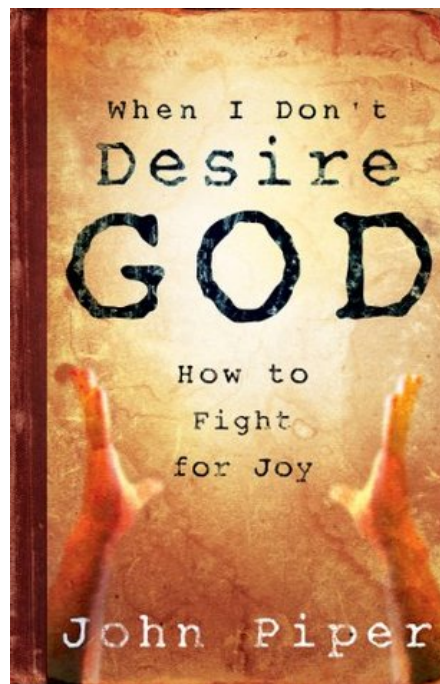




## When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight for Joy

*John Piper*

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# When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight for Joy

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**When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight for Joy** John Piper

**We all want to experience liberating, love-producing, risk-taking satisfaction in God.** But the reality is that we often struggle to find, and hold onto, true and lasting joy—even when we have embraced the good news of God's grace. So we face a crucial question: *What should I do when I don't desire God?*

John Piper aims to help us find joy in Jesus that is so deep and so strong that it frees us from bondage to comfort and security, and impels us to live merciful and missional lives. Written with the radical hope that all Christians would experience the fullness of life in Christ, this book will help you fight for joy daily by leading you to rediscover the soul-satisfying glory of God.

## When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight for Joy Details

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## From Reader Review When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight for Joy for online ebook

### Jane says

Fighting for joy brings God honor even if you don't really want to fight. Now that is vintage Piper! He is consistent across all of his 50 or more books with his theme of how we glorify God by finding our satisfaction in Him. This book makes that application in an area of the Christian experience that every believer faces at least once in their lives.

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### Monica says

Excellent book. It was so good, I look forward to reading through it again.

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### Matthew Huff says

This book is marvelous - certainly my favorite Piper read thus far. His chapters are organized clearly, and his approach is filled with practical advice and deep biblical insight. I would say, for me, this is Piper at his most straightforward and encouraging. I found myself at many points convicted and relieved, paradoxically.

I would recommend this book as a starter for anyone interested in Piper and a must-read for anyone seeking to experience deep and lasting joy in Christ. Covering topics such as prayer, discipline, early mornings, Bible memorization, reading, poetry, depression, repentance, grace, and much more, this book stands as a powerful tool for drawing the Christian closer to his God.

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### Indrajeet Pawar says

Reading Piper is almost always an experience of getting close to a 'burning bush' experience. His challenge that we don't desire God enough and are easily satisfied with inferior things struck home. Reading him I was reminded of C S Lewis' analogy of playing with mud pies and being ignorant of an offer of a holiday by sea. Piper's practical and pastoral counsel in this book will help every reader have a 'holiday by the sea with God'. And in Him may we all be most satisfied so that He is most glorified.

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### Matt says

The long-awaited sequel to *Desiring God* (DG) has arrived! In DG, Piper presented the concept of Christian Hedonism – the truth that Christians are to pursue their joy and pleasure in God. When Christians do this, God is most glorified because he is seen as infinitely satisfying. To do anything less is sin! Well, this leaves most readers excited at first since they were created to pursue their happiness in God, but then follows the heart-breaking reality – we pursue joy in others things and find ourselves not desiring God. So, Piper, almost 20 years later, answers in this book many of the questions he has received over the years and gives strategies

in fighting for joy when you don't desire God. This includes a theological foundation, chapters on prayer, fasting, meditation and the disciplines of Scripture study and memorization. It ends with an excellent chapter on depression called "When the Darkness Does Not Lift." This book is convicting and encouraging in fighting the good fight.

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### **Natalie Vellacott says**

I'm abandoning this. I picked it up from our church bookstall for 50p thinking I couldn't go wrong at that price. I was also curious because I really didn't like *Desiring God* which made me feel that I wasn't saved because I didn't experience certain feelings and emotions that are apparently essential.

Beginning this book, there was a familiarity to it. It is basically exactly the same as *Desiring God*. The same principle of Christian hedonism which I can't find in Scripture, the same emotionalism and the same repetitions. The title is obviously different and maybe the author is coming at the subject from a different angle, but the material is the same. I feel cheated out of my 50p!

I know there are a lot of Piper fans out there and I have read a few of his earlier books which were quite helpful. I don't, however, recommend this or the prequel.

