How to please God

Opening prayer-

We thank you so much for preserving our lives, we can never thank you enough dear God, but as much as we can, we offer ourselves to you tonight, by giving ourselves to you we are simply giving you what is yours by right and on the basis of the blood of your Son. As we listen to your Word Father, let your Spirit enlighten our understanding. Grant me simple language Father, possess my mind as I humble myself in your presence. Touch us in a very marked way, not only in this place but your children listening over the internet, be with them I pray and at the end of the message let us say it was good to have been here. We pray from our hearts in Jesus name. Let God’s people say, amen and amen.

Let us go to Hebrews chapter 11, we shall read verse 6. Hebrews 11 reading verse 6. Our subject is How to please God.

When you set out to please God, please be prepared to displease many people. Did you hear what I said? Mmm-hmm. A life that pleases God will displease most people and the classic example of that was Jesus Christ. His public ministry lasted 3 and 1/2 years that’s as much as the world could take of an absolutely holy life.

Hebrews 11 verse 6 the Bible says

>But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.<

Let’s read that again and we shall read how? Microscopically, meaning what? As if we’re looking through a microscope for every little piece of meaning, every word, phrase, clause, sentence.

But without faith it is impossible to please God.

Now pleasing God is attached to what? Faith. That’s the only way to please God. The Bible says whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Let me say it again, those of you who teach, you know how often the teacher says things however simple and the things fly right over the heads of the students and they need to be repeated, over and over again? Without faith, no one in heaven, on earth can please God! That’s the Bible.

Now let’s go earlier in the book of in that chapter. Let’s go to verse 4 and we’ll read 4 and 5, By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. What is the verse not saying in words that we can deduce? Listen to the verse, don’t consider my presentation as a sermon, consider it a Bible study from the pulpit. Is that okay with you? Alright listen to the verse again, you must think. Listen again to Hebrews 11:6, but without faith it is impossible to please Him for he that cometh unto God must believe that He is. Faith and pleasing God are inseparable. Wherever God is pleased, what can be assumed? There is faith. Wherever there’s faith, what can we assume about God? He’s pleased. Now keeping that in mind, listen to verse 4 of Hebrews 11 as we continue how to please God.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. What can we assume that’s not mentioned in words? That God was pleased with whom? Abel. Why? He acted in faith. God was pleased with what Abel did. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain by which he obtained witness that he was what righteous. Now a person who pleases God has what? Faith, and is described as what? Righteous.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect: You know God is very balanced. Regarding Able, God had respected him and his offering. God can't respect the offering and disrespect you. That's why a lot of people will do good things for God, but God will say I don't know you. God acknowledges what you did was good. He knows in quotation marks, but you, I don't know. So, that in Matthew 7:22-23 Jesus says

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name, have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Now, what can we construct from Genesis 4:3-5 and Hebrews 11 verse 4? Why did God respect Abel's offering? Let's get a clue. Let's continue from verse 6 of Genesis 4.

6 The very next verse the only way to please God is by faith. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain by which he obtained witness that he was righteous God testifying of his gifts. When you and I please God by acting in faith and faith is the power by which we do what is right in the sight of God, God Himself testifies to the fact that we are righteous.

Now, what can we construct from Genesis 4:3-5 and Hebrews 11 verse 4? Why did God respect Abel's offering? Let's get a clue. Let's continue from verse 6 of Genesis 4.

And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect because it is out of the abundance of the heart, but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.

Now, what can we construct from Genesis 4:3-5 and Hebrews 11 verse 4? Why did God respect Abel's offering? Let's get a clue. Let's continue from verse 6 of Genesis 4.

And the LORD said unto Cain, why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? Pause.

What is God saying about Abel, by what He just told Cain? Now, I need more than one person to answer me all the time. I need some correct answers from other people. Think with me. Listen to God as He speaks to Cain verse 6 Genesis 4, and the Lord said unto Cain why are the wroth? why is that countenance fallen? if thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? What does that say about God's response to Abel? Abel was accepted because Abel did well. What did God mean by did well or do well? Do things how? My way. Bring offerings as I have outlined. I want something that bleeds and carrots don't bleed, broccoli doesn't bleed. So, Cain don't bring me cabbage and brussel sprouts, bring Me a lamb that bleeds, that I may know you have faith in the lamb to come. Are you with me?

And so, God says, if thou doest well - if you do what you're supposed to do and what you're supposed to do is what I have told you to do, shall thou not be accepted? God is so reasonable. If you keep the speed limit, I won't give you a ticket, just the way I didn't give him, but since you're doing 70 in a 45 zone I give you a ticket and possibly arrest you. Let's put these pieces together. God said by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by faith, so that when God says if thou doest well, God is implying Abel did well. How did Abel do well? By faith. What was the effect on God according to Hebrews 11, He was pleased. Therefore, how would you describe a man who pleases God? Righteous. Alright let's have that confirmed in another life of another person.

