

Joy in The World By Bryan Loritts

All right, well, I have nothing to add to Bryan's message this morning, so I'm going to preach my own, except I do remember, you know, one time, you know, first time I'd ever heard about racial reconciliation, it was at a Promise Keepers gathering. And it was just it was kind of weird to me, you know? And I remember them just saying, yeah, you know, so first they had the black guy get up.

It's like, so now everyone find a black guy and hug him. It's like, OK, you know, and then it's like, OK, it's a Chinese guy got up and everyone find a Chinese and hug him. Then all these white guys came over and hugged me and and it was just like this routine. There's like, OK, fine, I'm Mexican, Pedro, come over here, you know, and, you know, it was just like it just.

All right, all right, all right. Just to hug kind of someone from every race. And it was just kind of this thing you went through, just kind of this ritual, just kind of this heartless, OK? He told me to hug a black guy. I'll go do it. And and it just really wasn't from my heart. It wasn't the heart of what God says in scripture, you know, which is what Bryan was trying to get out was.

What was getting at is just, you know, God wants to look at each other and say, you know what, you're every bit my brother and sister, my daughter, my my my mother, you know, they're flesh and blood we're talking about yesterday. It just means nothing compared to who we are

spiritually. And for us to really look at each other that way, I mean, really getting at the heart of the matter, just keep going.

I love everyone, all of my neighbors as myself. I say that because so much of what I did in my Christian life, I'm ashamed to say was heartless. It was out of obligation. It was out of duty. And it wasn't the desire of my heart. And it's really been a process in my life where God has changed me. But I really want to start this morning by by with some good news. Cheetos, Cheetos. I was eating Cheetos the other day and and I was noticing on the label zero grams of trans fat.

Not great. Oh, man, no trans. Because, man, did you grow up when your mom would you know what she does in your. Let's go. No, Mom, I'm worried about trans fat but zero grams. No trans fat. No, I was eating these and I was just looking at that and go man that's their selling point. Their selling point is zero grams trans fat. And I just and it made me think, what is a cheeto anyways. Seriously, you ever eat them all the time of the year or something? What am I eating? What is a Cheeto? And I'm looking at the ingredients and I look at the ingredients of some of the things, you know, that are on there, like, you know, maltodextrin, just sodium phosphate, cultured cream, artificial flavor, monosodium glutamate, lactic acid, artificial colors, yellow six citric acid, partially hydrogenated soybean oil, you guys. And do you know what partially hydrogenated soybean oil is? It's trans fat, but it's less than one grams, something of zero grams, trans fat, you know, and I'm looking at all of this junk that's in the ingredients.

And I and it just occurred to me go, you know what this is? This is where a lot of Christians look like. We want to put that one thing on that label that makes us look good. Zero grams, trans fat, you know, meanwhile, back if you really checked the ingredients, you go, you know what, zero grams nutritional value, you know, really is just, you know, how much junk is in this.

But you know what? They put on their wrapper, zero grams, trans fat for all the world to see. Look, look, Gedo, zero grams, trans fat. No, check out what they really are. It's a bunch of junk. And I feel like so many Christians do the same thing. We come to a Bible college, we go to church and go, hey, I went on a mission trip last summer. Yeah, but let me look at what your life is really about.

Let me turn over the label. Let me see what's really inside. What are you really made out of? Oh, my dad was a missionary. My dad was a pastor. This that you know what? Quit putting the most attractive thing about you on the label, quit coming to the chapel and, you know, with this beautiful package and saying, you know what, this is what I've done. This is the mission. I help out with the youth group.

I'm in high school ministry now. What's really going on in your life? What's really in there so often as Christians, we want to find that one thing that we can boast about and make ourselves look good when in reality you know that between you and God, there's all sorts of junk in your life that no one else knows about because it's all the fine print and yet it's who you are and really want you to think through this morning. What's really going on in your heart.

