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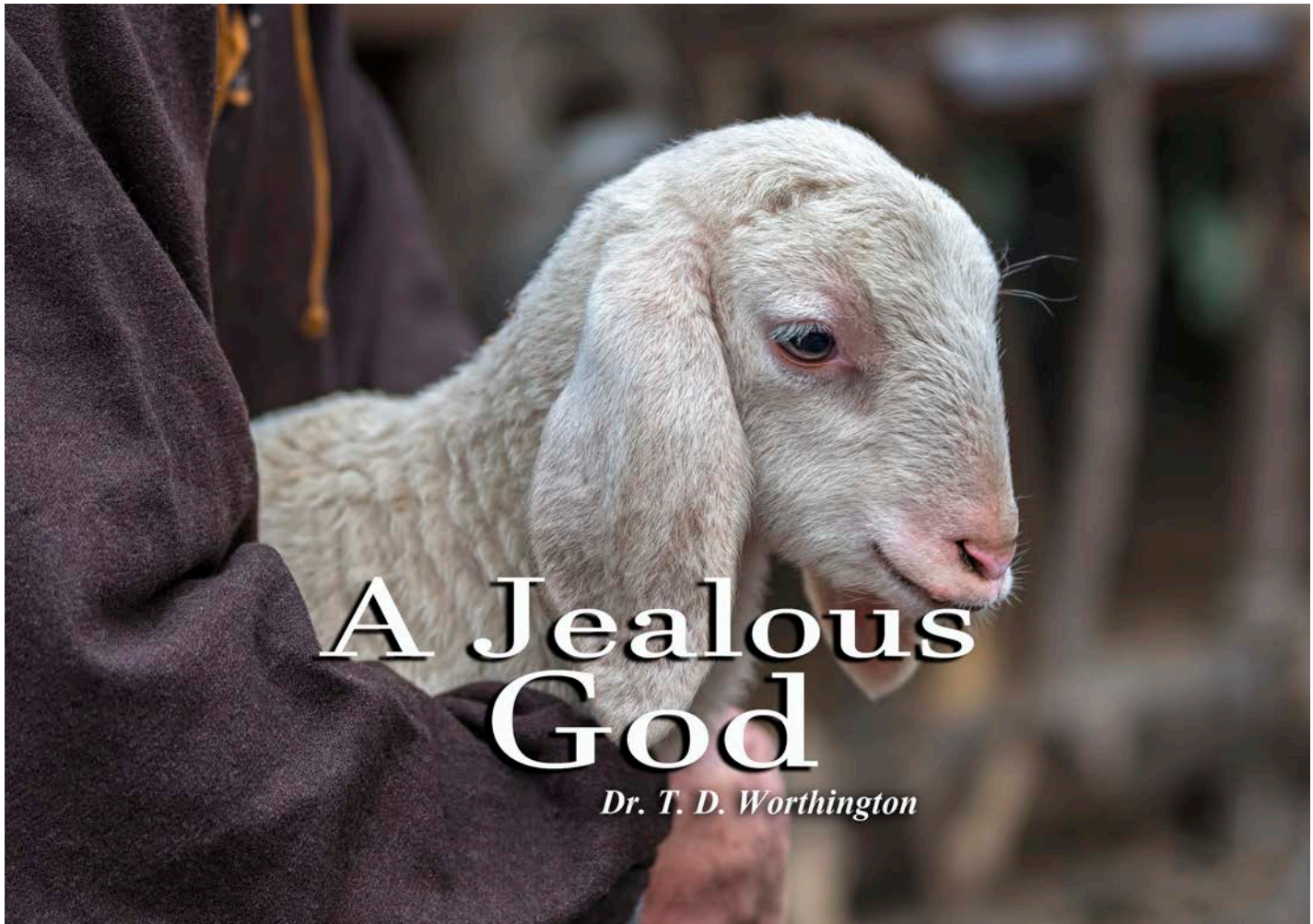
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A Jealous God

Dr. T. D. Worthington

“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:”

Exodus 34:14

There may be hundreds of reasons why I know God loves me, but here is a reason you might not often think of. When you love someone, even though you may totally trust them, there is still a bit of jealousy over them. I will confess to you, I am a jealous husband. That speaks of two things, it speaks of my deep love for my wife, and my desire to protect her from all harm.

