

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is
fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore
Psalm 16:11 (ESV)

In the car on Wednesday, I caught a small part of an interview with Derek Thompson, a writer for *The Atlantic*, discussing what he calls the “antisocial century.”¹ He details how people across all age groups are increasingly isolated, choosing “me time” over direct interactions or meaningful connection with others. Thompson shares some disturbing trends such as a significant decrease in spending time with others and notes the irony that those who are most connected to “communities” on their phones have the fewest actual friends. While he doesn’t go so far as to assign direct blame to technology, he notes the coincidence of the growing antisocial population with the explosive influence of connected technologies, particularly smartphones, and how they offer instant gratification but leave us feeling empty and disconnected. The result is a dramatic decline in face-to-face interaction, a preference for virtual connection, and a constant need for external validation. Thompson concludes that it seems that humans are built with basic needs of connection, purpose, love, security, and joy. These needs manifest as deep desires that are woven into our being—desires unmet by the trinkets of the world.

In listening to this interview, I was grieved. Thompson seemed genuinely concerned about the long-term health of our society because of the trends he documents. He attempts to provide solutions drawn only from a secular toolbox that, inevitably, fall completely flat. Of course, as Christians, we know that God has placed these deep desires into all of us, meant to be unsated by the world, but to be ultimately fully satisfied *in Him*. The world offers counterfeit versions of fulfillment, ultimately leaving us anxious, depressed, and nihilistic or else just pacified until death. What a tragic state for man!

Now consider how amazing God’s plan for mankind is. His plan all along has been to create the universe with purpose and meaning and to wrap us, his chosen children, up into his loving purposes now and for eternity. Through Christ we are included into the “big picture” (and what a big picture it is!) of every teeny particle having its every moment directed toward eternal goals. In Christ and, consequently, in fellowship with his church here on earth, we experience true loving relationships intended to model the perfect unity of Father, Son, and Spirit. All the elements that Thompson identifies as being in decline in contemporary culture (interpersonal connection, life purpose, love and acceptance, security and stability, joy and contentment, etc.) we enjoy in *increasing measure* here and will have pleasure in, *in fullness*, in eternity (Ps. 16:11, above). Our lives lived together here, as the body of Christ, manifest something amazing and eternal even in the simplest things—our Sunday worship, meals in our homes, prayer and fellowship in small groups, discussions at Wednesday evening Bible studies, and just daily moments over coffee, or a hospital room. Embrace these moments and revel in how God has given us such a treasure that even the world knows they need but cannot find. Let us then renew our efforts to invite the hurting, broken, lost, and weary into this community that satisfies us today, and will exceed all our expectations for eternity.

Love,
Pastor Aaron

¹ A transcript of the interview can be found here: <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/nx-s1-5276197> His original article is archived here: <https://archive.is/Sk8YB>