You know, I, I I feel like there's so much of Christianity I just didn't get and and even issues of dishonesty in my life where you go being a Christian isn't about serving God. Being a Christian isn't just about doing a bunch of ministry. You know, going on a mission trip, I no longer swear, you know, I no longer do this, I no longer do that. It doesn't make a good Christian. Sometimes in churches, we can we can believe that.

And I can think about even in my teaching, sometimes I've I've kind of given that type of idea. If you just do this, if you just do that, that'll make you a good Christian, because that's not what God says. Well, what you read in his word is what God explains is that a person who is a good Christian in his eyes is someone who loves him, who is crazy about him at the core of their being in love, him with all their heart, their soul, their mind. And they love other people in that same way. That's at the core of Christianity. See, but so often we want to throw something else out there, like, well, I did this. I don't swear anymore. No trans fat. It's like I doesn't matter the issues.

Are you crazy about God? I read a quote just last week that just absolutely rocked me and. Then I read it to my wife and she just started crying. I read to my congregation and people just kind of sat there with their jaws dropped, it was out of John Piper's new book, God is the Gospel. And is this whole question of whether or not we truly love God. And the whole premise of this book is he saying God is the gospel.

So a lot of times we think God the gospel. The good news is I don't have to go to hell. The gospel is I'm forgiving of my sins, the gospel as I was a law breaker. And now now I don't have

to I don't want to pay for it. The Gospel as I can have heaven, you know, we're no more pain, everything else. And then John Piper is saying, you know what? Have we missed it?

Look at the scriptures. God is the gospel, getting him a relationship with him. What we've been taught all our lives. Right. We grew up in a Christian home or in Christian church. It's all about a relationship, not a religion. But then he asked this question. He says, Would you be happy? In heaven, if Christ were not there. And listen to what he says, he says, The critical question for our generation and for every generation is this if you could have have been.

With no sickness, with all the friends you ever had on Earth, all the food you ever like, all the leisure activities you ever enjoyed, all the natural beauties you ever saw, all the physical pleasures you ever tasted, and no human conflict or any natural disasters, could you be satisfied with heaven? If Christ was not there. And the question for Christian leaders is, do we preach and teach and lead in such a way that the people are prepared to hear that question and answer with a resounding no?

So just watch me, because I thought, man, how many people come to church wanting something that God can give them in all the gifts and everything else? When we talk about heaven, we talk about men. Think about that time when there's no more sickness. I've said these words. Think about that time when there's just no more pain. And heaven's a place where you don't have to worry about your friends dying or your friends gossiping about you or your parents dying or this or that.

You don't have to worry about any of this stuff or hatred or this or that, rather than say, you know, heaven is a place where God is. At the core of your being, aren't you just longing to see him? I really want you to think about that question. Is it God that you love? Do even really have a relationship with him or he's the one you're dying to see? Are you like a kid who says, you know what, dad, I don't care about you, just just give me my allowance, give me a place to stay, everything.

I don't need to know you. I counsel couples all the time where where the husband will come in and say, you know, my wife doesn't love me, she just wants me to bring home the paycheck. She just, you know, she just uses me for this or that. She doesn't care about me. And I talk to wives who say, you know what? He just wants, you know me to take care of the house, take care of the kids, you know, let him have sex with me so that, he doesn't care about me. He just wants my stuff. And yet, how awesome it is when when my wife looks me in the eyes and she can say, Francis, I love you, and for me to go, you know what? I know. It's me you really love.

And yet, do we do that with God? Is he the gospel to us? Is he the good news? Are we in love with him? See, that's a believer in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy six about you shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind. Just love him. When Jesus was asked was the greatest. Just love me. Love me with all of your heart, every fiber of your being.

Love me. And I read a quote like that from Piper and I go, you know, my whole life I've told people this is a relationship, this is a relationship, it's a relationship. And then I start asking myself, has it been.

Do I love God or just all his stuff? And I think about my Christian life because there's so much I just feel like God has been teaching me these last few months just about how much he has to offer and who he is and loving him and how much pleasure and joy comes from knowing him. You know, and and I accept because I used to even the word of God, I, I would read like the Psalms and I didn't get them.

