

How to Please Your Maker

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Date: 02 April 2017

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[0 : 00] My subject as indicated in the bulletin this morning is how to please your maker.

! I've selected the passage from Colossians 1 9-14. I'm also reading a few verses from 1 Thessalonians. 4. But my subject is how to please your maker.

Paul uses this statement twice in Colossians and also 1 Thessalonians. He talks about walking and pleasing God. We're going to read that in just a moment. Before I do, let me just say a few words about that.

You know there are some people you can't please. Have you noticed that? As a pastor for so many years, over 60 years I've been in the ministry, I've had a lot of counseling sessions where something would come forth like this.

Maybe it was in a marriage crisis situation and one or the other would say, I just can't please him. I can't please her. You ever heard that said to somebody? Sometimes I've heard it from a fellow who was disappointed and discouraged with his job.

[1 : 16] I just can't please them anymore. A few times I've heard it from students who would say about their parents, Parents, I'm sorry, I've heard them say this. I just can't please them. Well, of course, I know what it means is that they don't like what you're telling them to do and not to do.

But I can't please them. That's a common phrase that's used throughout lifetime because when we feel uncomfortable with the situation, we say, you know, and we retort, we respond to that.

I just can't please them. Well, let me tell you something. We're going to read in the Bible in just a few minutes. Paul says we ought to please God. God would not tell us to do something that's impossible.

Now, I've been married 67 years. How can that be? You say you don't look a day over 50? Thank you. But I know the truth of the matter because I look in the mirror every morning, you know, comb in my hair.

67 years I've been married to that wonderful lady. By the way, she used to always attend here.

When I was director of missions, she would come here because we lived just over the way, still live in the same location. But she would attend here when I would be off out preaching somewhere else.

[2 : 21] She loved it here. And so she wanted to come this morning. She's been ill for a couple of weeks. But you know, if I told you that I always pleased my wife, you'd say, well, you must not know the truth of the matter because she told me.

No, she wouldn't do that. But, you know, I really, let me say this. No, I don't always please my wife. I know it when I don't. Sometimes she may not holler at me or scream at me.

No, she don't do that. But I can tell by her expression. She's not happy with things. But you know what? Let me say this. I want to please her. Now, why would I say that?

Because I love that girl. She didn't marry a preacher. I became one about four years after we married or surrendered to the ministry. And she stayed with me. And she's been with me all these years.

And whether you know this or not, the truth of the matter, it's hard living with a preacher, especially one who never gets to preach. So she's glad for the opportunity today.

[3 : 19] But I do want to please her. I'm leading up to this truth. If you love God, you want to please him. Amen? And he's not hard to please.

Here's a passage over in the book of Hebrews. I share this. Then we're going to read our text. It is said of Enoch. Enoch. He walked with God and was not. He didn't see death. For God took him. But before he was translated, he had this testimony. He pleased God. It's said of Enoch, who did not have to go to heaven through death.

I mean, he was taken up into heaven without having to go through death. And he's spoken of. He had this testimony. This was his testimony. He pleased the Lord. Again, I say God would not ask us to do something that's impossible.

Now, don't raise your hand. How many of you this morning say in your heart, I really do want to please my heavenly Father? I want to do what I should do always. Now, in saying that, let me say to you that standing before you this morning is someone who cannot say, I always do those things that please him.

[4 : 22] There's only one who's been able to say that. His name was Jesus. Jesus said that. I always do those things that please him. And he did. You and I fail him at times.

But there's no excuse for it. And when it happens, we should always remember we have a loving heavenly Father who delights when we come to him and tell him we're sorry for our sin.

He loves us so very much. Okay. Turn your Bible. If you haven't already. Colossians chapter 1. And picking up at verse 9. Paul is reflecting on the news that he had received about the church in Colossae.

And he said, For this reason we also, since the day we heard it about them, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, and all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering, with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints and the light, delivered us from the power of darkness, and converted us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his love.

1 Thessalonians chapter 4. Finally, brethren, we urge you and exhort you in the Lord Jesus Christ, you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God.

[6 : 04] For you know what commandments we've given you through the Lord Jesus. This is the will of God. God's will for you. You want to please him? He said, All right, here's one thing you need to remember. This is the will of God, your sanctification.

Abstain from sexual immorality, that each of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion and lust like the Gentiles, who do not know God.

