

Jumpstarting BIBLE STUDY



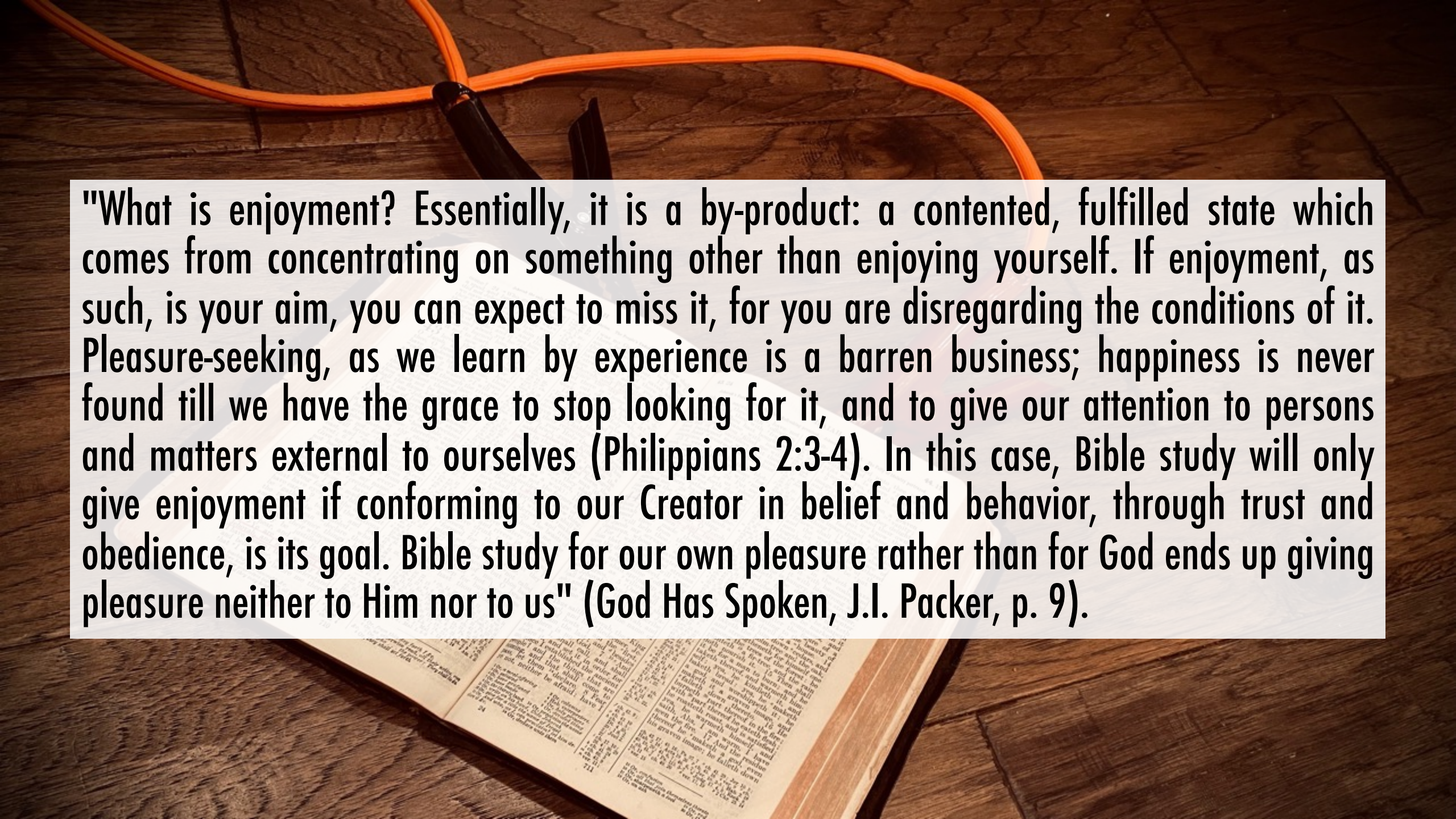


SOME SELF-TESTS

- Does the subject of Bible study make you uncomfortable? Is there guilt over a long track record of failed “Read The Bible In A Year” plans?
- Are there frequently Bible references that go over your head in our classes?
- If you scan the table of contents, are there numerous books that are still enigmatic to you? Has that list gotten longer or shorter over the years?
- Do you basically know about the same amount as you did ten years ago?
- Does Bible study feel more like a chore than anything else? Or like homework?

