



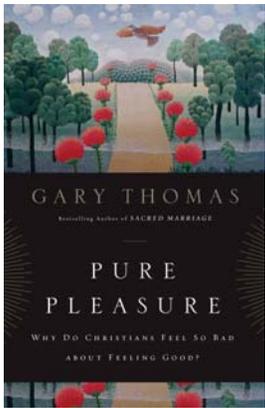
NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Robin Geelhoed
(616) 698-3345 [P]
robin.geelhoed@zondervan.com

For Your Reading Pleasure: Gary Thomas Discusses *Pure Pleasure* *Bestselling author Gary Thomas views pleasure as a life-giving force, gift from God*

Grand Rapids, Mich., Oct. 2, 2009 – A stone massage, homemade chocolate cake, a round of golf, the perfect cup of coffee, your morning run – or your afternoon nap. These are all simple pleasures that God created for us to enjoy – not feel guilty about. Bestselling author Gary Thomas urges Christians to embrace pleasure and carve out time to enjoy life. In *Pure Pleasure: Why Do Christians Feel So Bad About Feeling Good?* (Nov. 2009), Thomas explores the idea that Christians should view pleasure as a gift from God that points us back to him.



According to Thomas, "God isn't just our Redeemer... He is our Creator. He made us, and he made this world. So when we participate in this world as he made it, we celebrate him every bit as much as we honor him when we do things that reflect his redeeming work."

Christians shouldn't necessarily feel guilty every time they buy a latte or indulge in a seemingly unnecessary expense. There is a line between enjoying the world God created and frivolous excess, but Christians shouldn't feel pressure to consistently ignore what brings them joy. Thomas helps readers determine which pleasures are healthy and life-giving and which pleasures are destructive and should be avoided.

Thomas offers an impassioned biblical defense of pleasure and explains how God delights in, and shares, the pleasure we experience when we encounter his world with thanksgiving. Everyone finds pleasure in unique ways, and whether readers delight in high thread count sheets, gourmet cooking, the scent of freshly cut flowers or finishing a crossword puzzle, Thomas says incorporating guilt-free pleasure into our lives rejuvenates and refreshes individuals and provides a stronger platform for a lifestyle of worship.

Thomas boldly confronts the contentious issue of the cost of pleasure and how we can balance our need for restorative pleasure with our call to be faithful stewards of God's resources. Pleasure in moderation is healthy and life-restoring, but overindulgence is harmful and must be avoided. Thomas assists readers in determining their own boundaries. He helps readers come to grips with the true costs of that daily latte or expensive vacation – not necessarily that those things are sinful, but how they affect one's spiritual life.

"I'm asking you – no, *pleading* with you – to embrace pleasure with sophistication. Pleasure is a gift from God. It is good. He designed us to receive pleasure in many ways and is, in fact, preparing us for an eternity of pleasure. We must also realize, however, that there is a hierarchy of pleasure – with God at the top – that orders all of our other pleasures. If the *hierarchy* gets broken or becomes skewed, then lesser pleasures will begin to war against the primary one, which is delight in Christ."

Gary is launching a downloadable video curriculum for small groups. A discussion guide with questions for each chapter is included at the end of *Pure Pleasure*. The six-session video curriculum will be available at www.zondervan.com/purepleasure on Oct. 15 and costs \$24.99.

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Gary Thomas enjoys spending time with his family, is an avid runner and has completed seven marathons including the Boston Marathon. He is a writer and adjunct faculty member at Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon. He is the author of several books including *Sacred Marriage*, *Holy Available*, *Sacred Pathways*, *Sacred Parenting* and the Gold Medallion Award-winning *Authentic Faith*. For more information visit: <http://www.garythomas.com>.

About *Pure Pleasure*

Pure Pleasure:

Why Do Christians Feel So Bad About Feeling So Good?

By Gary Thomas

Zondervan

9780310290803

272 Pages

\$14.99

PUB DATE: November 2009

About Zondervan

Zondervan is the world's leading Christian publisher of books whose authors are noted for their excellence in the craft of writing as well as their worthy contribution to the ongoing global evangelical conversation. The works published by Zondervan not only confirm readers' faith and understanding, they also challenge and stretch readers' thinking. For more than 75 years, Zondervan has delivered transformational Christian experiences through general, ministry, and academic resources by influential leaders and emerging voices, and been honored with more Christian Book Awards than any other publisher. Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Mich., Zondervan publishes bestselling books, audio, video, curriculum, software, and digital products in such categories as biblical languages and studies, biography, business, contemporary issues, counseling, cultural, devotional, evangelism, family, fiction, history, inspiration, leadership, ministry, pastoral, personal development, prayer, philosophy, reference, relationships, textbooks, theology, youth and more. Zondervan resources are sold worldwide through retail stores, online, and by Zondervan ChurchSource, and are translated into nearly 200 languages in more than 60 countries. Visit Zondervan Books on the Internet at www.zondervan.com/books.

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About Gary Thomas Author of *Pure Pleasure*



Gary Thomas is a writer and is currently an adjunct faculty member at Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon where he teaches on spiritual formation.

Gary graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in English literature from Western Washington University, and he holds a master's degree with a concentration in systematic theology from Regent College in Vancouver, B.C., where he studied under Dr. J.I. Packer and served as a teaching assistant for Dr. Gordon Fee. While at Regent, he was awarded the Theology Award, given annually to the outstanding student in the theology department. In 2006, Western seminary awarded Gary an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.

His many books have been translated into eleven different languages and include the Christian Book Award-winning *Authentic Faith*, *Sacred Parenting*, *Sacred Pathways* and the best-selling *Sacred Marriage*. As a collaborative writer, Gary has written for such well-known Christians as Chuck Colson, Norma

McCorvey (a.k.a. Jane Roe of Roe v. Wade), Franklin Graham, Michael W. Smith and Senator John Ashcroft.

Gary speaks at approximately 50 churches, denominational meetings and ministry gatherings every year, teaching at seminars designed to equip Christians to grow in their faith. These seminars vary from one-evening sessions to a weeklong or weekend format and address the essential elements of Christian spirituality from an evangelical perspective.

He has had well over 150 articles published by national magazines, including *Christianity Today*, *Decision*, *Marriage Partnership*, *New Man*, *Discipleship Journal*, *Charisma* and *World*, among others. He has also appeared on numerous national radio and television programs, including Focus on the Family and Family Life Today.

Gary enjoys running marathons and spending time with his wife Lisa and his three children: Allison, Graham and Kelsey. He makes his home in Bellingham, Washington.

**For an interview with Gary Thomas, contact Robin Geelhoed at
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Possible Interview Questions for Gary Thomas Author of *Pure Pleasure*

1. Why did you write a book about pleasure? Why is this an important topic for Christians to discuss?
2. Why do we honor God by enjoying the world he created?
3. Can you answer the question the subtitle asks? Why do Christians feel so bad about feeling good?
4. In the book you discuss how you worshiped God and honored your wife by buying a car. Can you explain that idea?
5. What is the latte factor? How often do you go to Starbucks and do you ever feel guilty?
6. You talk about guilt-free pleasures. What are these? What are your guilt-free pleasures?
7. One of the examples you use throughout the book is running. How did being a runner influence this book?
8. What are the different types of pleasures? How can Christians find healthy pleasures to enrich their lives?
9. In the book you ask readers to "embrace pleasure with sophistication." What exactly does that mean?
10. What about dangerous pleasures? Is there a danger of overindulgence? How can Christians avoid this?

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