The next verse, we're back to Hebrews 11, we shall read verse 5. Our subject is how to please God. Hebrews 11 verse 5, By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Now, we know from verse 6 the very next verse the only way to please God is by faith. The Bible says Enoch had this testimony that he pleased God. Who testified to that? God, as He did in the life of Abel. Let's read about Abel again verse 4 of Hebrews 11. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain by which he obtained witness that he was righteous God testifying of his gifts. When you and I please God by acting in faith and faith is the power by which we do what is right in the sight of God, God Himself testifies to the fact that we are
righteous not we ourselves, God testifies to that fact and when God testifies no one can controvert His testimony.

Let's go to John 8. How to please God.
John 8 listen to the words of Jesus Christ. John 8 reading from verse 29 - the Bible says 29 And he that sent Me is with Me: The Father hath not left Me alone; stop. You know the only time the Father ever left Jesus was when Jesus cried out what? Why hast thou forsaken me? Let me take your mind back to times that you and I cannot imagine. The Father has always been there, that's one feature of God. God has no beginning, Christ is equally God. He had always been there because we're human, we cannot fully conceive of someone who has no beginning, but as far as our limited minds can take us back, the Father and the Son, as the young people say, were tight. How long that was, we don't know; for millennia and millennia on lightyears, always together. Can you then imagine the agony of Jesus Christ when for the first time in all that time the Father separated from Him and He cried out my God, my God. When He was on the earth during His miracles the Father was with Him as He testifies in verse 29.

Let's continue with the verse 29 And he that sent Me is with Me: The Father hath not left Me alone; for I, do always those things that please Him. All right, what have we learned about pleasing God? It requires faith. Faith leads us to what? Obedience, that's the word. If thou do as well, do what I want. Do things My way. Faith is expressed in obedience and the effect on God is: I like that, I like him. I like that, I am pleased, mmhh! says God. Listen to Jesus now, He that have sent Me is with Me: The father hath not left Me alone and Jesus explains why the Father did not leave Him at that point and what's the reason why the Father was with Him? For I, do always the things that please Him. Now if Jesus pleased the Father, what kind of life did Jesus live? A life of faith and obedience, mm-hmm. Jesus lived a life of faith because the Bible says the only way to please God is how? By faith and Jesus says I please Him. Then the life of Christ was a life of faith and faith leads to one thing obedience. Well let me say differently, faith is expressed in one thing - obey. And so, Abel obeyed God, how? By faith. What was the effect on God? He was pleased and what did God say of him? He's righteous.

Verse 5 Hebrews 11 Enoch lived a life of faith, God translated him and God Himself testified he was righteous. Jesus, let me explain why My Father has never left Me so far, I do all the things that please Him then why did the Father leave Him when He was on the cross? What was He bearing on the cross? Sins. Do sins please the Father? No. Since the Bible is a book of opposites, if righteousness pleases the Father or obedience what's the effect of sin on God? It disgusts Him, causes Him to want to puke, you know He said I'll spew you out of My mouth and so when His Son carried all the sins of the world on that cross, Jesus died as a cursed person. That's why Paul tells us in Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us and who's the ultimate person to curse? God, cursed His Son, because His Son died as the ultimate criminal and so the Bible says He was numbered with the transgressions (Isiah 53, the last verse of that chapter) Numbered of the transgressors. So, the Father turned away for a while from His Son because at that point what the Father saw was not pleasing.

My brothers and sisters, there's one way to please God and that's to do what He wants. Listen again to John 8:29, see how intense Christ please His Father. We read again and He that have sent Me is with Me: The Father hath not left Me alone for I do always the things that please Him.
Go quickly to 1 John 3:22. Here’s one reason why God does not answer many prayers. What is the Bible say 22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight? One of the conditions for answered prayer is to do what pleases God to the extent of your knowledge. If all you know is this, very little, that’s all God requires. He’ll arrange circumstances to bring you into contact with a little more because knowledge and salvation go hand in hand.

- John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
- 1st Corinthians 10:1 more of a brethren I would not that ye should be ignorant
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13 moreover brethren I would not have you to be ignorant

Paul does not want people ignorant:

- Know ye not that ye are the temple of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:16),
- What? know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 6:19).

What you don’t know? I want you to know, so even if this is all you know and this is all God requires. God has a restless desire to expand your knowledge because as your knowledge expands, your faith grows because faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17)

And so, 1 John 3:22 and whatsoever we ask we receive of him because we keep His Commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. So, we go back now to John 8:29 and He that have sent Me is with Me: The father hath not left Me alone for I do what’s the next word? Come on what's the next word? Always stop. Let’s look at it microscopically. This text is not in Revelation or Daniel or Joel. So, we read it how? Come on, we read it how? Literally. This is very powerful statement from Christ - I do always the things, finish it, that please Him. If that is the case, listen to this question, did Christ ever act on the basis of a self-centered motive? Yes or no? No, He could not have said I do always.

