

# All I Once Held Dear (Knowing You)

By Graham Kendrick

*See print copy for words of song.*

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We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

## Credits

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# Old Orchard Church

February 15, 2009 – 10:15 to 11:45 a.m.



God has made everything beautiful in its time.

He has also put eternity into man's heart.

I perceived that there is nothing better than to be joyful and to do good and that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in his work—

this is God's gift to man.

—Ecclesiastes 3:11-13

# Celebrating Jesus, Incarnate as Son of God: Lord of All Human Pleasure

Blessed be the eternal Son  
For the glory and goodness of human pleasure!  
He created us with desires,  
And made those things that answer to them:  
Food, work, fun, romantic love, children, sleep, friendship.

He made us in his image,  
Capable of creating that which answers to our longings:  
Art, sport, architecture, houses, literature, games, travel, science.

Blessed be the eternal Son  
Who orders our desires under him,  
And reins in our wayward longings;  
Who heals our twisted desires  
And forgives the sin in them;  
Who satisfies our unmet desires,  
As the One Lovable Object  
Answering to the deepest yearning of our heart;  
Who teaches us to desire first  
Those satisfactions in God that do not diminish,  
And the sweet things in the life of the world to come:  
**In your right hand, O Lord, are pleasures forever more.**

Alleluia



## Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

New Testament Lesson: I Timothy 4:1-5

## Sermon

“The Greatest of Commands”

Text: Matthew 22:34-40

*Jason Bartlett, seminary intern, preaching*

## The Problem of Pleasure

God created Adam and Eve with a capacity to relish life. He created a world that provided the opportunity for intense and satisfying sensuous pleasure. Yet the first humans weren't satisfied with the blessing that God had generously given them. They gave in to temptation, ate the one fruit they were supposed to avoid and got themselves thrown out of the Garden. Ever since, the experience of pleasure has been problematic, both a blessing and a curse.

Does it have to be that way? Is it possible for pleasure not only to nourish and momentarily satisfy but also to increase our hunger for what lies beyond the moment of satisfaction? We believe it can. But the pursuit of pleasure can also be a problem. The real danger is when pleasure satisfies without increasing a hunger for the God who made all pleasure....

I love barbecue potato chips. If they are done just right, with the proper amount of flavoring, they taste so good going down. However, I am never satisfied with one chip or even a lunch-sized bag. I always want more. I know that eating too many will make me feel slightly ill and certainly guilty about my weight. But I am amazed how rarely that knowledge stops me eating chip after chip. The pleasure of one leads to a desire for the next.

And that's the problem with much of the pleasure we find under the sun. It never leads to complete satisfaction. It always leaves us wanting more. But recognizing the transience of pleasure rarely makes us give up on it. Instead, we tend to pursue pleasure all the more intensely, especially when we're feeling empty.

When life is hard, pleasure can be more than a diversion. It can easily become a need. We easily move from a properly moderate enjoyment of sensuous experience to a consuming desire for it....

[Sometimes we] use pleasure to numb ourselves from our painful realities. Pleasure at that point is an anesthetic rather than a stimulus to consider God's goodness.

Pleasure is meant to prompt us to praise God. Whenever we use it to numb our souls, as the Teacher [in Ecclesiastes] describes, to avoid facing our troubles, we usually end up overindulging to the point of oblivion. We overdo the pleasure to accomplish the desired end: escape.

A healthy enjoyment of pleasure has a boundary, an acknowledged limit that allows the heart to taste present goodness while also whetting the appetite for more. It enriches the heart and body while also, paradoxically, causing the heart to hunger, to ache for what no earthly pleasure can provide: a direct, consuming encounter with God.

Sadly, few people embrace pleasure for this purpose. Instead, they allow the pursuit of pleasure to lead them into idolatry and to addiction.

*Breaking the Idols of Your Heart* (2007)  
by Dan Allender and Tremper Longman