Paul says we ought to walk and to please God. Father God, thank you for these moments we can share together. Thank you for the music that's inspired us.

We praise you. Thank you for those who led us in it and reminded us again how good is our God and how great you are. And your blood, your cross covers all of our sins.

For that, we are eternally grateful. Bless this church. Bless them tonight as they come together to elect the search committee. And may our prayers be diligently for them and for your leadership in their lives and for this great church.

[7 : 12] Thank you for Jesus' sake we pray. Amen and amen. By the way, a few years ago, Arnold Long, who had been pastor of your church for a number of years, was here when this building was built, was living in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

And a friend of mine had heard of him and had purchased his library. My friend lived in Missouri. He knew that I knew Oklahoma, knew Arnold Long.

He said, if I come by and pick you up, would you travel with me to Shawnee to help me find where Arnold Long lives? I said, well, you'll be delighted to do that. We got there and we arrived and we found Arnold Long sitting out in the garage.

And he had his books all boxed up ready for my friend to pick up. Well, anyway, in talking with Arnold Long, I said, well, do you ever get to preach? And he said, no, I don't. I wish I did, but I don't. I said, well, you've got a good sermon for us.

He said, as a matter of fact, I've just been working on one. And if you got, and the two of you will sit down and listen to me, I'd like to preach to you today. And he did. And it was a good sermon. I enjoyed it very much.

[8 : 15] I loved Arnold Long so very much. I was pastor in those days at First Baptist Ramona. He called me a Baylor evangelist. I didn't go to Baylor, but I did wear the long hair in those days. So that's what he called me. Well, let's talk about pleasing God.

Those who are not pleasing to God. There are those who cannot. There was no way possible. You just cannot please God. And this is the word there. It's found in the same passage I read from the book of Hebrews about Enoch, that he walked with God, was not for God took him.

He had this testimony that pleased God. It said that in that same statement where it talks about faith, it says, without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Let me say to you again these words. Without faith, without trust in Him, you can't please Him.

That's the first step toward pleasing Him. I mean, He wants to bless you.

He wants to save you. He wants to redeem you from your sins. That for a fact, He's chosen you in Jesus Christ. You make that step. You make that decision. And that's what pleases Him the most.

[9 : 18] When you give your heart and life to Jesus Christ in faith, you have begun the journey of pleasing God. Now then, when He accepts you, He accepts you for all eternity.

You're saved and saved forever. Thank God for that. But the fact is, He's given us a journey on which to travel. A life in which to live. In fact, when the Word of God talks about walking, which we read this morning, it's talking about life.

You could translate the word. When you live, you ought to please God. As long as you live. As long as you're alive. And then we have eternity to spend with Him. But those who are not pleasing to the Father do not have faith in Him.

You've never trusted Him as you're saved. But you know what? It's called upon your life. The Holy Spirit tugging at your heart strings. He wants you to come. And the Word is spoken this morning. We're getting ready for the Lord's Supper in just a little bit.

It's to recognize the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What the price was that He paid for us on the cross of Calvary. He died for us. And our response to that is, yes, Lord.

[10 : 25] Thank you that He died for each of us. John 3.16, let's say it. For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

You can't please Him unless you know it. But let me say step number two. Those who are pleasing to the Father are growing believers. Look at 1 Thessalonians 4.1. Finally, brethren, we urge you and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that you should abound.

That means grow more and more just as you receive from us how you ought to walk and to please God. Again, in Colossians 1.9, He says, Both references have to do with the fact that when we are saved, when we're born again, we're brought into the family of God through Jesus Christ, faith in Him, we begin to grow.

You don't enter the Christian life as fully grown as such. You're saved as you ever will be. The Bible calls us babes in Christ when we're first saved. I was talking to a church not too long ago about someone that they were considering.

They had partially considered this person as a prospective pastor for their church. And I said, well, and I was talking to them and I said, well, how do you see him? What state do you feel like he's mature enough?

[11 : 52] He's young. Anybody's young. Not only me, but anyway, he said, he's young. And they said, well, we like him a whole lot, but he needs to grow a little bit more.

In fact, one said he's sort of like a baby Christian. I said, well, in other words, he's still in the process of growing and becoming. And this is a small congregation. And I said, well, maybe God wants you then to help him grow and he will help you to grow until you grow up together.

But the fact is, folks, I want you to know something. You never should stop growing in the Christian walk. I mean, never should you cease to grow.

