

Trying to Please the Lord

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of pleasing God and living an inward life, rather than seeking to please men and living an external life.

Duration: 57:16

Scripture: Proverbs 31:30, Matthew 8:10, Matthew 18:4, Luke 3:21-22, 1 Corinthians 10:5, Ephesians 5:10, 1 Peter 3:3-4

Topics: "Humility And Obedience", "Pleasing God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of aligning our thinking with God's will, focusing on humility, seeking what pleases the Lord, and valuing internal character over external appearances. It highlights the need to be childlike in humility, gentle, and quiet in spirit, following the example of Jesus and Mary. The message encourages seeking God's approval over the praise of men and striving to live a life that pleases the Father, even in hidden acts of goodness.

Transcript

If we can believe that God always desires what is the best for us, one of the things that Jesus was trying to emphasize to his disciples throughout the three and a half years he was with them, you know, when he was trying to teach them how if earthly fathers give good things to their children, how much more will your heavenly father give good things to those who ask him? Not only to those who ask him, but always God desires to give us that which is the very best for us. But the more immature we are, the less we understand what is good for us. I mean, we see that with our own children.

Little children don't know what's good for them. We parents discover that the younger they are, the less they realize what is good for them. One mark of maturity is that as these children grow up, their thinking aligns more and more with the thinking of their parents.

They begin to know what's good for them. For example, a three-year-old doesn't know a lot of things that's good for them. By the time he's 10 or 12, he knows a little better.

By the time he's 17, 18, he knows a little better. But still, most 17, 18-year-olds, their thinking is not aligned with their parents at all. They think their parents are old-fashioned and out of touch.

But by the time those teenagers become about 30, 40, and have children of their own, their thinking is aligned with what their parents believe. So it's a process by which as we grow, little children, they thinking

becomes more and more like their parents, because their parents always desire what's good for them. So that's one way we can also know that we are growing, that our thinking is more and more aligned with God's.

In other words, we agree more and more with Scripture, because that's God's will is revealed here. And if you find yourself in conflict with Scripture, whether it's a small commandment or a big one, you know that you're not mature yet. You need to grow.

You know, the Bible says that Jesus said that we are to go into all the world and make disciples. And disciples are those who learn from their master and follow their master. We see that in non-Christian religions also.

They have someone called a guru. And I'll tell you something, in non-Christian religions like Hinduism, the disciples of a guru are usually a thousand times better than those who say that Jesus Christ is their Lord. They seek to follow their guru in many, many areas, whereas those who claim to be Christians, even believers, do not seek to understand what it is, I mean, how the master lived on earth.

So I want to just think of one area. If you look at Luke chapter 3, if you really want to know how our master lived on earth, here is a great verse. You know that most of the Gospels, almost all of the Gospels, describe only 10% of Jesus' life.

And most of that describes his ministry. If you look at the Gospels, you read very little, about the way Jesus lived. Most of what you read is his preaching, and his healing, and his miracles, and his travels, and his discussions with others, but very little about how he lived.

So we can say that deals with the external part of Jesus' life. But there was another part of Jesus' life which is much more important. And to be a disciple is to follow Jesus in that other part.

If we concentrate on the Gospels, very few people can do the things Jesus did there. I mean, almost none of us can preach like Jesus preached. None of us can do the miracles he did.

So those are not the areas where we can follow him. How many Christians do you find? I've never found one who can do the miracles Jesus did in my whole life. I've never found anybody who can preach like Jesus.

But I have met a few who live a little more and more like Christ as they grow up. And those are the ones who look to see how Jesus lived more than how he preached or what miracles he did. So here's a verse in Luke chapter 3, and this is when he was baptized.

The heavens were open, verse 21 and 22. And a voice came out of heaven saying, you're my beloved son. In you I am well pleased.

That's a very important verse because that tells us that for 30 years Jesus pleased the Father. And he never did a miracle in those 30 years. He never preached a sermon.

He never cast out a demon. If he went to the synagogue, he didn't participate in the synagogue. He was not a musician.

I don't think Jesus would play any instruments. All these things matter nothing to God. These things that mean a lot to people in the world means absolutely zero to God.

But some of us can feel discouraged that we don't have the gifts that other people have, whether it's to speak or sing or anything. But Jesus wasn't preaching or singing or doing any of those things in those 30 years. And the Father said, I'm well pleased with him.

So to be a disciple means to look at your master, Jesus Christ, and say, Lord, how did you please the Father in those 30 years? For me, that's been almost the greatest passion of my life for many years now, to find out how Jesus pleased the Father in those 30 years. Why is that so important? Because if you are grateful to Jesus Christ and to God for saving you, that gratitude is not going to be shown by just saying, thank you, Lord. That's empty.

