

# Pleasing God

by James Smith

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*Pleasing God is possible through our actions and attitudes, and it requires aiming to please God, living a holy, consistent life, obeying God's commands, and seeking to glorify God in all things.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 147:11, Proverbs 16:7, Romans 8:8, 2 Corinthians 5:9, Ephesians 5:10, Philippians 2:13, Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:1, Hebrews 10:22, Hebrews 13:16

**Topics:** "Sanctified Living", "Pleasing God"

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## Description

James Smith preaches on the concept of pleasing God, emphasizing that while sinners cannot please God, believers in Christ who have received His grace and salvation can indeed bring delight to God by living a sanctified life and seeking to honor Him in all they do. The sermon highlights that God takes pleasure in the prayers, praises, and consistent walking of His people, as well as in their obedience to His commands and participation in sacraments like baptism and the Lord's Supper. Pleasing God should be the ultimate aim of every Christian, as it leads to personal satisfaction and harmony within the body of Christ.

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## Transcript

"Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more!" 1 Thessalonians 4:1

My mind is struck with the idea. I ask, "Is it possible for a sinner to do anything that will please God?" The reply is, No, not considered simply as a sinner; for those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But if the sinner has received Christ; if he is a believer in Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; if he has put on Christ, and realized acceptance in the beloved--then he can please God. Being sanctified by the Holy Spirit; having his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience; looking to Jesus alone for peace, acceptance, and salvation--he can now glorify God in his body and spirit, which are God's.

O delightful idea, to please God! that God whom I had offended, whose law cursed me, whose justice once condemned me, whose wrath was once feared by me; to please him--and for him to take pleasure in me--is truly delightful. Yes, for this purpose he redeemed me by the blood of his Son, taught me by his gracious Spirit, and led me into liberty and peace. That I might please him--he called me his child, gave me the Spirit of adoption, and blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. And I do find that when grace is in exercise in my soul, nothing appears more desirable, nothing more sweet and

pleasant, than having the opportunity and ability to please God.

God is pleased with the secret, heartfelt, fervent prayers of his people. The eye of divine compassion lingers with delight over the closet, the barn, or the chamber, where the Christian enters to pour out his soul before God. The secrecy honors his divine omniscience, the silence his omnipresence, the emptiness his mercy, the sense of unworthiness his grace, the plea his justice, the confidence his faithfulness, and the act as a whole, his paternal character and infinite love. The empty-handed, Jesus-pleading, resolute petitioner at God's throne--pleases him! No angel's harp yields such music, or ministers such delight.

So also the feeble praises we present, he has condescended to assure us they glorify him; he comes and makes a home of them he is so well pleased with them; hence the Psalmist addresses him, "O you who inhabits the praises of Israel." As the Shechinah-glory over the Mercy seat was enveloped in the smoke of the burning incense, so our God loves to be surrounded with the heartfelt praises of his people. O let us call upon him often, and praise him always, for thereby we please him.

We are mistaken if we think prayer or praise is only for ourselves; prayer and praise please our God, and bring down blessings on our souls.

Holy consistent walking in the world, in the family, and the church of God, is well pleasing in his sight: when the Christian is clothed with humility, ornamented with a meek and quiet spirit, filled with faith in Christ and his word, with love to God, his people, and poor sinners, and aims at the glory of God and the good of souls in all it undertakes, it pleases God; and this should be our ardent desire and constant aim.

There is nothing which Jesus has commanded his disciples--but it is pleasing to God, when attended to in a loving spirit, from gospel motives, and with a laudable design.

In baptism the believer pleases God; he comes forth and professes before the world and the church that he is building on Christ alone for salvation: that he has renounced self, the world, and the service of sin; that Christ is his all in all; that he desires to honor him as his priest--by relying on his perfect atonement; as his prophet--by receiving his instructions, and approving his command; as his king--by walking in his ways and observing all his statutes. He professes he looks to Jesus alone for salvation, and yet holds himself under grateful obligation to obey.

So also in the supper of the Lord, he meets the holy family at his Lord's command, in order to observe his precept and do his will; he there looks to Jesus, remembers the garden where he agonized and sweat blood, and the cross where he languished and died. He blesses the Father for his gift, Jesus for his condescending love and vicarious sufferings, and the Holy Comforter for the revelation of the facts in the word and to the heart.

So in all the Christian does--he may please God; in his meditations, plans, purposes, and actions; and in all he should study how he may please the Lord.

