

(1) Do you struggle with feelings of guilt or shame because you find your heart longing to be happy and filled with joy? If so, why do you think that God would regard that desire as sinful or sub-Christian? What in your past or in the teaching you've heard has led you to regard the desire for happiness to be sinful?

(2) How do you react when you hear the words "Christian Hedonism"? What is your reaction to this definition of it: God is most glorified in you when you are most satisfied in him. What does that mean? Do you agree with it? If not, why not? Be specific in your explanation of the relationship between God's glory and your gladness. Are they mutually exclusive? If not, why not?

(3) Read aloud John 15:11 and John 17:13. Why would Jesus say this? Why does he make his aim that his joy would become our joy? Why the focus on "joy" and not some other experience, such as obedience or fear or gratitude or conformity to God's will?

(4) Read Psalm 1 in its entirety. What does the psalmist mean by the word "blessed"? What relationship is there between "delighting" in the word of God and the experience of joy or blessedness?

(5) What should you do with this inescapable passion in your soul to experience joy and satisfaction and happiness? Should you suppress it? Deny it? Seek to fulfill it in what the world offers? What does God want you to do with it? Where does he want you to find its fulfillment (assuming he does)?