

A landscape painting featuring a bridge in the background, a large tree on the left, and a person in the foreground. The background is filled with mountains and a cloudy sky.

The Bridge to Godly Enjoyment

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26

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There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink
and tell himself that his labor is good.

This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God.
For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?

For to a person who is good in His sight
He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy,
while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering
and collecting so that he may give to one
who is good in God's sight.

This too is *hebel* and striving after wind.

Main Point

There are substantial gaps between the enjoyment God desires for us and our experiences of that enjoyment, but God has provided a bridge to span these gaps if we will walk it.

The Bridge to Godly Enjoyment

The rites of godly enjoyment.

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**For who can eat and who can have
enjoyment without Him?**



What are the rites of godly enjoyment?

Eating

Ecclesiastes 2:24

There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink
and tell himself that his labor is good.

Ecclesiastes 2:24

There is nothing better for a man **than to eat** and drink
and tell himself that his labor is good.

Ecclesiastes 9:7

Go then, **eat your bread** in happiness...

Ecclesiastes 2:24

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Go then, eat your bread **in happiness...**
What is the background?

Genesis 2:8

The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden;
and there He placed the man whom He had formed.

Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree
that is pleasing to the sight and good for food.

Genesis 2:16

The LORD God commanded the man, saying,
“From any tree of the garden you may eat freely...”

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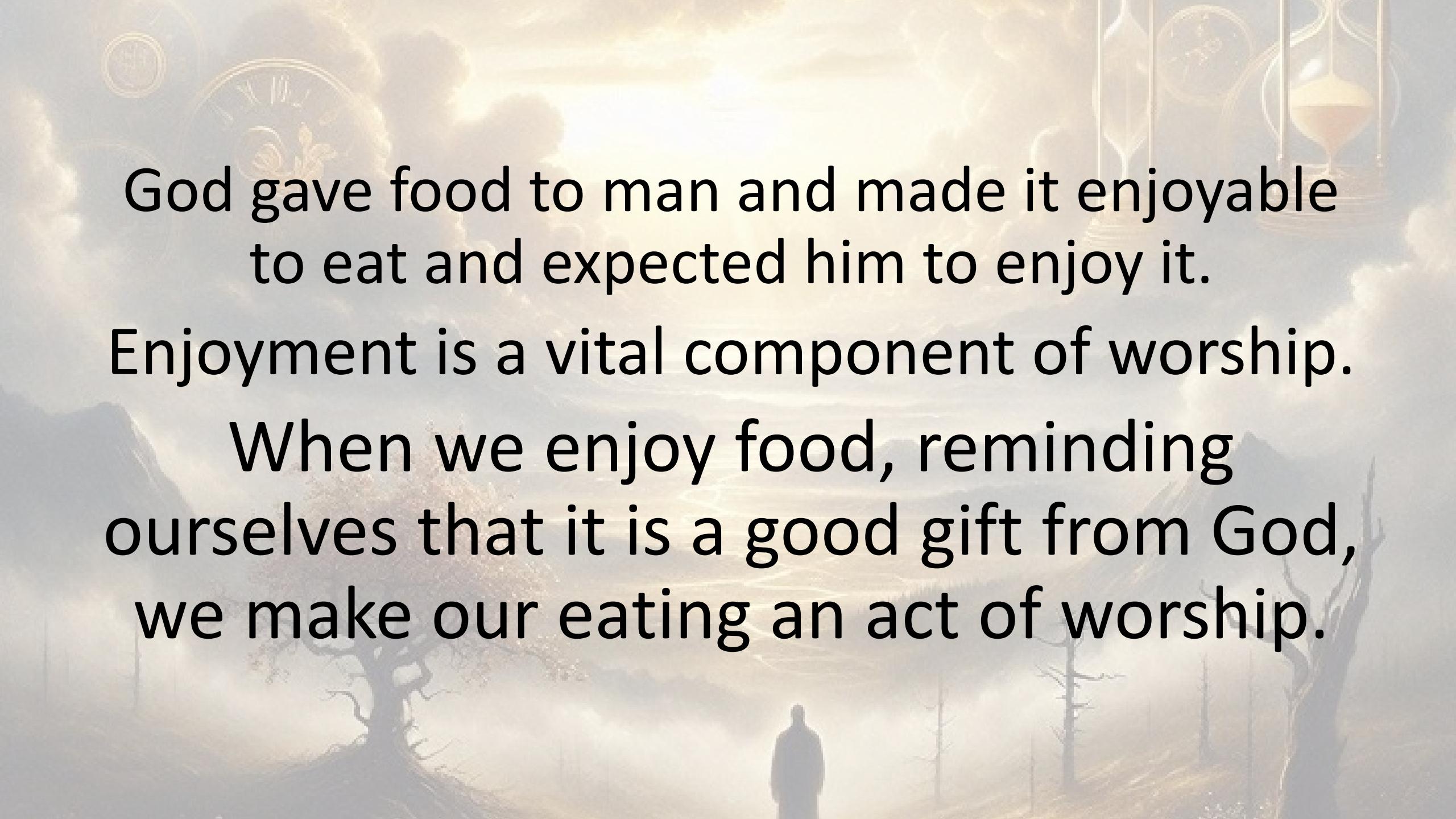
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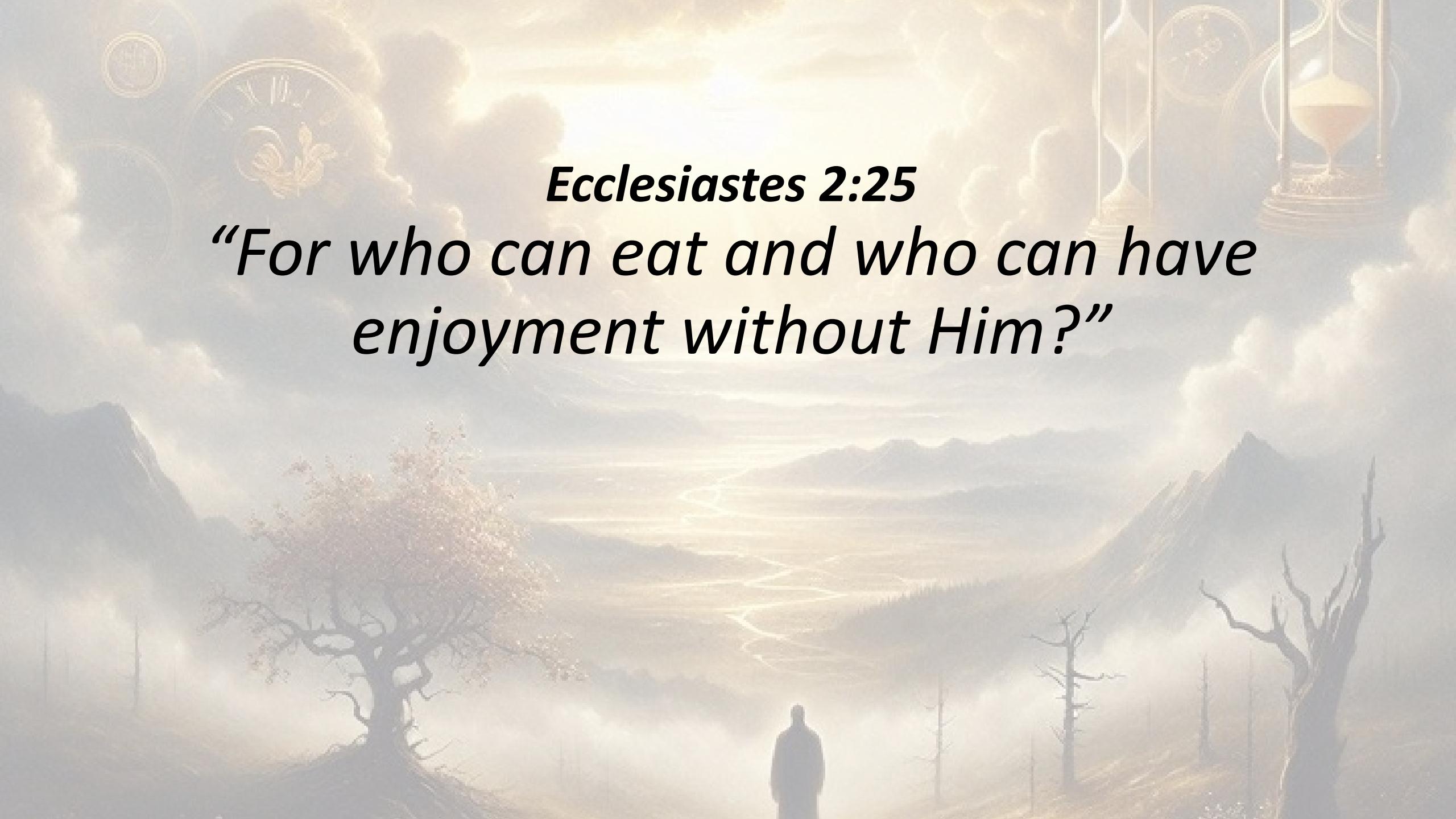
“From **any tree** of the garden you may **eat freely** ...”



