

Do What Pleases the LORD Our God

Hebrews 11:6 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁶ *And without faith it is **impossible to please Him**, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him.*

2 Corinthians 5:9 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁹ *Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.*

Mark 1:9-11 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁹ *In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him; ¹¹ and a voice came from the heavens: "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."*

Introduction

One day, I was reading God's Word, Mark 1. The text was about Jesus' baptism. He was coming out of the water after He was baptized by John the Baptist. He saw the heavens opened and the Spirit of God like a dove descending upon Him. A voice came from Heaven saying, You are My beloved Son; with You I am well-pleased. In response to His Father's love, Jesus always did what pleased His Father (John 8:29).

Do you have someone in your life who loves you and well-pleased with you? I had one. She was my mother.

Looking back my growing up years, I can tell you that she loved me. Although she had four sons, she would tell me, that I was her favorite. Considering my brothers, I often asked her to stop calling me that way, but I doubt she ever did. One thing it did for me, though. Her words assured me that she loved me. In fact, I cannot recall any occasions when she ever got angry with me, scolded me, or spanked me. Even when I did something bad or made mistakes, she never said anything that would hurt me. She was always pleased with me, kind and loving.

For this message, I thought about the times when she was pleased with me, and the things that I did to please her. A couple of occasions come to my mind. One time, she was so proud when I got into a top college in Korea. She would not stop boasting to everyone

how smart her son was. I was her joy and pride. The other occasion was the fact that she enjoyed spending time together with me over the phone. For almost forty years, we were apart 7,000 miles away. I would call her once a week to chat with her for about a half hour. She would look forward to our weekly conversation. That taught me a very important lesson: talk to your aging parent. Yes, we know that every parent loves talking with their children, but, let me tell you this: When our parents are in their advanced years, they really need it and love the time together with their children.

This morning, I am inviting you to think with me about the relationship with our heavenly Father who loves us and well-pleased with us. The question is: in response to His love, do we love Him back? What do we do to please Him in our walk with God?

Content

I remember learning in the seminary about the Westminster Shorter Catechism (written by the Westminster Assembly in 1646 and 1647). Catechism is “*a book summarizing the basic principles of Christianity in question and answer form*” (<https://wikidiff.com/catechesis/catechism>).

There are 107 questions and answers ranging from God the Creator, original sin, the fallen state of man’s nature, Christ the Redeemer and the benefits from redemption, the Ten Commandments, the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and to the Lord’s Prayer. “*The most famous of the questions (known to a great many Presbyterian children) is the first:*

Q. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westminster_Shorter_Catechism)

Here, to glorify God means to please Him. We are created to please, to glorify, and to enjoy our Creator forever. Please keep that in mind for the message this morning.

Did you know that your heavenly Father wants to have a close relationship with you? Did you know you can please Him as you do your earthly parents? To do so, you need to know the ways you can please your heavenly Father and make Him happy.

The trouble among the believers today is this: we do not cultivate the habit of knowing and pleasing the Lord. Furthermore, many of the believers stay lazy in their walk with God convinced that once they have received the Lord Jesus as their Savior, that takes care of the rest of their faith journey until they stand before God. No, folks, your faith journey just begins when you receive Jesus into your heart. For the rest of your life, and during your faith journey, you need to cultivate the habit of praying, studying, and

meditating on God's Word to obey His commands and to love your God and neighbors, even your enemies.

Now, check it out yourself. If your life as Christian is boring and even dreary, something is wrong, because the life in Christ has to be exciting and vibrant as you walk with the Lord. This is especially true with the baby Christians. Like a normal baby grows leaps and bounds in the first few years, they too must grow in their faith leaps and bounds in the first years of faith journey. Here's a yardstick to measure your spiritual growth, provided by a Chinese Christian, Watchman Nee. He said that during the first three years of Christian life the believer must grow in the knowledge of God and in the love of God to the point where he or she is able to disciple other believers.

So, let me say it again. Our heavenly Father desires to have a close relationship with us and expects us to glorify and please Him in our lives. Therefore, it is our duty to find out what pleases Him and do them (Ephesians 5:10, Romans 12:2). I urge everyone to join me in discovering the things that are pleasing to the Lord our God and do them. Here's what I have found in the Scriptures.