Not that I couldn't understand it, but I'm just like, oh, I'm on. You know, you hear this guy who goes, gosh, I'm in this dry and weary land where there's no water, you're going to die of thirst. But yet I thirst for you. God, I feel like, wow, what is that? And especially when he would talk about the commands, he would talk about the commands. And I'd read passages like Psalm 119. And and when he would talk about his God's word, he would say things like this some some 119 verse one twenty nine. He says, your statutes are wonderful, therefore I obeyed them. The unfolding of your word gives light. It gives understanding to the simple. I open my mouth and pant longing for your commands. What you want the commands of God, you're opening your mouth and you're panting, oh, God, God, give me another.

Come in, give me another come in. I'm like, come on. See coz when I became a Christian, the commands to me were the downside of Christianity. They just were the benefit of Christianity is unforgiving. I'm going to heaven. The downside is now I got all these commands I got to obey.

And let's be real with it, let's be honest, I mean, I look at the commands and I come in, you know, I got to watch what comes out of my mouth.

I like swearing. There's nothing like dropping a good F bomb or flipping someone off. Like, yeah, you want some of this, you know, just. Oh, what a great feeling, man. I just remember I remember lying and and I loved lying. Lying was the best. You know, you could just do anything and go and do it. And suddenly it's like, oh, man, I got to watch my tongue, not bear false witness. I love cheating. Cheating was so cool. High school man, you know, just writing everything on your shoe, on your head and kind of going nuts. I don't know, you know, just everything. Looking at people's seats, every single bit of cheating on just this is the best. And then suddenly I'm a Christian now I can't cheat. I hated that. All the commands they were the down side is like, oh, no more swearing, no getting drunk, no pornography. I love naked women. You know, just all of this stuff is like, oh, I gotta do this now.

But but I go, OK, OK. But your word says in here you're a holy God. So I'm going to do it. I'm going to show you God, I'm going to show you God that I'm serious about you and I'm going to follow these commands because you tell me to and and you guys, I know you'll regret that because any time you obey the word of God, it's a good thing. It's better to obey than to disobey always. But you guys, to me, I didn't understand these things that. That scripture was saying about God being so wonderful. And it's commands being so wonderful. Everything to me was discipline, everything was forced upon me. I even remember coming here by only I don't know how I remember how long I was, but I was talking about prayer. I don't know if you remember, I brought in one thousand four hundred and forty dollars.

Remember that I brought in one thousand four hundred and forty dollars. And my illustration and this whole thing about praying to God and spending time with him and reading his word was I said, what if I gave you one thousand four hundred and forty dollars? And I said, OK, and the only catch is you got to take 20 dollars of that and spend it on me.

Would you do it? Thank you. Of course. And I thought, what if I told you, OK, I'll do it for you every day. I'll give you one thousand four hundred and forty dollars and all you do is spend 20 bucks on me. Would you do it every day? Of course. Someday I'd spend 40. Some day I'll spend a whole hundred on you. You know, if you're going to give me one thousand four hundred and forty. And I talked about what if I came to your house one day and go, hey, would you buy me today? And you said, Oh, I spent it all. And I use that as an illustration. Explain that do you realize every single day God gives us one thousand four hundred and forty minutes?

There are 1440 minutes and every day. These are given to you by God, you could you would fall over in a second, you would just fall over dead if he didn't give you this minute right now. And my illustration was, are you telling me that you're going to spend that one thousand four hundred and forty minutes of the day and not even give 20 minutes back to God, you know, which I don't regret teaching, then that's every bit true. And I was like, yes, I just spent 20 minutes, you loser, you know, just going to jail just to just obey. Just spend time with God and on and on and on, you know, discipline yourself.

Make yourself do it. And yeah, but you guys are so much more. It's not about just doing stuff. It's about really, truly believing that, you know what, I want to spend this time with God and there's no one else I'd rather hang out with. I want to obey these commands you see pretty soon in life, what starts happening is you start looking at those commands, those ones that you thought, man, why would he tell me to do that?

