

December 29, 2019

## Life Orientation in 2020

### *Psalm 115*

#### Intro

- *Sleepwalking with Mike*
- *Choice Anxiety*
- Researchers are finding that happiness comes not from open-ended opportunity but from *commitment*.

"I first encountered this data through Harvard professor Dan Gilbert, ...who describes one study in which subjects were allowed to choose a print from a selection of beautiful paintings. Those who were told they could change their minds ended up less satisfied with their prints than those who made clear choices. This and many similar studies have shown that commitment, not unlimited choice, breeds happiness. Loosening commitment (e.g., telling the subjects they could come back any time in the next week and trade in their prints) decreases satisfaction, as does increasing choice beyond a certain point. At the trivial end of the spectrum, if someone is offered a large array of chocolates to choose from (say thirty, rather than six), he or she is less likely to choose."

–**Rebecca Mclaughlin**, *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion*, Kindle Loc. 2982

- *The Second Mountain* by David Brooks

#### Whose Glory are You Seeking? (v. 1-3)

- We can spend our energy on our small concerns, missing what God is up to in our lives for the glory of his name.

- Nothing is of more value than the glory of God. Nothing is more central in the Bible—and in all existence.

➤ *William Wilberforce*

- How has God been good to you in 2019? In the past decade? May his Name be praised!
- God has attached his glory to his people. He will intervene to rescue them, from the trouble that their own sin and unfaithfulness have brought about.

➤ *Really cool LEGOs*

- “Where is your God?”

➤ *Object Permanence*

- God is in heaven, doing the very next thing he wants. God has unhindered divine freedom. He can act next year in a way that nothing about the history leading to it causes us to expect.

“A God too great to tie down to any image or even to earth itself, who is not the prisoner of circumstances but their master, is a God to glory in.”  
–**Derek Kidner**, *Psalms*, 405

## Whose Likeness are You Resembling? (v. 4-8)

- When we don't live for the glory of God, something will always take that place. Something else will serve as our goal, as the target for our lives, as our interpretive authority over what is desirable or good, as our source of value and security.
- The impotence of idols...
- Do you realize that you can dedicate yourself to things that can never produce what you need most?

➤ *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman

- A spiritual law: You become what you worship.

"What we revere, we will resemble—either for our ruin or for our restoration."  
—**Greg Beale**, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry*, 11

➤ *Replika app*

- Do you pay attention to how you are being formed and shaped? At the end of 2019, are you more anxious? More impatient? Less flexible? Shallow? Dull to the things of God? Controlled by addiction? *Why?*
- The risk of idol-hopping...

"One of the ways people keep themselves from facing the harsh reality that they are being controlled by idols is by idol-hopping. People are embarrassed by too much dedication to one thing—no one wants to admit being dominated, since the point of

idol worship is self-determination, after all. They, therefore, resist one life-dominating idol by replacing it with another with a similar promise. What sports promise people in their teenage years, their careers promise in their thirties. What one relationship promises, another relationship tries to provide when the first one fails. What one fixation promises and fails to deliver, the next fixation will gladly swear it can fulfill. People can dispose of a particular idol easily if another idol is standing by with a promise to deliver the same motivating value, all the while muting and deadening the human heart.” –**Jeremy Pierre**, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience*, 68

*“Those who look to the LORD are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.”  
(Psalm 34:5)*

### **Whose Abilities are You Trusting?** (v. 9-11)

- How do you respond to the helplessness you feel?
- There is no trust switch to flip. But there *is* a God available in your trouble.

### **Whose Blessing are You Pursuing?** (v. 12-18)

- What has to grant permission in order for you to have joy?

“The word ‘bless’ or ‘blessed’ is repeated five times. The word means richness, fullness, multidimensional thriving, and satisfaction. Idols cannot give it.” –  
**Timothy & Kathy Keller**, *The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms*, 297

“We must have the smile and creative touch of God if we are to thrive.”  
–**Derek Kidner**, *Psalms*, 406

- Living Your Blessed Life Now...
  - *Carpe Diem Redeemed* by Os Guinness