God gave food to man and made it enjoyable
to eat and expected him to enjoy it.

Enjoyment is a vital component of worship.

When we enjoy food, reminding
ourselves that it is a good gift from God,
we make our eating an act of worship.



Ecclesiastes 2:25

“For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?”

What are the rites of godly enjoyment?

Eating

Drinking

Ecclesiastes 2:24

There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink
and tell himself that his labor is good.

Ecclesiastes 2:24

There is nothing better for a man **than to** eat and **drink**
and tell himself that his labor is good.

Ecclesiastes 9:7

Go then, eat your bread in happiness
and drink your wine with a cheerful heart.

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Ecclesiastes 9:7

Go then, eat your bread in happiness

and **drink your wine with a cheerful heart.**

What is the background?

Psalm 104:14-15

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle,
 And vegetation for the labor of man,
So that he may bring forth food from the earth,
 And wine which makes man's heart glad,
So that he may make his face glisten with oil,
 And food which sustains man's heart.

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This is a clear allusion to Genesis 1 and 2.

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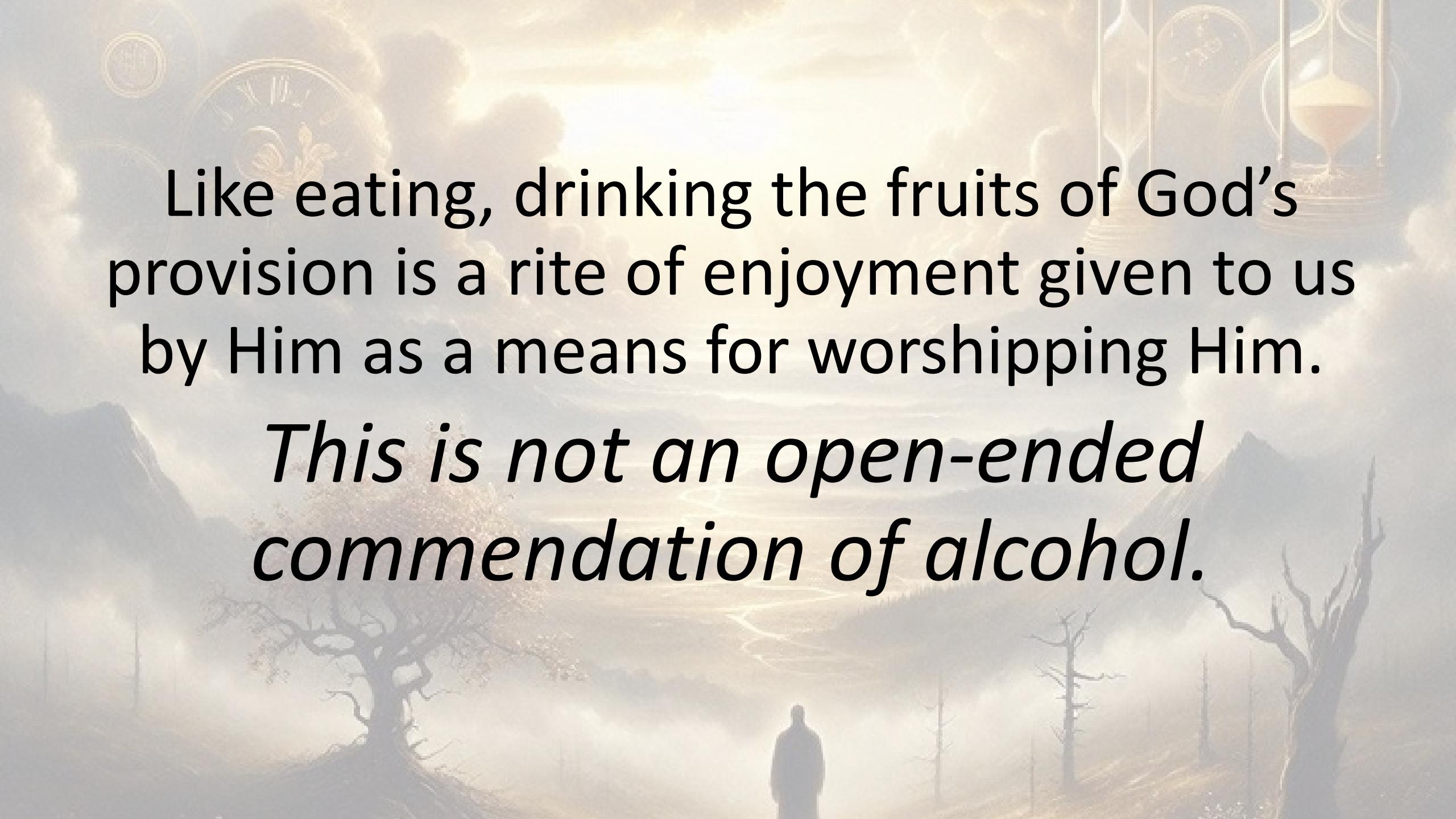
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...drink your wine with a cheerful heart.