I don't want to do that. I don't want to obey that. I don't want to obey the. Then pretty soon you realize, you know, disobedience, obedience to God's word doesn't really work out anyways. You know, there's a reason for these commands. And you start realizing the more I obey these things, they really do lead me to life. And you find an enjoyment, you find of pleasure, you see when I read the Psalms.

I see that this isn't a guy who when he when he writes and doesn't say, OK, God, I'm going to put in my 30 minutes today. I'm going to discipline myself and force myself to be with you. It's just a guy who says it's a guy who is infatuated with God. A guy who is saying, you know what, I love you so much more than anyone else on this Earth. And there was a joy, there's a pleasure. You know, anyone who's read any of Piper's writings knows that his big phrase is, you know, as God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him. And how, you know, a God gets honor when we're satisfied. And we're pleased when we just said we enjoy him so much. Not when we go, OK, I'll obey these commands because I have to, but when we really enjoy it. So we enjoy something, we give glory to that.

It's like if I. You know, I just had my little boy, I'm sure I think most exciting, you know, things that have taken place. My baby boy was born last Sunday and and, you know, I got three girls at home, nine year old, five year old and a 13 month old. And and now we got this little boy. But the birth was unreal, OK? The midwife comes in, you know, at the hospital, Kaiser, and she comes in.

She knew who I was. And we've had a relationship. She delivered my last daughter. And she goes she goes, Francis, you know how much I prayed for this delivery? She's you have no idea. All week long, for the last seven days, I've been praying to God, asking God to make this good, asking him to just show me a sign that he was here. And look at these contractions are out of control. I'm just smiling from ear to ear because God is with us like, wow, man, how often does your doctor pray for you, you know, and say, I've been spending long weeks because this is awesome.

I got my nine year old daughter in there with me. She wanted to be there. And when it came time to deliver the baby, you know, the doctor, Sister Rachel, do you want to help me? And puts on a little mask, you know, a gown and gloves and to see my nine year old girl. I mean, all these births were amazing. See, my nine year old girl put her little hands on Ezequiel's head with the doctor putting her hands over. And they're both pulling out, you know, and my daughter's just bawling her eyes out, just crying as she's pulling. Just can't believe what she sees. She's pulling out her baby brother and holding him and just sobbing and crying and looking at me with a smile like, I don't know what to feel right now. I am so blown away by what I just saw, just crying. And she hands the baby to mom and she cut the cord.

And then she comes running over to me, just sobbing, holding me just just go, oh, so amazing. We're just here for like half an hour. She's just crying. She can't let go and go. Dad, I can't leave the house or I can't go anywhere. I can't leave my little brother, you know, everything else in this. And it was just an amazing moment. See, as I talk to you about that event, you just go, wow, what an amazing event makes you want to go out and have a baby, right?

You know, you just go, wow, wow. That's intense. You guys. I don't know I don't know that you can experience anything more beautiful than that. You know, any creation of God where you see the birth of your child and everything else. But then to have your own child help deliver your your other, you know, her sibling, you just go, this is unreal. You see, when I get pumped up about something, when I get fired up and I go, man, that was so awesome. You go, wow, that was amazing. That was amazing.

You guys, it's the same thing with God, it's like when we go, hah, this morning, I was alone with God. I mean, everyone was just gone. It was just quiet. And you walk around telling people about this event, this time with God, you walk around telling people, oh, man, you got to understand, my mind was such a mess. And I began this relationship where I'm talking to him. I'm talking to the God of the universe.

I mean, it was just awesome. I'm in my room just thinking no one else is here and I am speaking to God. And God Almighty starts answering the things I pray for, even as I'm praying for them. And I see it through the day and you start talking about that. It gives glory to God. Christian,

everyone's like, man, why are you so fired up about this guy, just like when I talk to you about that birth, you go, Whoa, that's awesome.