It's like children who say, thank you, dad, mom, and then do what they please and never please you. I mean, there are millions of children like that who will send thank you notes to their dad and mom, write birthday greetings and live exactly as they like displeasing their father. And I tell you, there are millions of believers like that who sing wonderful songs on Sunday to God, but live exactly as they please.

And you tell me, are you happy with such children just because they wrote you a thank you note or a birthday card and then lived as they like? You would rather that they don't send you a thank you card and don't send you a birthday greeting, but live in a way that pleases you. God is exactly like that. You know, God doesn't care whether you can sing or not.

God doesn't care whether you even come for a meeting or not. I don't know how many meetings Jesus went to. He went on the Sabbath to synagogue.

It was probably boring sitting there, and I don't think he paid one bit of an attention to the boring sermons the Pharisees preached. I think he sat there because Joseph and Mary took him there, but I think his mind was set on God. These are not the things.

You need to ask yourself whether your life consists of the externals of the Christian religion or the inward ones. That shows whether you're in the Old Covenant or the New Covenant. The Old Covenant is full of externals, and if your Christianity is only in the external things you do, reading the Bible, going to prayer, praying, going to meetings, doing external things like that, you are in the Old Covenant, whatever you may believe.

That's why you're defeated by sin. You always wonder, you know, why am I so defeated by sin, in spite of going to meetings? I'll tell you, because you haven't sought to live that inner life with God. The outer life means more to you.

The approval of men means more to you than the approval of God, but you'll never get victory over sin then, not in a hundred years, until you change your emphasis and say, Lord, I want to concentrate on my inner life. The Bible says, I mean, many people talk about those 30 years of Jesus in Nazareth, those hidden years, and if you have heard me preach the last 35 years almost, I've spoken more about that life of Jesus in those 30 years than about all his public ministry, because that is what pleased the Father. And I want to live my life on earth pleasing the Father, not pleasing men.

And the Bible says in Galatians 1.10, that if you seek to please men, you can never be a servant of Christ. Do you know that every one of you can be servants of Jesus Christ? If you decide one thing, that you'll never live to seek the honor of men. Never.

Make that determination. I will not live to get the praise of men. The praise or approval of men means nothing to me.

If I do seek the approval of a person, it will be a very doubtful person, because his mind is more likely to be the mind of God. I'm not going to worry about the opinion of worldly people. I mean, Paul or John, the apostle around here, I certainly would be interested in their opinion about me, because they live pretty close to the Lord, but not the opinion of all the others.

So let me give you an example of another person, another group of people in 1 Corinthians 10. We saw that Jesus pleased the Father for 30 years without doing any miracles, without doing what we would think are the most important aspects of Christian religion, the externals. He wasn't even engaged in evangelism.

He wasn't engaged in any type of ministry. He spent those years at home and at his place of work. I'm sure he did a lot of good to people, definitely.

That he would have started doing from the time he was a small boy. I'm sure he helped his mother, helped his brothers, helped a lot of people around in those 30 years, which are all hidden. I don't think you'll discover it even in heaven.

See, that's another mark of a truly godly person. He does good, and nobody knows about it. Jesus did good for 30 years, and you ask me, what is the good he did in Nazareth? I don't know.

Nobody knows. Isn't it wonderful to live a life that you do good, and nobody knows the good that you did? If you're like that, you're like Christ. The more you're like that, the more you're like Jesus Christ.

The more you want others to know, the more you advertise, and imagine that you're a wonderful person because everybody knows what all good you do, I'd say you're closer to the devil. Not the Christ. Jesus lived such a faithful life that till today, 2,000 years, people haven't discovered what he did in those 30 years.

What a way to live. Because, I'll tell you why, the father saw him. That was enough.

I want to ask you, when you do good, is it enough that the father knows about it? Or do you also want others to know about it? That's where you need to look at your master and be a disciple, and say, Lord, I want you to know when that's enough. Never think. That's one reason why, as a church, there are many ways in which we are a little different from other churches.

We don't claim to be superior or better, but different. Different in the sense, for example, that we never take an offering. We don't even ask people to give, because the moment you ask, you're putting pressure.

Pressure. God loves a cheerful giver, and so, you see, those who want to give can always put money in the box. That's up to them.

And nobody knows. If you want to get approved, better get it from God. And the other thing is, we never send a report of our work to anyone.

No photographs of our work. So many people have asked us. We say, no, we don't do it.