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### **Greg Bodwell says**

I found this book to be refreshingly practical. While I love John Piper, a lot of his books can stay very spiritual and theological (which isn't always bad), but *When I Don't Desire God* dishes out ultra-practical advice on getting out of spiritual ruts and seasons of spiritual dryness: Including tips for memorizing scripture, helpful ways to pray through the Bible, and the importance of our physical fitness/health. It takes a while to get through (like most Piper books I've read), but it is definitely worth it if you're looking for practical guidance in finding joy in God again.

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### **Aaron says**

Also read January 2012.

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### **Alex says**

Filled with lots of Scripture, research, and great truth, this book is easily the best of any book by Piper that I've read. He uses much compassion to talk about Christian's who lack joy at times, even suggesting that he, himself, is in a constant fight for joy. And while a majority of this book is just a long way of saying read your Bible and pray more, there's much practical advice to take away from it.

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## Dan says

A long way of saying read your Bible and pray. This is not a bad thing as the extended meditation on the topic is certainly helpful. A few quotes:

"When I address the question, "What should I do if I don't desire God?" I am addressing the question: "How can I obtain or recover a joy in Christ that is so deep and so strong that it will free me from bondage to Western comforts and security, and will impel me into sacrifices of mercy and missions, and will sustain me in the face of martyrdom?" Persecution is normal for Christians. "All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12)."

"having a spiritual taste for the glory of Christ is not morally neutral. Not to have it is evil and deadly. Not to see and savor Christ is an insult to the beauty and worth of his character."

"This relationship between the Word of God and the glory of God is remarkable, and we should grasp it firmly. God ordained that spiritual seeing should happen mainly through hearing. Christ is not visually present for us to see. He is presented today in the Word of God, especially the gospel."

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## Esther says

READ this book & prepare yourself!! So much valuable insight & guidance on the importance of fighting for joy to glorify God through Christ. "Preferring anything above Christ is the very essence of sin. It must be fought." If you're thinking this is a light hearted devotional to make you feel good, this ISN'T it. This book will challenge you in how your walk with God should look according to scripture.

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## Jonathan McIntosh says

My second time through and I've decided that this is my favorite book by John Piper. *When I Don't Desire God* takes all of the concepts of *Desiring God* and puts those in real-world scenarios. It believe it's certainly his most practical and helpful.

You want to be one who hungers and thirsts after Christ, so what practically do you *do* when you don't? Piper answers that question here with warmth and challenge combined with his years of pastoral insight. Distilling the wisdom of Puritans like Richard Baxter and John Newton, as well as drawing on heavy doses of Martyn Lloyd-Jones and C.S. Lewis, Piper teaches us practically how to fight through times of depression and spiritual darkness so that we might truly "taste and see that the LORD is good."

My one (minor) complaint with Piper in general (and it shows up here in the chapter on How to Wield the World in the Fight for Joy) is that he sometimes comes off as somewhat Platonic in his view of the world and enjoying the gifts of the world.

For example:

"We must make it our aim that the joy awakened by music be joy in God. Not all pleasures of music are pleasures in God."

And...

"This is what we pray toward even now - that all our joy in the things of this world would be because, in and through them, we see more of the glory of God."

All our joy in the things of this world must be joy in God? I can never listen to and enjoy music simply because it *is*?

Often food, drink, friendship, sex, and music point me to the glory of God. But I also think that these things are gifts from God to be enjoyed in and for themselves. When I give my children a present, I do want them to thank me... but often the best way that they can thank me is to go play with the present!

Sometimes I can come away from reading Piper not quite feeling free to enjoy the good gifts God has filled our world with for fear that I might not be enjoying them for God or his glory. I think this is potentially due to slight neo-Platonic influences in his teaching.

That being said, this is a tremendous (and I will say once again deeply *helpful*) book that God has used over and over again to stir my affection for Christ. I wish all Christians would read it and find new tools that will help them delight in Christ.

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## Devin says

I was originally introduced to this book when I was informed that a small group I had been put in would be studying it week to week. I should've been very familiar with John Piper. I've read *Don't Waste Your Life*; in my church back home, the pastor referenced and quoted him regularly; and now, I find myself going to Bethlehem College and Seminary, a school under John Piper's church in Minneapolis, MN.

When I first began reading this book, I was skeptical. I thought that this would turn out to be another Christian-themed self-help book. However, reading Piper's foreword and prayer at the beginning of the book changed my perspective. From the very beginning, Piper seeks to let his heart for Jesus shine through the text on these pages, and he does so wonderfully. He often speaks of his personal experiences in his own quest to find joy in God, but he never lets his experiences validate Scripture. He always is sure to interpret events in light of what the Bible teaches.

