

Delayed Gratification

God has designed the universe around delayed gratification, especially for Godly masculinity. This is seen in many different dynamics in the Christian life. One of the main ones is the cost of bringing a crop to harvest involves delayed gratification. Some of the costs of bringing a crop to harvest would be the three H's of 2 Timothy 2: hard work, hardship, humiliation, and a fourth one that is not an H, purity equals availability. Availability equals purity. A vessel that is clean is useful to the master and ready for His use. Some of the passages that teach not to quit in terms of the cost to bringing to harvest: 1 Cor. 15, Gal. 6, 2 Tim 2.

Back to this theme of delayed gratification, it's actually quite rare that God will bless our pursuit of pleasure directly. God has ordered the universe in such a way that pleasure is a byproduct of cooperating with His creation structures whether that be labor, organization, planning, creativity, design, hard work, whatever. This means that pleasure normally comes to us as a residual effect or byproduct of pursuing a worthy goal. Pleasure comes in that way. And this is why, if we seek dopamine directly without work or virtue, it is both addictive and corrupting.

Six ways dopamine is addictive and corrupting if we pursue it apart from work:

1. It creates a pleasure pathway divorced from virtue and divorced from delayed gratification.
2. It cultivates an absence of contentment. It says in 1 Tim. 6:6, "Godliness is joined to contentment." So what is the opposite of contentment? Ongoing coveting – wanting something that is not yours.
3. Dopamine without work tells a lie to the soul that you can have masculine pleasure divorced from self-control, virtue, and hard work.
4. Dopamine without work develops a habit of loving self and not loving God. That is the net result. That's the bottom line.
5. In becoming a tutorial for self-love, we wind up fighting against who God is as the holy sovereign lord of the universe who has, Himself, established a principle of delayed gratification.
6. Dopamine without work is ultimately the same spirit of coveting that we find in gambling, prostitution, and revenge.

For a married man who uses porn, porn puts a man on an adultery continuum. It's a continuum of adultery in the imagination because he is allowing himself to be aroused by a cyber harlot. And for every minute he allows that, it produces a yawning chasm, a great deficit of actual oneness. If God's given this gift to produce oneness and all you have is a pleasure and not oneness, you have a growing vacuum here. The man begins by taking his sexual fantasies to a cyber harlot, but this opens up a chasm which pushes him toward taking his sexual fantasies to a flesh and blood harlot, and this is the terrifying aspect.

Who God is defines what it means that we should be as His image. Who God is: pure, holy, creative, self-controlled, righteous, loving, these things determine what we are designed to be. Therefore, he has constructed the universe around delayed gratification. That's the only way we can serve others instead of serving ourselves. And at the very height of redemptive history, which is the cross of Christ, our Lord could say this about his cross through the author of Hebrews, "For the joy set before him, he endured the cross." So the highest expression of delayed gratification is the cross. He wins. He wins his bride. He purchases a purified people--a new race of individuals as created who are made in the image of God. Even his cross is the basis for a remade cosmos. This is the ultimate, ultimate act of delayed gratification--the crucifixion.

This honors God. This is tied to our godly masculinity. Thus, for a true believer, who God is--as agape, as imaged in the ultimate example of delayed gratification in the work of Christ--must weigh upon a man so heavily that it has a renewing and transformative force in his thought life and in his affections.

Our pornified sexualized culture tells women that their immodesty, their lewdness, their exhibition of their sexuality and immodesty, is power. Which it is because, as men, we are sexually attracted. We are attracted visually. If you combine this worship of sex and their immodesty and lewdness and that this message hits us in the media, even from the way weather girls dress on tv, to movies, that means every day, as a Christian man, you will have to deconstruct this lie that if you mate with an ideal body you will have ecstasy. You have to deconstruct that lie every single day, that you can have ecstasy sexually without agape, without covenant, without honor to God, without lifelong oneness, and without delayed gratification. So you have to deconstruct that lie every day. Because it is coming at us in every single form in a culture that worships sex and idolizes in our culture.

Bottom line: I have to deconstruct this lie, otherwise I'm telling myself I can have my sin and Heaven too. I can keep my sin and have Heaven too. To truly attack the lie is to say, 'I may have less time to repent than I thought.' Christ tells us in numerous passages to use the time wisely and repent on time is the only way to be ready for his return. Parables on being ready on his return, there's about three or four of them in Matthew 24 & 25. The Lord tells us from his own lips that it is possible to not be ready described in Luke 17 & Luke 21.

In the book, It's Good to be a Man, it basically says the guys who get a great wife are guys with "gravitas." Gravitas means a masculinity that has a plan, that has a mission, that is able to influence others, that is not a pleaser, that is not emotionally dependent...

But to round out your sanctification means a huge part of your gravitas is having moral authority. And moral authority means your profession among your brethren, your profession in front of your wife, has to be matched by your posture of heart. That you are a champion of righteousness. Therefore, you can defend moral absolutes. You can defend with a moral authority that comes from you being a unified man having a unified heart and not a secret hypocrite.