You say, well, I've just done all I can do. Well, physically, that may be so in terms of your ability to do some things. I don't climb ladders anymore, especially after I fell off one two years ago and had a double hernia.

Now, I don't climb ladders anymore. A lot of things I don't do. When I was young in high school, I ran the 440. And I was quick on my feet. I was little. I had to learn to run. But I can't do that anymore. But I tell you what I can do.

[12 : 56] I do what I am doing. They asked me, do you feel up to it physically? I said, well, yeah, you know, I feel like you can do it if you want me to do it. I still got my driver's license and I'm not blind.

I can do that. But the fact is, there are some things we can do, maybe can't do, but we never should stop growing in the Lord. How does one grow?

Well, we grow through proper food and nurture and doing those things that help our bodies stay strong. But how does one grow spiritually?

Folks, there are two things that you need to remember. You can't grow spiritually unless you spend time in God's Word. It's God's Word. It's God's revelation. It's God's love letter to us. He wrote it so that we might understand His will.

He did not leave us in the dark. He shared with us the truth. What He wants us to know, He's put it in a book. It's called the B-I-B-L-E. Yes, that's the book for me.

[13 : 56] I don't know if you have a regular time in which you spend reading the Word of God. It's a simple thing to do. But somebody said, well, I don't understand it. Yeah, I know, sometimes we don't.

But that's what the job of the Holy Spirit is. But keep on reading it. You'd be surprised how much you could learn. Some years ago, in my first church, as a matter of fact, a fellow named Bill, he was a mechanic, actually one of the best in the country.

And he had become a Christian when he was 28 years of age. And he told me, he said, Brother Tom, I've got to tell you something. When I came to be his pastor, he said, I don't read. I don't read very well at all.

He said, I'm learning. You know the book he was reading to learn how to read? He's reading the Bible. He never did get, you know, real efficient, real good at reading. He was embarrassed when he stood before the people to read even a verse of Scripture.

But the thing of it was, he continued to read and to study the Word of God. And you know what? There wasn't a finer Christian man in all of our congregation. Read the Word of God. Don't let your diet be solely one meal Sunday morning here at the church.

[15 : 01] You listen to the man that you called to be your pastor. And you assume that he studied and he's wept over. And first of all, preach the message to himself, which we do, before he shared it with you.

But don't let that be your only meal of the week. You ought to have a time each day of the week. Every day, you ought to spend time with God and His Word. You say, I don't have time.

Then you're too busy. God's Word is a food for the soul. And if you're not reading the Bible, if you're not studying the Bible, then you're not growing like you should. You won't do it.

Exercise is another. The Bible says, exercise thyself into godliness. That simply means living for God. To recognize that your life is designed to grow.

To be mature means that you're growing up in the Lord. And this process goes on. He says, we ought to walk worthy of the Lord, fully, fully pleasing Him.

[15 : 59] You want to please Him today? Well, he said, obedient believers, not only those that read and study the Word of God, but those who obey what it says to you. What it says to you, just do it.

Remember that first miracle Jesus performed? It was at a wedding feast. And He there, He, of course, turned the water to wine. But it's what Mary had to say to the servants.

I want to call to your attention. For Mary, you know, after talking with Jesus a little bit and reminding Him of the need, you know, He had words to say about that. But then Mary went over to the servants, and here's what she said.

Whatever He says to you, do it. Nike tennis shoes. That's one of their slogans, that Nike means, yeah. Just do it. I know more to do now than I get done.

The fact of the matter is, when we read God's Word and He speaks to us through His Word, the Holy Spirit brings to our attention the thought of something that we need to do, do it.

[16 : 55] Just do it. You say, well, I don't know what to do. Well, then you ask Him. You might ask me, and I might, you know, concerning your strengths that I might observe, and I say, well, you know, you could do this or fit in here somewhere, but the one that's best knowledgeable about your life and your gifts is the one who gave it to you to begin with.

If you really want to know what He wants you to do, ask Him. Ask Him. Ask Him. And don't be embarrassed about asking.

But then when He reveals to you what He wants you to do, don't say, well, I'll get around to it next week, next month, maybe, or whatever. No, no. No, if He reveals to you something that needs to be done, the best time to do it is the moment when He reveals that to you.

Don't put it off. Don't put it off. Whatever He says to you. That's the way we grow. You say, well, I'm not gifted. Yes, you are. Yes, you are. In some way, you're gifted.

