

Aspire to Please the Lord

Key Verse: So we make it our goal to please Him. (2 Corinthians 5:9)

Everyone who truly knows God has a fixed goal, which is to please the Lord (See John 8:29, cf. John 13:16). In all circumstances, can there be a greater aspiration than this? Is the joy of pleasing the Lord your aspiration? This is indeed the secret to a victorious life. (See the account of Enoch - Genesis 5:22-24 and Hebrews 11:5). Throughout the ages, there have been many people whose noble aspiration is to please God. Many people today strive to satisfy themselves (cf. Judges 17:6; 1 Corinthians 10:5; 2 Timothy 3:4); but there are also those who seek to satisfy God's requirements for a life that is pleasing to God.

1. What are the conditions to be pleasing to God?

- a. **We must be born again.** (See Romans 8:8, cf. John 3:5). Human nature is "carnal". When we are "carnal" we can never please God. So the prerequisite to being pleasing to God is to be born again, so that we are no longer "of the flesh" but "of the Spirit." (Romans 8:9).
- b. **We must stay away from all sins and doubts.** When we are born again, we become children of God (1 John 3:1). But the Christian life is a battle, and we are soldiers (see 2 Timothy 2:3-4). The worldly Christian life is full of sins and obstacles, but those who hope to please the Lord will be free from what is holding them back in their Christian life.
- c. **We must offer up our lives to the Lord.** (See Romans 12:1). Staying away from sin and doubt is passive, but offering up ourselves to God is active. Have you ever dedicated your body to the Lord? Have you dedicated your "members" of your body to God? (Romans 6:13) -- your hands, feet, eyes, ears, lips... In other words -- yourself?
- d. **We must be good witnesses.** God has entrusted the gospel to us. What a sacred entrustment it is! The gospel is for everyone, and our life's work is to preach it (see 1 Thess. 2:4). Notice how Paul said, "So we speak..." Did we speak? Maybe we need to pray like a psalmist to please God (see Psalm 51:15). Believers who behave consistently and have their lips ready to preach for Him are truly pleasing to the Lord, as they bear witness to the grace and power of the Lord.
- e. **We must obey.** (See Col. 3:20). It is pleasing to have children obeying their earthly parents. How much more so that God's children obey Him. Obedience is very important (see 1 Samuel 15:22; cf. John 2:5; 14:15 and Acts 9:6).
- f. **We must have faith in God.** Hebrews 11:6 tells us that it is impossible to please God without faith. Thank God that we can trust Him —not only for the forgiveness of our sins (1 John 1:9), but also for the supply of our physical needs (Psalm 34:10); not only for our redemption (Acts 4:12), but also for the provision all our needs (Philippians 4:19)!
- g. **We must be gracious.** (See Hebrews 13:16). Another translation is: "Never forget kindness and generosity" - loving, sympathetic, understanding, willing to help,

encouraging, selfless - (cf. Romans 12:13 and Galatians 6:6). This is the victorious life of a practicing Christian.

2. What are the consequences of pleasing God?

If we resolve to please God, the most amazing result is that our lives will be pleasing to God (cf. John 8:29 and Matthew 3:17). In a unique sense, the Lord Jesus is the Son of God; but every Christian is also a son of God because of believing in Jesus (Galatians 3:26). How wonderful it is that our lives are pleasing to God! There are three practical consequences of our pleasing God:

- a. **Prayers are answered.** See 1 John 3:21-22 and notice why we are so sure that God hears and answers our prayers. Note also the word "everything", which includes all our needs. This promise is very challenging because it not only tells us how our prayers are answered, but also explains why some of our prayers are not answered!
- b. **Make peace with the enemy.** There is a wonderful promise in Proverbs 16:7. Note again that this promise is based on what we do to please Him (cf. Romans 12:17-21). Most likely you need to experience the reality of the Lord as promised in these Scriptures in your social relationships!
- c. **Special power to overcome temptations.** Ecclesiastes 7:26 mentions a special temptation. But if God promises to deliver us from this temptation, He will also to deliver us from every temptation (see 1 Corinthians 10:13, and cf. 2 Timothy 4:18).

3. What motivates us to please God?

If you are a true believer, you are an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ (Romans 8:16-17). You will own your property (Obadiah 17); you will experience perfect peace (John 14:27); you will have overflowing joy (John 15:11), power of witness (Acts 1:8), and abundant grace (2 Corinthians 12:9). But our main motivation for pleasing God is not to gain something, but that we are children of God:

- a. For Christ did not please himself (Romans 15:3).
- b. In all that we do, we do it for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- c. The fruit of our life will be revealed at the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:13).

Finally, remember this: **We cannot please God by our own strength!** (See Philippians 2:13)