

God's Pleasure in His Creation

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[0:00] Well, we're in the third chapter today of, what's his name, John Piper's book, *The Pleasures of God*.! And this morning we delve into the pleasures of God in His creation.

And Piper opens with the question, does God take pleasure in His creation? What do you think? Does He take pleasure in His creation?

The obvious answer is yes, since that's our topic. Please turn to Psalms 104, verse 31. Psalm 104, 31.

During the creation week we saw over and over that God kept saying, as He made things, oh, this is good, this is good. And then after completing His creation with man and woman, He adds the superlative, this is very good.

And now in Psalm 104, we see a little bit of a glimpse of the delight God took in His creation. And it reaches its apex in verse 31.

[1:15] May the glory of the Lord endure forever. May the Lord rejoice in His works. This isn't a prayer of, I hope it happens.

Will the glory of the Lord endure forever? Well, I hope so. No. It will endure forever. And just as the glory of the Lord will endure forever, so also the Lord rejoicing in His works is a reality.

What was the mood of heaven during the creation week? Well, consider God's challenge to Job in chapter 38 of that book. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

Tell me if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know. Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set?

Or who laid its cornerstone? While the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy. Here you have a picture in heaven of God making the created order, and heaven is rejoicing.

[2:25] They're shouting for joy. I'm going to quote John Piper quite a bit this morning because his vividness of language I cannot duplicate. And he says on this point, all the angels had evidently been created before the universe, and it is not hard to see why.

God meant there to be an audience when he created the world. I am sure he said, watch this, when he spoke the galaxies into existence. Imagine the awe and wonder that exploded among the angels.

They had never or even imagined matter. They all ministering spirits and have no material bodies as we do. When God brought material stuff into existence with all its incredible variety and utterly unheard of qualities of sight and sound and smell and touch and taste, that was totally unknown to the angels.

God had made it all up. It was not like the unveiling of a new painting made of all the colors and paints we are all familiar with. It was absolutely, totally, unimaginably new.

And the response of the sons of God was to shout for joy. Now I admit that God does not say explicitly in this text that he himself shouted for joy. But do you suppose that God sat by with a blank face and no emotion while millions of holy angels shouted for joy over his creation?

[3:50] Something would be very out of sync in heaven if that were true. I think God told Job about the joy of the sons of God because sons get their disposition from their father.

If the finite sons were shouting for joy over the greatness and wonder of the father's creation, you can be sure that the father's delight, both in the creation and in the son's joy, was immeasurable. Now here's the point. If God takes pleasure in his creation and all of heaven is rejoicing with him in pleasure over his creation, then so should we.

We are to take pleasure in his creation. Let that thought sink in. We're to take pleasure in his creation. Why is God's pleasure in creation an important subject?

So that we may know and understand our God better. But also because we're to be imitators of our Heavenly Father. If he takes pleasure in his creation, so should we.

[4:57] If millions of his holy angels are shouting for joy over what he has made, then so should we. But Piper asks a very intriguing question. Isn't taking pleasure in God's work a form of idolatry?

Is God an idolater toward his son when he takes pleasure in his son's works? And that's a question for you. Or to ask the question maybe a little differently.

Since God is able to fully appreciate the glory of his son, unlike we can do, how could he find anything else pleasurable by comparison? Is God an idolater?

We know no. But why? Jason. Well, you just stole one of my illustrations. But yes, excellent.

Okay, well let's continue on because that's really what this lesson is all about. If God takes pleasure in the created order without it being idolatrous, then as imitators of him, we need to do the same and we need to understand how to do the same.

[6:09] So really the question is, do we take pleasure in God's creation in a way that glorifies him?

So let's seek to understand as we go through this lesson, and we're going to be covering five points, five aspects of God's delight in his creation to also apply it to ourselves so we understand how we can delight in it in a way that is not idolatrous.

So why does God take pleasure in creation? First, because creation expresses God's glory. Psalm 19, 1 and 2, a familiar psalm begins in that way.

The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech night after night they display knowledge. What's so glorious about the creation?

Well, the fact that it so vividly displays the glory of God. So expanding a little on Jason's illustration, what if a husband enjoyed the fruits of his wife's cooking every day?

