

A young boy and girl are standing in a lush green field under a sunset sky. The boy, on the left, is wearing a striped t-shirt and blue pants, pointing upwards. The girl, on the right, is wearing a colorful striped dress and has her hands clasped in prayer, also looking upwards. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds from the setting sun.

*Life Shaped By
Presence*

Pleasurable Receptivity

*Contemplative
Verse*

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Pleasurable Receptivity: Architecture of Communion with God. A Prophetic Theological Synthesis

I. The Soul's Design for Pleasurable Receptivity

The soul is made for total pleasurable receptivity to God. Every form of creaturely pleasure — the warmth of sunlight on skin, the savoring of food and wine, the delight of intellectual discovery, the wonder of beauty perceived, the fragrance of rain on earth, the joy of music, the tenderness of human touch, the full passionate intensity of erotic love, and every other mode of sensory and spiritual delight — is a distinct, irreplaceable manifestation of God's own love, deliberately and generously designed by Him to be received by His creatures with full, abandoned, loving receptivity. These pleasures are built into the very architecture of creation, declared good and beautiful by God Himself before any shadow of sin entered the world (Genesis 1:31, 2:9), and they are not incidental gifts but the chosen texture of creaturely existence in communion with its Maker.

II. Pleasure as Vehicle, Not End

These pleasures are emphatically not ends in themselves — to grasp them as such is idolatry and ultimately destroys both the pleasure and the soul (Romans 1:21-25). Rather they are the chosen vehicles through which the living God continuously pours His love into His creatures, inviting them into ever deeper communion with Himself. They are the Bridegroom's gifts, designed not for possession but for reception — not for grasping but for grateful, open, abandoned enjoyment as the very medium of divine-human union. God Himself is the source and substance of all pleasure, and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11). He satisfies His creatures from the river of His own delights — the very word eden, the garden of original pleasure, used for what flows from His presence (Psalm 36:8). He invites His creatures simply to taste and see that He is good (Psalm 34:8), to eat with gladness and drink with a joyful heart as an act of righteous living (Ecclesiastes 9:7), and to receive every created gift with thanksgiving, for everything God created is good and nothing is to be rejected when received with gratitude (1 Timothy 4:4).

III. The Erotic as the Height of Interpersonal Abandonment

The erotic is the height of interpersonal pleasurable abandonment and therefore occupies a central and irreplaceable place in this vision — not despite its intensity but because of it. The Song of Solomon does not apologize for its full sensory and erotic richness but inhabits it as holy Scripture, the most sacred of all writings according to Rabbi Akiva, depicting with unembarrassed passion the abandoned mutual delight of the soul and its Beloved (Song of Solomon 1:2, 2:3-6, 7:1-9). God Himself is portrayed as wooing and alluring His beloved with genuine erotic tenderness, speaking to her heart in the wilderness and restoring the intimacy of their first love (Hosea 2:14-16). He spreads His

garment over her in covenantal marriage, adorning her with extraordinary beauty and delighting in her with ardent spousal love (Ezekiel 16:8-14). He rejoices over His beloved as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, and her Maker is her husband (Isaiah 62:5, 54:5). The erotic is therefore not a peripheral accommodation to human weakness but a central scriptural language for the soul's deepest communion with God — one voice, the most intense interpersonal voice, in a full symphony of creaturely delight.

IV. The Incarnation as Total Affirmation of Creaturely Pleasure

To receive any pleasure — erotic, gastronomic, aesthetic, intellectual, or sensory — in loving, grateful, abandoned receptivity is to commune with God Himself in that moment, for the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), eating and drinking with His creatures (John 21:12-13), touching and being touched, affirming through His own incarnate presence that creaturely sensory existence is not a spiritual liability but the very arena of divine encounter. The soul that has learned this posture discovers with Paul not a grim stoicism but a deep contentment — a freedom to receive every pleasure as pure gift without grasping, and to remain open to God in its absence (Philippians 4:11-13). This is the posture of Mary at Jesus' feet, receiving rather than striving, choosing the better part that will not be taken from her (Luke 10:42). It is the posture of the bride in the Song of Solomon, leaning on her beloved, coming up from the wilderness transformed by love (Song of Solomon 8:5).

V. The Eschatological Consummation

This posture points toward which the entire movement of Scripture is tending — the wedding feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9), the New Jerusalem descending as a bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2), the tree of life bearing twelve kinds of fruit, the river of the water of life flowing through the city of God (Revelation 22:1-2) — a total, simultaneous, consummated reception of every form of divine delight by creatures finally and fully open to their Maker.

To receive all pleasures simultaneously in this posture of loving, abandoned receptivity is therefore the eschatological destiny of the redeemed soul — not an otherworldly abstraction but the fulfillment and surpassing of everything creaturely existence has been pointing toward from the first garden to the last. The spiritual life is not primarily the suppression or subordination of pleasure but its transformation and fulfillment — the gradual education of the soul into ever deeper, more open, more abandoned receptivity to God's love manifested through every gift He has placed within and around His creatures. As the Spirit and the bride say together at the close of Scripture, simply and with total openness: Come (Revelation 22:17).

VI. The Prophetic Indictment of Modern Christianity

This vision stands in sharp prophetic indictment of dominant modern Christianity — particularly its Protestant expressions — which has systematically inverted this posture, replacing loving receptivity with striving, moral performance, doctrinal achievement, and the functional suspicion of creaturely pleasure. This inversion is not a minor cultural distortion but a profound theological derailment explicitly warned against in Scripture itself, which identifies the forbidding and suspicion of created pleasures not as advanced spirituality but as a doctrine of demons, and insists that every created gift is to be actively, fully received with thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:1-5). Paul sees through the spiritually impressive appearance of pleasure-denial to its actual bankruptcy — it has the appearance of wisdom but lacks any value (Colossians 2:20-23). The Church has exchanged the abandoned delight of the bride for the anxious striving of the elder brother, who remained outside the feast not through persecution but through his own inability to receive his father's lavish, pleasurable generosity (Luke 15:25-32).

VII. The Call for Modern Prophetic Voices

The recovery of this vision cannot be accomplished through academic theology alone. It requires modern prophetic voices — men and women through whom the Spirit speaks freshly into the present condition of the Church — to name what has been lost, to embody what full receptivity looks like in community, and to call the Church back from anxious striving into the abandoned, pleasurable, loving union with God that Scripture from Genesis to Revelation describes as humanity's deepest purpose and ultimate destiny. For this is what the Bridegroom has always desired — not the striving of servants but the open, delighted, fully receptive love of His bride (John 15:15). And this is what the whole creation groans toward — the full revelation and liberation of the children of God into the glorious freedom of creatures who have finally learned, in every fiber of their sensory and spiritual being, simply and totally to receive (Romans 8:19-21).

Tyson – “Prophet”