What Pleases the LORD Our God

1. We please Him when we seek His Kingdom and righteousness and do what is good and right in His sight (Isaiah 38:3). E.g., King Solomon prayed for the wisdom to govern God's people (1 Kings 3:10). His prayer impressed the Lord so much that He added to Solomon riches, honor, and prosperity as well (1 Kings 3:10-13). It surely pleases the Lord when we do God's will. E.g., Loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute you pleases Him (Matthew 5:44). E.g., 2. To rejoice in the Lord pleases the Lord. To pray without ceasing pleases the Lord. To be thankful in all circumstances surely pleases Him. The Lord is also proud of you when you obey His commands (1 John 3:22).
2. When we turn from evil ways, we please the Lord (Ezekiel 18:23). We call it repentance. Repentance always pleases the Lord. When a sinner repents and returns to the Lord, there's joy among angels in Heaven. Jesus said, "*There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.*"¹⁰ *In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents"* (Luke 15:7, 10).
3. When we shine our lights in the corner where we are, and when we do good works, we glorify the Lord (Matthew 5:16). When we share God's blessings with others, it

pleases our heavenly Father as well (Hebrews 13:16). For example, if you take care of your own family, the Lord will be pleased with you (1 Timothy 5:14).

4. It also pleases the Lord when we make petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving for all people including those who are in authorities (1 Timothy 2:1-3). The prayer of the upright pleases the LORD (Proverbs 15:8).
5. When we walk in the Spirit (Romans 8:9), it pleases the Lord.
6. When we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1), the Lord is pleased.
7. When we love kindness, justice, and righteousness (Jeremiah 9:24) and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8), we surely please Him.
8. When we trust in the LORD without wavering (Psalm 26:1), it too pleases the Lord. E.g., Abraham waited for 25 years for God's promise to be fulfilled.
9. We also please the Lord when we bear fruit of the Holy Spirit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (John 15:8, Galatians 5:22-23). The list goes on.

This time, let's think about:

What Does Not Please the LORD Our God

Basically, if we do and say the opposite of what pleases the Lord mentioned before, then we will not be able to please the Lord. For instance, if you have no faith in God, you cannot please Him. If you walk in the flesh, that means, your mind is "hostile toward God" and not willing to keep God's law, then you cannot please God (Romans 8:7-8). If you walk in wickedness, the Lord will be displeased (Proverbs 15:8). Another instance: even though you know what God's will is for you, yet not doing it, it is not pleasing to the Lord. Actually, the Bible calls it sin. "So for one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, for him it is sin" (James 4:17). If you live out the life of injustice, violence, unrighteousness, greed, and hypocrisy, you displease Him. In a nutshell, disobeying the Lord and not keeping His commandments definitely displeases the Lord (Leviticus 26:31).

One more story and I will be through. The case study of Enoch.

Case Study: Enoch was the great grandfather of Noah. Yes, that famous Noah and the Ark. The Bible calls Enoch a man of faith who walked with the Lord and pleased Him (Hebrews 11:5). He lived his first 65 years and begot his son Methuselah (the oldest person recorded in the Bible---969 years---Genesis 5:27). After that, for the next 300 years, Enoch ‘walked with God’ and then was taken up alive by the Lord (Genesis 5:22-24). This is what we call ‘rapture’---taken up alive and never tasting death.

Based on Enoch’s life, Jude (the younger brother of Jesus---Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3), explained the characteristics of the life pleasing to the Lord.

1. **Separate** yourself from those who walk after their own ungodly lusts and those who are sensual (v. 18, 19). Paul the Apostle echoes saying, “*Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?*” (2 Corinthians 6:14).
2. **Build up** your life on faith like Enoch and **praying** in the Holy Spirit (v. 20). Pray with the mind of the Holy Spirit, always seeking and praying according to God’s will.
3. **Keep** yourself in the love of God (v. 21). That is, to love God by keeping His commands.

Conclusion

Once Paul the Apostle shared his ambition with the Corinthian believers: *Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him* (2 Corinthians 5:9). He indeed lived a life with ambition to please the Lord in everything He did, alive or dead. Let us, therefore, be like Paul. Let us have the ambition, whether we are alive or dead, to be pleasing to the Lord in all we do and say. King David also practiced such ambition in his life: “*May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, Lord, my rock and my Redeemer*” (Psalm 19:14). To those who do what pleases Him, the Lord gives wisdom, guidance, and protection (Ecclesiastes 2:26, Proverbs 2:7). May the Lord give us the desire to please Him and power to do His will every day. Amen.