Only let's say that wife was a world-famed chef. And so now every time somebody comes over, how perverse would it be if that husband took and incessantly talked about all the qualities of the food and the makeup of the food and how it came out to be just tasting so wonderful, and never ever pointed back to his wife or spoke of her.

[7:37] Well, such an attitude is equally offensive to God. And we see a little of that in Romans 1, 20 to 23.

For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

When done properly, the glory in your wife's cooking does not demean her but actually heaps greater worth upon her. And so when we praise and thank God as the outflow of the overflow of contemplating his creation, we are not being idolatrous but giving him the glory due his name.

So let me ask, who created the heavens and earth? Which person of the Godhead? The Father.

[8:58] Partially correct. The Son. Partially correct. Creation was a joint project by both the Father and the Son.

Listen to a few verses. 1 Corinthians 8, 6. Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live. And there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Colossians 1, 16. For by him, Jesus, all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by him and for him.

Hebrews 1, 2. But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed, heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

John 1, 1 to 3. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made. Without him nothing was made that has been made.

[10:04] So just getting it fixed in our head. The Creator is God, and it's God the Father and God the Son. And we see elsewhere that the Spirit moved on the face of the deep. So the Spirit was somehow involved in this process as well.

So was the creation work of the Father born out of some dissatisfaction or boredom in his Son? I mean, this is where we have to step outside of ourselves because we, in our human frailty and sometimes our depravity, move on to other things because we become bored. And we tend, and we see it most in children, don't we? But, I won't name any names. But whenever we'd go to Ryan's, it was always macaroni and cheese. I mean, there's this huge buffet of luscious food, but always macaroni and cheese because that's what they loved the most. And we'd become a little more sophisticated as we get older, but we can't imagine having multiple loves and being able to appreciate multiple things at the same time. But that is our God. Jonathan Edwards illustrates, Surely it is no argument of the emptiness or deficiency of a fountain that it is inclined to overflow. [11:25] Don't you like that? John Piper goes on, The glory that they have together is that overflowing mutual joy in each other's perfections. So creation is an expression of the overflow of that life and joy that the Father and the Son have in each other.

Well, secondly, why does God take pleasure in his creation? Because creation praises him. Creation praises him. Have you ever completed a project that accents your particular skills and the things you love and taken a step back and look at it? What did you feel? Maybe it's simply something as simple as washing and waxing a car. Maybe you take a few more passes by the driveway or you look out the window a few extra times. Man, that's a beautiful looking car. Come on, admit it. You've done it. For others, maybe it's finishing the landscaping project with a winding path of cedar wood chips perfectly aligned by half-moon blocks through a maze of flower beds offset by beautiful flowering trees maybe ending in a little brook cascading down into a small pond. [12:50] Kind of my dream project. Only mine would be a big pond. Or maybe you're a woodworker and you've just finished a six-month project building a new kitchen or some handcrafted cabinet.

In every case does not your heart leap with joy and delight every time you look upon your completed work? Is that perverse? I think not. It's a reflection of what God does. Listen to John Piper as he expounds on this thought of when God said it is very good at the end of his creation. I take this to mean at least that God was delighted with his work. He approved of it. He was glad that he had done it. When he looked at it it gave him pleasure. It is as though he said yes, that's it. That will do just fine. That's exactly right. So think about the delight that you experience when you look on something that you've done well. [14:00] something with excellence. Just think a little bit of those feelings that you have. We've all experienced them. Hopefully repeatedly. And that just gives us a little picture of what God feels.

There's no one else maybe that we do it that appreciates it. Some of you maybe are musicians and you play only for yourself. You do it because it's a pleasure and you enjoy perfecting what it is you're doing. the lifeless thing itself brings you joy because it's a positive reflection on your person. But yes our depravity does create two perversions in this. First we now idolatrously desire the praise of men for our works and conversely our ability to receive purely personal gratification from our labors has been greatly diminished because of that. no small fruit of God's sanctification process is going to be his children replacing the idolatrous desires with righteous delights. [15:07] But certainly in its pure form the delight we feel in what we make is simply a reflection of being made in the image of God. But stop and consider the implications at this point of the fact that God has made us in his image.

that those non-idolatrous feelings of delight we experience from a job well done can give us a small taste of God's jubilancy as he contemplates the incomparable glories of what he's made. We are to delight in him and we're to give God praise for what he delights in. What I'm trying to do is get us to make this an emotional experience. And just not a head thing. And in order to do that we must feel something of what it is that God feels so that we can then join in with him much as if a neighbor comes over and compliments one of your works and you not in an idolatrous way but feel that welling of joy in your own soul now magnify it and seek to do that for your God.

