

*Second Baptist Church of Doylestown*

*Wed. Eve. Bible Study - 9/16/15*

*Living Successfully In Christ*

**MAKING IT OUR AMBITION TO PLEASE GOD**

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The constant aim of everyone who really knows the Lord should be to be well-pleasing to Him - look up **John 8:29**, "The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." and compare **John 13:16**, "Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him." Could anyone, anywhere, have a greater ambition than this? Is it your ambition to please Him? - for here, surely, is the secret of successful living.

There is nothing greater than living day by day a life which is well-pleasing to the Lord. See what the Holy Spirit has recorded about Enoch - **Genesis 5:22-24** "After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup> Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. <sup>24</sup> Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away, and **Hebrews 11:5**, "By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God."

All down the ages there have been men and women whose supreme ambition it has been to please God. Most people today are bent upon pleasing themselves - compare **Judges 17:6**; "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit." **1 Corinthians 10:5**;" Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness" and **2 Timothy 3:4**; "treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— but there are those who are seeking to fulfill God's conditions of a life that is well-pleasing to Him.

**1. WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS FOR PLEASING GOD?**

We must be born again. Look up **Romans 8:8**," Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God." and compare this with **John 3:5**."Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit." Every man and woman is "controlled by the sinful nature", and while we are "living according to the sinful nature" (**Romans 8:5**) we can never please God. The first need, therefore, is to be born again, so that we are "controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit" (**Romans 8:9**)." You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of

**God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.**

**We must separate ourselves from all sinful and doubtful things.** When we are born again we become children of God (1 John 3:1); but the Christian life is a warfare, and we are soldiers - look up **2 Timothy 2:3-4**, "**Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. <sup>4</sup> No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.**" The lives of worldly Christians are full of sinful and hindering things, but those who wish to please Him disentangle themselves from the things which hinder them in their Christian life.

**We must dedicate our lives to Him.** Look up **Romans 12:1**, "**Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.**" and notice the words, "holy and *pleasing* to God". Separation, sinful and doubtful things is negative, but the dedication of ourselves to the Lord is positive. Have you ever presented your body to the Lord? Have you handed over to Him the "parts" of your body (**Romans 6:13**) - your hands, feet, eyes, ears, lips...in other words - yourself?

**We must be good witnesses.** God has put us in trust with the gospel, and what a sacred trust it is! The gospel is for everybody, and our whole business is to make it known - look up **1 Thessalonians 2:4**. "**On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.**" Notice that Paul says, "...we speak..." Do we speak? Perhaps we need to pray the prayer of the psalmist in order to please Him - look up **Psalm 51:15**, "**Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.**" Believers who witness to the Lord's grace and power, by lives which are consistent and by lips which are ready to speak for Him, are well-pleasing to the Lord.

**We must be obedient.** Look up **Colossians 3:20**, "**Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.**" If it is well-pleasing to earthly parents when their children obey them, how much more must it please the Lord when His children obey Him? Obedience is very important - look up **1 Samuel 15:22**, "**But Samuel replied: 'Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.'**"

**We must have faith in God.** In **Hebrews 11:6** we are told that unless we have confidence in God we cannot please Him.

Thank God, we can trust Him - not only for forgiveness (1 John 1:9), but for food (Psalm 34:10); not only for salvation (Acts 4:12), but for the supply of our every need (Philippians 4:19)!

**We must be large-hearted.** Look up **Hebrews 13:16**. One translation renders this: "Don't forget to be kind and liberal" - full of love, sympathy, understanding, readiness to help, encouragement, unselfishness - compare **Romans 12:13** "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." and **Galatians 6:6**. "Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor." This is the successful Christian life in action!

## **2. WHY WE SHOULD PLEASE GOD RATHER THAN OURSELVES**

(1) Even the Lord did not please Himself (**Romans 15:3**). "For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."

(2) Only thus can we glorify Him (**1 Corinthians 10:31**). So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

(3) The Judgment Seat of Christ

**Romans 14:10**; "You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

**1 Corinthians 3:13** "their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work."

*We cannot please Him in our own strength* - **Philippians 2:13** "for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."

## **3. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF PLEASING GOD?**

The most wonderful result is that if we make it our ambition to please Him, *we shall have His smile upon our life* - compare **John 8:29** "The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." and **Matthew 3:17**, "And a voice from heaven said, This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." . The Lord Jesus is the Son of God in an unique sense; but every Christian is a son of God through faith in Him (**Galatians 3:26**). How wonderful to have God's smile upon our life! There are three practical results of pleasing God:

**Answers to prayer.** Look up **1 John 3:21-22**, "Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup> and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him." and notice why we are so sure that God will hear and answer our prayer. Notice also the word "anything",

for this covers all our needs. This promise is very challenging, for it not only tells us the way to get our prayer answered, but it explains why some of our prayers are not answered!

**Enemies at peace.** There is a wonderful promise in Proverbs 16:7; **"When the LORD takes pleasure in anyone's way, he causes their enemies to make peace with them"** and note again that the blessing promised is conditional upon our being well-pleasing in His sight - look up Romans 12:17-21, **"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

It may well be that in the matter of human relationships you need to prove the Lord on these verses!

**Special overcoming power.** In Ecclesiastes 7:26 a special temptation is referred to; but if deliverance is promised from this evil, surely it is promised from every evil - **"I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare."** look up 1 Corinthians 10:13, **"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."**