



What is the “most 90s” thing you can think of?

Like every decade before and every one since, the 90s were full of ups and downs. Our perspective on that time can diverge from others who experienced the decade differently. Some will remember the success, others the trouble.

Psalm 97 actually has the very same theme as a psalm we studied before. Psalm 93 is organized around the thesis that “the Lord reigns.” Looking at that earlier psalm, we saw how the Lord remains seated in power, even in the midst of threats the world can never escape.

In Psalm 93, “the Lord reigns” is a call to comfort in the midst of turmoil and tragedy. In Psalm 97, “the Lord reigns” is a call to joy recognizing He wields His might in mercy.

Who is the most famous person in the world today?

Who was the most famous person in the world in 1997?

What makes someone worthy of our attention?



The photo on the right is the final one taken of Diana Spencer with her eldest son, William. Today, he is next in line for the British throne, and his mother is remembered for her tragic death at age 36.

During her life, Princess Diana was noted for her glamour, accessibility, and commitment to the world's charitable causes. She was riding in an armored Mercedes when her chauffeur crashed trying to evade paparazzi in a tunnel beneath Paris's River Seine.

Diana was mourned the world over. Even as a global figure, millions who never met her paid their respects in places she'd never visited. Few humans achieve that transcendent status, but that doesn't stop us from looking for new icons of beauty, heroism and greatness.



DISCUSS

- WHY DO PEOPLE PLACE EXTRAORDINARY EMOTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE ON STRANGERS?
- WHAT DO WE HOPE FAMOUS PEOPLE WILL GIVE US?

The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! Clouds and thick darkness are all around Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. Fire goes before Him and burns up His adversaries all around. His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim His righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory. All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship Him, all you gods!

Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice, because of Your judgments, O Lord. For You, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods. O You who love the Lord, hate evil! He preserves the lives of His saints; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to His holy name! - Psalm 97 ESV

- WHICH WORDS AND IMAGES STAND OUT TO YOU?

Psalm 97 wants us to see something bigger than ourselves. We seek superstars; the Lord has every star in the heavens obeying His command. We crave what's beautiful; the Lord reveals Himself as the source of all beauty. We admire greatness; the Lord reveals His greatness by vanquishing His adversaries.

We seek what's glorious. We are fascinated by power, celebrity, and success. But Psalm 97 reveals that all earthly glory is derivative. God alone possesses ultimate glory. So as creatures made to appreciate and be attracted to what's glorious, will we stop at the reflection or worship the Source?

Ultimately, all humanity seeks answers to the questions:

- **WHO AM I?**
- **WHAT MAKES ME VALUABLE?**
- **WHAT MAKES ME SAFE?**
- **WHAT GIVES ME HOPE?**

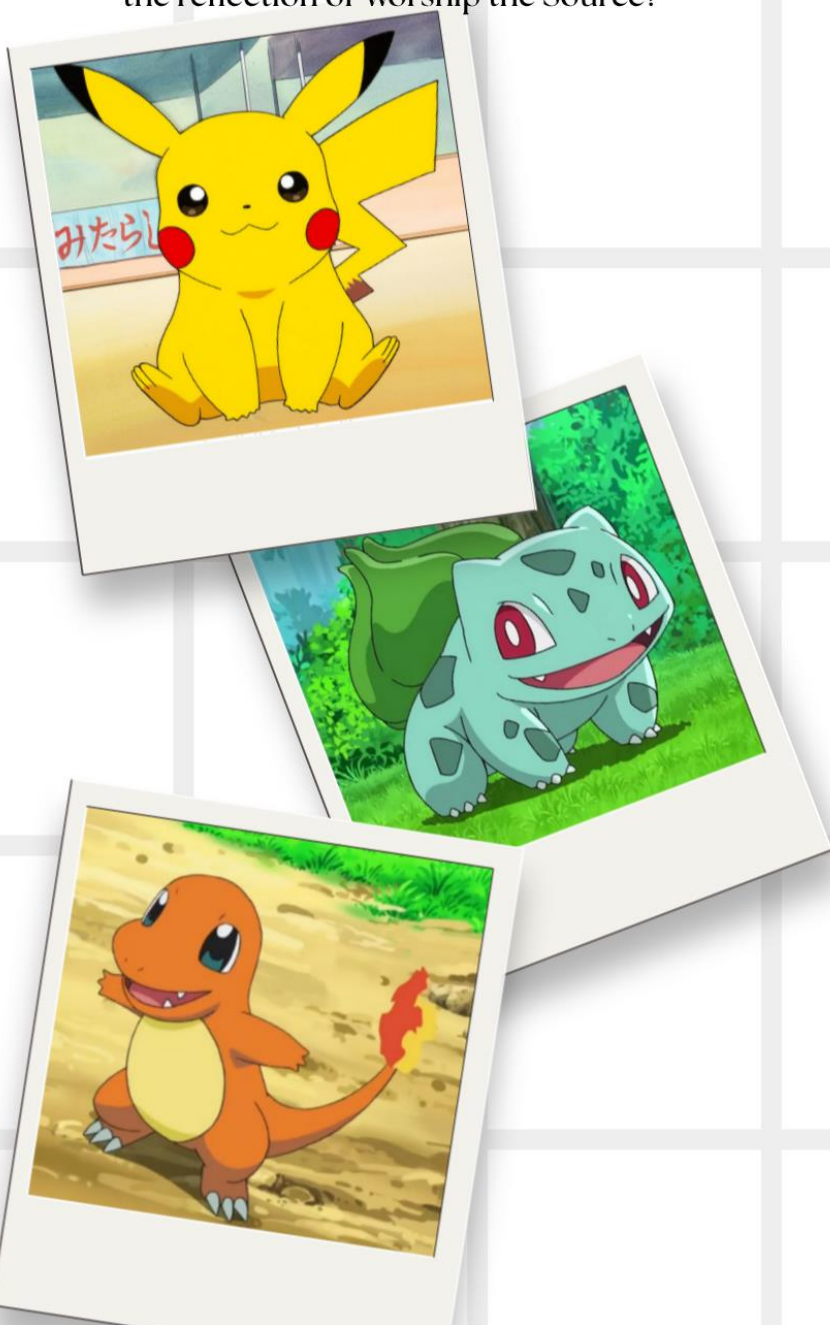
What earthly things compete to answer those questions?