God's love so what is the chief end of man? Well to glorify God and enjoy him forever. So what's the chief end of creation?

[16 : 30] To glorify God and enjoy him forever. If we think this universe was purely and only created for man we've missed the point. How did Colossians 1 16 end?

All things were created by him and for him. Listen to the psalmist. Praise the Lord. Who or what's to praise the Lord?

All his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the Lord oh my soul. Or Psalm 148. Praise him sun and moon. Praise him all the shining stars.

Praise him you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the name of the Lord for he commanded and they were created. He set them in place forever and ever.

He gave a decree that will never pass away. Praise the Lord from the earth. You great sea creatures in all ocean depths. While it's true that the glory of creation is intended to cause man to lift up his eyes and praise his creator, it's also true that there are boundless aspects of what God has made of his masterpiece that none of us has ever seen before.

[17 : 43] Piper contemplates that on the bottom of the ocean there were beautiful gems that no human eye would ever see and that in distant deserts millions of flowers would bloom, blush with vivid colors, give off a sweet fragrance and never be touched or seen or smelled by anybody but God.

Why did God create all these things? Why do you tend a garden or build a cabinet or perfect a melody on your instrument within the privacy of your home that no one else may see?

If your motivation for these activities is to show off what you've done then you haven't learned anything yet of true pleasure and love. But if you can engage in these exploits with great exuberance knowing that few if anyone will ever know what you've just done and your heart's still elated and filled with joy then you're experiencing a small measure of the ecstasy our God feels when he looks on his creation.

He made it for himself. God confronted Job with the immensity of this thought when he paraded his works before him.

Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me if you know all this. What is the way to the abode of light and where does darkness reside?

[19 : 12] Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn? You know the older we get the more small we realize we are. The more we realize we know nothing.

That there is an immensity of things happening out there we know nothing of. And the fact is you combine the whole human race together and there is an immensity of stuff going on in this creation that no human eye has ever seen.

And that's just fine with God because he didn't primarily make these things for man but rather for his own delight, pleasure and glory. Well thirdly, why does God take pleasure in his creation?

Because creation reveals his incomparable wisdom. Because creation reveals his incomparable wisdom. Please turn to Psalm 104 104, or if you're still there.

104 verse 24. How many are your works, O Lord? In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures.

[20 : 18] In wisdom he's made them all. So as I've been harvesting vegetables from our garden this year, I've bitten into a juicy apple.

last night as we cleaned green peppers and scraped all the seeds out, you can't help but contemplate why.

Why did God put this luscious fruit intended for the enjoyment of man and his creatures around those seeds? By and large the seeds don't need it.

Why did he do it? Wisdom. It's just one small, mind boggling aspect of God's wisdom and creation. Speaking of peppers, our pepper plants have been doing marvelously this year.

So much so, well our tomatoes too, I mean of course they died with the last freeze, but before that, while I was preparing this week, looking out there I'm thinking, you know, I love tomatoes.

[21 : 24] Wouldn't it be great if I could have them all year? And those pepper plants are huge. We just took another half a bushel off of them. And just one pepper plant. So I thought, well maybe I should bring them in the house.

And if anybody's been in my house in the winter, you know that I bring half the garden in every winter, so this isn't new to me. Got to grow light and everything. But then a thought crossed my mind.

When they bloom, there isn't anything to pollinate them. The fruit won't grow, will it? It won't form. We need pollination.

And I probably then, after thinking about bringing a beehive into the house, decided my wife wouldn't appreciate it.

But what about butterflies? Anyway, what wisdom would it take to both conceive of and then realize a universe with such complexity, with so many interdependencies?

