

Living in the Real World

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With a new year come new expectations. Some are clear to us: work harder, rest better, lose weight, read more. I came across some resolutions to read more books this year where some were saying instead of 35, 45! Some of us would be happy with 5. But isn't it funny that in successfully reading 35 books last year, they remained unsatisfied? Whatever we accomplish the year prior (working, resting, reading) we remain unsatisfied. Why? Because there's an expectation beneath the expectation. A longing to be *satisfied*. How do we get satisfied? To get it, we need recognize reality, remain in reality, and reflect reality.

Recognizing Reality

To be satisfied *the quality of the object pursued has to line up with longings of the heart*. This winter I walked outside I saw a stunning sunrise; the sky was on fire—red, orange, gold curling across the sky. This display of light was so brilliant, I ran inside to tell my family beckoning them to see the light. If it had been an ordinary sunrise, I wouldn't have been moved. It had to be of superior quality, to be great. The author of this psalm encounters something superior, something truly *great*. We know because he says, "[Bless the Lord, O Lord my God you are very great.](#)" How do we know he's *satisfied*? Because he says Bless the Lord. Grandma bless you. To bless is to thank, adore, praise something. To make a big deal out of it. Guys, you have to come see this sunrise! We know this writer's experience is genuine because he says, Bless the Lord *O my soul*. It's not just a religious flourish. See, when he refers to his soul it's a way of marshalling his entire being, putting his full weight behind it and saying: this. is. incredible. It satisfies my entire Self. What? It's not limited to a fleeting sunrise; it's deeper. We know because he says, Bless the Lord, *O my soul*. O Lord *my* God. His satisfaction is so deeply authentic, he takes possession of it, *my* God. He owns it, so to speak. When *we* really like something we often say, That's my jam. It's *my* thing. We love it so much we own it. We make it personal. What could be so great, that this writer, would say it's not just my jam; it's my soul's delight? Something great; not just great, very great. The word "very" in Hebrew attaches to other words to escalate the meaning. *Exceedingly* great. What is exceedingly great?—*the Lord my God*. Is the quality of the objects you pursue lining up with the longings of your heart? Are they great? Worthy of

your soul? Or are you settling for losing weight? Resting more? What's worthy of your longing? Only something truly great. *God* is great, How great? Well, he clothes himself *with splendor and majesty, covering himself with light as with a garment*" (1-2). We pick out clothes to communicate something. If it's a casual occasion, we wear something casual. If it's a special occasion, we dress up to honor the occasion. *God dresses to honor himself*. He wraps himself in light. Now what's the occasion for this light?, The occasion is creation. Psalm 104 is a poetic commentary on Genesis 1, and follows the six days of creation. What's the first thing God created? Let there be *Light*. Now this light is different from the light we enjoy, the light of the sun and moon. Those luminaries are created on day 4. *This* is probably God's creative light, the light given off in his act of creation. Big Bang theory posits an initial explosion generated an abundance of light nuclei containing basic building blocks of biological life. That cosmos-creating light is God's *cape* for the occasion of creation. Like Dr. Strange summoning the Cloak of Levitation, God lifts his two fingers and is *ensconced in light*. Now *that's* worthy of satisfaction. Why? What does his wardrobe tell us? That only *he* is fit for the occasion of creation. No one else can come close to dressing the part. He alone possesses that superior quality that our souls long for. Only in the One robed in light do we discover *the quality of the object pursued lining up with the longings* of the heart. Recognizing reality we are satisfied.

Remaining in Reality

If that's true, why do we often find ourselves *dissatisfied* in God? Because we step away from *reality*. In a lapse of sanity we expect, often demand, something of inferior quality satisfy us: books, relationship, church. This lapse is *unbelief* in Reality. PKD, "*Reality is something that, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away.*" We disbelieve the God who doesn't go away, the who God satisfies, when we believe books or people will satisfy us. We disbelieve Reality. So, the challenge is to remain in Reality, to continually align the longings of our heart with the Lord of light. This psalm shows us several ways. First, is to recognize the scope of reality; the breath of God's greatness. In the next few verses, 3-5, we see God constructing the cosmos: He stretches the heavens like a tent, sets the beams of his chambers in place, and the earth on its foundations. What emerges? A cosmic temple. Isaiah sees a similar vision of God, "*Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool*" (Isa 66:1).