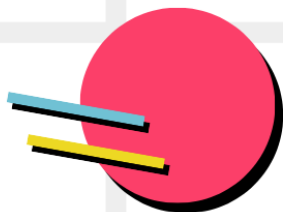
The phenomenon began overseas, but by 1997 Nintendo was preparing to introduce the United States to Pokémon. The cute, collectible characters made Pokémon a smash success. The basic premise? Collect, train, improve, battle, win.

DISCUSS

- **WHY DID POKÉMON BECOME SO ADDICTIVE?**
- **HOW CAN SOMETHING PERFECTLY HARMLESS BECOME UNHEALTHY?**

Idolatry doesn't always begin with something evil. Sometimes it begins when a good gift becomes the thing we cannot imagine living without.





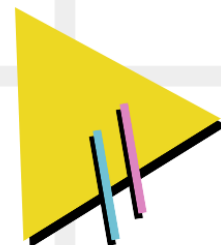
**O YOU WHO LOVE THE
LORD, HATE EVIL!
-PSALM 97:10A ESV**

Biblical hatred of evil is not the hatred of people. It means refusing to celebrate what destroys, rejecting what separates us from God, resisting sin in ourselves, protecting others from harm.

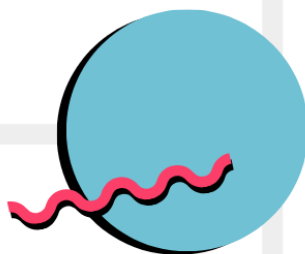
It's difficult to hate evil when we often excuse (or enjoy!) certain sins. We are willing to tolerate evil if it benefits us. The reality of evil all around us numbs us to its effects, or makes us feel powerless to do anything about it.

But the Christian is called to simultaneously confess "I am a sinner" and "I hate sin." We do not hate evil because we think we're better. We hate evil because Christ has rescued us from it.

**LIGHT IS SOWN FOR THE
RIGHTEOUS, AND JOY FOR
THE UPRIGHT IN HEART.
-PSALM 97:11 ESV**



Psalm 97 declares light, joy, and righteousness belong together. It's easy to think of righteousness as deprivation, but for the redeemed, a life of holiness is light, joy, and freedom.



**[CHRIST] IS THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD...
AND HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS, AND IN HIM ALL
THINGS HOLD TOGETHER. -COLOSSIANS 1:15A, 17 ESV**

We are hardwired to seek what's glorious. The irony is our all-glorious God displays His glory most clearly at the cross. Only a God so secure in His glory could lay it all aside to rescue a world full of sinners.

The cross flips the world upside down. God dies for humans. You achieve celebrity status. The Lord knows your name; He's invested in your every move!

Every idol is a distorted attempt to make the invisible visible. Jesus Christ is not just a replacement for our collection of faulty idols. He is God incarnate, the perfect revelation of the Father's heart.

We cannot overcome idolatry by loving things less. We overcome idolatry when we discover someone more worthy of our love.



- Read Psalm 97 daily
- Audit who or what gets your attention and resources

- Pray about the things you worry about losing and ask "Is this a good gift from God, or have I made it into a god?"