It’s amazing, it’s baffling, we cannot understand that because almost all of our actions and I speak with respect, I include myself are based on what we want and then we run into what? Trouble and then we run back to whom? God. I do always - was it the first or second night when we looked at first Corinthians 10:31 whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do how much? All how? To the glory of God and Jesus is essentially saying the same thing because if I do all these the things that please Him, God is glorified. He never acted on a self-centered, I didn’t say He never had a self-centered motive, having it is not a sin, being tempted is not a sin, having an evil thought joggle through your head, notice I said through, not stay, through, it’s not a sin, but He never acted on a self-centered motive.

In Christ Triumphant page 224 paragraph 3 Ellen white writes He was kind and gentle and did not contend for His rights. It is no wonder that Jesus says in Matthew 16:24, 24...If any man will come after me let him deny himself. That is the most difficult struggle for the so-called believer. It was a struggle for Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Luke 22 reading from verse 41 the Bible says 41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 2 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me. If thou be willing, if there’s a way to get me from this suffering that has Me bleeding through My pores remove this cup from me: but praise God, He continued with these words, nevertheless, not my will, not my urges but yours be done. The Bible says He prayed that prayer three times. There was a struggle between His will and what the Father wanted.
Now a struggle is not a sin, it's not a sin. Resisting sin is a struggle. A struggle is not a sin. Jesus ultimately surrendered to the Father's will that He died for the world - I do always the things that please Him. Let me say again, that clearly teaches us that in all of His life on this earth, Jesus never put Himself first. I can't say that for me, I doubt you can say it for you and I speak with respect.

Let's catch a glimpse of this in the life of Christ. Let's go to Luke 23, let's read verse 34. Luke 23 verse 34. The Bible says then said Jesus Father forgive them for they know not what they do. When Jesus Christ said that where was He? On the cross perhaps being nailed at the time I don't know. In His suffering, in His agony the thinking of Christ was for the people nailing Him not for Him. Now we need divine surgery to think like that. Your husband beats you up and you start praying for Him instead of calling the police, or looking for two by four. They're nailing, they're nailing this man, now at least give Him some time to shout and scream, their salvation was so upfront in His thinking that perhaps it distracted Him from the agony of the crucifixion.

There are people who in a moment of high anxiety or high stress, they have been shot and they didn't know it. Did you hear what I said? There are people who have been shot, they are in accidents, legs broken they didn't know until they get out of the car and try to walk because they were distracted by the rolling of the car and the noise of the crashing metal. Legs broken unaware because something else distracted them and the condition of those nailing Christ touched Him so much. It could be that the condition distracted Him from His agony and He focused - Father forgive them. This wasn't the first time in John chapter 4 when Jesus was trying to win the woman at the well, the disciples brought Him bread in verse 31. The Bible says in the meanwhile His disciples prayed him say master eat. He didn't realize He was hungry because He was absorbed in trying to win that woman and when they literally brought Him food, 32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of - you know there's something else sustaining Me beside those frys that you just brought Me, Father forgive them.

Let's look at another statement of Christ while He was on the cross, stay in Luke 23, let's go to verse 43, 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise. Now Jesus is trying to save one of the thieves, not trying, He's saving him because the man says in verse 42 Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom and Jesus said unto Him verily I say unto thee today thou shalt be with me in paradise. He prays for the forgiveness of those nailing Him, He saves one crucified with Him as a fellow criminal.

Let's go to John 19 we're looking at a man whose first thought was other people, pleasing God
John 19 verse 26, the Bible says 26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. Christ on that cross, suffering sees His mother and makes provisions for her physical comfort because as the firstborn son, that was His responsibility and He carried it out in the middle of a crucifixion. What excuse do you and I have for not doing our duty in the eyes of God? I'm unemployed, I'm too busy looking for work, I can't serve the church. In the midst of a crucifixion, Christ is thinking of those who crucified Him:
- Luke 23:34, 43 He's thinking of the thief on the right trying to save him
- John 19:26 and 27 He makes arrangements for His mother to be taken care of

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Let's go to Mark 15 verse 34, the famous cry of Jesus Christ on the cross is also found in Matthew 27 verse 46. 

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Now as a human being Jesus senses the departure of His Father and He has no help, no help at all and He wants to know where’s the Father. That’s as close I suppose you can come to something concerned with Himself, but He feels the absence of the Father and it’s God’s desire that we be close to Him.

