

Pleasing to God

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes that our primary purpose is to please God, leading to true fulfillment and peace in life.

Duration: 28:50

Scripture: Revelation 4:11

Topics: "Pleasing God", "Obedient Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living to please God, highlighting that our existence is meant to bring pleasure to Him. It contrasts living for self-pleasure, as seen in King Solomon's pursuits, with the fulfillment found in pleasing God. The key to pleasing God is aligning our will with His, as demonstrated by Jesus' obedience and selflessness. The sermon encourages choosing to please God in all aspects of life, leading to peace, contentment, and fulfillment.

Transcript

As we are moving through the Bible, we are presently in First Thessalonians, chapters three and four. Because of the crusade tonight, we'll continue in these chapters three and four for a couple of weeks, and so it'll give you a good opportunity to study them over thoroughly as we are dealing with a very fascinating subject here in chapter four of the rapture of the church. But this morning, we'd like to draw your attention to verse one of chapter four, in which Paul speaks on another issue.

He said, Furthermore, then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, as you have received of us, how you ought to walk and to please God, so that you would abound more and more. How you ought to walk in order to please God. Pleasing God is the very basic purpose of our existence.

We read in the book of Revelation, chapter four, that they're in heaven as John beholds the throne of God, and the cherubim around the throne, surrounded by the twenty-four elders, that as the cherubim are worshiping God, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which is, which was, and which is to come. In the acknowledgement of the worship, the twenty-four elders cast their golden crowns on the glassy sea, and they say, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor, for thou has created all things, and for your pleasure, they are and were created. Listen carefully.

For your pleasure, they are and were created. All things, that includes you. Each one of us exists to bring pleasure to God.

That's the purpose of our existence. One of the basic questions that the philosophers asked was, Why am I here? That question is answered in this particular scripture. You are here in order that you might please God.

God created man for his pleasure. Now, many reject this truth, and they fight against it, and they assert that they are interested in their pleasure, and to live to please themselves, and are determined that they will live to please themselves, not to please God. You can fight this concept.

God allows you to fight it. God doesn't force you to live in such a way as to please him. He leaves that for your choice.

I can choose to live my life in such a way that God is pleased, or I can choose to live my life in such a way as I think will bring me pleasure, live for my own pleasure. This really seemed to be the philosophy of King Solomon. We read in Ecclesiastes 2, he said in his heart, I'm going to find life through partying.

I will therefore enjoy pleasure, but behold, I found that this was empty. I said of laughter, it's crazy, and of the partying, what good is it? So, I immersed myself in building great monuments. I built houses.

I planted vineyards. I made beautiful gardens and orchards, planted trees with all kinds of fruit, and I made reservoirs to water them. I got servants and maidens.

I also had great possessions of cattle, more than any that ever been in Jerusalem before me, and whatsoever my eyes desired, I did not keep from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced in all my endeavors, and then as I looked at all that my hands had wrought, all of the labors that I had labored to accomplish, behold, it was all empty. My spirit was vexed.

I found no lasting satisfaction in all of those things. Lived life to the fullest after the flesh. Did everything possible.

Did not withhold from himself anything that he desired. He had the wherewithal, the money, and all to do whatever he desired to do, and did it, and having done it, found that it left him empty and unfulfilled. As Solomon, you may rebel against the idea of living to please God, and you might live for your own pleasure, but I will guarantee that one day when you come to the end of the road, like Solomon, you will say, I hated life, because it's empty.

It's unfulfilling when you live for your own pleasure. I've been designed by God for the specific purpose of bringing pleasure to him, and unless my life is bringing pleasure to God, there will always be that emptiness there. There will always be that haunting awareness that life must be more than what I have yet experienced, and as Solomon observed, he that loves silver will not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loves abundance with increase, because this also is empty.

Solomon should know this. The Bible said that during his reign, he made gold and silver as common as stones in Jerusalem, amassed a vast fortune, but then said it was empty. It was unfulfilling.