God's greatness encompasses all things. Reality is temple-shaped. What does this mean? It means to find our place in reality, to be satisfied, *is to seek God's greatness everywhere*. This means we don't treat life like a lunchtray. A section for work, section for God, section for beans, dessert. No, God is the whole tray. We can be satisfied everywhere because God's greatness extends over everything. All of life is a fodder for soul-satisfying worship because God's greatness extends over all of life. Creation is a theatre of his greatness. I sing a lot of pop music with my kids: Imagine Dragons, recently Mumford & Sons. In a new song we've been singing "Before you leave you must you know you are Beloved." Talking about his girlfriend. But because God's greatness extends everywhere we can see Reality through that lyric. And Church, before you leave you need to know you are Beloved. So the first step to being continually satisfied is to recognize God is continually present. A second way is to work like God is great, to labor as though every good thing comes from God. The beasts recognize God quenches their thirst; the birds sing from *his* well-watered trees. *The earth is satisfied with the fruit of his work* (13). He causes the plants to grow that we cultivate (14); provides the food and wine that gladden the heart (14-15). Verse 27: *all look to you*. What does this mean for our work? *It means we don't make too much of our work*. We don't make work our reality. This means we can walk away from it, that we're not a slave to it, because we're satisfied with God. We can close the books at school, walk away from the office, say no to the boss, and even to our own insecurities. We don't approach work as though it is great, as our **security**. God is our security. Every good thing comes from him. He keeps the world running, not us. He provides for our families. He moves the project forward, not us. All look to him. When every good thing comes from God, you can *rest*. My wife was talking to a mom at our kids school who shared that her husband has one day off a week. So they try to cram it with as much family time as possible since she knows he's going to have a heart attack in his fifties. As Christians they are in this unbelieving believers, disbelieving reality, that every good thing comes from God. But when we *believe* God satisfies us and all the earth, we can rest, we step back, take two days off. Not just because work isn't our security, but because work isn't our **identity**. *You can be with your family without feeling guilty because you have an identity outside of work. In Christ Beloved of God. You don't have to make a name for yourself in your field because you have a better name Beloved of God. You don't have to prove you belong because Christ died and rose to give you greater belonging.* We

work like God is great, not work is great. We don't make too much of our work, but third way to remain in reality, is don't make too little of work. [Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening](#) (23). You don't sleep till ten and come home at two. You don't cut corners. You aren't lazy. You don't neglect work in the name of "spiritual retreat." You do your job, and do it well, for the Creator of light. Because you believe in the reality that God is exceedingly great. Not work, not play, not rest. Through belief we remain in the all-satisfying presence of Reality. Now what do you do if you struggle? You remind yourself of Reality. And that starts every morning. I often start my morning by praying, believing, [Satisfy me in the morning with your lovingkindness, O God, that I might shout and sing all my days](#) (Ps 90:14). We need some piece of truth to give us a reality check, to remind us what we should believe.

Reflecting Reality

Finally, the proof we're living in the real world is that we resemble Reality. God rubs off on us, and people can tell. They can look at the way we work and see what we trust in (work great; God great). We reflect the reality that God is that object of superior quality that satisfies all things. Another way to do this is to sing. In verse 31, [May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works.](#) God rejoices in his work. If we're line up with reality, we'll sing/rejoice in *his work*. *We wont be known as moaners and complainers but as singers.* My daughter wrote a song she sings around the house and it reminds me God is great, not work. It goes, "You welcome me with all I've done; you welcome me. My sin not gone, you welcome me. You welcome me. You welcome me." This is singing over God's good work in Christ Jesus. God welcomes us, even if we've disbelieved reality, even if we've sinned against him, even if we've made too much or too little of our work. Why? Because of the finished work of Christ: crucified so we can be welcomed. That's why God can satisfy us, why we don't burn up approaching the God wrapped in light. Jesus makes it possible for God, not just to tolerate us, *but to welcome us!* Before you leave you must you know you are Beloved. How will we believe and stay in Reality? We will sing, he's *my God*, "He welcomes me!" Sing: ["Bless the Lord, O my soul...worship his holy name."](#) Why? Because [the Lord our God is very great.](#)"