Like eating, drinking the fruits of God's provision is a rite of enjoyment given to us by Him as a means for worshipping Him.

This is not an open-ended commendation of alcohol.

Proverbs 20:1

Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler,
And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.

Ephesians 5:18

Do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation,
but be filled with the Spirit.

Drunkenness is contrary to worship!

What are the rites of godly enjoyment?

Eating

Drinking

Laboring

Ecclesiastes 2:24

**There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink
and tell himself that his labor is good.**

Ecclesiastes 2:24

There is nothing better for a man **than to**
eat and drink
and **tell himself that his labor is good.**

Ecclesiastes 2:24

There is nothing better for a man **than to** eat and drink
and ***find enjoyment in*** his labor.

Genesis 2:5 and 15

Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man ***to work*** the ground.

Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden ***to work it*** and keep it.

Ecclesiastes 3:13 (ESV)

...that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his labor —this is God's gift to man.

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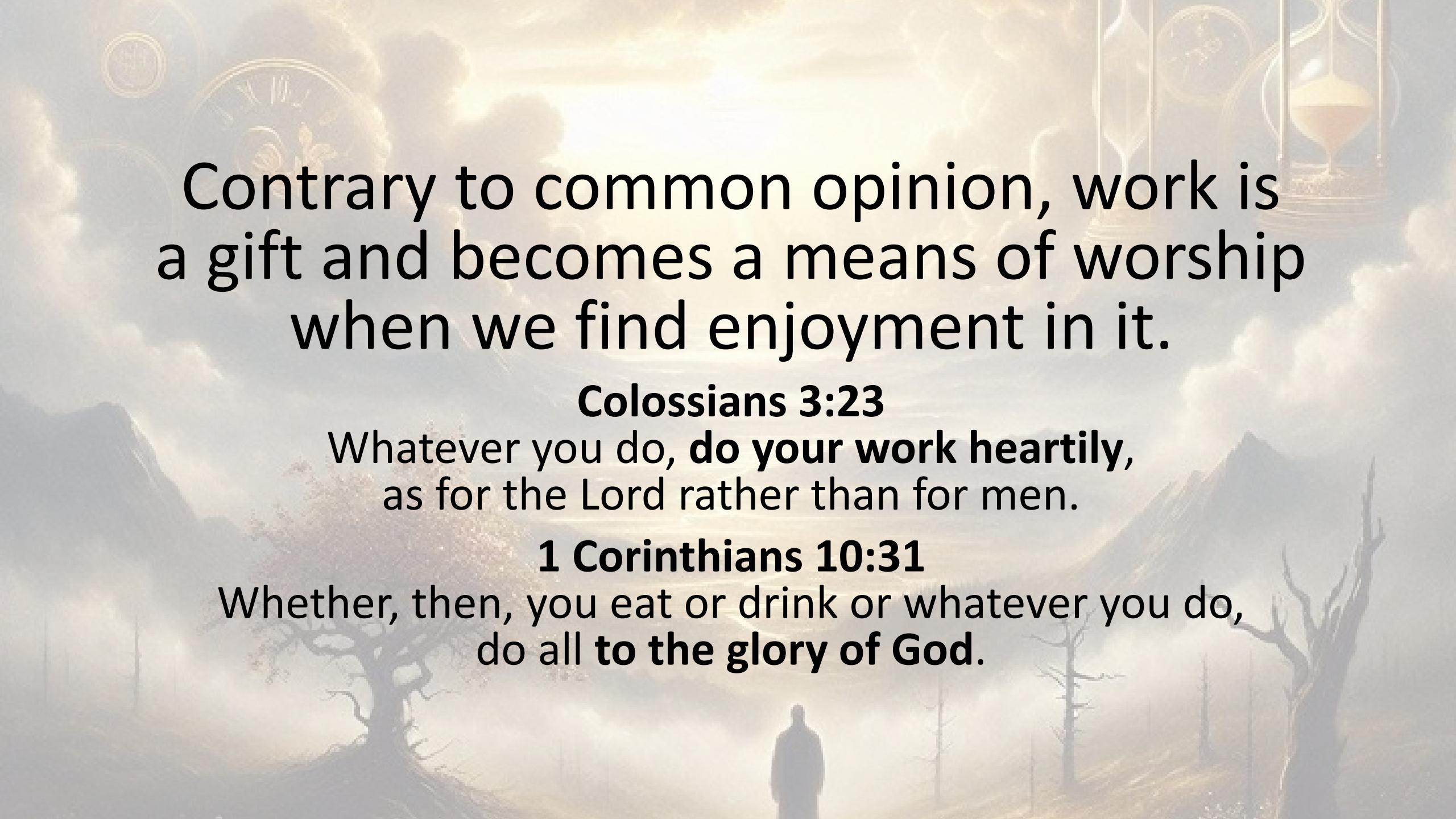
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Contrary to common opinion, work is a gift and becomes a means of worship when we find enjoyment in it.

