

A SOURCE OF GREAT JOY... AND FRUSTRATION

Something that brings me a lot of joy is watching the birds come to the various feeders at my house. I have four feeders at the front of my house and three at the back. I often glance at the feeders at the front of my house while watching television. I love seeing the finches that often come to these feeders. I recently added a hummingbird feeder to my collection out front, but so far it has not attracted any visitors.

Last week I picked up some special bird seed for cardinals and blue jays. Shortly after filling the feeders out back with this special seed, a group of blue jays gathered around. As I watched them at my feeder, I noticed more blue jays were waiting in one of my trees for their turn to swarm the feeder. I counted eight blue jays in total all anxious to enjoy this new bird seed I had provided for them. It makes me happy during all four seasons of the year to see birds come to my feeders and enjoy what I have put out for them.

While my bird feeders provide me with a lot of joy, they are also a source of frustration. It is not the birds that feed from them that frustrate me, but rather the squirrels and chipmunks. I can't tell you the number of times that I have just refilled the feeders only to find a squirrel or chipmunk has already climbed up and started eating. At times, I bang on our front window hoping to get them to jump down. Other times I will awaken our dog Daisy from her peaceful sleep and say, "**Daisy, squirrel!**" She knows what to do right away. She leaps up on an ottoman that I have strategically placed at our front window so she can snarl and bark at the squirrel. This usually works for a few moments, but the squirrel returns to the feeder shortly after.

I recently tried putting Vaseline on my bird feeder poles in hopes that the squirrels could not climb up. My neighbor said that trick worked great for him. Sparing no expense, I got vaseline from the Dollar Store and applied it to all of my bird feeder poles. I don't know if using a cheaper brand makes a difference, but I still have squirrels making their way up these poles. I know they need to be fed too, but I wish they would just eat what's on the ground and let the birds eat too! It is so frustrating to see most of the seed go to them and not the birds.

My bird feeders are a source of joy for me but also an occasional cause for great frustration. There are certain things in our lives that can do this for us. I have had people tell me that their golf game can bring them moments of incredible joy as well as much frustration. Watching our favorite sports teams can result in these contrasting feelings. We may also have certain people and relationships in our lives that bring us both joy and frustration. Thinking of these

things reminded me how this also applies to our walk with the Lord. David acknowledged in the opening verses of Psalm 32 the joys that he experienced when obeying the Lord, and the frustrations he had when he did not.

Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. (Psalm 32: 1-5)

David was frustrated with how long he chose to hold onto his guilt after being disobedient toward God. God must have been equally frustrated at David's hesitancy in not confessing his sins. David is very honest here by admitting how his feelings of frustration turned back to joy when he confessed his sins to God and was forgiven. Forgiveness has always been part of God's loving nature. It brings God much joy when we come to Him like David did and confess our sins so He can bestow His grace and forgiveness upon us.

Just as certain things and people can be both a source of great joy and frustration for us, our willingness to obey or disobey God can cause these feelings for us as well. We may not be able to control our joys or frustrations with respect to bird feeders or golf games, or how our favorite team is playing, **but we can maintain this positive feeling by being more determined to be obedient to the Lord's ways and repenting sooner than later if we have disobeyed Him.**

I will keep trying to find ways to prevent the squirrels from climbing up and eating from my bird feeders. I prefer that these feeders provide me with joy as opposed to frustration. I wonder if I need to start having Daisy standing guard at the bird feeders? That may solve the problem at the front of my house, but I may need another dog to solve this from happening in my backyard. I think neither my wife, nor Daisy would like that solution.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean