

DEFERRED PLEASURE

Hebrews 11:24-27

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PREAMBLE

Our discussion today is still centred on the third quarter theme - *towards spiritual maturity*.

Deferred Pleasure is the same as delayed gratification. Our discussion on delayed gratification will be viewed from both our physical and spiritual lives because of its enormous benefits in our day to day living on earth.

Delayed gratification means **resisting the temptation of an immediate reward, in anticipation that there will be a greater reward later**. It's a powerful tool for learning to live your life with purpose. It's linked to impulse control: Those with high impulse {desire, instinct, urge, wish etc.} control typically excel at delayed gratification. However, delayed gratification is also a skill that you can develop.

According to Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalytic theory on “**pleasure principle**,” **humans are wired to seek pleasure and avoid pain**. This is why children seek instant gratification. But as we mature, this desire is tempered by the “reality” principle, or the ability of humans to consider risks versus rewards, by which we're able to delay fulfillment instead of making a poor decision – especially if the later reward is greater than the one we'd get immediately. This is delayed gratification or deferred pleasure.

A person's ability to delay gratification relates to one's skillfulness in managing;

- Patience,
- impulse control,
- self-control and
- Willpower, all of which are involved in self-regulation.

Broadly, self-regulation involves a **person's capacity to adapt the self as necessary to meet demands of the environment**.

A growing body of literature has linked the ability to delay gratification to a host of other positive outcomes, including academic success, physical health,

psychological health, and social competence. The holy bible also attests to this tool in our quest for the heavenly race as we will see later in our discussion.

SOME EXAMPLES OF DELAYED GRATIFICATION

- Resist the impulse to start a fight or react angrily to your partner, and instead use your communication skills to find a constructive solution.
- Resist the desire to marathon Nollywood films, Netflix, Showmax, or scroll through social media, and instead use your NET time/Data to gain skills or knowledge that will advance your career.
- Delay the gratification of a night out or a late happy hour, or late night movie in favor of being well-rested and prepared for next day activity.
- Delay the gratification of purchasing something you don't absolutely need, and earn the long-term reward of having more savings and financial freedom.
- Saving money for retirement instead of spending it now is delayed gratification. Bro Ekaragha discussed extensively on this in one of his recent sermons.
- I will remind you with this extract rendered in my thematic analysis in 2013 youth lectureship ... "The secret of the rich are simple, they are not taught in conventional schools. They are about good financial planning, about saving and investing, and about **delayed gratification and about making your money live longer than you**". A quote from a comedy movie: Ejika and Sons I watched recently simplify it this way .."when you save money today, money will save you tomorrow"
- Delayed gratification allows you to do things like forgo large purchases to save for your child's education or take a job you don't love but that will help your career later on.
- Young Lovers remaining chaste prior to their marriage is delayed gratification!
- **AN EXAMPLE OF DELAYED GRATIFICATION IN THE BIBLE**
- By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, **choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.** By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. (**Hebrews 11:24-27 NKJV**)

- **WARNING ON PLEASURE**
- *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (2 Timothy 3:1-4 NKJV)*
- The last days perilous times will produce “lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God” {Perilous times and Perilous Men!}. This is the bane of modern day evil in our society. No wonder majority in our society today can do anything to derive pleasure.
- The parable of the sower also highlighted the danger of the pleasure of life.
- *“Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. (Luke 8:14 NKJV)*
- These men heard the Word, understood the Word yet became fruitless. Why? Because they left the door of their heart open to the thorns of “*the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things*” (Mark 4:19), which entering in, choked the Word. As expressed in James 1:13-15 saying:
- **“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”**
- Dear friends, I urge you, as pilgrims and strangers upon earth, *to refrain from indulging the cravings of your earthly nature, for they make war upon the soul. (1 Peter 2:11 TCNT)*
- The great warning on deferred pleasure for our heavenly goal is painted clearly in the book of Romans 8:18
- *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. (Romans 8:18-19 KJV)*
- The Basic English translation renders it this way; “*I am of the opinion that there is no comparison between the pain of this present time and the glory*

which we will see in the future. For the strong desire of every living thing is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God. (Romans 8:18-19 BBE)

- Current suffering cannot be compared to the glory that awaits us if only we work faithfully ignore the instant pleasure of the world. (**2 Corinthians 4:17**)
- **THE EMPTINESS OF PLEASURE {Ecclesiastes 2:1-11}**
- Here we will look at the summation of King Solomon's experiment on pleasure and the outcome; well documented in **Ecclesiastes 2:1-11**.
- *"I said to myself, 'Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself.' And behold, it too was futility. I said of laughter, 'It is madness,' and of pleasure, 'What does it accomplish?' ..."* (**Ecclesiastes 2:1-11**).
- King Solomon deserves your credit in his research for meaning in life, once he found out that one thing did not satisfy him, he turned to something else.
- First, he tried wisdom, the human variety, not the divine, and pronounced it all "vanity" (1:12-18). Next, he tried pleasure as he said to himself, "I will test you with pleasure" (2:1). He became a total pleasure seeker who denied himself nothing: *"And all that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor"* (**2:10**).

Let's look at the extent of King Solomon's PLEASURE TEST. To get the full effect of Solomon's "pleasure test," take a careful look at all that he tried.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-8 specifies the kinds of pleasure which Solomon experienced.