When I speak of jealousy, I am not referring to a controlling or manipulative kind of jealousy, but a loving protective jealousy. Now, the Bible teaches us that God is a jealous God — so jealous that

his name is ***“Jealous”*** (Exodus 34:14). God reserves for Himself the right to our exclusive worship.

For believers, that’s the greatest calling in the universe. But for others, they don’t like to be loved like that. There are some wives that refuse to let their husbands love and protect them. There are some husbands who refuse to let their wives love them. For many people, divine jealousy seems defective. It seems like a flaw. How can a great and all-sufficient God be jealous? Doesn’t this make it sound like He’s an insecure tyrant, complaining about losing His tight grip on His lover? No, not when you understand it.

Why do people stumble over the jealousy of God? Why are so many

uncomfortable with the idea that God demands our affections, our allegiance, and our love; and if we don’t give it, then He may chastise us because of His jealousy? People don’t like the idea of God commanding that our hearts belong to Him and His being angry if we give our hearts to someone or something else.

Yet it’s true. It’s just plain true. God commands our affections, and that they be entirely His. Jesus said that the first and great commandment is to love the Lord your God. ***“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”*** (Matthew 22:37). How much of it? All of it. God demands that we love Him. He effectively says, *“Don’t give any of your affections that belong to Me to*

anyone else.” Or, the way the Old Testament put it in **Exodus 34:14**: **“For thou shalt worship” — that is, treasure, reverence, admire, esteem, praise, love, delight in — “no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”**

In other words, God demands that you and I, and everyone else give Him all our worship, all our allegiance, all our affection. Nothing is to be loved more. Jesus said, **“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37)**. So, our Lord is demanding all of our supreme affections and allegiance for Himself. If we give any of our worship to another, God is jealous, because it belongs to Him. And if we don’t repent, He may bring forth judgement. **“For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.” (Deuteronomy 4:24)**.

Now, why do some people bristle at this? People don’t want to be told where to find their greatest pleasure. We want to be autonomous, self-determining people. We want to decide for ourselves what is good and evil, beautiful and ugly, satisfying and unsatisfying. And our sinful hearts recoil at the thought that anyone, including God, would demand that we find our satisfaction in Him.

We reason that should we find satisfaction in lust, that’s our business. If we find satisfaction in alcohol or drugs, or in pleasure, money, or amusement, that’s our business. But, God says, **“No the only way you will ever find real satisfaction is in Me.”** Sin does not like to hear that for at least two reasons.

First, we don’t like being told what to do, period. And the second reason is that if there is sin in us, it will never find its greatest pleasure in God—even if we are a Christian! So, since we don’t want to be told what to do, and we will certainly shun from being told to find our greatest pleasure in God, because sin will never have its greatest pleasure in God, therefore we justify our resistance. One way we resist is by finding fault with His jealousy.