[22 : 34] In a project I'm managing for a large company right now, we're designing a website that has many moving parts, is going to run part of their business. Our customers spent six months talking to people and working out the details, writing out the specifications for the system.

He spent months mocking up pages, how every single webpage would look. When I was brought in, I spent four weeks designing and creating the database that would house all the information. And then myself and another man spent another six weeks going back and forth with the man at our client, working out a lot of things he'd missed in those specifications over the previous six months. Now, we're all experts in our field, but you know what? Every week, as we actually build out new pages of the application, and anyone in this field understands this course, we find a bunch of stuff we missed.

We've got to add these additional pieces of information to the database. Oh, this isn't going to work like this on the webpage because we didn't think about they would use it in this way. We have a 90-day warranty period attached to the project because both our customer and ourselves know that, you know, it's going to get worse as soon as you hand it over and people really start using it. They're going to find things that we never thought of after all the time we spent. You know, those, oh, I never thought of that moments. Now, consider the wisdom of God's creation.

[24 : 05] He didn't spend months documenting and prototyping and talking to others to flesh out his idea of creation. No, in wisdom, he conceived it all instantaneously and perfectly.

In fact, it was so flawless that when man sinned, he had to curse it so it wouldn't keep running forever. Was there anything he missed that after he had been headed up and running for a few weeks or months or centuries that he said, oh, foo, I didn't think about that scenario happening? Never. God thought of everything. Listen to a discourse on just one of his billions of inventions. Water.

Seventy percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water, or an estimated volume of 326 million cubic miles. Water is unique in that it absorbs large amounts of heat without much alteration in its temperature.

water. Its absorption speed is extremely rapid, about 10 times as fast as steel. During the day, the seas soak up heat and during the night they give it back off. Without this water-to-land ratio, many parts of the Earth would be hot enough to boil water in the day and cold enough to freeze that same water at night.

[25 : 23] Water is made up of H₂O, or two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. Hydrogen is a highly flammable gas, and oxygen is the element necessary to support the combustion of gas.

And yet, when you put these two elements together, in the correct proportion, they form water, the very substance used to extinguish fires. Because of water's unique bonding property or cohesion, capillary action is possible where water will actually defy gravity and rise up a narrow tube.

The narrower the tube, the higher the water will rise. It is this property that allows for the support of plant life. water is able to rise up the stems of flowers and trees.

Water is the perfect solvent. It is able to dissolve or break down the molecular structure of most other substances. This enables water to transfer the nutrients so necessary to support plant life. Practically all objects, when cooled, contract, therefore becoming heavier. Water follows this same principle. As it cools, it sinks while the warmer water rises to the surface.

[26 : 30] This keeps the surface temperature the warmest and therefore able to support life. But water does an unusual thing as it continues cooling. When it reaches a temperature of four degrees centigrade, it begins to expand again, thus rising.

If it were not for this fact, the ocean bottoms would freeze and become unable to support life. In the same way, all lakes and rivers in the colder regions would become solid ice every winter.

But since ice is lighter than liquid water, it rises to the surface where it can be melted by the sun. Unlike almost all other elements, when water is heated, it changes into a gaseous form, becomes lighter and rises.

Because of this unique property, when changing into gas, it leaves behind all other impurities and is thus purified or distilled before being rained down from heaven as the refreshing fresh water needed of life.

Without this cleansing cycle, the planet would have long ago become polluted and all life would have died. That's just one tiny little slice look at one trillionth, probably, of his inventions.

[27:40] And as you consider it, you just sit there, especially if you're a designer by trade. I mean, I could just see myself the first time winter hits. Oh, phooey, the water's freezing, the whole lake's going to end up frozen because all the ice keeps collecting at the bottom.

This isn't going to work. God thought of everything. His wisdom is beyond comprehension. But there is one degree of wisdom necessary to conceive of a design, which will work flawlessly under normal operation.

But what sort of wisdom is required to make something self-repairing? Well, so much so that I don't think man has ever done it, not effectively anyway. When one throws the proverbial monkey wrench into the engine, does it grind to a screeching halt?

Does all that glorious wisdom come to nothing? Not with God. What happened to all the oil from the Gulf oil spill? often the most magnificent revelations of his wisdom are manifested at those times when man really messes up.