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, **do your work heartily**, as for the Lord rather than for men.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God**.

The Bridge to Godly Enjoyment

The rites of godly enjoyment.

The gaps in our enjoyment.

Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

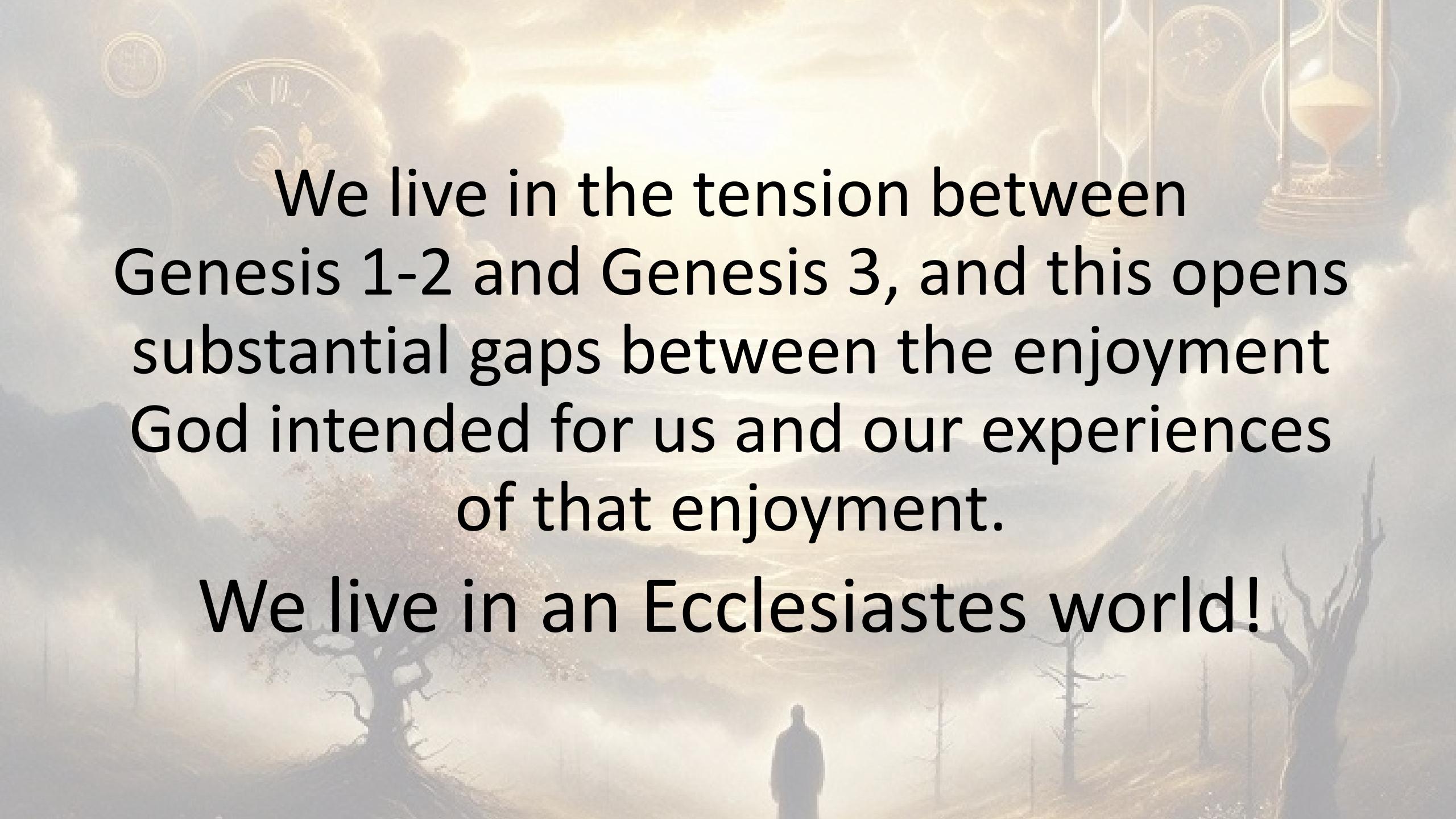
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Versus...

Ecclesiastes 2:17

So I hated life, for the work which had been done
under the sun was grievous to me;
because everything is *hebel* and striving after wind.



We live in the tension between Genesis 1-2 and Genesis 3, and this opens substantial gaps between the enjoyment God intended for us and our experiences of that enjoyment.

