

"Pleasing God"

When you truly love someone, you want to please them. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to explore the joy and the value of pleasing our Father in heaven.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God has delivered to us in Scripture His grace and steadfast love. Our gracious God promises us eternal life if we'll come to Him in faith and love. When you believe God, you take Him at His word. When you love God, you do everything in your power to please Him and meet His expectations. If you wish to please God, you must know Him and follow Him. God expects us to do His will. And thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

I hope and pray you make it your goal each day to live pleasing to the Lord. It's amazing how many take the grace of God for granted and never think about improving their spiritual lives. The apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:9 to 10, "So whether we're at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."

When you love the Lord, you want to please Him. You don't act out of fear or because you feel compelled; you act out of love and respect. David said in Psalm 19:14, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." His loving and grateful relationship with God led him to take God's desires and His will seriously rather than to suggest that God ought to be happy with whatever we do. God is God, and we're His creatures and His servants. The Lord Jesus said we should seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6 and verse 33).

Now we offer this study free on the importance of pleasing God our Father. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

We'll now worship in song, read from 1 Corinthians 9:24 to 27, and we'll explore the importance of pleasing our Father in heaven.

Our reading today comes from Paul's words in 1 Corinthians, chapter 9, verses 24 to 27. "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified." And I hope that none of you are disqualified either, so that we can please the Lord and live with Him forever.

Let's pray. "Father, we're thankful for this example of Paul who worked diligently and hard to please You and to fulfill Your will. Help us to have the same mindset and the same desire. In Jesus name, Amen."

"For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, He watches all his paths (Proverbs 5:21)." God knows all about each of us. He knows how we behave and how we think. He can look into our hearts and know our intentions. The seer Hanani told Asa the king of Judah in 2 Chronicles 16:9, "For

the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." It matters to God whether we're devoted to Him and willing to serve Him.

The Lord Jesus told two parables about the kingdom of heaven at the second coming in Matthew 25. The first speaks of five wise and five foolish virgins. The wise were prepared for the coming of the bridegroom, while the foolish were unprepared. The wise virgins entered into the wedding feast, while the five foolish virgins were not allowed. In fact the Lord said to them, "Truly I say to you, I do not know you." (Matthew 25 verse 12). Well we must be on the alert then, because we don't know the day nor the hour when the Lord will come a second time.

In the second parable, the Lord Jesus tells of a man about to go on a journey, who called his own servants and entrusted his possessions to them. He gave five talents to one, two talents to another, and one talent to a third servant. Now a talent was money and worth fifteen years of a laborer's wages. The man with five talents gained five more, and the man with two talents gained two more; but the man with one talent dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

When the master returned from his journey, he praised the five-talent and the two-talent men. He said, "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Wouldn't it be wonderful on the Day of Judgment to hear these words from the lips of the Lord Jesus?

The one-talent man said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you didn't sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and I went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I didn't sow and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'

"For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who doesn't have, even what he does have shall be taken away. Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:24 to 31).

At this point, the Lord tells us a little more specifically about what will happen on Judgment Day at the second coming. All the nations will be gathered before Him as He sits on His glorious throne. He will separate the sheep from the goats. The King will say to the sheep on His right, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." Because they served their fellow man, they were honoring the Lord Jesus and serving Him.

To the goats on His left who failed to serve their fellow man, the King will say, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you didn't invite Me in; naked, and you didn't clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit Me." The goats "will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:31 to 46).

Now our culture has this notion that everyone will be saved no matter how we've acted or treated our fellow man; but not everyone will enter heaven. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:13 to 14, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there

are few who find it." The Lord has no desire for anyone to be lost, but people who choose to live in sin and choose to forsake the ways of God also choose to separate themselves from Him.

Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch, and these people rejected Jesus as the Christ in Acts 13:46, the Bible says "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you [that is to the Jews] first; since you repudiate it and you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we're turning to the Gentiles." Yes, people have freewill and make up their own minds about whether they will believe. People also choose whether they would rather keep sin in their lives or repent. People choose whether they will treat others with kindness or live in anger and hatred. God has shown us the way to eternal life in Jesus Christ, but many choose their own ways. And by doing so, they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.