When the believer aims at pleasing God--then he is most likely to be pleased with God. It is an solemn fact--but a fact it is, that the Lord's own family are often displeased with him in his dealings with them. Perhaps there is no one person with whom we are so often offended as the Lord. He has managed the world for nearly 6000 years, and yet his people often feel, and talk as though it was but badly managed; the dispensations of his providence in every age, have produced and secured the welfare of all his saints, and yet they often complain as though all things were against them.

We often find believers whom God has in mercy bereaved, or stripped of their idols, making it manifest that they find it very hard to forgive the Lord for what he has done. The Lord's ways never so well please us--as when we aim in all things to please him. Jesus pleased him always and in all things, and he was pleased with his Father, kept his commandments and abode in his love, though his lot was the hardest that was ever endured. When we seek to please God in all things--then we are most likely to please ourselves; we often find this a difficult matter, and so sure as we aim at it we shall miss the mark. We are not pleased with our prayers, our praises, our graces, our lot, or anything we do; and it is generally going ill with us, if we are. But if we sought simply to please God more--we would look at self and our own things less; we should mourn over failings, grieve at short-comings, and seek grace, that we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

A true Christian never can please or satisfy himself--but only as he pleases God. If we sought only to please God--we would doubtless please God's spiritual people more. How often do we grieve, vex, and displease members of the heaven-born family; and why? Very frequently it is because we are so unlovely in our tempers, ways, and deportment; so little like Jesus, so much like the world. But if pleasing God was our constant object--we would be much with God, and be often beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and become changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. Like Moses coming from the mount, our faces would shine; or like Paul coming from the third heaven, we should, in the same sense as he did, please all men in all things.

Never are the Lord's right-minded saints so pleased with other saints, as when they discover by their spirits, actions, and aim, that they are endeavoring to please God. And we must not forget that it is written, When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Proverbs 16:7. When we aim in all things to please God, we shall be able to make allowance for the feebleness and infirmities of others. We shall be less severe in our censures, more charitable in our spirits, and more condescending in our manner. The bitterness and uncharitableness of spirit in Christians often originates in mistaken views, supposed superiority, and aiming at a wrong end: if we only sought to please God, there would be more love, forbearance, and compassion among us.

Paul beseeches us by the Lord Jesus to walk so as to please God, and abound therein more and more. As if he had said, If you have any love for that Jesus who laid aside his glory, assumed your nature, suffered your desert, obtained your release at the expense of bitter privations, dreadful agonies, and inconceivable sufferings, and who now pleads your cause at the right hand of the Father--then so walk as to please God. If you have any reverence for his authority whom the Father has highly exalted, and to whom is given a name above every name, who rules over heaven, earth, and hell, and seeks your welfare in all--then so walk as to please God. If you have any concern for his glory who took so deep an interest in your eternal welfare, that he considered no sufferings too great, no shame too much, no burden too heavy to be endured, or borne for your relief--then walk so as to please God. If there is any savor in his name, any power in his love, any respect for his word, any desire for his approbation--then walk so as to please God. You have the rule in his word to direct you; you have the motive in his love to influence you; you have the encouragement in his promise to incite you; you have the happiness that flows from his gracious presence and smile to allure you--O then walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, abounding in every good work.

Can we consider this subject--without feeling reproved? Can we look back upon our lives without grief and regret? Can we look from the subject--to the cross or the throne, without ardent desire and earnest prayer, that our God would pour upon us such a measure of his grace, and so much of his Spirit, as shall not only

enable--but constrain us to walk so as to please God? Surely not, if we are under divine teaching, or are partakers of the grace of God. Never let us expect permanent peace, holy joy, or solid and lasting satisfaction, unless brought to walk, habitually to walk, so as to please God. And let us remember that for this purpose we were chosen in Christ, put among his children, redeemed by the invaluable blood of the Lamb, blessed with the Gospel, visited by the Spirit, and are continued in the world. And let us also bear in mind that the Lord is not pleased with anything of ours because there is any inherent excellence in it, or because it adds anything to him; this cannot be the case: but as the parent is pleased with the acts of of the child, because he is a child, and an object of complacency and love; and because what he does springs from love, is done because commanded, and with a desire to please: so our heavenly Father is pleased with the imperfect actings of his children when they aim at his glory, out of love to him as their God, and because he has commanded them so to act in his holy word. He views their persons in Christ, and accepts and testifies his approbation of their actions, as they come up before him perfumed with the incense of the dear Redeemer's merits. My brethren in the Lord, may we be enabled constantly to aim at pleasing God in all we do, and never consider that we have arrived at this sufficiently--but seek to abound therein more and more. Amen.

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