So many people support the work here, and we tell them, we're sorry, we cannot send you any report of our work. If you don't trust us, don't send us any money. That's fine.

But we will not send a report of our work or any photographs of our work anywhere, because Jesus never did it. That's the reason. I remember years ago, the Lord said to me that, you know, the old days when we didn't have these electronic cameras, where we had to put a roll of film inside a camera and take pictures, and then when it's all over, you give it to a shop to develop it and print it.

Do you know what would happen if you take out that roll of film and expose it to the light, and then give it to the Photoshop? You know what would happen? Some of you younger people who don't know such cameras won't know the answer. But I'll tell you, everything will be wiped out. You have to keep it in the dark.

And even when they develop it, they had to take that roll into what is called a dark room and develop it there. And the Lord said to me, your work must be like that. All that you do for me, all your life for me is, the moment you expose it to others, it's gone.

Or if you expose one slide, it's gone. The rest of it is there. Or you expose two shots, that's gone.

How much of your life is gone? It'll never come back. You can never retrieve it back on that. You can do things, you can take pictures of the future and don't show it to others.

But what is already shown to others is gone. You get up into eternity and say, Lord, didn't I do this? No, it's not there. It's not on your record.

It's wiped out. Because you did it to show other people. I'm not talking about people accidentally discovering something.

That's different. I'm talking about things where you do it and you want others to know, or you do it in order to show others. Or you don't want to do it to show that you are happy when other people know about it.

That's enough. It's exposed. The film is exposed and it's wiped out.

I believe a lot of Christians have got a major part of their life wiped out. Because so much of what they do is to impress people. I can be tempted when I stand here to preach, to impress people.

People who stand up here to sing, constantly tempted to impress people. Everything is wiped out. Imagine having all of your service for God wiped out.

Wouldn't that be terrible? You stand before God and God says, you did nothing for me. Lord, I did such a lot. Really? Let me see it.

It's not there. Please remember this. It's good to know it now.

Jesus said that very clearly. He said, when you do good, don't let your left hand know what your right hand does. Which means sometimes you've got to do good without your wife knowing about it.

Or your husband. When you do good to someone. That's how Jesus lived.

That's one of the major things we need to learn. See, there's a phrase in, yeah, I want to show you this verse first. 1 Corinthians 10.

Speaks here about a number of people. You know, we saw that Jesus pleased the father for 30 years. And here are some people who did not please the father for 38 years.

1 Corinthians 10 speaks about the people who came out of Israel and were redeemed by the blood of the lamb. They passed through the sea, verse 1, and they were baptized. They had two baptisms.

Just like we have two baptisms. Baptism in water, they went through the water of the Red Sea. And baptism in the Holy Spirit, that is a cloud that came down from heaven.

And they had food, like we have the word of God. They drank the Holy Spirit, symbolizing the water that came from the rock. But then, after all this, after being born again, baptized in water, baptized in the Holy Spirit, symbolically, it says, nevertheless, verse 5, God was not well-pleased.

Now, you've got to contrast this verse with what we read in Luke chapter 3. God says, I am well-pleased with somebody who lived his life hidden for 30 years. And here is someone with whom God said, I'm not well-pleased. Now, when you see those two statements, I'll tell you what comes home to my heart.

I say, Lord, I want to find out. What is it that you are not well-pleased with in those people? And what is it that you were well-pleased with in Jesus for 30 years? Very important to find out. I'll tell you why.

Because in other words, I want to show you in Ephesians chapter 5. See, one of the things I've been emphasizing nowadays to Christians is, read the Bible slowly. We read too fast. Read the Bible slowly.

It doesn't matter if you read only one verse a day. If you meditate on that verse for 15 minutes, it'll do you a lot more good than reading 15 verses sometimes. When you're reading the genealogies, you can read them all in a few seconds.

But when it comes to certain verses, you've got to stop. This is one of those. How many of you remember that there is a verse like this in the Bible? Try to learn, try to learn, try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

You know there's a verse like that in the Bible? How many of you knew it? Ephesians 5 verse 10. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. If you want an education, something better than mathematics, chemistry, physics, computer science, engineering, medicine, learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

That must be number one. And it says we must try. That's a great verse.

It's a great verse to think about frequently. Trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. If someone says, what are you doing? Try to learn what's pleasing to the Lord.

I hope that is uppermost in our mind. Yeah, we're doing a lot of other things. We're working to earn our living.

We are bringing up our children. We've got to look after our home. We've got to do 101 things in this earth, but top of the list, what am I doing? I am trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Make that a motto in your life. I'm trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord because that's what it says in Ephesians 5 and verse 10. I must try to learn.