We live in an Ecclesiastes world!



What are some of the gaps we experience in our enjoyment?

Toil in our labor.

Ecclesiastes 2:24

There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink
and find enjoyment in his labor.

Ecclesiastes 2:24

There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink
and find enjoyment **in his *toil*.**

Genesis 3:17-19

Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.

Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;
And you will eat the plants of the field;
By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread.

Genesis 3:17-19

Cursed is the ground because of you;

In *toil* you will eat of it

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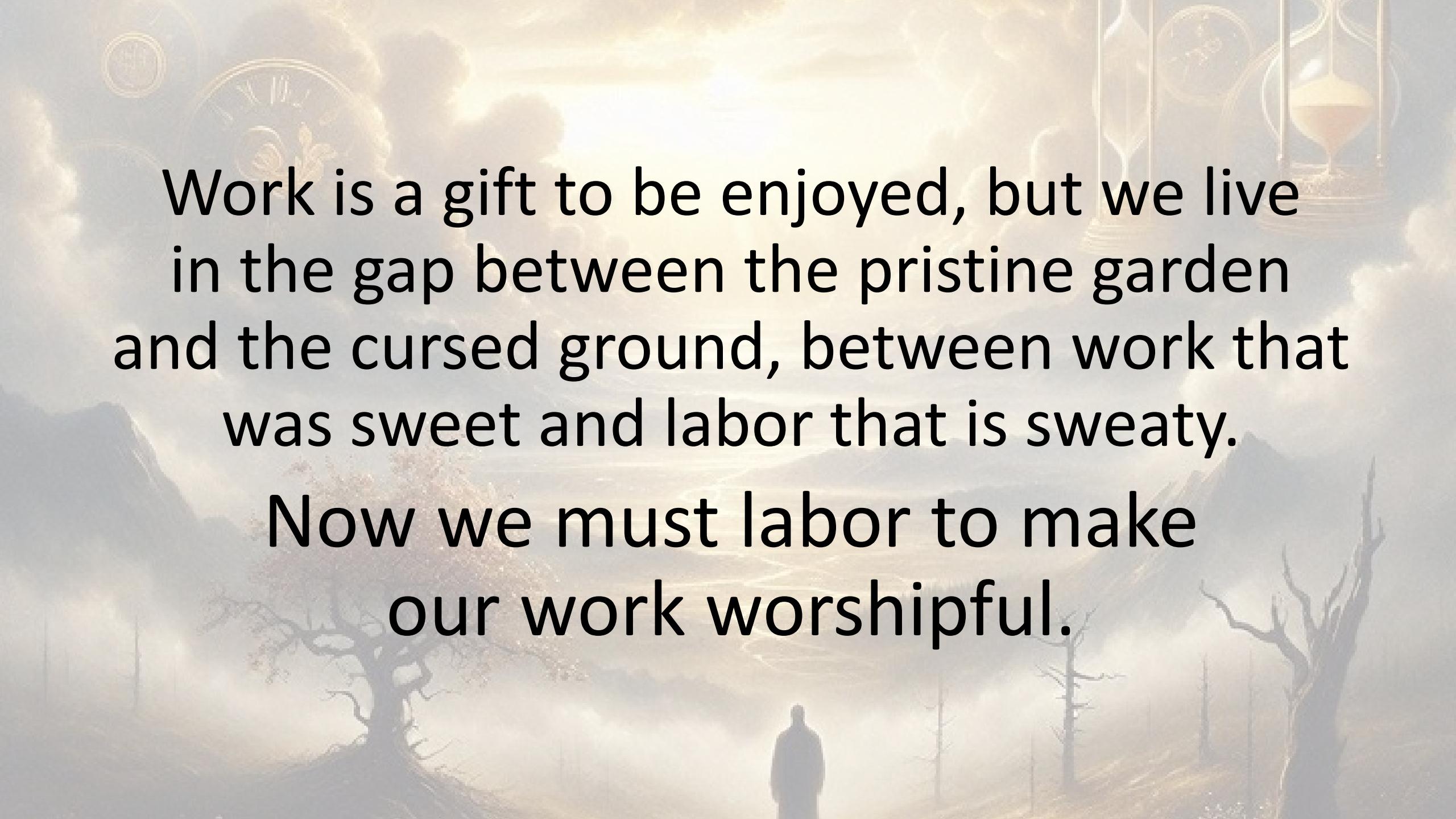
Ecclesiastes 5:18

Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting:
to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor
in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life
which God has given him; for this is his reward.

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A surreal landscape with a golden glow, a clock tower, and a figure in the distance.

Work is a gift to be enjoyed, but we live
in the gap between the pristine garden
and the cursed ground, between work that
was sweet and labor that is sweaty.

Now we must labor to make
our work worshipful.

What are some of the gaps we experience in our enjoyment?

Toil in our labor.

Contradictions in our world.

Ecclesiastes 2:26

For to a person who is good in His sight
He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy,
while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering
and collecting so that he may give to one
who is good in God's sight.
This too is *hebel* and striving after wind.

Ecclesiastes 2:26

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and collecting so that he may give to one
who is good in God's sight.

This too is *an enigma* and striving after wind.

Ecclesiastes 8:14

There is *an enigma* which is done on the earth, that is,
there are righteous men to whom it happens
according to the deeds of the wicked.

On the other hand, there are evil men to whom
it happens according to the deeds of the righteous.

I say that this too is *an enigma*.