If we could talk about God that way, we could talk about our relationship with him that way.

And yet so much of my Christianity was in that it was like, I will serve this God, I will obey this command and watch me. You know, I hate it. I hate this command. You know, it drives me crazy, but I'm going to do it anyways. And you think people are looking you go, oh, I want what you have.

But you read the psalmists and he's just gone, I'm crazy about God, I thirst for my hunger for him. He's my rock, he's my refuge, his commands, man, that is leading me to life. So much so that I'm like, God, give me more, give me more. Because every time I obey your commands, like, it leads me to life and you begin to realize that and you begin to love his law, not just put up with it or look at it as the downside of Christianity, which I did for so long.

You start realizing, you know what, God, it's kind of it's kind of good not to be angry. It's kind of fun just not to be angry at anyone. That's a great feeling. It's it's an amazing feeling, it's great not to covet and desire other things and what other people have and just to be content and go, gosh this is cool, you're my shepherd. I don't want anything else and not to desire more. It's fun rejoicing in the Lord always and not being anxious for anything just to live a stress free life, to never worry again. That's a good command. I mean, what if we left this room and we just rejoice in the Lord always? Always, and we were anxious for nothing. Imagine if you could walk out this room and never, never worry again what life would be like.

It's like one never worry and just always rejoice, you know, reading these commands and honestly, that was always one of those commands that I never took seriously and never thought, oh, it's not real real command. You know, command is a harsh thing, not rejoice. You know, it's just, you know, you, you know, command it. Don't do this. Don't do that in the Bible commands. No rejoice in the Lord always.

I'll say it again, rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always did you rejoice in the Lord today, have you been rejoicing in the Lord today, anxious for nothing? But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with Thanksgiving, a request was made known to God rejoicing. Just every day to just stop and think, you know what, if I died right now? I'd be with God. I talk to the guard at the unit is a good thing.

So rejoice in the Lord always, I'll say it again, rejoice, and he says, let your forbearing spirit be made to all men. You'll be rejoicing with God so much that when when huge things happen, the word forbearing is the word sweet reasonableness. It's the word appropriateness, it's like you don't fly off the handle, you don't get angry, it's like no big deal. No big deal. I know God. I don't care that everything else is falling.

I know God, you don't understand this relationship with God is so great. You can go ahead, swear me, do whatever you want for me. I don't care. I know. God, it's just crazy. I know God and rejoice that way. And to go man and all the commands he gives me, they're just going to

make my life better. There's going to lead to life. This is great. And it's commandment is to never stop rejoicing, always be joyful in me no matter what happens.

And he tells me never to worry again. And what an amazing, amazing life we could live if we really took those verses seriously. I mean, we just rejoice. Always, always. Have a forbearing spirit is crazy, and I've been preaching about joy at church and Saturday night, you know, while I'm at church, my next door neighbor came over to my house and got in my wife's face and starts screaming at the top of his lungs. Because someone had just come by to drop off a baby gift and, you know, and her car, I guess, went into his driveway a little bit and and so she was just dropping off a gift. And it's going to take off. And and my neighbor sees that comes running over and just screams at the top of his lungs in my wife's face, just on and on, calling her names, calling or, you know, I was like, man, you know what?

I just had a baby. You leave her alone, you know? And I come home from church and I'm like, Are you serious? Are you serious? He did that to you. And everything inside of me is just like, oh, man, you know, all the thoughts of what I could do right now, just going over his house and just getting in his face. No one yells at all these things. And Herman is looking at my wife, I guess. So what do you want to do? What do you want to do? She goes, Why? I was thinking I would bake them some cookies and give him a card and just apologize again, like, OK.

Christian, you know, and. But it was amazing. OK, so the next day, next day, I'm at church, I'm at church, and this was just a Sunday and she sure enough cookies and this card and goes and apologize again. Go. You know what? I can imagine how angry you got. And, you know, just,

you know, that was insensitive. I should have called her ahead of time and said, hey, make sure you don't have any part of your car sticking in front of the driveway.