If we wish to please the Father we must believe in Him and in His promises. Hebrews 11 and verse 6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." The Lord has blessed us richly, and He's blessed those who call themselves Christians with the knowledge of His will found in the scriptures, and these also include His promises, so that by His teaching and promises we may become partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now this is a great blessing to be treasured and never taken for granted. The Lord expects us to devote ourselves to becoming His people and following His will.

2 Peter 1:5 to 11 says, "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an inheritance, an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Now the Lord Jesus is our example in all things, yet He realized His purpose was to do the will of the Father. When the disciples wondered why Jesus didn't eat the food they brought to Him as He sat by the well near Sychar, Jesus said to them in John 4:34, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work." On another occasion, the Lord Jesus said in John 5 and verse 30, "I can do nothing on My own. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me."

The Lord Jesus knew the day would come when He would die for the sins of the world. Many doubted Jesus during His earthly ministry, but Jesus knew why He had come to earth and that He was indeed the Son of God and the Messiah. The Lord Jesus said in John 8:28 to 29, "When you lift up the Son of Man [that is when I'm crucified], then you will know that I am He [that is the Son of God, the Messiah], and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He's not left Me alone, [than He says] for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him [that's Jesus]." At the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus determined to do the will of the Father and not His own will, even at the cost of His life on a cruel cross.

The Lord Jesus said in Hebrews 10 verse 9 in fulfillment of the prophecy of His sacrifice found in Psalm 40 verses 7 to 8, "Behold I have come to do Your will." Now if the Lord Jesus felt the necessity of pleasing His Father in heaven, and if we follow His example, shouldn't we do everything in our power

to please the Father. The Lord Jesus said in John 15 verse 10, "If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love." I tell you I want to remain in the love of the Father, and I want to remain in the love of the Son!

The apostle Paul by inspiration also encourages us to please the Lord by our attitudes, our words, our deeds, and by how we treat others. Romans 12:1 to 2 says, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Now we are to live out the will of God in our lives and not be conformed to the ways of the world.

Let's look once again at 1 Corinthians 9:24 to 27, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? [Then he says] Run in such a way that you may win. Now everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified." Athletes train for years to be the best at their sport for an earthly and perishable reward. Our spiritual training is to receive an imperishable crown and to live with the Lord forever. We don't want to be disqualified by failing to discipline our lives, to control our thinking, to control our actions, to control our attitudes and to control everything about how we treat others. We want to remain free from sinful ways.

Colossians 1 and verse 10 urges us to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord" and "to please Him in all respects." Whatever God desires should be our heart's desire. We should love the things that God loves and stay free of the things that God is offended by. Paul urged the young man Timothy in 2 Timothy 2 and verse 22, "Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." Let's keep our hearts pure and serve the Lord with all our hearts and all our soul.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father, we're thankful that You have shown us the way that we need to walk and how we need to behave and how we need to think and treat others, so that we may please You. We pray that our hearts will be set upon doing Your will, on showing our love to You by keeping Your commandments, and by pleasing You.

Be with us, give us strength and help us to discipline ourselves. In Jesus name, Amen."

Matthew 17:1-5 says, "Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it's good for us to be here; if You wish, I'll make three tabernacles here, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' And while he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!'"

The Father in heaven wants us to listen to the Lord Jesus. Whether we listen to Him matters. He will judge us on the last day by His words (John 12:48). And if we're obedient to His will, we can enjoy eternal salvation. Hebrews 5:8 to 9 says, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation."

Obedience to the gospel is necessary to our salvation, and living faithfully to the Lord afterwards is also necessary. To become a Christian, hear the gospel, place your trust in the Lord Jesus and in what He says, repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized into Christ. And this means being immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ. And when you're baptized, you're baptized into the death of Christ; and God will wash your sins away (Acts 22 verse 16). Now when you're baptized you're also raised with Christ in that baptism, and you're able to walk a new life, and it's free from sin (Romans 6 Verses 4 to 7).

Now we hope today's study about pleasing God has stirred you to consider your soul. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And be sure to like the programs that you watch; this will help spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God today by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.