Have you stopped to consider whatever happened to all a man's dire predictions on what was going to happen? I remember seeing one map that showed the oil spill destroying the entire eastern seaboard, moving across the Atlantic and wreaking havoc on the European shorelines.

[29:07] But instead, we've simply been left with this massive, mysterious disappearance of all that oil. We know we only captured a small fraction of it.

So where did the rest of it go? Well, before I give the answer discovered by scientists, let me remind you of another more pronounced, pronounced in terms of longevity, event in some of our lifetimes. How many of you remember when Lake Erie was pronounced dead? Anybody go walleye fishing there now? Do you remember how long the experts predicted it would take for it to come back? Many predictions went into the hundreds of years. And how long did it actually take for the lake to be teeming with life again? 20 years. The Chicago Sun Times summarized the lake's return in May 1988 in this article.

Nearly 20 years after the Cuyahoga River last caught fire, for those of you who are younger, yes, there was so much pollution, the rivers caught fire.

[30:20] Officials say Lake Erie and its tributaries are cleaner than they have ever been in decades. Scores of beaches will be open in Ohio this year and more than 25 million walleye thrive in Erie's waters.

Boating has become so popular that many marinas in the Toledo area are running out of dock space. How did the cleanup happen so quickly? Where did all that oil go from the Gulf oil spill? Well, the answer starts with the wisdom of God. God built into his ecosystem an incredible feedback mechanism that recovers from some of our most colossal blunders.

God created microscopic animals that swarm by the billions in his oceans and lakes. One report explains, naturally occurring microorganisms found in deep ocean vents consume petroleum and produce oxygen, thus apparently repairing ocean dead zones as they clean up pollutants.

Once the oil has all been consumed, the microbes die off. And of course, what God creates, man exploits. Osprey biotechnics offers bacteria that are said to do much the same thing.

[31:35] The company estimates that 155-gallon drums of their Monix product will treat 4,000 square miles of ocean. But unfortunately for Osprey biotechnics, it would seem that God beat them to the punch.

A Manhattan-sized plume of oil spewed deep in the Gulf of Mexico by BP's broken well has been consumed by a newly discovered fast-eating species of microbes, scientists reported on Tuesday. The microorganisms were apparently stimulated by the massive oil spill that began in April and they degraded the hydrocarbons so efficiently that the plume is now undetectable, said Terry Hazen of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

These so-called protobacteria, Hazen calls them bugs, have adapted to the cold deep water where the big BP plume was observed and are able to biodegrade hydrocarbons much more quickly than expected.

Imagine that. Without significantly depleting oxygen as most known oil-depleting bacteria do. Hydrocarbons in the crude oil from the BP spill actually stimulated the new microbes' ability to degrade them in cold water.

[32 : 49] Hazen and his colleagues wrote in research published on Tuesday in the Journal of Science. I use this recent illustration in the hope of challenging us to start looking at his creation for the wisdom of God.

It is all around us. And if we stop and we just contemplate and think not from an earthly mindset. One of the first things that entered my mind when they kept giving the dire predictions and of course having the perspective of thinking back on Lake Erie is God's got something up his sleeve.

This isn't going to happen like this. Now God doesn't always choose to do that. But what a way for him to display his wisdom to a watching world. John Piper exhorts, what a wonderful experience it is when God grants us a moment in which we don't take anything for granted, but see the world as though it was invented yesterday.

How we would marvel at the wisdom of God. We should pray for the eyes of children again when they saw everything for the first time. Especially as men, we must combat this perversion within us that somehow sees not being impressed by the things that we can be impressed by anything. As manly. Instead, it's wicked. We need to allow ourselves to start seeing the wonders of God's creation.

[34 : 28] There's nothing wrong with looking out the window as we did in first grade at the first snow and watching the snowflakes come down and be in awe and excitement over them. That's not unmanly.

We need to start prodding ourselves towards gaining excitement again over what God has put all around us. The angels are.

But in continuing the article on microbes, the following statement should send righteous anger through everyone who is a child of God. In part, Hazen said, this is because these new bugs have adjusted over millions of years to seek out any petroleum they can find at the depths where they live.