I want you to know that, you know, as I walked through the door this morning, a gentleman handed me a bulletin and said, welcome. I want you to know that that's a service for the Lord. But there are other avenues in which you can serve.

[18:05] Know that there is a job for each of us in His. Master, where shall I work today? And His words, my words flowed warm and free, and He pointed me to a tiny spot and said, my son, tend that for me.

Quickly, I answered, oh, no, not there. Why, no one would ever see. No matter how well my work was done, not that little spot for me. The words He spoke, they were not stern. He answered me tenderly.

Nazareth was a little place. So was Galilee. Whatever it is, whatever He puts in your hand, just use it for His glory. There are those who are not serving the Lord, serving God and pleasing God.

Those that have become so selfish and self-centered, they can't think of anyone else but themselves. Paul said in Romans 15, that we that are strong ought to bear the scruples of the weak, the needs of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Excuse me. Let each of you please his neighbor for his good and leading to edification, looking out toward the needs of others. Know someone that has a need in their life?

[19:09] Maybe someone that just needs to, for you to maybe be there with them in their sickness or their suffering or something that they're going through and not necessarily give a lecture, but just to be there, to say, I care.

I care about what's helping you. That too is a ministry that God's pleased with. And we have the perfect example in that in Jesus Christ, who came into this world, not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

Selfish, self-centered people can't please God. If you're living only for yourself, what you might get from it, then you are not pleasing to the Father. Compromising people are not pleasing to the Father.

Ephesians 6, he said, we're to serve Him with sincerity, that means genuineness of heart, as to Christ, not with eye service as men pleasers, but as bond servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

In other words, be real. Be yourself. You're special. God made you. And He put within you the gifts that He's given.

[20:16] So just be real. Don't try to be something you're not or someone you're not. Just be yourself. You're the best person yourself that God wants you to be.

And so just don't compromise that. There's one other lesson that Paul gave us in the book of Romans, chapter 8. He says, the carnal mind is enmity against God, and it's not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Those in the flesh cannot please God. Be in the flesh. Well, hey, I'm living in the flesh, right? That's not what He's talking about. He's talking about that part of you that seeks only for itself.

The flesh that can be led by lusts and immoral actions. By the way, Paul had something to say about that, didn't he? In his Thessalonian passage. He said that we should abstain from sexual immorality.

Folks, there's not anything that's hurting the church more in this day and age than that one terrible sin. It's affecting so many.

[21:26] It's in the news. We hear about it. And it's happening. And there's nothing that can be more destructive in the Christian's life than getting involved in something that's immoral, sexual.

You say, well, I don't intend to do that. Well, it's good that we make that kind of statement, but we've got to beware because Satan is very subtle. And he doesn't always paint the full picture.

It just gives you a little dose. And then he will lead you on in the paths that you never dreamed that you'd take. And then when you're caught in that, you think, oh, I didn't mean to do that. Well, why did you start in the first place?

Paul says, if you want to please the Father, you need to learn something about who you are, that God created you in His image. And He gave you spiritual life, Christ coming to live in your life.

And you're not your own, Paul said. You're bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. You belong to God.

[22 : 28] Everywhere you go, you are representative of what the kingdom of God is all about. If you're the best Christian somebody knows, what's their impression?

I'm saying to you that if we want to please God, we've got to understand something. The flesh is weak, but the spirit can be strong. Gird yourself up with the Lord Jesus Christ and the power of His Holy Spirit.

Search the Word to find what it has to say. Feed your soul on what the Bible says about life and the way it ought to be, and you'll be pleasing God. Paul read in 1 Thessalon 4.1, you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus Christ.

He told us in His Word what to do and what not to do. I know Christianity is not just a do's and don'ts type thing. It's by faith. We live it by faith, but we need to understand that God is a moral God.

He has established moral righteousness in a world that's determined to go against that. Who's going to stand for right? Who's going to stand for morality?

[23 : 35] If it is not God's people, God's children, we need to set a good example. 1 Thessalonians 4.8 said, Who who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us the Holy Spirit.

You know, some people, well, I don't like that. I was talking to a person about what the Bible said. He said, well, I know what it says, but I don't, that's not the way I see it.

You know, I think it ought to be this way. I want to rewrite what the Bible says. I object to what God is saying. Well, then your problem is with Him. We are to remain faithful, growing believers, obedient believers, understanding that we don't please Him if we indulge in sins that destroy the body and the mind.