It's not easy. I mean, if it is something easy, there's no need to say try. You know, like a teacher will sometimes tell a student doing a difficult task, try, try.

Come on, you can make it. Try and do that. You can do it.

It's like when you teach our little children how to bicycle. Try, try. You can do it.

You can do it without falling. Anything, you know, which as children grow up, they learn to walk and say, come on, don't give up. Try.

You'll walk one of these days. Trying requires effort. Think of how long it takes for a child to learn how to walk.

It probably falls a thousand times before it walks, but it doesn't give up. And many other things. We have many of the things that you have learned in life.

You have learned whether in school or in college, because you try. You sat up till midnight. Don't you remember you college students, ex-college students, how you sat up till midnight some to try and find out how to learn that, how that thing works or what that subject is all about.

Why did you do it? Because you felt that if you do it, you get success. They're going to be good long-term results. You would reap something useful in exactly the same way, in the same spirit.

I want to encourage you now to try also to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. So when you read two phrases like this about Jesus for 30 years, he was well-pleasing to the father. Israelites in the wilderness were not well-pleasing to the father.

You need to ask yourself, what is it that's not well-pleasing to the father? Well, number one was that when the Israelites came to the border of the land of Canaan, and the Lord had promised them, I will send you into the land, they did not believe God would kill those giants. See, God wanted that land of Canaan completely for his people. He promised it to Abraham 400 years earlier.

He said, now go and occupy it. I'll help you to defeat those giants. They said, no, they're too strong for us.

They didn't have faith that God was more powerful than those giants. That was the main, number one reason why God was not happy with them. So let's apply that to our life.

All those things that happened in the Old Testament, we read in 1 Corinthians 10 were examples for us. Today, the land of Canaan is our body. Inside this body, from our childhood, many giants have lived and have ruled us.

Giants, not just, they're giants who rule the body. Giants of sexual lusts that have occupied certain areas in this land and say, this is my territory. You will do what I say.

And every time it says, that giant says, come on, lust after somebody, you obey because he's the ruler in that territory. Come on, turn to that internet pornographic site and listen to me. Go and click there.

You say, yes, sir. You do it. He rules that area.

You might as well recognize it. Don't pretend he's not ruling that area. He is.

Or another giant called anger. He rules another area of this land and says, every time I tell you to get angry with somebody, you are going to listen to me. Okay.

Especially when somebody gets upset with you, I'm going to tell you what to do. Give him a piece of your mind or give her a piece of your mind, especially if it's your husband or wife. Yes, sir.

I'll do as you say. He rules a certain area of your life or don't forget that person, the giant of unforgiveness. I tell you, don't ever forgive that person.

Do you know what harm he did to you? You know what harm he did to your children? Don't ever forgive him. Listen to me. Yes, sir.

I'm not talking about unbelievers. I'm talking about believers. I'm talking about people who say they are born again.

Who got people are redeemed from Egypt. People who put the blood of the lamb outside the door. People were baptized in the Red Sea with the cloud of baptism that came upon them.

People have experienced miracles, answers to prayer, who got healings, who can testify how God answered prayer, who can say, yes, we were bitten by poisonous snakes, but he looked to the Lord and he healed us. God was not pleased with him. Do you know the number of Christians who fool themselves that God is happy with them because he answered some prayer of theirs? You know, if you've got one of those Israelites to stand up here and give a testimony, you would be absolutely amazed at his testimony and every word of it would be true.

He would stand up here and say, you know, brothers and sisters, where we got our breakfast from every morning? Straight from heaven. I mean, later on, Elijah got it from the cross, but this is even better. Straight from heaven every morning.

An angel serving breakfast every morning. I mean, if that happened to you once in your life, you'd be talking about, you'd probably write a book about it to let the whole world know that once in your life you got breakfast from heaven. These guys got it for 40 years and you won't believe it.

You know where we got water from in the desert? We just hit a rock and the water came out. You think he's telling stories. He's not.

And he'd show you his sandals and say, you know, we wore these sandals for 40 years in that desert, never wore out. Unbelievable. This shirt I'm wearing, 40 years, never wore out.

And you know, another thing, we never had one lame man in our 2 million. How could a lame man go in the desert? It's written in the Psalms. I don't have time to show you this verse.

I tell you, boy, what a man of God you'd say. No, no, no. He's not a man of God.