I'll try to call all my friends. I know that she's saying this sincerely, which I will know, but she's she's doing all this and he starts yelling at her again. He just goes, well, just common sense. I mean, it would be so stupid as she was. I know. I'm just coming here and I'm apologizing again. Well, you know, you just should have known. She's like, OK, all right. I'm just so and, you know, it's just everything in me not to just go there and just just scream whatever, you know, all this stuff.

And, you know, later on he knocks and goes, I had a hard day. All right. It was the straw that broke the camel's back because I understand. I understand. You know, it just she goes, I know. I'm just imagining you're OK. I just want you to know I had a hard day and walked away. And she goes, No, I'll take it as an apology. You know, it just and just amazing, you know, because that night, you know, I'm going for a walk and that guy's son comes up to me and goes, I heard my dad shoot your wife out and everything else.

And I go, Yeah, you know, it honestly, it ticked me off. And he goes, Me? I'm so sorry for my dad, you know, and he's swearing everything else, too. But I just amazing the softening and the family. And it's like, wow, this is good. It's so good. Now, suddenly his boys, you know, I just thought, man, what if I got angry and then suddenly, you know, because I could have kicked I could have taken him, you know, but but he's got these two, you know, he's got his big teenage boys.

And I thought, OK, if those two, you know, and and it was just amazing how I was like, gosh, you know, God, you're lost. So good, you're lost. So good. You know, it's so awesome. And well, you know, I get my first spiritual conversation with this kid, you know, and just go, you know, more. And we're just sad. We're sad for your dad. We're sad for your family, you know, because we've just found so much things.

My wife has found so much peace, you know, in God and in his relationship with him. And and, you know, and we could talk about this. And, you know, it's amazing how God's laws just so lead us to life and when we can rejoice and enjoy and then show the world, look, we don't fly off the handle. I can have a forbearing spirit the Lord is near. And just to remember that and not to be anxious about anything, what a wonderful life we could live.

See, these are God's commands. They lead to law. You know, it says some 119. I mean, so many of these these these verses in here, they're just all about how much God's laws have been good. He says your promises have been thoroughly tested. Your servant loves them. Your commands are mine delight. Your statutes are forever right. Give me understanding that I may live my eyes, stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises.

You know, it's just just on and on. I love your commands. More than gold, more than pure gold. How sweet are your words to my taste? Sweeter than money than honey to my mouth. I stand in all of your laws to the perfection I see to all perfection. I see a limit, but your commands are

boundless. Oh, how I love your law. I meditate on it all day long. Your commands make me wiser than my enemies.

You know, just on and on. You start reading. It's like this isn't a guy who has to obey anything. This is a guy who's saying, gosh, the more I obey your commands, the more delight I find in them, the happier I am. And just looking at God going, you're amazing. Everything about you is amazing. You commands, everything you give me is just so good. I love you. I love you. He says in verse ninety seven.

Oh, how I love your law, I meditate on it all day long. Your commands make me wiser than my enemies. Do you want wisdom? Did you long for the commands? You know, I just love being wise because I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. But but the part that hit me was when when he talks about how he goes, your statutes are wonderful, therefore I obey them. Do you love the law? They love the law. Do you love the commands? They hate disobedience. Or you still where I was when I was a newer believer, when I was in high school and college, where the commands were the downside of Christianity. Or have you gotten to the point where you realize there is no downside, that even the suffering, you find joy in it, the sacrifice ends up being more of a blessing.

It's more blessed to give than to receive. It's more blessed to obey than to disobey. And you actually find pleasure in God, so much so that you go around boasting about him, enjoying him so much that other people are actually attracted to your life. You know, thinking about my babies, I think about, you know, last year when I came here, I just had a kid, you know, and and

Ellie and then Ellie on is your name and Ellie, she did this weird thing, and I hope my son doesn't do it.