The very last chapter was the most impacting in my reading. Though the rest of the chapters in this book make a great case and outline for how a Christian ought to live and fight in this life, the last chapter is a guide of what to do if all else fails. Piper speaks very practically of how a person ought to help his depressed Christian neighbor and offers tips of how to live in a way that exercises Christian hedonism even when we aren't enjoying God. The last chapter is riddled with stories of influential pastors of old and their part in people's struggle for joy. Seeing that these giants of the faith dealt with these issues just as Christians do today was very encouraging and motivating.

I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who needs to find a new excitement in their faith. This book is both for people who are themselves depressed and without joy and for those who don't know how they ought to reach out to neighbors and friends who are going through this type of struggle.

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## April Knapp says

I think every Christian should read this book! It is great for both young and mature believers. It is deeply convicting and motivating and hard to ignore.

Piper is an eloquent writer, but what I like most about his books is that he always writes based on scripture. He doesn't use rhetoric it merely use scripture to back up what he says. Instead, he studies scripture and writes accordingly. And it is completely based on the Gospel of grace.

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### **clAViD says**

Highly recommended for those wanting to start developing spiritual disciplines and those who have never been exposed to "Christian Hedonism." Good mix of doctrine and practical application. I think this book is THE "Christian Living" book. If I were to give a new believer a book on growing in his walk, this would be one of the books I would give him.

This is a really small and non-primary part of the book, but just to pique your interest, have you ever thought about this:

"We know from experience that our spiritual and physical life are intertwined. Losing sleep increases our impatience and irritability, but the Bible says that love is "patient... it is not irritable" (1 Cor. 13:4-5), and it calls love and patience fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). So are love and patience fruits of the Spirit, or are they the fruit of sleep?" (176).

Read this book.

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### **Melissa says**

This is one of my all-time favorites, because it really does help me fight for joy and look to God and the Bible in doing so. I *\*highly\** recommend it!

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### **Elizabeth says**

Have you ever gone through a period of time in which you had little desire to read your Bible? Or maybe a time when you pondered which book to pick up next but just felt kind of "blah" about the whole thing? I went through a phase like this about six months ago. I was more aware of my failures than God's grace. I knew that I needed to focus on what God has done for me through the blood of Jesus Christ rather than reading another Christian living title that would reveal my many shortcomings in my marriage, parenting, and every other area of my life. A short time later, I began reading When I Don't Desire God by John Piper. It was hard reading for this sleep-deprived mama, and it was slow going most of the time. However, it was well worth the effort. God used this book to encourage me greatly. It was comforting for me to realize that "...no one ever desires God with the passion he demands" (pg. 13). Ironically, when I realize that I don't desire God enough, I'm actually in a better place spiritually than when I think I'm doing well, even if I do feel worse.

This book is classic Piper; he's singing the same tune: "...God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him" (pg. 19). The first half of the book is largely foundational and philosophical while the latter portion is immensely practical. For example, we all know that the greatest commandment is to love God with all of our heart, so why is Piper writing a whole book about fighting for joy? I'll let him answer:

"The apostle Paul said, "If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed" (1 Cor. 16:22). Love is not a mere choice to move the body or the brain. Love is also an experience of the heart. So the stakes are very high. Christ is to be cherished, not just chosen. The alternative is to be cursed. Therefore life is serious. And so is this book" (pg. 19).

As for the practical, there's nothing essentially new here: we fight for joy mainly through God's Word and prayer. However, Piper does have many helpful insights as to how the Word and prayer help us in our fight for joy and how to use them to this end. As usual, Piper says many thought-provoking things making this a book in which you'll likely want to spend some time. I'll leave you with a quote that was meaningful to me in my situation; may it whet your appetite.

"The fight for joy always involves both [prayer and meditation]. Prayer without meditation on the Word of God will disintegrate into humanistic spirituality. It will simply reflect our own fallen ideas and feelings—not God's. And meditation, without the humility of desperate prayer, will create proud legalism or hopeless despair.

Without prayer we try to fulfill the Word in our own strength and think we are succeeding and so become proud Pharisees; or we will realize we are not succeeding and will give up in despair" (pg. 149).

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### **Luis says**

This is precious book to me. I recommend it for anyone, especially to those whom have tasted and have partaken of the Holy spirit in savoring Jesus Christ , but have at some after this experience have become downcast in spirit, losing Joy in there salvation.Ive learned from this book that God is very tender in mercy through Jesus Christ and if we wait upon the Lord to revive our spirit by prayer and supplications, we will eventually be lifted up in due season by Gods mercy according to the loving kindness of His only son Jesus Christ.

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### **Julie says**

While I have listened to John Piper speak at church several times, this was my first time reading a book written by him. I thoroughly enjoyed it and will revisit it often.

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### **Jo says**

This book is essentially for people who realize the truth of "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him", but have a difficult time dragging their desires in that direction. It's highly strategic, meaning that it has very specific ideas about how to go about pursuing this desire. Thought provoking as well as helpful.

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