And God was displeased with him for 38 years. That's the part he won't tell you. Can God be displeased with somebody who he blesses and gives material things to, answers prayers, does miracles for them? It's one of the greatest deceptions in Christianity today to think that God is happy with you because he's blessed you with material things.

I would say that's almost the number one deception today among those who believe the prosperity gospel. And what is worse among those who are against the prosperity gospel deep down in their hearts, they feel God is happy with me because he answered certain prayers of mine. He's given my children good jobs.

Uh-huh. But you're like the people in the wilderness. I'll tell you when God is happy with you.

When you get rid of those giants of anger and sexual lust and bitterness and jealousy and unforgiveness from your heart, then God will be happy with you. But you keep those giants there and say, I got breakfast from heaven. God answered my prayer.

God healed my sickness. I want to tell you, you're deceiving yourself. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

And one way to learn that is try to learn what is not pleasing to the Lord. So when we read about those Israelites, that God was not well-pleased with them. Hey, I want to know.

I mean, it's like a good obedient son. I want to know what dad's not happy with. I want to know what dad is not happy.

And that's a good obedience. I think any of us would like to have children like that. Dad and mom are not happy with it.

I don't want to do it. I mean, I may like to do it, but I don't want to do it with dad and mom not happy. I tell you, such children will be protected from a lot of evil in the world because what does it mean for a child to honor their father and mother? I think all of you parents, every one of you believe that children must honor their father and mother.

And I also know every one of you parents believe that children must obey their parents. I want to ask you, how many of you believe that in the same way you must honor God and you must obey God exactly the same way as you want your children to honor you and obey you exactly the same. I'm not asking for more.

You see how we are inconsistent. We want those beneath us, our children honor us and obey us, but we don't want to honor and obey someone who's above us. And that's why we have so many problems in our Christian life.

And that's why many of our children go astray and are rebellious. You know what the Roman centurion said to Jesus? Listen to his words. If you don't know it, turn to Matthew chapter eight.

That's quite an amazing revelation. And he was a non-Christian and Jesus called his statement a statement of faith. Do you believe this is a statement of faith? Now I'll show you that first.

Jesus heard this in verse 10. Jesus heard this. And when he heard it, he was amazed.

He was amazed that a non-Jewish person could have such understanding of faith. And he said to those who are following, I tell you, I have never found such great faith with anybody in Israel. All of you Israelites, or today Jesus would say all of you Christians don't have the faith of this Roman soldier.

What was his faith? Did he do miracles? No, he couldn't do miracles. He asked Jesus to do a miracle for him. His faith was manifested in these words.

Lord, I believe your word has got authority. Verse eight, because verse nine, listen to this. I am a man under authority with soldiers under me.

You got it? He was probably, I don't know what he was. If he was a captain, he had a general on top of him and the general told him the captain what to do. And he would tell the soldiers, go.

They'd go. He'd say, come. And they'd come.

And he'd say to his slave, do this. Verse nine, and they didn't do it. Why? Because when his general told him, come, he would come.

When the general said, go, he would go. When the general said, do this, he would do this. He was a man under authority and therefore he had authority over those under him.

It's a fundamental principle. When we learn to submit to authority, I mean spiritual God-given authority. I don't mean any Tom, Dick or Harry who thinks he's an authority.

It always brings authority into our lives. And the reason why we don't have authority, spiritual authority in many areas is because we don't submit to the authority of God. Very simple.

The more I submit to the authority of God in every area of my life, and that means obeying everything he says, he says, do this and I do it. He says, go and I go, just come and I come. That's the meaning of submitting to authority.

You know what will happen to me? I will have authority over situations in my life. I'll have authority over circumstances. I'll be a man with spiritual authority.

No giant will be able to rule in my body. I'll tell that giant to go and he goes. I'll tell that giant to shut up and he'll shut up.

It's like you tell a demon to shut up and he shuts up. Why is it you tell that giant to go and he says nothing doing? I'm going to sit here. Because God told you to do something and you said, I've got to think about that.

Well, keep thinking about it. As long as you keep thinking about it, that giant's going to rule in your life. This is the principle.

See, the proof of God's blessing, as I said, is not that God gives us so many things. Matthew five, I've often quoted this verse. It says, God is a good God.

Verse 47, it says, so that you, 547. You may be sons of your father in heaven because your father in heaven causes his son to rise in the evil and the good, sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Now, you know, those days that most people were farmers.

Ninety-nine percent of people were farmers. The most important thing a farmer requires is sun and rain. Sun and rain are required for his crops and his trees and plants.