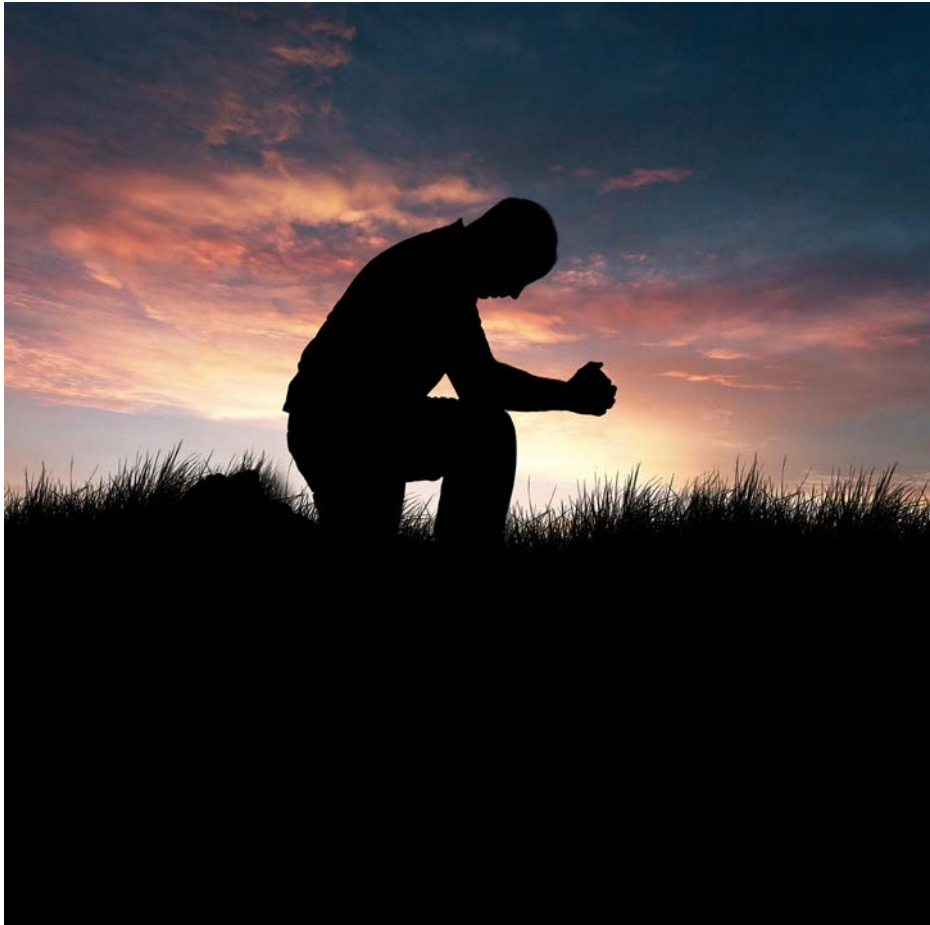
But just suppose that God does have a right to tell us what to do because He made us, He owns us, and He’s the only person in the universe who knows everything, and is infinitely wise and infinitely good, and knows what’s best for us. And suppose He is the greatest good in the universe, and He is the greatest joy, and He is the all-satisfying pleasure. Suppose we are utterly and totally dependent on Him for our greatest and most lasting happiness. Suppose all

that’s true — *which it is*. Then how would we view God’s jealousy?

Maybe we could reason it out biblically like this. God looked at fallen, sinful, rebellious humanity, and in His immeasurable grace, He decided to call out a people for His own possession. And the way He would relate to these people is as a loving husband to a beautiful wife. She would find her joy in His greatness and wisdom and strength and love and care and protection, and He would rejoice over her and protect her and provide everything for her that she needs to find her fullest joy in His presence.

Well, that’s what God did. In the Old Testament, it’s described like this in **Hosea 2:19–20**. This is God talking to his people: **“And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee**





unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.”

Here it is again in **Isaiah 62:4**: *“Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.”*

And then in the New Testament, God’s people, God’s chosen people, are described as the Bride of Christ. *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”* (**Ephesians 5:25-27**).

In other words, Christ aims to have a beautiful wife, and He died to make this happen.

At Valentine’s Day we think of Cupid. Did you know that Paul himself, thought of his ministry as an apostolic Cupid, bringing people into this relationship with Jesus. Isn’t that what he said in **II Corinthians 11:2**? *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”* That’s Cupid. That’s glorious, divine, apostolic work.

What happens, then, if the church, the bride, starts drifting into a love affair with the world? What happens? Here’s the way James describes that happening: *“Ye adulteresses!”* Now, that’s very significant, because not all the translations get the fact

that it’s a feminine word. It’s not just the term *“adulterers”*; it’s also *“adulteresses”* because it’s treating the church as the bride of Christ. *“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”*

He turns God into a betrayed husband. *“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?”* (**James 4:4-5**).

So, here’s the bottom line: the jealousy of God is the measure of His zeal for our happiness that is only available in Him, and His anger at our spiritual adultery, at our having other lovers besides Him, is a reflex both of His zeal for His own worth, but also of His zeal for our joy. If we turn away from Him as the greatest treasure, we turn away from our own greatest pleasure.

