

Weariness, the Surprising Doorway to Life and Love

Isolation—part 2

We are made for a particular kind of community

April 24, 2022

DAY 1: The weariness of life, the pursuit of pleasure or at least relief

1. If there is one word that describes the nation's experience with COVID it might be the word "weary."

2. Life is harder than we imagine. We become weary in the following ways:

- From the simplest of annoyances to the greatest of suffering and pain (Genesis 3:16-19)
- It is a battle to do what is right and not give in to temptation (Ephesians 6:10-18)
- We become weary in doing good. Often you feel like you're flying solo (Gal. 6:9-10)

3. What can solve the problem of weariness? Our natural go-to is the pursuit of pleasure or at least temporary relief that we can manufacture. The question we should ask is this: will pleasure or relief overcome our sense of weariness with people, relationships, pain or life in general?

4. The pursuit of pleasure

a. Moses had everything a person of the world would want. He lived in a palace, in the lap of luxury, with servants, cooks, attendants, and wealth. He grew up as Pharaoh's grandson. He was highly educated in the ways of the Egyptians.

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵ He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy **the fleeting pleasures of sin.**

b. But when he made pleasure his chief pursuit, what painful discovery did he make about pleasure?

c. Solomon had even more privileges, power, prestige than Moses. Solomon pursued pleasure in governing, building great buildings, building great gardens, massive wealth, a powerful army, and a thousand women.

Ecclesiastes 1:1 The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: ² "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

d. Solomon opens this book of Ecclesiastes with the message of the book. What effect did all of Solomon's opportunities, wealth, and people have on him?

5. We expect to be weary with the difficulties of life. What we don't expect is to become weary with the *pleasures* of life!

6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Weariness is an invitation to discover Jesus

Mark 4:19 ... but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

1. We can't imagine any deeper desires than the ones that tempt us every day. Those desires seem the deepest. Why?
 - a. We imagine that those desires would most satisfy us. They satisfy us for a short time, but leave us thirstier than before, like drinking salt water.
 - b. We are fooled by what the bible calls "deceitful desires" which "promise" us a satisfaction that they can't deliver. We are easily deceived and duped. We are "foolish".
 - c. Deceitful desires also numb are real, deeper desires, so that they are not felt as desires.
2. What we long for, yearn for, thirst for is something no earthly pleasure can satisfy for very long. It is that elusive "it" for which we clamor. Jesus calls it "rest."

Jesus said...

*Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

3. People rarely look at God as a first option in life. In fact, God is often the last option people consider. We certainly sense no desire for God, no affection for Him.
4. No matter what kind of blessings or the number of blessings He gives us, blessings alone do not turn our affections to God, our heavenly Father. Ponder that!
5. So, what does it take for human beings to consider God as important in their life? Hardship, pain, difficulty, suffering, or...wait for it ... weariness!
6. Jesus offers us rest. He is not talking about physical rest. He is talking about the problem of restlessness. We are searching for that elusive something that will satisfy us for more than a few minutes or for a short season of life.
7. How would you describe the rest Jesus offers us?
8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: Weariness is an invitation to deeper desires

Weariness is the natural result of continuing to trust something or someone that either leaves us only partly satisfied, or emptier than when we began.

1. One hot summer day at noon, Jesus talked to a woman who had tried to quench her thirst for satisfaction and contentment by finding the “right” man. She had been married to five men, divorced from them all, and was living with a sixth man when she met Jesus at a well.

John 4:13 Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

2. People have an innate thirst that seeks to be quenched. The assumption is that “thirst” is a problem to be solved, as in, “drink a big glass of cold lemonade on a hot summer day and I won’t be thirsty anymore.”

3. For the woman at the well in John 4, no man could quench her personal or relational thirst. Yet, as long as she kept pursuing this method she would continue to thirst and yet become ever thirstier, as her history indicated.

4. The bible describes a different kind of thirst that quenches the human heart like no human endeavor can. It is a thirst for God and the things of God.

5. Below, are some examples of a different kind of thirst God wants us to get in touch with lying deeper in our hearts than the “regular” desires for which we crave to fill. Underline words and ideas that strike you.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Psalms 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

Psalms 63:1 You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

6. To get to the point where we finally look to God as our primary source of satisfaction and rest usually requires us to come to the end of ourselves. God, in His severe mercy, sometimes hastens that process and awareness!

Hosea 2:3 Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst.

7. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: Weariness is an invitation to a different satisfaction and a deeper life

1. Our greatest joys come from:

- Finding our satisfaction in God (spiritual formation)
- Reflecting His love to the people around us, (relational formation)
- Learning to live like He did (character formation)

2. Finding our satisfaction in God has two parts to it.

a. We will experience a deeper satisfaction in God on occasion, but certainly not 24/7. Sometimes it will feel like the greatest joy we can experience on earth, until we're home in heaven.

b. Second, well then what should we expect when God can satisfy the deepest parts of our soul but doesn't? What are we to make of that? During those times He is doing something that is crucial for our future joy but ironically leaves us temporarily unsatisfied.

He wants to create a greater thirst for satisfaction that can only come from Him than a satisfaction we think we should derive from anyone or anything else! It is not the experience with God that He is after. It is a *thirst* for God that matters.

3. This is what C.S. Lewis discovered in his book, Surprised by Joy. C.S. Lewis said it is not the experience of God but the thirst for God that is the sweetest experience this life has to offer.

4. Loneliness, emptiness, and weariness are the natural results of chasing any pleasures more than God. But God redeems even these bad feelings by using them to break our addiction to self. Don't you sense these things are true? How often have you silently asked the question, "Is this all there is?"

5. In reality there are only two options. (1) Realize that God is weening you from your addiction to you, in order to deepen two vital realities: Learning to rely on God's unquenchable love for you as your new bedrock, that infuses you to love the people around you, no matter how difficult that may be. (2) Try to fill yourself up any way you can.

6. Character formation. Living like Christ and loving like Christ define our deepest life.

Philippians 3:7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

(See also John 17:3)

7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: Fast track: emulating example in community

1. You may be wondering how do we learn these truths? We can read these truths in the bible, and we can learn these truths through men and women in a different kind of community.
2. To try to learn this on your own is the slow way. To be engaged with other brothers and sisters in community who are farther down the spiritual road than you is the faster way.
3. Under each of the following verses, jot down how example can make a difference in learning these truths.

Prov. 13:20 He who walks with wise men becomes wise, but the companion of fools suffers harm.

*Ecclesiastes 10:10 If the axe is blunt and one does not sharpen the edge he must put forth more strength, but **wisdom** helps one to succeed.*

Proverbs 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Phil. 3:17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor:

¹⁰ If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

¹² Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

As we wrap up this week, remember we started with the experience of weariness in this life. Weariness is not a problem to solve.

- Weariness is a wake-up call:

We have been, and are now pursuing someone or something that we think will provide the satisfaction we crave.

- Weariness is an invitation:

Turn your eyes to Jesus Christ. Bring yourself to Him, just as you are.

*Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are **weary** and **burdened**, and **I will give you rest.***

29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."