- 1) First was laughter. "I said of laughter, 'It is madness.'" Evidently, Solomon sought to lose himself in "fun and games," whatever would give him a laugh.
- 2) Second was wine. "I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine." Like so many today, Solomon looked for contentment at the bottom of a bottle. Even though he indulged in drinking, his mind was still "guiding him wisely," apparently meaning that he sought to remain in control, perhaps to gauge whether or not wine was giving him what he looked for. It did not.
- 3) Third was real estate. Solomon mentions houses, vineyards, parks, gardens, and pools. Such indulgence in lands and building projects was typical of ancient kings as a show of their wealth and splendor. In other words, their real estate holdings served as status symbols—not unlike today!
- 4) Fourth was money and possessions. Solomon specifies that he owned many slaves, livestock, silver, gold, and other treasures— "larger than all who

preceded me in Jerusalem.” The belief that wealth brings happiness is an age-old one. Solomon gave it all he had in order to find out.

- 5) **Fifth was sex. In verse 8 Solomon says that he got for himself “the pleasures of men — many concubines.” First Kings 11:3 is more specific: He had “seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines.” Every conceivable erotic pleasure was at his disposal, and he apparently tried them all.**
- 6) What was the result of this self-indulgence? It is unquestionable that he did experience some pleasure. The problem with the pleasure that Solomon found was that it did not last! He said, **“Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun” (2:11).** Solomon reached the same conclusion regarding pleasure that he had earlier reached regarding human wisdom: “Vanity!”
- 7) Solomon is not condemning pleasure as sinful, though some of his pleasures obviously was sinful. His real problem with his sensual pleasures is that **they were unfulfilling!**
- 8) They did not give him the satisfaction, the meaning that he needed. **That which promised him a full life left him empty inside; this is the tragedy of sensual pleasure! {1 Peter 2:11}.**

What can we learn from Solomon’s experiences? Sensual pleasures make promises that lead nowhere. The enjoyment of life is a personal gift from God. After admitting that his endless pursuit of pleasure was unsatisfying, Solomon admits: **“Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I? For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to him who is good before God.** This also is vanity and grasping for the wind. (*Ecclesiastes 2:24-26* NKJV)

Solomon learned to his dismay that he could not “make himself happy.” In reality, no one can make himself happy. God has to give us genuine and lasting satisfaction in life.

When Solomon says that nothing is better than to eat, drink, and find enjoyment, he is not recommending some kind of worldly lifestyle. Rather he is recommending the enjoyment of what God gives us.

Instead of pursuing pleasure, we ought to pursue life. Solomon acknowledges his basic error in 2:1: He pursued pleasure for its own sake. This seems to be the

troubling error of our times: We are “pleasure addicts”; we cannot get enough thrills; we need bigger and more exotic “fixes” to keep us going. Solomon learned the hard way that pleasure is not an end in itself but the by-product of going about one’s daily pursuits (2:24). *Therefore, if you want happiness, pursue life! Pursue God. Pursue better relationships with your family. Pursue meaningful work. Pursue service to others. Then, pleasure in life will be God’s gift to you, just as it finally was to Solomon.*

HOW TO EMPLOY DELAYED GRATIFICATION

To develop self-control, it might require building a stronger “muscle” that may warrant denying yourself of anything pleasurable, most especially that pleasure that will impact on your faith. Be reliable with yourself and follow through on your promises as your brain looks for consistency to guide its decisions. These four tips will get you started.

1. Start small

To orient your brain toward delayed gratification, start small. Create a goal so easy you can’t refuse it. Example, I am a brother that disappears once they say in Jesus Name in closing prayer; make a goal like waiting ten minutes for bonding before leaving the meeting hall. Next time, improve increase your bonding time. Incremental progress lets you build confidence with each small goal you achieve.

2. Make rules

You can also use delayed gratification as a “rule” for certain parts of your life where you may lack self-control. If you’re a late comer to programmed activity, make a rule that you must be there 10 minutes before the start time.

3. Practice gratitude

Reminding yourself of all that you have is a very effective way to train your brain to accept delayed gratification. When you think of all the clothes you are already lucky enough to have or the perfectly good car you own, you realize you don’t *need* that new stuff you’ve been coveting. Instead of being disappointed you’re having Okra soup with eba for lunch instead of a chicken curry rice, be grateful that you have food to nourish your body. Delayed gratification comes naturally when you practice gratitude.

4. Remind yourself of your goals

What is delayed gratification for if not the ability to reach your biggest goals and dreams? You’re putting off that purchase to save for a home or retirement, and you’re having salad instead of that burger so that you can achieve the body of your dreams and have more energy. **You are enduring pain and persecution so that you can inherit the eternal hope of all Believers!**

Moses had this bigger goal in mind when he forsook the pleasure in Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Keep a picture of your goal on a conspicuous place; as Christians, our heavenly race and our Savior's return should be **paramount in our hearts** – thus reminds us constantly of our eternal hope which we are working toward. It will make delayed gratification that much easier.

CONCLUSION

Pleasure is no substitute for God's gift of genuine happiness. It is no substitute for being able to finally face God with confidence and joy.

Life is about choices and decisions we make. You have the capacity or power to control your choices or decisions in life or how you live your life, but you don't have the capacity to control the consequences of your choices and decisions. One can choose to live his life on the edge; it's your life but its consequence or outcome is always beyond your control.

There is a song in the world that says it's mine life.... great! The consequences of such a living in this life and the life to come are beyond your control. We should not allow momentary sensual pleasure to deprive the Soul of the eternal hope of living with his Maker!

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. (2 Timothy 2:3-4 NKJV)

This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. (2 Tim. 2:11-12 NKJV)

Story to conclude.....