In Jesus Christ, God offers Himself to all, to all as a great Savior, a great treasure, an all-satisfying pleasure. *“In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”* (**Psalm 16:11**). And His jealousy says: I love you so much, and I know you will never find real and lasting joy in anyone or anything else, that with absolute determination I will protect you from anything that might draw you away from Me.



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry nearly fifty years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries and Christian Bible College.



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Despite what the old groundhog may have to say, many of us are anticipating the arrival of spring. It won't be long before the cold dark days of winter will slowly slip away into a frosty memory.

The **GoMix** service area has a full range of weather options. For some, the summer is your time to shine. Others enjoy the colors and chills of a crisp autumn morning. Some hearty souls relish the winter months. Still, others are patiently waiting for

spring, when a thousand shades of green begin to blanket our woods and fields.

The sleeping buds that have been hidden all winter will soon burst forth to find the sun. Of course, that is the way many of us see spring. Spring is about new life and new beginnings. It is about a new world of possibilities.

That is also the message we share each day of the year at **GoMix Christian Radio**. We share a message of new life. After all, that is the message our Lord has called us to share. Our work is to share the hope provided to all of mankind through the finished work of Christ. Through Him, we can have the new, abundant life we long for, both here and for all eternity in heaven.

Thank you for helping us share the message of Christ to a world that needs it so badly. Regardless of the outside temperature, our **Faith Partners** are essential in helping us maintain and expand our mission. With your continued support and by God's matchless grace, we hope to continue to share the message of Christ throughout every season of the year.



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A Promise Soon Fulfilled

It has been over three years since our Lord gave us the opportunity to start the process of building a new radio station in *Clinton, N.C.* that would serve *Sampson County*. The process has been a long one as there have been numerous setbacks, delays, and hurdles along the way. Finally, by the grace of God, we're pleased to say we should be on the air soon! The station will broadcast with 13,000 watts on **WCGI, 89.1FM**. We are sincerely hoping and trusting to be on the air by March 1st.

We are so very excited about this opportunity to share the Gospel with a new audience! We are also

extremely grateful to our **Faith Partners** who have prayed and given financially to help make this new station a reality. It is only through those prayers and support that **GoMix Christian Radio** has grown from 1 FM frequency in 1998 to 11 Southern Gospel signals and 2 additional Contemporary signals today. Thank you for your patience as we obtain one victory at a time to make this new station a beacon of light in *Sampson County*.

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Forgive God?

Dr. Sherry Worthington

Is it allowable to forgive God? God is perfect! How can we say such a thing? We agree that God has done nothing that needs forgiving—because He has done nothing wrong.

A story has been told that illustrates this truth. Imagine you are a Jewish five-year-old trapped behind German lines with your father during World War II. You would rather stay where it feels safe. But your father knows that the Germans are coming after you. He must smuggle you past the enemy. In the process, he sneaks you past tanks that nearly run you over, and you take a bullet in the leg. In your head you know that your father is not to blame; the enemy is. But a traumatized five-year-old cannot let go of conflicted feelings without help, and your

father knows this. So after he gets you to safety and sees to it that your wound is attended to, he says, *“For your own safety, I had to put you through this.”* He understands that in your head you want to accept what he says, and that you do not want to blame him. But he also knows that in your heart you cannot let go of the pent-up hurt and anger you feel. He listens to you pour out your heart, and then asks, *“Can you forgive me?”* Even though both of you know your father is not to blame, you answer *“yes.”*

This father did not let the son believe he had done anything wrong that required forgiveness, he just allowed him to let go of any bitterness he might have. We do the same thing when we step on a friend’s toe. We ask forgiveness,

even though we did not maliciously hurt our friend. When our friend replies, *“I forgive you”* he is not pardoning a sin, he is just saying it is okay.

Many people have encountered times when they blame God for a hurt in their lives. They know in their head He is not to blame, but it is hard for it to get to their heart. For those people, it may help to say *“I forgive you, God.”* Thus, they will be drawn closer to a Heavenly Father who knows what they mean by that statement. I forgive you God means that in our head we know it is not God’s fault, but our heart does not feel the truth. So, we use words that enable our hearts to agree with the truth our heads already know. God is and has always been innocent of all wrongdoings in my life.