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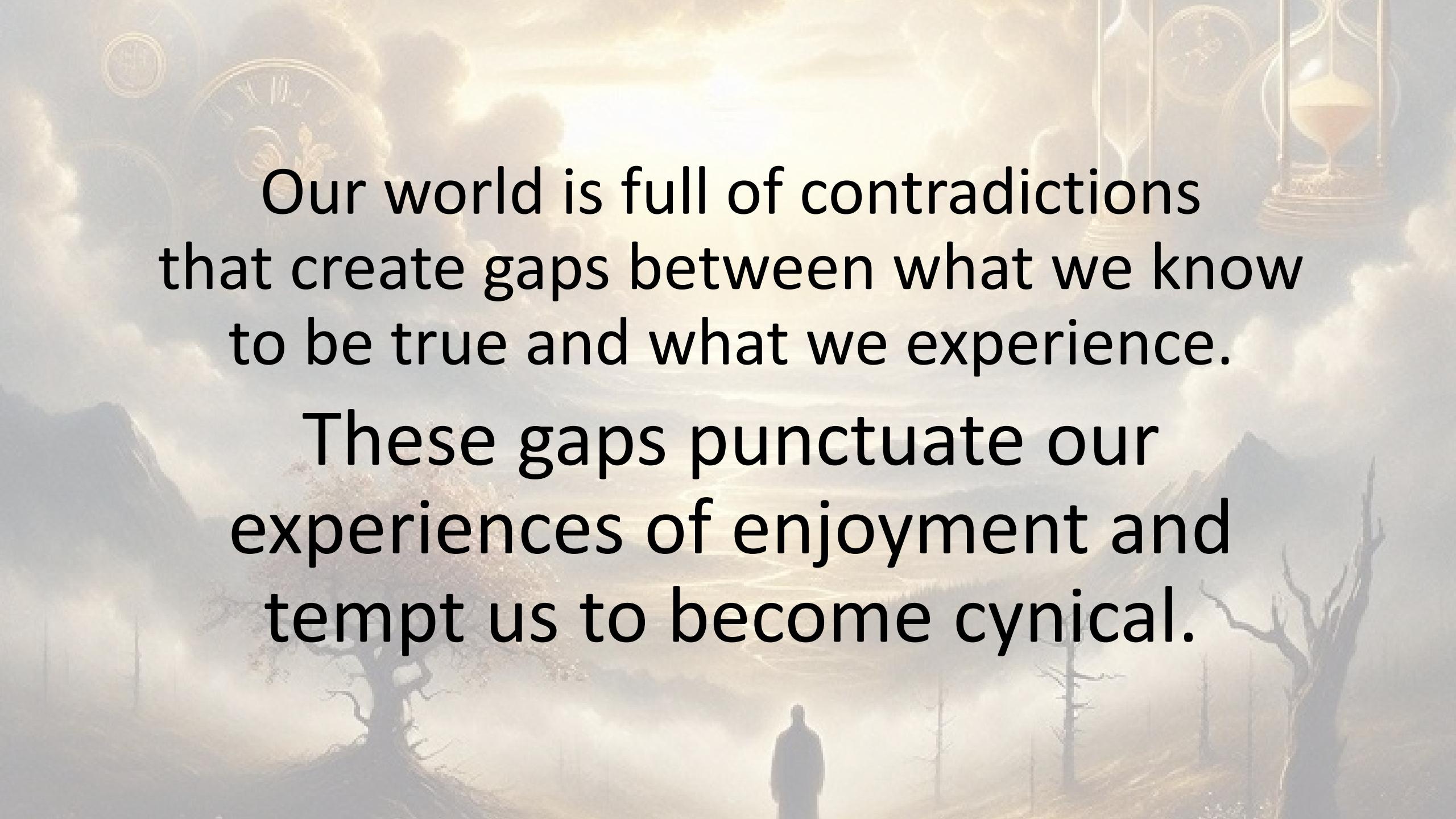
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Our world is full of contradictions
that create gaps between what we know
to be true and what we experience.

These gaps punctuate our
experiences of enjoyment and
tempt us to become cynical.

What are some of the gaps we experience in our enjoyment?

Toil in our labor.

Contradictions in our world.

Losses in our lives.

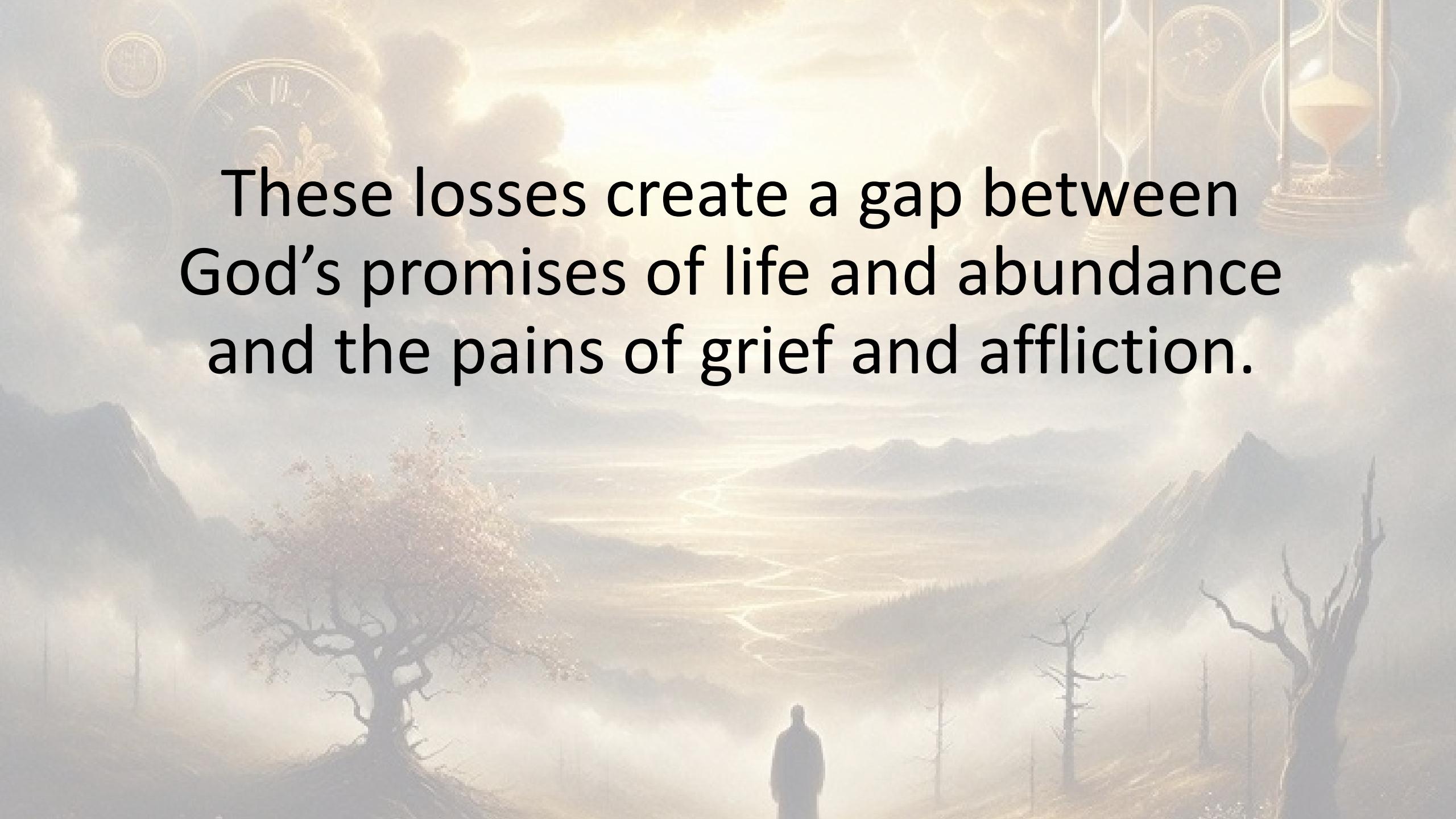
Loss is a key theme...