Let’s go back to John 19 verse 28 the only statement of the Cross where it was really Christ thinking of Him for a while and all the world can understand. John 19:28, what did Jesus say? I thirst. Now who can’t understand that? All Jesus asked for on that cross, may I have a little water please? And He didn’t get it. I’m told that loss of blood leads to I don’t know whatever causes thirst. He lost so much blood, fluids. He was a man, He died as a man not as God. God can’t die. In His human condition, He said am thirsty. To whom He said it I don’t know. Even a condemned man in this country is offered a last meal of his choice and condemned as Christ was, all He asked for Himself was some water and He didn’t get it. The thief whom He saved, He got that salvation, the prayer of forgiveness, it covers the world.

Staying in John, let's go to verse 30. What does Christ say in that verse? It is finished. All the struggle, all the agony, the hard life, the constant persecution, the threats on His life, all for the purpose of providing salvation, Jesus says in effect what I came to do for you, the crucifiers, it is finished. And in Luke 23 verse 46 Jesus said to Father, 46...Father into thy hand I commend My spirit. His last words, put His life in the hand of the Father who had forsaken Him for a while. Even on the cross, we see Christ thinking not of Him but of others. He pleased God. Throughout His life, He pleased God. The only way to please God is by faith and so Christ died pleasing the Father. He lived a life that pleased the Father and by His own truthful testimony in John 8:29 I do always the things that please Him, are we pleasing God?

I have a question for you and for me, is there at least one thing we’re doing that we know, not guess, we know that does not please God? How many things do we need to do that do not please God? One, and leave it unconfessed and it will take us to destruction. How many sins did Adam commit that the Bible records? One. What’s the result? Six thousand years of suffering, because Adam did not please God. Adam transferred his faith from God’s Word to the word of Eve which was essentially the word of the devil.

I wrote to a friend of mine today and I told her read Deuteronomy 28: 1 to 13 all the promises God has made for those who obey Him. I mean tremendous promises, just difficult to believe but God doesn’t lie. She wrote back and said wow and I’ll use that as my Bible study focus. I said fine and I wrote back and I said you can’t find a better subject than obedience and I told her:

- as I watch the news and my stomach turns
- as I watch my mother on a machine to emphysema
- as I watch my mother-in-law trying to get around the house on a walker.
- as I watch vets coming back from Iraq and Iran with no hands half a body.
- as I watch the devastation caused by typhoons, cyclones, hurricanes, earthquakes
- as I counsel battered wives, abandon husbands, orphans
- as I visit prisons and preach to prisoners
I wish that Adam had done one thing, tell me that? Obeyed God.

**How to please God?** Give me one word? Obey, and who’s your example? Jesus Christ. Read Hebrews 11, to read the Hall of faith that all that list of people who by faith obeyed God. There is no other way, you don’t please God by reasoning, by argument, by logic, by degrees, we please God by simply doing what He wants and the power to do it is the faith, which comes through this (the Word).

And so tonight I ask you with respect as your brother and a fellow sinner struggling, if there is one clearly identifiable thing in our lives that we know does not please God, shall we not tonight say, Father give me the spiritual courage to put it aside. It may be hurting someone else, it may be hurting you but since the Bible says no man liveth unto himself, what hurts you in some way hurts somebody else because, as Ellen White said we’re all woven together in the great web of humanity. That one thing we know that this pleases God.

Tonight, let us say, Father your word has touched my heart give me strength to put away that one thing. It’s not all we have, but we have to work on these things one by one. How many will say, Father help me to put away that one thing, that one thing, can you raise your hand? If you don’t mind. Just one thing, stand up with me. We’ll pray and then we go. Just one and when the Lord gives us that victory, we get to something else.

**Closing prayer** -

Heads bowed, eyes closed

*Our Father in Heaven, we thank you dear God that there’s a way to please you and that way is the way of obedience which is possible only through faith in Christ. Forgive us dear God for the many times in the many ways we have displeased you, which means we’ve disobeyed you, which means we have not acted in faith, forgive us, the prayer of Christ, forgive them for they know not what they do in some way we have all contributed to the crucifixion of Christ because in the sanctuary service the animal was killed by the sinner and we’re all sinners and so the prayer of Christ covers us and we accept that prayer dear God and we ask you please for the sake of Christ answer that prayer in our lives and forgive us then father give us the mind of Christ that we may move without interruption toward that goal where we can say as far as we know, I do always the things that please Him.*

*Bless every man woman boy and girl who came, a double blessing of those with us for the first time. A special blessing on our guests, our fellow worshipers joining us by the internet dear God. Let us leave this place blessed, touched, challenged, humbled and with the determination to put away one thing that displeases you.*

*Dear God, grant it, make it possible for us to come back tomorrow to hear your Word again water over us as we sleep. In Jesus name, we pray. Let God’s people say, Amen and Amen!*