Some people are angry at God because their lives did not turn out like they thought it should. How can we be angry at God? We have to realize there are things that we do not understand. It is a mistake to be angry at God and not accept help from the only one who can help us. If He does nothing else for us, He gave us His greatest gift. He gave us eternal life through the death and resurrection of His Son. We have to trust our Heavenly Father in all things. God is always just.

In **II Corinthians 5:18-20** Paul tells us we should be reconciled to God. Reconciliation involves a changed relationship. We must change from the inside out. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. God is the one who did the reconciling. He changed us. He doesn't make the problems disappear; He helps us through them. He changes how we handle them. His arms are stretched out pleading for us to come to Him.

We must remember that God's own Son suffered tremendous pain so we could go to Heaven. This pain was for the furtherance of His Kingdom. **II Corinthians 5:21** states, *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* Whatever we have been through on this earth pales in comparison to what Jesus went through for us. Why do we then think that our lives are supposed to be easy? What we are going through on earth is but for a short time. It still hurts. Jesus still hurts, too.

Unfortunately, statistics tell us that despite what Jesus did for us on the

cross, sixty-two percent of people admit to being angry at God. The highly educated, women, and younger people showed a higher tendency to be angry with God. Not surprisingly, the angry feelings tended to match up with a person's general level of mental distress. The higher the distress the more the anger. When we experience anger towards God, we must walk our way through it. We cannot let it linger. Much like when we get angry at our earthly father, we must realize first that we are wrong. Then we must remind ourselves how much our father loves us and how he would never allow anything bad to happen to us that was not for our good. Our Heavenly Father loves us so much more than our earthly father could love us. When we let our anger turn into a grudge or bitterness, it destroys our relationship with Him. It destroys us on the inside.

The bottom line is we get angry at God when things don't go as we think they should. We believe God is punishing us. God doesn't punish His children, but He chastens them. He chastens those that He loves. **Hebrews 12:5-7**, 11 teaches about the chastening of the Lord. Verse 6 reads, *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."* Chastening is corrective. God always has our good in mind. He desires to grow our faith.

Romans 8:28 teaches us that all things work together for good. Every incident of our lives leads to our perfection in Him, if we will allow it. **Philippians 1:6** reminds us if our hearts are right, everything that happens can cause us to be more like Christ. We cannot

destroy what God has for us by being angry at Him or anyone else. We know that God is all-powerful. He can prevent all trouble, but God doesn't choose to stop all trouble. He made mankind with a freewill and this world is the result of man's choices. God intervenes more times than we can know. We must trust Him and be thankful for His wisdom and grace. So, why does God allow trouble? One day, God will permanently eliminate trouble for all Christians, just not today.

Ultimately, the root cause of all trouble is that we are sinful and the world is broken. There are several possibilities that bring us trouble: we make bad choices, other people make bad choices, and nature brings trouble. Satan is the author of some of our troubles (**Luke 22:31-32**), and God brings some of the trouble we experience to refine us and bring Him glory (**John 9:2-3**).

No matter what happens in our lives, we must never blame God. He is watching over us and wishes to hold us and uplift us. He gave us His only Son so we could go to Heaven. He not only gave His Son so we could have eternal life, but He gave His Son so we could live life in the present abundantly. **John 10:10b**, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* Our daily lives are to be full of His bountiful love and grace. Life is worth living in Him.



Dr. Worthington has five children and twelve grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.



For Better or Worse

Anonymous Contributor

As a picture of Christ and the church, marriage represents the intimacy that we as a church should have with our Saviour. Christian marriages should reflect that to the world. Yet many marriages, Christian ones included, end in divorce. How does that affect our outreach? How do so many despise a sacred picture of our relationship with Christ by undermining our marriages? Why are so many couples ignoring the vows that they swore before God to remain faithful to each other “till death do us part”? Why do we give up so easily? Why do we not fight for the union that God promises to bless?