Ecclesiastes 2:14, 16, 18

I know that one fate befalls them both.

The wise man and the fool alike die!

I must leave it to the man who will come after me.



These losses create a gap between
God's promises of life and abundance
and the pains of grief and affliction.

Job 2:10

Shall we indeed accept good from God
and not accept adversity?

Psalm 34:19

Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

This too is *hebel*!

The Bridge to Godly Enjoyment

The rites of godly enjoyment.

The gaps in our enjoyment.

The bridge to godly enjoyment.



**What is the bridge we must walk
to godly enjoyment?**

It is the bridge of trust.

Trust in the hand of God!

Ecclesiastes 1:13

It is a grievous task **which God has given**
to the sons of men to be afflicted with.

Ecclesiastes 2:24

This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God.

Trust in the hand of God!

Ecclesiastes 1:13

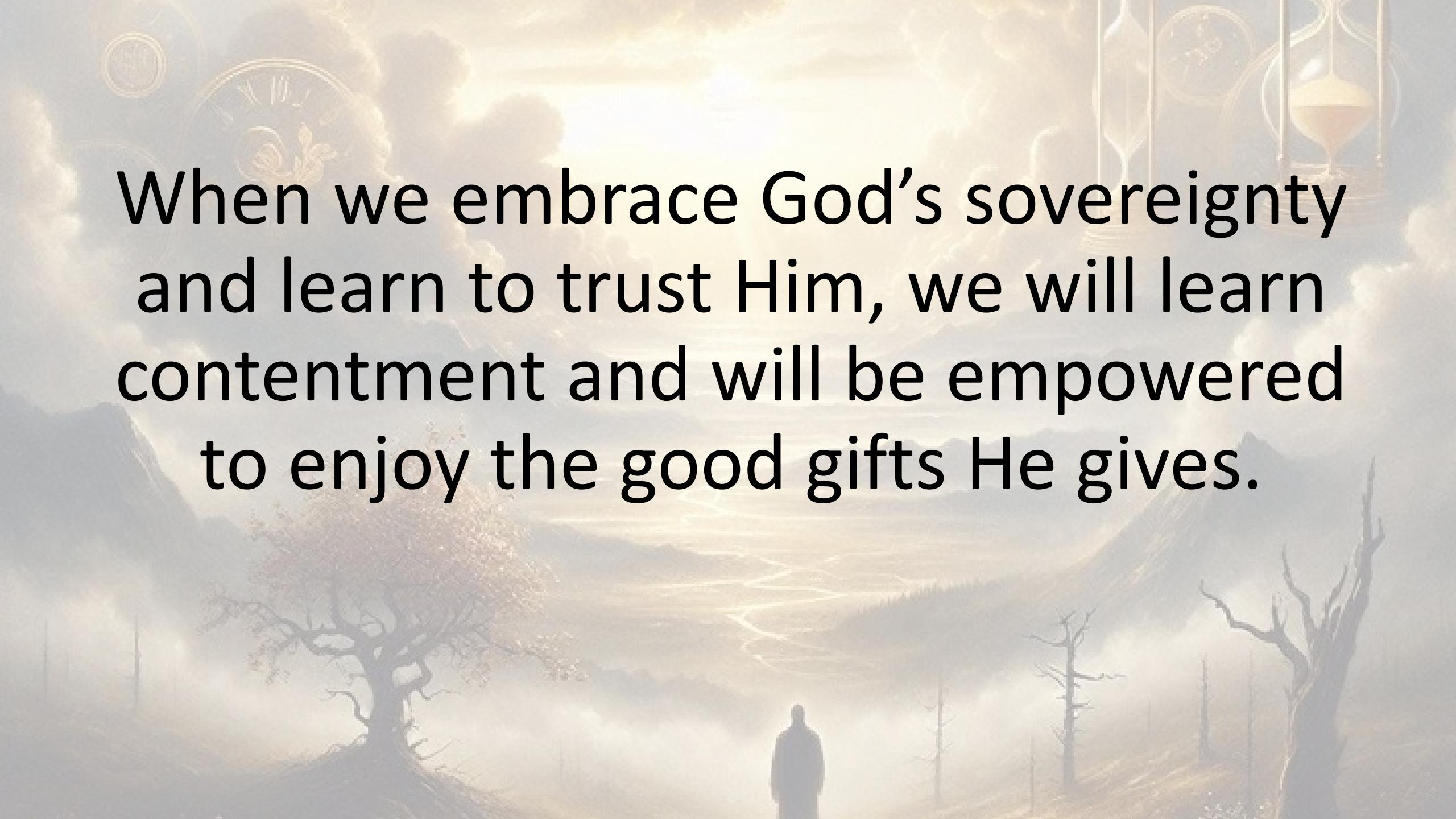
It is a grievous task **which God has given**

to the sons of men to be afflicted with.

