

ONWARD

from the desk of Chris Greer



Hey . Chris here, with today's issue of [ONWARD](#).

Do you know why I got married?

Not because marriage is God's design for most people or because it's the bedrock of a stable and thriving society.

And not because my parents have been married for 50 years or because marriage is one of God's great tools for making us holy and happy.

Though each of those is true and good.

I got married because I found a woman in whom I *truly* delight, and who truly delights in me.

Today we'll see how one underused word (and one under-experienced reality) in our relationships with God can help us get unstuck and move forward...

quote(s) of the week

"If God is your treasure, he will be your pleasure."

— John Piper

The word is *delight*: a word rarely used in correlation with prayer.

And I get it. Personally, I'm tempted to narrow prayer's purpose to something purely pragmatic. But in his book, *Dirty Glory*, Pete Greig (the co-founder of [24/7](#), a worldwide prayer movement) wrote...

"Too often we *only* pray about problems: conflict at work, friends who need healing, and prodigals far from God. But one day, when the Lord invites us to walk with him in the cool of the evening, and when there are no more problems we can possibly address in prayer, will we have learned simply to enjoy his presence, hallowing his name, without asking for anything in return?"

His final question — "Will we have learned simply to *enjoy his presence*?" — captivates me.

Only recently (embarrassingly enough) have I considered or pursued prayer as a means to *enjoy* God.

- Worship God?
- Obey God?
- Please God?
- Fear and respect God?

Yes. Of course.

- Even [know God](#)?

Sure.

But... *enjoy* God?

Not so much.

Yet, if God is a personal being (Col. 1:15) whom we can know (John 17:3) and in whom we exist and live (Acts 17:28) and experience true abundant life (John 10:10), then is it so hard to imagine that enjoying him is par for the divine course?

Remember the English and Scottish theologians who declared that “The chief end of man is to glorify God and **enjoy** him forever”?

The practice of prayer — as much as anything else — is about developing a pathway for simply delighting in God.

That’s why I now start my mornings with ten minutes of wordless prayer. I set aside my habit of saying something to God and my goal of hearing something from God so I can simply enjoy being *with* God.

My aim is to simply behold God beholding me. To delight in him as he delights in me.

In our accomplishment-driven and achievement-based world, it’s difficult to settle our bodies, minds, and souls. It’s our spiritual “Everest.”

But it *can* be done. God *will* meet you in it. And the joy is *palpable*.

If you’re longing to try it, here’s how to get started...

- **Pick the same time and the same place.** Our minds, hearts, and bodies recognize familiar places and routines, making our efforts easier in those spaces. (My time is 5am, my place is my kitchen floor.)
- **Try it for two solid weeks.** Everything worthwhile requires effort and commitment, and developing spiritual muscle memory is integral to prayer and enjoying God. Repetition will help you “lock in” with Jesus more easily. (My first two weeks are almost up, and I’m excited to lean into two more.)
- **Repeat a word or phrase when your mind wanders.** Choose something simple that’ll recenter your thoughts on God, and whisper it until you’re focused on him again. (My phrases are “I love you Lord Jesus” or “Come Holy Spirit, come.”)
- **Pick a short Bible passage that makes you smile, feel joy, or experience peace.** Don’t “study” it, just read it slowly and repeatedly, and enjoy God in it. (Mine are Psalm 23 and John 9)
- **Go on a stroll with Jesus.** Imagine him next to you, stride for stride, enjoying his creation (including you!) as you do. (My favorite spot is a lakeshore in our neighborhood.)

Learning to enjoy God in contemplative prayer, like all prayer, takes time, effort, and grace. It's why it's called a spiritual *practice*.

But give yourself to it – and to *him* – and he'll prove to be no small delight.

Enjoy,

Chris

P.s. What are some of the practices you've adopted that help you enjoy God? I'd love to hear. Just respond to this email!

dad joke of the week

I love telling Dad jokes.

Sometimes he even laughs. ☐

Did you miss one? Check out past ONWARD posts at Chris-Greer.com/onward.

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