Now, here is a very God-fearing farmer in one field and next to him is a farmer who's an atheist or a wicked, godless man. And when God sends the rain, he sends it on both fields equally. And when God makes the sun to rise, the sun rises on both fields equally.

Does it mean God is happy with that godless man? No, not at all. It only proves that God is a good God. That's all.

So that teaches us one thing, that when God blesses a person with material things, it only proves God is a good God. He doesn't prove anything about you. Many things we pray for.

But do you know that there are a lot of material things I'm talking about? There are godless people in the world who get those things without praying. There are believers who pray to have a child and sometimes they don't have a child. There are terrorists who pray to have children who have multiple wives and have many children.

What does it prove? God's blessing them and not blessing you? You got to be off your head. And they're training some of those children to be suicide bombers. Are you saying God blesses? Do you see how wrong ideas even Christians have about God's blessing? God's blessing is not having children.

It was in the Old Testament, not today. Many people have money, but unbelievers have more money than believers. The richest people in the world, by the way, are not believers.

No. In no country in the world are the richest people believers. Most of the richest people in the world are crooks and cheats and people who don't, and atheists and things like that.

The healthiest people in the world are not believers. No. You look up the Guinness Book of Records, the oldest man and woman lived and never a believer.

What do these things prove? These are not the marks of God's blessing. God blesses people in all these ways because He's a good God. So I want to eliminate this from our mind completely, because if we don't understand this, we'll have to say that all religions are the same.

Jesus Christ is not the only way to the Father, we'll see. I'll tell you why. Because in the Islamic countries, they say Allah is the true God because He's given us all the oil.

And people in the world come begging to our country for oil. And people from other lands, from India, long to get a job in the Gulf, where Allah has given people oil. And the Christians come there begging to give us a job here, to give us some money.

And then, you know, some of the richest people in India, businessmen, are people who worship the goddess Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth. They go to the temples, offer pujas, and they say, that's what made us rich. And some very rich businessmen in India, who are Hindus, who are the world's top 100 richest people in the world, who became rich from nothing.

They say, our goddess Lakshmi is the true God. So you have two, Lakshmi is the true God, Allah is the true God. And then there are Christian preachers who say, no, Jesus is the true God.

You ask Him, He will make you rich. Somehow, He doesn't seem to make us as rich as these businessmen and these sheikhs, but He'll give you a better car or a better house. Strictly speaking, if that is the argument, He seems to be an inferior God to Allah and Lakshmi, don't you think so? Think of the logic of it.

I'm amazed that so many Christians believe this. I'll tell you the mark of God's blessing, that He makes you more and more like Jesus Christ in your character. If you have become more Christ-like, and if your wife can testify to it, and if your husband can testify to it, God has blessed you.

If your children can testify, and even more, if the servant who works in your home can testify to it, that's a pretty accurate indication of God's blessing. There's a verse in Proverbs that says, a righteous man is even kind to his animals. Yeah, imagine a man who was swearing at his cows and sheep every day, and

suddenly he gets converted, and he stops swearing, and the cow wonders what happened.

Yeah, he got converted yesterday. That's what happened. It's like that.

There's something that happens when a man is filled with the Holy Spirit. He doesn't become richer. He may become poorer.

Jesus wasn't the richest carpenter in Nazareth, because He'd do so many things free for people. How can you become the richest carpenter in Nazareth if you care for poor people? No, you can't do it. The people who have become rich in the world are the people who don't care for the poor.

You know, what is it that Jesus said was pleasing to the Lord? Let me just show you another verse, Matthew 18. Matthew 18, the disciples asked Him a question. Verse 1, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Or in other words, we could paraphrase it like this, who is the one who pleases God the most? Let's find out.

Obviously, that must be the greatest person in heaven, the one who's pleased God the maximum. And He called a little child, I think it was a very young child, and said, unless you're converted, leave alone becoming great in God's kingdom, forget becoming great. He said, unless you're converted and become like little children, you won't even enter that kingdom.

Really? I thought if I say the magic words, Lord Jesus, come into my heart, I'm going to enter into the kingdom. No, that's not what Jesus said. That's what some foolish evangelist told me.

I'll tell you what Jesus said. If you really receive Christ as Lord of your life, this is what will happen. You'll be converted and become like a little child, and you enter the kingdom of heaven.

That's not contradictory to receiving Christ as Lord of your life. When you receive Christ as Lord of your life, you become like a little child before God. It's not just saying some magic mantra words, Lord Jesus, come into my heart.

A lot of people have said that are in hell today. Whoever humbles himself, first you got to get converted. Turn around and say, I want to be like a little child.

Second, you must seek to humble yourself like this child. That is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. We can learn from little children.

