already carried a heavy burden. ¹⁹ Remember, O my God, all that I have done for these people, and bless me for it.

3. Joseph-Escaping Pleasure

Genesis 39: 6-12 NLT

⁶...Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man, ⁷ and Potiphar's wife soon began to look at him lustfully. "Come and sleep with me," she demanded. ⁸ But Joseph refused. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. ⁹ No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God." ¹⁰ She kept putting pressure on Joseph day after day, but he refused...and he kept out of her way as much as possible... ¹² She came and grabbed him by his cloak, demanding, "Come on, sleep with me!" Joseph tore himself away, but he left his cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.

4. Jesus- Dealing with Pleasure

Luke 4: 1-13 NLT

Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,² where he was tempted by the devil for forty days.

1st Temptation: Appetite?

2nd Temptation: Authority?

3rd Temptation: Power?

The 'Why', 'What', 'When', and 'How' of pleasure must be fulfilled within the boundaries of the word of God.

Titus 3: 3-7 NKJV

³ For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

“The real trouble with this world of ours is not that it is an unfeeling world, but that it is a world so full of feelings; so crowded with excitements and enjoyments, that we have not left a corner of our hearts free to feel the wonder of God.”

G.K. Chesterton

Take home points

1. Not all pleasant experiences are good/godly
2. Not all unpleasant experiences are bad/ungodly
3. Earthly pleasure is unavoidable
4. Earthly pleasures are multiple
5. Earthly pleasure has limits...it can never truly satisfy
6. The reason for pleasure must be very clear
7. The boundaries of pleasure must be defined clearly

The fear of God and desire to please Him is the only way we can truly deal with Pleasure and still retain wisdom.

Discussion Questions

- Which biblical example do you relate to most: Solomon, Nehemiah, Joseph, or Jesus?
 - Solomon explored pleasure.
 - Nehemiah limited pleasure.
 - Joseph escaped temptation.
 - Jesus resisted pleasure outside God's will.
- Which example challenges or encourages you most right now, and why?
- Before pursuing a pleasure, what questions should we ask ourselves about our motives and purpose?
- What practical boundaries help us enjoy pleasure without being controlled by it?

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