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Try to avoid the cycle of guilt, since it is generally an ineffective agent in neutralizing our problems. If you feel guilty about a lack of Bible knowledge or passion, it's time for a change in perspective.
- There are many passages in Scripture which clearly proclaim the enjoyment that comes from reading, studying and mediating upon God's written thoughts. Take Psalm 119, for example:
- "I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches" (Psalm 119:14).
- "I shall delight in Thy statutes" (119:16).
- "They testimonies also are my delight; they are my counselors" (119:24).
- "Make me walk in the path of Thy commandments, for I delight in it" (119:35).
- "And I shall delight in Thy commandments, which I love" (119:47).
- "For Thy law is my delight" (119:77).
- "Trouble and anguish have come upon me; yet Thy commandments are my delight" (119:143).

An open Bible with a pair of glasses and an orange cord resting on it. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular background.

"What is enjoyment? Essentially, it is a by-product: a contented, fulfilled state which comes from concentrating on something other than enjoying yourself. If enjoyment, as such, is your aim, you can expect to miss it, for you are disregarding the conditions of it. Pleasure-seeking, as we learn by experience is a barren business; happiness is never found till we have the grace to stop looking for it, and to give our attention to persons and matters external to ourselves (Philippians 2:3-4). In this case, Bible study will only give enjoyment if conforming to our Creator in belief and behavior, through trust and obedience, is its goal. Bible study for our own pleasure rather than for God ends up giving pleasure neither to Him nor to us" (God Has Spoken, J.I. Packer, p. 9).

An open Bible with a pair of glasses resting on it, set against a dark wood background. The Bible is open to a page with dense text, and the glasses are positioned over the right-hand page. The text is overlaid in white, bold font.

So, Psalm 119 is right in pointing out the enjoyment
that comes from God's word.
But it is not enjoyable just for enjoyment's sake.



BIBLE STUDY IS LINKED WITH...

- **Discipleship (Matthew 28:18-20);**
- **Salvation (Romans 1:16);**
- **Approval by God (2 Timothy 2:15);**
- **A prescription for spiritual troubles (1 Timothy 4:11);**
- **Being equipped (2 Timothy 3:17);**
- **A connection to the past (Luke 4:17-21);**
- **Life lessons, both positive and negative (Romans 15:4);**
- **Faith (Romans 10:17);**
- **Armor for spiritual combat (Titus 1:9-11, 1 Peter 3:15).**

What are some Bible study *Jumpstarters?*



- Stop doing things that don't work – If previous reading plans haven't worked, try a different approach. Be realistic with your time. Set mini-goals, and let a little success motivate you.
- Make an investment – We tend to care about the things we spend money on, so buy a brand new Bible (a nice one). Pick a new translation after doing some research. If a new pair of shoes can reignite zeal for exercise, the same psychological factors work for Bible study.
- Welcome accountability – Tell others about your struggle. Ask someone to text you periodically to ask how your studying is going. Share books you've read or new insights.
- Take full advantage of the tools that are already there – Are you coming to Bible class every time? Are you preparing? Are you asking questions? Are you interested in studying with someone from church?
- Find the balance with technology – Social media and entertainment apps can become time-wasters and can easily distract us during our free time. If you're going to use a digital Bible, put it on your home screen and move the games and entertainment away from view.
- Study with a purpose...



- Don't just wander through the Bible. Study books that are connected (Luke/Acts, The minor prophets alongside the narrative in Kings/Chronicles, etc.). Follow "breadcrumbs" and go deeper when you have questions, or don't understand something, or feel like you need some more background information.
- Environment matters. Be careful of noise, screens, people, hunger/thirst, uncomfortable chairs, etc. A mind is often only as productive as the body will allow.
- Study to change your heart first, and the mind will follow naturally. "Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies" (1 Corinthians 8:1). Other scriptures show the importance of having an honest and open heart (John 14:15, 7:17, 18:37, Luke 8:15). Remember what is at the other end of those jumper cables!