He definitely tells us, abstain from sexual immorality, all forms, lustful, passion. By the way, he mentions fraud in there. Did you notice that?

It talks about fraud in 1 Thessalonians as that being also something that's not pleasing to God. One other thought, and I draw to a conclusion we have the Lord's Supper to do yet.

[24 : 50] Do you want to please God? Growing believers are pleasing God. Obedient believers are pleasing to God. One other. Loving believers are pleasing to God.

1 Thessalonians 4, 9 and 10. You're taught by God, Paul says to this church at Thessalonica, to love one another. We know that's found throughout the scripture. Love one another. You're taught by God to do that. And he said, indeed, he compliments them, and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia.

That was a big area. He said, the word about you folks is going around that you love people. But he says, we urge you brethren, increase more and more.

The many times that I have been in this church, there's one thing that I have noticed about you folks. You do love people. You do. You love the Lord and you love each other so that there's no reason for anyone coming inside those doors and not experiencing that love.

And you've always been that way toward me. Let me say this and please understand what I'm saying. You know, he's our preacher for the day. He's our interim director of missions.

[26 : 01] He's been around this town since Adam was around, but not quite, but anyway. Well, you know, if anyone comes through those doors and receives any love less than what you give me, shame on you.

I don't care who it is. I don't care who it is. That's the one thing that stands out in a church that really does attract others.

We love each other. We love each other. We love the Lord supremely and we love each other and we love others also. a church that's pleasing to the Father, individuals that are pleasing to the Father are still growing, still growing, becoming all that God wants me to be, trying to be obedient to His Word, seeking the ways in which I might serve Him, and then keeping this vessel as clean as I possibly can for God's sake and for the sake of the lost, who are looking in a critical fashion toward the church, always trying to find fault.

The devil's going to see to that. Let's don't give him fuel. Let's don't add to his fuel. But all we say, I'll never go there.

I'll never do that. Be careful. The devil's mighty tricky. Let me close with one other thought. You like for people to like you?

[27 : 39] You say, well, I don't care about that. Well, I don't believe that. I believe, and we all want folks to like us, right? The writer of Proverbs, Solomon, said this, Proverbs 16 and 7, when a man's

ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies be at peace with him.

You got any enemies? You know, I was pastor at Shawnee, Oklahoma for five years while I was finishing OBU. taking care of a family. After I left there, they called an interim who was also the sociology professor at OBU.

And while he was there during his interim, he wrote a book of the history of that church. And indeed, he started out by interviewing each of the pastors, you know, about what they knew about the church during their tenure.

And he called me up and he said, you know, and I shared some things with him. Well, I, of course, wanted a copy of the book after it was written and he sent me a copy of it. And what do you do when you get, you know, you're in there somewhere?

I turn over there, first of all, see what he had to say about me. And most of it was, you know, it's like I told him. But he said one thing. He said, it was sad about Brother Tom Cox when he left here.

[28 : 54] He didn't have a single enemy. Not only in the church, but in the community. I called him and told him, I said, if he'd called me, I could have given you three names. But here's the promise.

I know there's some people hard to get along with, but there's the promise. When a man's ways please the Lord, he'll make even his enemies be at peace with him. You would like to have that happen in your life?

It starts by pleasing the Father, being obedient to him, growing in your faith, seeking to know more about his word and the life that he has given you to live.

And then keep your vessel, that body of yours, free from sin, the popular sins of the world that will drag you down and destroy, ultimately destroy your testimony for Christ.

You're the best God has. You're the best God has. And he's chosen, amazing as it is so, he's chosen to get the word out of what he can do in a person's life through human instrumentality.

[30 : 03] Angels would be glad to do it. But he said to us, you are to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Bartlesville, Dewey, Ramona, and in the outermost parts of the earth.

We are his witness. Let's don't disappoint God. We're going to stand together. We're going to sing a hymn of invitation. Brother Dan is going to come lead us and Brother Tom Holland will be standing at the front.

We're getting ready for the Lord's Supper. What the Bible says in the Corinthian passage about the Lord's Supper is that we let every man examine himself. And it's a serious matter.

If there's anything in your life, you need to rededicate your life, you need to get right with God, you need to be saved, then you ought to come this morning and make that decision. that is eternal.

Start a journey that leads to heaven.

Thank you.