In the world, in the scientific world, they learn from professors and great scholars. In the Christian world, you learn from little children. What shall we learn from little children? Humility.

Number one, humility, because that's going to make you great in God's kingdom. Think of a little child lying in a cradle and say, Lord, I want to learn humility from that child. Humility is in the mind.

What is that child thinking when it's lying in that cradle? Have you ever looked at a child three months old lying in a cradle? I've often looked at a child and said, let me try to think, what's that child thinking about? Let me first of all think what he's not thinking about. He's not thinking what a smart fellow I am or how good looking I am. Even if many children are good looking, but they don't realize it themselves.

That's the blessed part of it. If you're good looking and you realize it, I'm sorry to say, you're pretty close to the devil. But if you're good looking and you're not even aware of it, it's wonderful.

You're pretty close to God, I'll tell you. You don't have to be ugly. Little children are very good looking, some of them.

But it doesn't matter. Some children are very dark and they don't have good features. It doesn't matter.

What I'm trying to say is it doesn't matter. It's not a little child who's dark and say, humanly speaking, ugly speaking, doesn't get depressed there and say, oh, I'm so dark, three months old child. Why is my features like this? No.

It's only grownups who think like that. Because they're so conscious of what men will say. If everybody in the world were blind, would you be worried what the color of your skin was? Or whether you were good looking or ugly? Or whether your dress was smart or not? Everybody in the world were blind.

Everybody. You wouldn't worry about your looks. That's how a child is.

It's so free from the opinions of men. It's one mark of humility. One mark of humility is to be free from the opinions of men.

Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. And I'll tell you, it won't come in one day. I've been battling it for 50 years.

It's a little better now. But it's a mountain. If you don't start climbing, you'll never reach the top in your lifetime.

You live and die as a person seeking the honor of men. That child is so free from the opinions of men. That's humility.

You know, the humanity which is trying to act humble, that is concerned about the opinion of men. Because you want people to think you're humble. I mean, if you do something to because you want people to think you're humble, that's not a child.

The child is not trying to do something to act humble. It's free from the opinions of men. It lies there blissfully ignorant of what people think about it or say about it.

Or even if you pinch it one day, you go back tomorrow and smile at you. Doesn't even remember that you pinched it yesterday. No.

Isn't it wonderful to be so forgiving and so ignorant of the evil that other people have done? This is the greatest in God's kingdom. How many miracles have you seen three-month-old children do? How many demons do you find three-month-old children cast out? How many sermons have you heard from three-month-old children? How many musical instruments can three-month-old children play? Do these things matter? You want to be the greatest in God's kingdom or you want to be the greatest in the church? Let me tell you in Jesus' name. Some of you who have sat here and listened to me for 25 years, your aim is to be great in the church.

And that's why you'll never be great in God's kingdom. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. If you take what I say seriously, it'll go well with you from today.

If you don't, you'll be doomed to live this type of rotten, defeated life until Jesus comes and you'll get a big surprise when he comes. It's true. You're seeking to be great in the church, not in heaven.

That's why you're discouraged when you can't do certain things. That's why you're jealous that somebody else can do something better than you. Child is not jealous.

If the child lying in the next cradle is more good-looking, it doesn't bother him. No. If most of the people are going looking at the child in the other cradle, that also doesn't bother him.

That's fine. He's completely free from the opinion of men. It doesn't matter if other people are praising some other child.

Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. These are things written in scripture. We need to meditate on them.

Like I've often said, it's more important the Bible goes through us than we go through the Bible. The purpose of our going through the Bible is so the Bible goes through us. So that's a great passage that we need to think on because that's the person who's greatest in God's kingdom.

And when we realize that we get to heaven, we see that Jesus is the greatest in God's kingdom. Then we see that Jesus lived like a child on the earth. He was completely free from the opinions of men.

His humility was not seen in trying to speak in a gentle way always. He didn't speak in a very gentle way when he spoke to the money changers in the temple. He looked with anger at people who would not allow some other poor person to be healed of his withered hand.

Where do we see the humility of Jesus there? Can you explain to me where you see the humility of Jesus when you see him making a whip? He honestly decided to get some string and they wondered what for and he sat down there and made a whip. It must have taken him 15 minutes at least. And they're wondering what in the world is he doing trying to make a whip for what? It says he made a whip and he took it and whipped all those fellows out, the sheep and the cattle, and turned the tables of those money changers and said, get out of here all of you.

Where do you see his humility there? Have you ever thought about it? He was always humble. I'll tell you, I see his humility there in his not being bothered what his disciples thought about him when he did it. See, if you did that thing, you'd always be concerned.