Why is the idea of evolution so evil? Because it seeks to rob God of the glory and honor he deserves from his creatures for his incomprehensible wisdom he displays within that creation. Evolution explains nothing. Millions, billions, or trillions of years explains nothing. You could have trillions of years and the supposed omniscience of time and chance and you'd never be able to make a universe of anything.

[35 : 47] You couldn't even get started. Such says independent statistical analysis. There just isn't enough time. Why?

Well, Isaiah 40, 28 summarizes it well. Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. Fourthly, why does God take pleasure in creation?

Because creation reveals God's incomparable power. In Isaiah 40, God compares the most elevated of humans to their creator.

And nothing could be of greater contrast. First, find the most powerful humans on earth, the princes and rulers, and consider their fate. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

[36 : 49] No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground. Then he blows on them, and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

They're here today and gone tomorrow. The beautiful and famous of a generation ago are not even known by most people under 30 today. The greatest athletes of a mere decade ago probably aren't known by anyone except avid followers of athletics.

And only seven years ago, Saddam Hussein had held millions in terror, invaded Kuwait, and raped their people, and defied a watching world.

But then God blew on him. And overnight, he went from absolute sovereign to hiding in holes into the ground, and finally being vanquished from the land of the living.

Now compare this picture to God. To whom will you compare me, or who is my equal, says the Holy One? Lift your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these?

[37 : 58] He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. In contrast to man's fleeting power, God turns our eyes to the heavens.

Why the stars? Because nothing in all creation probably reveals the incomprehensibility of his power like the heavens. These great balls of fire.

A single star is so vast and potent in sea, it's mind-boggling. By harnessing a few special atoms here on this earth, we're able to create a bomb that can destroy a city in a flash.

But our sun, what power is there? This was conceived by a mere thought from our creator. Its surface burns at a temperature of 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit every second of every day since the creation.

And for lack of time, I'm not going to continue on it. But as you think about this universe, you think about our own sun, and then you multiply that over trillions upon trillions of times.

[39 : 15] In fact, so much so that it's silly to even estimate the number of stars now because every time we get a more powerful telescope, we realize there's more arrays of galaxies beyond what we previously saw.

Why did God put it out there? Well, for his own delight and pleasure, up until the recent telescopes, we didn't even know they were there. But also, for us mere humans to look upon them and say, what power created this?

What are we dealing with here? Maybe glorify God because of his power. But then lastly, why does God take pleasure in creation? Because the creation makes us thirst for the creator.

After graduating from college, Patricia moved to a new town to begin her employment. As she settled into her new church, she began visiting some of the widows to help them with her household chores.

As she entered the First Lady's home, she complimented her on her beautifully landscaped backyard with walkways, luscious scratch, and a flower garden. But the widow deflected all the praise to Michael, a young man finishing up his final year of college who had spent many days the previous summer digging up the overgrown mass of shrubs and weeds and creating the masterpiece that she was now enjoying.

[40 : 33] As Patricia visited more widows, she was told of stairways that Michael had repaired, gardens that were weeded, and barnyard chores performed with excellence and speed.

At the career Bible study, she met a new believer, John, who she learned came to a knowledge of Christ through Michael's witness and subsequent personal discipleship. And as the year progressed, she discovered more and more of Michael's love for the Lord, acts of servanthood, and godly character.

After nine long months, Patricia had fallen in love with a man she had never yet met or even spoken with, and she found herself counting the days until he returned home.

Why? Well, because Michael's reputation told a story that captivated Patricia's imagination. If his works were so wonderful, what must the man be?

Let me ask you, what effect should the works of God have on us? John Piper captures the thought well. If the mere work of his fingers, just his fingers, is so full of wisdom and power and grandeur and majesty and beauty, what must this God be like in himself?

[41 : 50] Jonathan Edwards expressed it like this, The enjoyment of God is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven fully to enjoy God is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here.

These are but shadows, but God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the ocean. May we take the time to gaze upon and contemplate his works, that we might be driven to long for the creator himself.

I close with Psalm 104 again. I will sing to the Lord all my life. I will bring praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him as I rejoice in the Lord.

We're dismissed.