But she did this thing, OK, where when she was a few months old, she would grab a hold of her hair and she would, you know, just get this kung fu grip, you know, just with all her might you just see all, you know, turning white? And then she would pull as hard as she could and then she would cry as loud as she could. And so, you see, I don't know I don't know if your kids ever done that.

You know, where they're pulling their hair and crying and you're like, you know, me and my wife. What do we do, you know? I'm trying to pry her hand off her hair, but she would do this regularly. You're like, you know, you're trying to pry her hand off it. But the more you pull her hand, the more she screams and she looks at you like it's your fault and, you know, and so it's like, well, what do you do with that?

What are you doing? You're pulling your own hair. You know, he's like, I can't do anything for you because you're the one you're killing yourself. And and it's the whole thing of man, you guys. That's exactly what I see with so many believer's men. You're holding on to your skin. This thing that you think is bringing you so much pleasure, man, so many of you in this room, you know, like a bag of Cheetos, you got all sorts of junk in your life.

You're holding on to you because you think it's so wonderful. You think it's bringing you pleasure and you're holding onto this thing for dear life and it's making you miserable. You were

joyful this morning. You walk in here, everyone else is worshipping. And inside you're feeling these guilt feelings because things you looked at on the Internet, hatred you feel for other people in this room, a lack of racial reconciliation, whatever it is. And you feel this guilt in this lack of enjoyment.

And yet you're not going to let go. You're going to hold on. You're going to hold on. And I just look at you and go, you're just killing yourself. I don't know what I can do for you. You believe this lie that holding onto this sin is going to bring you more pleasure than letting go and holding on to God? You're believing some sort of lie that there's something on this earth that will bring you more fulfillment than knowing God and obeying his commands.

You totally believe that lie right now and because you believe it and because you're holding on to it, I can't do anything for you. I'm just going to sit here and watch you make a mess of your life and just just pull keep pulling. Go ahead. Just keep pulling. No one can do anything for you. You at some point have got to decide, you know what? I love God's law. I believe this will lead me to life. I think that by obeying and thirsting and hungering for as long, I'm going to be happier than sitting here pulling my hair out.

Let go. I don't know what it is you're dealing with. I don't know what's going on in your life, but at the root of it, it's this belief of some lie that you've got to stop believing. That anything on this earth is better than Jesus. Because I, I have played the games. I've lived a lie. I have deceived, I've pretended. And I'm just telling you right now, there's nothing like knowing in. Nothing like knowing Jesus.

Nothing like just enjoying him, his commands. I car-sharing yesterday, you just go, wow, this is great giving, giving is cool, serving is good, obeying is good. This brings me so much pleasure. It's good to rejoice in the Lord always. It's good to not worry about anything, not be anxious about anything, but just recognize, you know, nothing's a big deal compared to God compared to knowing him. But do you love him?

I was really convicted by one of my students who was preaching his preaching Psalm Psalm 13, and it's where the Psalmist was just so real with God and. All right, it's not Psalm 13 yeah, it is OK, I was looking for OK, where where he says now it's so good because he says to God, he says, how long will the Lord will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts? And every day have sorrow in my heart. How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, Oh, Lord, my God, give light to my eyes or I'll sleep in death. He's just saying, God, how long?

And he asked the question he asked me, you know, is in my sermon prep class and he's just looking at me and a few other students, he goes, are you guys even real with God? Do you even honestly tell him what's going on in your life, or do you feel like you've got to make it look good? You know, almost like the Cheetos thing, you just got to make a rap record. God, you know, hey, everything's went really in your heart. You can't God, I don't love you. This starts with honesty here today to say to God, if you say God, you know what, I don't even know if I have a relationship with you.

I think about heaven, I, I just don't want hell, I, I don't know, so I'm scared me. So I just said I believe. I got all his junk in my life, and I don't believe that getting rid of it is really going to make my life happier. Say that to God. Be honest, he already knows the truth. Just to be honest, this morning I said, God, I don't believe that by letting go of this relationship. What this person who who isn't bringing me closer to you, I don't believe that's going to bring me more pleasure and I don't believe your law in that.