What do the others think about me? Did I lose my temper? And you see more of his humility in the fact that afterwards he didn't explain to his disciples, hey, fellas, I just want to tell you, I didn't lose my temper there. Actually, these fellows needed to get that. You know, when you try to explain to people why you did something or you have something very expensive in your house and you always feel a bit guilty about it, anybody who comes to your house say, well, actually, my uncle gave this to me.

Somebody gave this to me. Why? What all this explanation for? How do you care? People must think you're a humble man. We live in a self-deception.

Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. If you've done what's right in God's eyes, you don't need to justify it before a single soul in the face of the earth.

You've done it before God. That's it. It says in 1 Peter, let me show you one more passage.

There are many things in the whole scripture. It's written really to show us what's pleasing to the Lord. In 1 Peter chapter 3, it says especially for women, but the principle applies even to men.

Speaking about women who got very difficult husbands, verse 1, husbands who are disobedient to God's word. How should a woman behave whose husband is disobedient to God's word? Try and win them without speaking a word. Have you ever tried to win somebody without speaking a word? Just by your conduct and behavior.

That's what it says. Win them to Christ by your conduct and your behavior. When they see your holy light and your respectful behavior.

Wonderful. And then it says, your adornment. Yeah, women must adorn themselves, but not external braiding the hair and wearing gold jewelry or putting on expensive clothes.

But there are two sides to it. Not this, but the hidden person of the heart. That's an adornment.

I want to ask you sisters, how many of you value this hidden person of the heart adornment? Which the Bible says the adornment of something that never perishes. He says even gold will perish, but there's something inward that will never perish, a gentle and a quiet spirit. I have to say there are very few women I've met in my whole life who got a gentle and a quiet spirit.

Very, very few. Well, it's true. There are very few precious things on earth.

A gentle and a quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. When you word like that, which God approves of so highly. I mean, if I were a young girl or a woman, I'd just jump at that and say, Oh God, I want it.

I mean, I'm a man and I still jump at it. God, you value a gentle and a quiet spirit, a spirit that's not agitated. I want that.

It's talking about a spirit. Don't go to the tongue. The tongue will come much later.

Start with a spirit, a gentle and a quiet, not, you know, there are some human beings who are always very quiet. They are some of the biggest crooks I know. So don't be deceived by this outward quietness and calmness.

That's just his temperament. It's not a divine nature. If you look inside his heart, there's turmoil and storm.

We're talking about a heart in which there's no storm, a gentle and a quiet spirit. Jesus had it. He said, learn from me for I'm gentle.

He was gentle when he called the Pharisees generation of vipers. He was gentle when he comforted the woman caught in adultery. He was gentle when he put his arms around a leper.

He was gentle when he took the whip and chased people out because it was gentleness of the spirit, gentle spirit, a quiet spirit. There was no agitation. When I do something externally, like when I punish my child, that's a, in a sense, a violent act to take a rod or a belt and hit the child.

But my spirit must not be agitated. It must be gentle. It can't be like that.

We have to work on it where the spirit is gentle. Jesus was like that. The spirit was gentle.

And quiet and very precious in God's eyes. I want to urge you, it says, especially for women, and I would urge you sisters, you know, some of you young sisters may look at some other sisters in CFC and say,

boy, they're so passionate. I want to be like them.

No. Seek to have a gentle and a quiet spirit. That's what God considers precious.

Some of those fashionable ones may not be so pleasing to God. You got to have a right, good examples. And the good examples you must follow are those who have got a gentle and a quiet spirit.

And if you ask God to show you who are the ones with a gentle and a quiet spirit, God will show you. And if you don't find such examples, look at Jesus. Or if you want a woman, look at his mother Mary.

Great example. You hardly see her. I mean, in the gospels, now and then she appears.

She was there with the disciples on the day of Pentecost. You never hear of her again. She didn't make her say, hey, listen, you know, I'm the mother of Jesus.

In every chapter in the Acts of the Apostles, no. Boy, she's going to get a great reward in heaven. I'm not Roman Catholic, but I've got a great respect for Mary.

She's a woman whom I think all women could follow as her example. A gentle and a quiet spirit is tremendously precious in God's eyes. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.

You may discover there are many things in your life that are not pleasing to the Lord. Ask God for the power of his Holy Spirit to get rid of them, for the power of the Holy Spirit to acquire those values that God wants you to have. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, give us light on things that are not pleasing to you, on things that are pleasing to you. We humbly ask in Jesus' name.

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