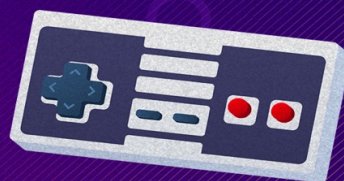


# NEXT LEVEL



## - Pursuing Pleasure -

### KEY POINT:

*It's not the desire for pleasure that's wrong in our lives... it's the way we choose to fulfill that desire.*

### ICE-BREAKER:

- Share a few things that bring you great pleasure (i.e. joy, peace and satisfaction) in life?

### DISCUSSION:

#### 1. Discuss the following remarks...

*"If there lurks in our minds the notion that to desire our own good and enjoyment is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is NO part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." - C.S. Lewis*

*The famous philosopher, theologian and mathematician, Blaise Pascal, wrote extensively about the universal drive in all people to pursue pleasure and enjoyment in life. He said the cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. In fact, he believed the will **never** takes the least step but to pursue that which is believed to bring the greatest satisfaction. He said it was the motive of every action of man, even of those who hang themselves.*

#### 2. Read I Timothy 6:17; II Corinthians 2:9.

- Do you struggle to believe God is concerned with your enjoyment (here, or in heaven)? If so, why?

#### 3. Read Hebrews 11:6; Hebrews 12:2; Hebrews 12:25-26.

- How do these passages tie into the concept of seeking the greater pleasure (reward)?
- How might pursuing "the greater pleasure" require discipline and self-sacrifice?

#### 4. Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-12.

- What truths/insights do you glean from this passage?
- When does something God intended for our enjoyment become a "worldly pleasure?"
- Give a good definition of a "worldly pleasure."

#### 5. Read Psalm 37:4; Ecclesiastes 2:24-25, and discuss the following statement: *The deepest and most enduring pleasure is found only in God. Not from God, but in God. That which ultimately fills the longing in our heart is none other than God Himself. God is the end of your search for pleasure, not the means to some other end.*

#### 6. Read Philippians 4:4; Hebrews 13:17; Romans 12:8; Deuteronomy 28:47-48.

- We don't often think of joy or cheer as being commanded by the Lord, do we? Do you struggle with joy in your Christian walk? Explain.
- Why do you think God is concerned about our attitude as well as our actions?

### APPLICATION:

- What steps can you take this week to find joy in God, and delight yourself in Him?