I don't believe that if I stop the pornography, that that's really going to make my life more enjoyable, I don't trust that. I don't think you have more to offer me. Then this Internet site. I don't believe you have more to offer me than the anger I feel toward my mother. My father. I don't think you have more to offer me than this is Buzz, I feel when I just started to get wasted or whatever it is, you know, that that I don't think you have anything better to offer.

And I'm believing the lie God changed my heart. To say it to him. Tell him if. This whole racial reconciliation thing, just tell me if you're not there. To say, you know what, it's it's Arabs. Or it's it's blacks or it's this or it's that guy. I just I'm not there. But just to be honest and say, God, I don't trust your word on that one. Or maybe I do, I want to get there, I'm just not there yet, change me.

But maybe some of you today would say, God, I am recognizing this now, I'm holding on, I'm holding on to this thing. And it's killing me. The let go and reach out for the father and let him comfort you. You know, when my daughter finally learned to just let go and then reach her arms out and I could just hold her, it's like, yeah, this is cool, isn't it stupid?

You know, don't it's kind of nice not grabbing on your own hair and and pulling for dear life. And you just realize, gosh, how many times have I had to do that with God? Fine. Let go of my sin, run to my father's arms and go, gosh, I was so dumb, so dumb. Why did I do that to myself? Because God's laws, they lead to life. They lead the joy, they lead you to a life that you won't experience any other way.

So let's stop just obeying because we have to. And realize we're just stupid if we don't. Will you pray with me? Actually, what you pray for yourself right now. And pray honestly to God. Tell them what you've been holding on to. Be honest with him if you feel like you've never really loved him. And you just love his stuff and what he has to offer and and right now, just tell him, God, I want to know you and love you more if that's your desire.

What you guys just look up at me for a second. I just want to say one last thing before we close, I'm not going to close this in prayer. You prayed with God and sometimes just sitting through someone else's prayer is in his real. I just want to say, you know what, if you you're hearing what I'm saying, I feel like I've thrown so much out today. And you're going, gosh, that's totally me, I haven't loved the command's.

And I don't know that I really even love God himself. I don't even know if I can love or know how to love. Man, don't be embarrassed of that, because it's like these are things I'm figuring out over the last few years is after being a pastor for 12 years and just God, man, I've gone down some stupid roads that just really didn't lead the life. I didn't understand, I didn't get it and man,

and I know you know that a lot of a struggle with this stuff, especially for grew up in a Christian home, a lot of us just routine ritual and.

And I'm just telling you guys, I just wish I didn't miss out on all those years of life because things are so, so good now. So wonderful now. And, man, I sure hope you don't leave here with guilt, and this is awful feeling of I better do this, better do that. I mean, I, I just I don't know how. I don't even know what I'm saying right now, except just to tell you that from one human being to another, I'm honestly saying this is where life is.

It's enjoying God, enjoying his commands, loving his commands, and really experiencing life to the full. It doesn't mean I wasn't a Christian all these years, I think I was I just didn't get to experience the fullness of those blessings because to me, I didn't think they were blessings. And now I'm just going, God, I am crazy about you and I want to understand you better and better and better. And I went along for you, not just everything else heaven has to offer.

Because I'm connecting with him now and he is my best friend. And that's where life is, and there's nothing on this earth that will bring you more joy than truly knowing him. And that's all I want for you guys, you know, this whole getting attitude theme, it's like I said, you know, it's this type of attitude, the heart that I really believe God has called us all to have. And when we have that, it's going to impact the world and it's going to bring glory to him as we become more and more satisfied and enjoy him.

Loritts: Joy in the World

So as we leave here today, just enjoy God, enjoy everything he has to offer, enjoy who he is and enjoy his commands. And let's just walk around like a bunch of children of his rejoicing in him, knowing that, you know, he'll take care of all the issues. I don't have to worry. My dad's in charge. He he's he's got my back. He's watching over me. Life is good. God is good to leave in the joy of the Lord. We'll see you later.

[End of Recording].