

Josh McDowell Devotions : Today's Youth Devotion

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- April 13th, 2017



God on Patrol

Bible Reading: Psalm 16:1-11

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. Psalm 16:11

MANY PEOPLE THINK of God as a cosmic cop standing in the center of the universe-like a police officer gunning you down with his radar detector. "Hey, you!" he snarls. "Yeah,

you! You look like you're having fun over there. Well, cut it out! And you with the video. What's it rated? PG-13? R? Hand it over, slow and easy. And who's lip-locked in that dark corner? Is that you, Kaitlin? And Jake-I should have known. We'll have no more of that. Not while I'm on patrol."

All I want to do is have a little fun. But God just wants to spoil it for me. Have you ever thought that way?

The same folks who see God as the ultimate party-pooper imagine the devil as a fun-loving guy aiming only to help people enjoy themselves. That's a lie. The devil doesn't care if you have fun. He hates your guts. He will eat you up. Peter says that the devil is always "looking for some victim to devour" (I Peter 5:8).

A guide once told a group of tourists in Israel that they were probably used to seeing shepherds driving sheep through the fields and roads. "But in Palestine," he pointed out, "things are different. The shepherd always leads the way, going in front of the flock."

The tourists were amused when the first flock of sheep that happened along was being driven, not led as the guide had explained. Embarrassed, the guide asked the man, "How is it that you are driving these sheep? I've always thought that Eastern shepherds *lead* their sheep."

“Oh,” replied the man, “that’s true. The shepherd does lead his sheep. But I’m not a shepherd. I’m a butcher.”

Satan is a butcher. He isn’t interested in giving you pleasure or happiness. He only means to chew you up and spit you out. If you want to really see him at work, read Job 2:1-8 to see what he did to righteous Job. And that’s just what he wants to do to you.

So don’t think of the devil as an outrageously fun dude just waiting to pack your life with extreme excitement. Jesus dashed that myth when he said, “The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10). The devil doesn’t care if you have fun. His only goal is to steal and kill and destroy you.

God’s goal is the exact opposite. Jesus said, “My purpose is to give life in all its fullness” (John 10: 10). God wants you to experience a jam-packed, joyful life.

REFLECT: Are you experiencing the full and joyful life Jesus promised, or are you just trying to keep God from getting mad at you?

PRAY: Talk that over with God today.