Someone asked a very wealthy man, just how much does it take to be satisfied, and his answer was, just a little more, and that's always true. We set our goals, and we think, if I just had this, I'd be satisfied, and then we attain it, and we find that it didn't satisfy. There's a yearning for just a little more, always just a little more, with the hope and the anticipation that if I can just get a little more, I will be satisfied.

Some of the wealthiest men in America today have expressed that the thrill is in the chase, that when you accomplish the goals, there's an emptiness there, and so it is. There is that hope that I'm going to be satisfied if I can just accomplish this. You accomplish it, and you find that you're not satisfied, so there's the necessity of setting new goals.

Jesus said a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses. That's not where life is at. Paul told them that they ought to walk so as to please God.

If I recognize and acknowledge this truth, that I have been created to bring God pleasure, then the basic question should be, what can I do to please God? Now, looking at that from a negative standpoint, the Bible tells us many things that do not please God. In Proverbs, we read these six things the Lord hates. In fact, seven are an abomination to him, and here's the list of do nots.

A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brethren. Paul tells us in Romans 8 that they that are of the flesh, or those that live after the flesh, cannot please God. In Galatians 5, Paul describes what it is to live after the flesh.

These are the earmarks. These are the things that people do in living after the flesh, and if you do, you cannot please God. Paul tells us that the works of the flesh are adultery, fornication, sexual uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, partying, and such like.

And Paul said, I've told you before, and I tell you again, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. How then can I live to please God? Well, in Hebrews chapter 11, we read concerning this man named Enoch in the Old Testament, and it says that he was translated that he should not see death. He was not found because God had translated him.

For before his translation, he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith, it is impossible to please God. For he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him.

How can I please God? By putting my trust in him, by seeking him, seeking to know what he would have me to do, and doing it. Someone said concerning Enoch that he went out for his evening walk with God and just never came home. So close to God, he just continued the path right into the presence of God.

God is pleased when you walk with him, putting your faith and trust in him. In Hebrews 13, 6, we're exhorted to not to forget to do good and to give sacrificially to help others, for that pleases God. Not living for ourselves, living for others.

Jesus is surely the classic example of one who lived to please the Father. In fact, Jesus said, I do always those things that please the Father. It seems like on two occasions that God acknowledged that Jesus did live his life to please him.

When Jesus was baptized, you remember there was that voice that came from heaven that said, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. And then we read when Jesus was there on the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James, and John, that as he was transfigured before them, there came again that voice saying, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. What is the secret of pleasing the Father? In John 6, 38, Jesus said, I did not come from heaven to do my own will, but the will

of him who sent me.

There's the key, not doing my own will, setting that aside in order that I might do the will of the Father. We read that in the Garden of Gethsemane, that as Jesus was facing the cross, that as he was praying to the Father, he said, if it's possible, let this cup that is the cross pass from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, thy will be done.

That is the key to pleasing God, not my will, thy will be done. In Psalm 40, there is a prophecy concerning Jesus. He said, then said I, lo I come, the volume of the book is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, your law is within my heart.

I delight in doing your will. In Philippians, Paul tells us that Jesus made himself of no reputation. He took upon himself the form of a servant.

Though he was made in the likeness of men and found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, submitting to the will of the Father. We all of us come to those places where I have the choice. I can do what I want to do in this situation, or I can do what pleases the Father.

Someone is driving recklessly on the highway. I see them in my rear view mirror. They're weaving in and out of traffic, and as they come up beside me, I realize that they're wanting to pass me, and I realize if I just leave a little space, they're going to dart in and around, and as they do, I want to honk my horn and shake my fist.

I mean, you're jeopardizing other people's lives. You're driving so foolishly, and I'll meet you at the next signal, because they'll be stopped waiting for me to get there for the light to turn green. Now, my will is yell at them, honk my horn, show my displeasure.