Ecclesiastes 2:24

This also I have seen that **it is from the hand of God.**

“The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away.
Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

A misty, sunlit landscape featuring a lone figure standing in the foreground. To the left is a large, gnarled tree, and to the right are several smaller, bare trees. The background consists of rolling hills or mountains under a hazy sky, with a bright sun visible in the upper left corner.

When we embrace God's sovereignty
and learn to trust Him, we will learn
contentment and will be empowered
to enjoy the good gifts He gives.

What is the bridge we must walk to godly enjoyment?

It is the bridge of trust.

It is the bridge of hope.

Romans 8:20-25

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

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the pains of childbirth together until now.

2 Peter 3:13

But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens
and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Romans 8:23-25

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

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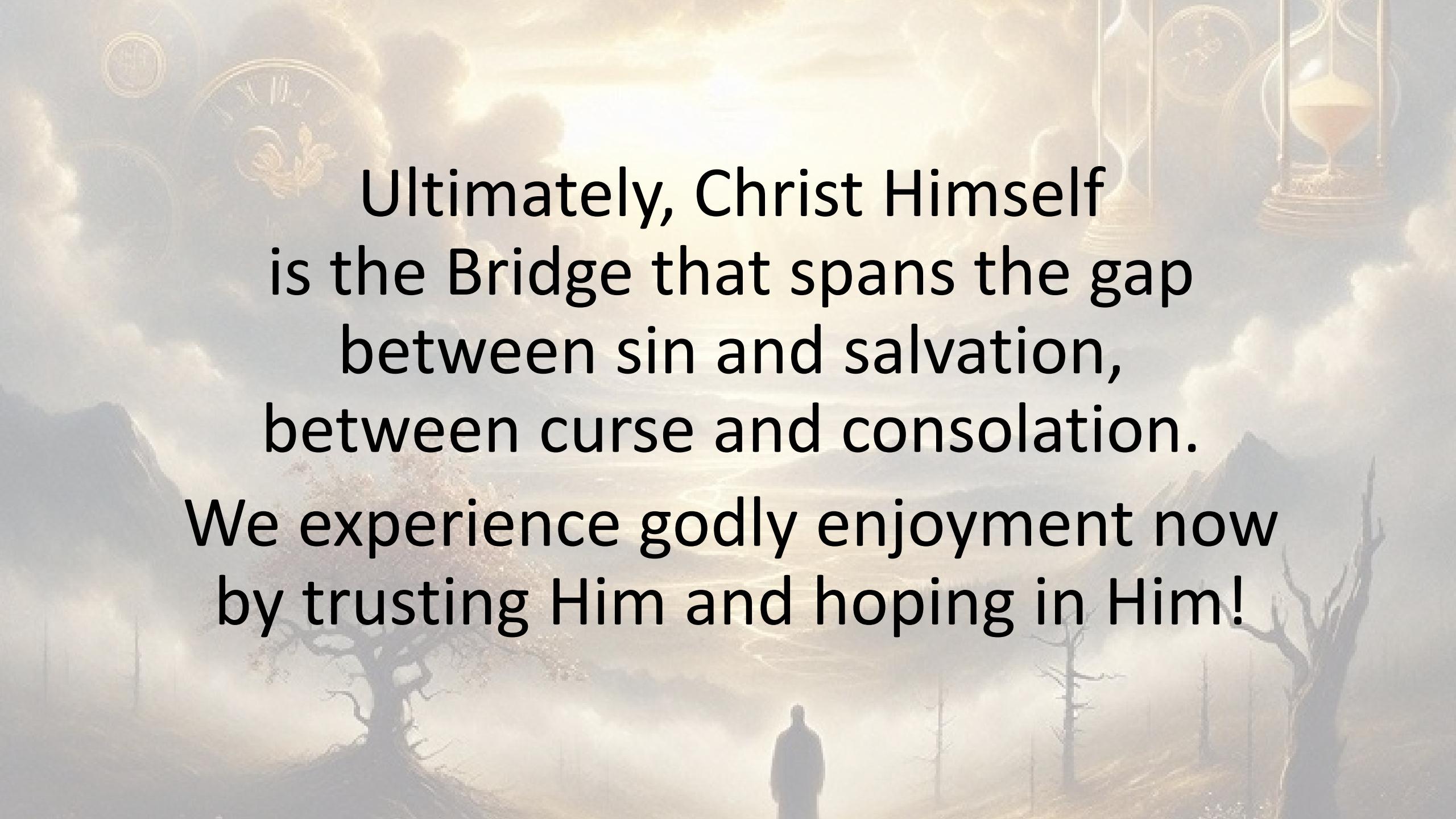
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A misty landscape with a bridge, a person walking, and a clock tower.

Ultimately, Christ Himself
is the Bridge that spans the gap
between sin and salvation,
between curse and consolation.

We experience godly enjoyment now
by trusting Him and hoping in Him!

Concluding Questions:

What is your attitude toward eating,
drinking, and working?

Are you frustrated by the gaps between
enjoyment and experience?

Are you walking on the Bridge that is Christ,
trusting in Him and hoping in Him?