LASTING PLEASURE

Researchers at a prestigious Eastern university researched motivation factors in monkeys. Choosing a male monkey for the experiment, they placed him in a cage and began a process of carefully recorded observations. They observed the monkey’s eating, sleeping, and mating patterns. They watched how this monkey cared for his young.

They then hooked an electrode to the monkey’s brain, which, when stimulated, would give the monkey a sensation of pleasure. The researcher taught the monkey how to push the pleasure button. The monkey now had the key to happiness—a pleasure button.

The monkey soon became obsessed with pleasure, ignoring his young, his food, and even his mate. The highest goal for the monkey was pleasure, stimulating the nerve endings, doing what made him feel good. Finally he knocked himself out having fun. The excessive stimulation killed the monkey.

Sin is an awful lot like the monkey’s pleasure button. It does produce an illusion of pleasure. If it didn’t, nobody would do it. The problem is that the pleasure is not only short-lived; it is destructive.

Moses chose rather “to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasure of sin” (Hebrews 11:25, NKJV). Sin’s pleasures pass quickly, leaving us empty. When the bubble bursts, discouragement floods the soul. Fortunately, Jesus’ joy is eternal. God’s deep, inner joy lasts. The psalmist called God his “exceeding joy” (Psalm 43:4, NKJV). Isaiah testifies that God will give us the “oil of joy for mourning” (Isaiah 61:3, NKJV). Jeremiah called God’s Word “the joy and rejoicing of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16, NKJV). Jesus says that His joy remains in us (John 15:11). Paul prays that his readers will be filled with “all joy and peace in believing” (Romans 15:13, NKJV). James says we can even “count it all joy” when we have trials (James 1:2, NKJV).

When our Lord returns, He will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21, NKJV).

Our Lord offers much more than a temporary, short-lived, illusionary pleasure. He offers the deep, lasting joy of His presence now and through all eternity. One thing is certain—there is no joy like this joy anywhere.

—Mark Finley, Solid Ground, pp. 249, 250.

SABBATH

FOR STUDY

Memory Text: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:11, 12, NKJV).

Our Beliefs, no. 7, The Nature of Humanity: “Man and woman were made in the image of God. . . . When our first parents disobeyed God, . . . the image of God in them was marred. . . . Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker.”

—Ellen G. White, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 62.

SUNDAY

RESPONDING

Read 1 John 2:16, 17.

Here’s the situation: A friend brings a questionable magazine to school one day. It gets passed around to both girls and guys. Because everyone is a little curious and a little afraid, no one throws it away. Finally, it comes to you.

A similar situation, but this time you are on the internet while some friends are at your house. Your computer is somewhere where your parents aren’t necessarily going to come by, so the choice is up to you. What do you do?

MONDAY

BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE NATURE OF HUMANITY

Read Psalm 51:5, 10; Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20.

Even though we are born with the propensity or tendency to sin, God sent His Son to save us from evil tendencies and from sin.

What tendency do you need to overcome by God’s power? Ask Him to help you overcome it.

___________________________________________________________________

Fill in the blanks.

“__________ Your face from __________ __________, and __________ __________ __________ __________. _________ in __________ a __________ __________, O God, and __________ a __________ __________ me. Do __________ cast me __________ __________ __________, and do __________ __________ Your __________ __________ __________. _________ to me the __________ of Your __________, and __________ me __________ __________ __________ __________” (Psalm 51:9-12, NKJV).

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What we look at and listen to affects us. The things we spend our time on is what causes our sinful desires are things we see all around us? Do we have to walk around this world with blinders on? Guys are especially susceptible to this. For some reason, guys are wired so that what they see has a big effect on them. However, girls are not exempt from temptation from the eyes. It gives both guys and girls a great deal of responsibility when dealing with printed material, images, and each other.

Girls, watch what you wear! Guys, make sure to guard yourselves against images that tear down the value in your eyes. Remember, every image you see represents a person who somehow found themselves in a less-than-ideal situation. But also remember that each person is a child of God and needs to be respected as such.

It’s important to deal with the issue of lust before we get into an overpowering situation. Jesus tells us in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:7) that we should stay as far away from sin as we can. How do we do this when what causes our sinful desires are things we see all around us? Do we have to walk around this world with blinders on? Guys are especially susceptible to this. For some reason, guys are wired so that what they see has a big effect on them. However, girls are not exempt from temptation from the eyes. It gives both guys and girls a great deal of responsibility when dealing with printed material, images, and each other.

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If we spend our time on things that are not of God, our minds gradually adapt themselves to the subjects upon which we spend our time and energy and look at Jesus, we will little by little become more like the world. And when we take that same time and energy and look at Jesus, we will become more like Him.