What is God's will? Lord, help them to get wherever they're going without a wreck or without hurting somebody, to pray. But you see, we have those choices to make every day in many different situations. How I respond, how I react can be of my flesh, or it can be of the Spirit.

Reacting of the flesh is not pleasing to God. Reacting after the Spirit does please God. And so, when I'm thinking about pleasing God, it's important that I respond to the situations that I'm facing in such a way that God will be pleased.

He'll smile, and he'll say, good job, Chuck. You didn't respond after the flesh, but you responded as I would have you to respond. The path that I have trod has brought me near to God, though it often led through sorrow's gate.

It's not the way I'd choose, for in my way, I might lose the joy that yet for me awaits, not what I wish to be, nor where I wish to go. For who am I that I should choose my way? The Lord shall choose for me, tis better far I know, so let him bid me go or stay. Do I choose to please myself, or do I choose to please God? So oftentimes, when we are measuring a situation, we seek to use the standard of right and wrong.

Is it all right to do this, or is it wrong to do this? But I believe that there is a standard that is even higher than right or wrong and should be considered, and that is, if I do this, am I doing it to please myself, or am I doing it to please God? I might prove that there's nothing wrong in doing that, that it's perfectly acceptable. It's not a sin, but maybe it isn't what God would have me to do. Maybe what I do, would it be

pleasing to him? And so really, that's the question that we should ask ourselves.

Does it please God? Because, you see, that's why I exist, to please him. Living for Jesus, a life that is true, striving to please him in all that I do, yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free, this is the pathway of blessing for me. O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself for thee, for thou and thy atonement didst give thyself for me.

I own no other master. My heart shall be thine own, for my life I give henceforth to live, O Christ, for thee alone. If I live to please God, there are wonderful consequences.

In Proverbs 16, 7, Solomon wrote, When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Paul wrote in Colossians 1, 10, that you might walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing him, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. As I please God, I become fruitful in every good work, and I increase in my knowledge of him.

John wrote in 1 John 3, 22, And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and we do those things that are pleasing in his sight. Gives you great power in prayer. Whatever you ask, you receive, because you're living to please him.

There is a great peace, there is great contentment, and there is tremendous fulfillment when I please God. When I do things that are pleasing to me, there's usually the emptiness that ultimately results from it. But when I do things that please God, it leaves me so fulfilled, so enriched, so blessed.

And so as Paul writes to the Thessalonians, and he says to them, You have received of us how that you ought to so walk as to please God. The answer to a rich, fulfilling life. Live it not for yourself, live it for him, pleasing him, and the results will be yours.

Father, we thank you for the privilege of living our lives, Lord, so as to please you. And we ask this day, Lord, that you'll help us to really stop and analyze the whole situation. And Lord, there are those here today that feel that emptiness, they accomplished so much, and yet Lord, there is that emptiness, that void within.

They're still searching, they're still hoping that the next project, the next thing will bring the contentment that they're looking for. But Lord, you told the woman, drink of the water, you will thirst again. And we realize, Lord, this is so true of these earthly pursuits, that we drink of the water, but we find that we are thirsting again.

It didn't satisfy. Lord, may we find the joy and the satisfaction that comes from living our lives for the purpose of pleasing you. And may you be pleased, Lord, with us.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to minister to you and to pray for you. As we're dismissed, we would encourage you, if there are needs in your life, that you just come forward and ask these men to pray with you and to pray for you.

The factual, fervent prayer, the Bible says, of a righteous man availeth much. And so, they're here to minister to you. And maybe, maybe you realize that there is that emptiness that you've been trying to fill in so many things, so many projects, so many ways.

But to be honest and to confess, there is that emptiness. Maybe today you'd like to just really commit your life to please God, to change the direction. No longer living for self, but now living for Him, pleasing Him.

You might know the richness and the joy and the blessings of serving and pleasing Him. They'll be glad to pray with you. Come on forward as we're dismissed.

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

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