Marriage is not easy. Blending the lives to two people of different backgrounds, desires, dreams, habits, and ways of doing things is a difficult task. I know, because at one time, I considered leaving my spouse. Unlike the relationship between Christ and the church, a safe, loving, and respectful relationship was lacking in our household. We did not communicate, and we were quickly growing apart. I began making plans to end our marriage.

When Satan recognizes trouble in a marriage, he begins whispering lies to both parties. He tells us

that our marriage was wrong to begin with, that God has someone better for us, and that God will understand ending our marriage. However, God says, “*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*” It was so important to Him that He actually recorded it twice (**Matthew 19:6b and Mark 10:9**).

Thankfully, God intervened in our marriage. He began changing both of us. It became obvious that He wanted our marriage to succeed.

Looking back over the investment that we have made to improve our marriage, I am so glad that we decided to work things out. First of all, we built a foundation in our marriage because we were both Christians. That foundation encouraged us to grow and seek the will of God for our relationship. We considered the memories that we had built together over the years: the children that we raised together, trips we took together, improvements we made in our house together, momentous occasions that we shared, shared plans for our future together, etc. All of those good memories helped us to have a more positive outlook on working on our marriage. Looking

at the examples that we could see of successful marriages gave us hope for our own. Friends who were willing to give us counsel encouraged us and showed us where we could improve. We have been married for nearly a half century now, and we are more content with our marriage than ever before. We still have a few different interests and we don't spend every moment together, but our time together is more precious. We have many more special memories now. The extra work to save our marriage was worth every bit of effort.

Nowadays, marriages are dissolving because one or both have decided that they don't love each other anymore or they are not having their needs met by their spouses. If Christians can practice



loving their enemies as Christ commands, why can't they love their spouses who God blessed them with in marriage? Is it a spouse's obligation to meet all of our needs, or is that something we should depend on our Saviour for? Christ has promised to meet our needs. Is He failing, or are our assumed needs only what we want or desire and not needs at all?

Is your marriage on the rocks? I beg you not to tear your family apart without seeking God's intervention and giving the extra effort to save your marriage. One day, as I have, you will look back and be glad that you did!

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Are You Satisfied?

Everyone longs for satisfaction. That elusive search for satisfaction has led many down wrong roads. It seems that in the physical realm one can never reach a permanent satisfaction. Whenever it appears that satisfaction is within our grasp, we want more or we want something different.

Psalm 37:4 tells us that God will give us our heart's desires if we delight in Him. As we desire more of God in our lives, He will give us the desires of our hearts. Sometimes, He does that by changing our desires, but the ultimate result is always a satisfaction that worldly desires cannot fulfill. He satisfies the desire of every living thing (**Psalm 145:16**).

In the physical realm, God satisfies our mouths with good things (**Psalm 103:5**). But our Creator knows our deepest needs are not temporal in nature. He has put within each of us a deep desire for a relationship with Him that only He can satisfy. Because of our sinful nature and the resulting spiritual chasm that separates us from Him, we need a remedy. He provided that on the cross when He bought salvation for all who believe. With the psalmist, we can proclaim, *“O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days”* (**Psalm 90:14**). Once we have claimed His mercy, He satisfies our longings and fills our hungry souls (**Psalm 107:9**).

As our relationship with Christ matures, our desires become more kingdom-oriented, causing us to hunger after righteousness. God's Word tells us that those desires will be satisfied (**Psalm 36:8; Matthew 5:6**). As we experience satisfaction in our relationships with our Heavenly Father, our desire increases. Our spirits long for a deeper relationship with Him, and He responds by satisfying our desires. Spiritual satisfaction leads to joyful praise as we recognize our unworthiness and the bounty of satisfaction that He bestows upon us (**Psalm 63:1-8**).

Our ultimate satisfaction will come when we finally arrive in our eternal home. **Psalm 17:15** speaks of that eternal satisfaction: *“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.”* Oh, to realize that final eternal satisfaction! Ponder that!



Mrs. Connie Peters has two children and resides in Princeton, NC. She serves as an instructor at Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.



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