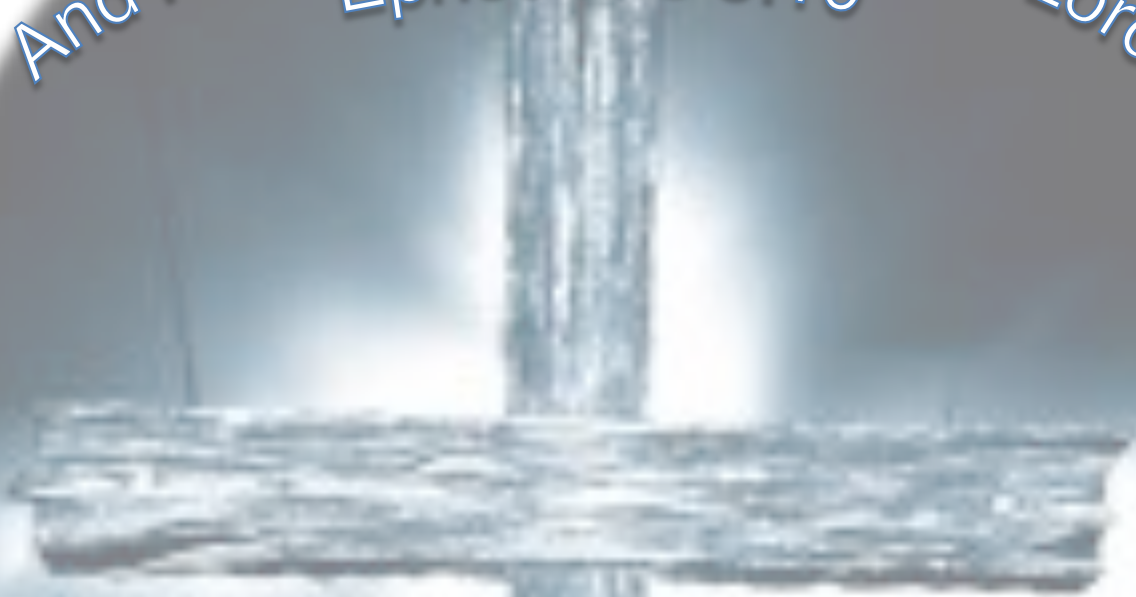


And Find out what pleases the Lord.
Ephesians 5:10



So we make it our goal to please him,
whether we are at home in the body or away from it.
2 Corinthians 5:9

Find out what pleases the Lord...

The goal of this study is to dig through the Scriptures and find out what pleases the Lord. By doing this we will be closer to fulfilling the verse “that we make it our goal to please Him”. It is my hope and prayer that in digging through the Scriptures together to find out what God likes and hates, we will get to know our Savior and Lord better. We will become more in awe of His qualities and that awe will fuel our desire to be like Him.

I pray that together we would be a people that would be about pleasing our God, as we are ever increasingly delighting in Him!

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Keep the Gospel at the heart of it all

The danger of trying to please God

It's important to pause before we begin a study like this. We must stop and think about the motive behind this study and the motive behind all that we do in this life. If we don't stop and think about this we can quickly slide into thinking that we must try and please God for Him to love us, to save us, to make us worthy in some way. That would be a horrible place to be and a very dangerous place to be.

Let's look at Scripture to see the truth of who we are:

- Isaiah 64:6-9
- Romans 3:9-18
- Romans 3:21-26
- Isaiah 43:3b
- Psalms 51:5

So Scripture clearly paints the picture that we are utterly sinful, utterly depraved. There is no good in us apart from the grace God gives us. So there is no way for us to "earn" anything from God or bring anything to this equation. Has not His hands made all these things? (Acts 7:49,50)

Let it be clear then from the beginning that we are not trying to earn or work our way to love or salvation!

How are we saved?

Then the question must be answered, how are we saved? How are we loved and made right? The answer: Jesus Christ.

Again, let's turn to Scripture:

- John 3:16-19
- Acts 2:22-39
- Romans 5:1-11
- Colossians 1:22,23
- 1 Corinthians 15:3,4
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-21
- Galatians 2:20,21
- Titus 3:3-8

Do our actions matter?

If that is so, then why do our actions matter? Why do we try and make it our goal to please Him? Go back and look at 2 Corinthians 5:14. It's because of Christ's love. It's His love that compels us. Relook at the verse on the cover 2 Corinthians 5:9, but read on to verse 10. We will appear before the judgment seat of Christ. I know when I am there before Him, I want my life to have pleased Him, not out of fear of condemnation, because that is gone, but instead because I love Him and I want to please those I love and that love me.

That is why we fight hard to please Him, because of His great love for us! That love should drive us forward, and we should put that love on display for the world to see. That is why our actions matter!

The Word

God is pleased with His Word

- Joshua 1:8-9
- Isaiah 55:8-13
- John 7:37,38
- John 1:1
- John 8:51
- 2 Peter 1:16-21
- 2 Timothy 3:16,17

God hates our thoughts of what is right in our own eyes

- Isaiah 55:8-9
- Proverbs 14:12
- Jeremiah 17:9,10
-

Other verses

Use this space in each section to capture other verses that the Spirit might lead you to as you study this category. Please be prepared to share them with the group.

Scripture Insight

Do you hold the authority of Scripture as the upmost truth? If yes, do you hold it even over your own thoughts and feelings? Do your actions line up with your answer? Explain.

How often do you check your thoughts, actions, feelings, and heart motives against Scripture before acting on them?

How equipped are you for doing every good work, based on 2 Timothy 3:16,17?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Christ Likeness

God is pleased with Christ likeness, holiness, and eternal focus

- Romans 13:14
- Colossians 3:1-4
- 2 Timothy 2:1-7
- Romans 8:29-30
- Ephesians 4:20
- 1 Peter 1:15-16
- 1 Timothy 4:7-10

God hates worldly likeness and worldly focus

- Matthew 16:23
- Romans 12:2
- Ephesians 5:10-17

Other verses

Scripture Insight

How real to you is the spiritual war that we are currently fighting? Are you living as a soldier or a civilian? Who are you training to follow? Explain your daily training routine.

How often and serious do you take the command to set your mind on things above? How is an eternal focus changing your daily life or how could it?

What are the practical implications to your life when you consider the fact that “you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God”?

What desires do you struggle with that are not Christ like? What would clothing yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ look like in those areas?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Obedience

God is pleased with our obedience and repentance

- 1 Samuel 15:17-23
- John 14:15
- John 14:21
- John 14:31
- John 15:14
- Luke 2:42-51
- 2 Kings 22:18-20
- Jeremiah Ch 35
- Jeremiah 10:23

God hates our hypocrisy, rebellion, and hard heartedness

- Matthew 23:23
- Revelation 3:14-20
- Hebrews 3:7-11
- Deuteronomy 1:26-36

Other verses

Scripture Insight

Explain the difference of an obedient / disciplined life vs a legalistic / Pharisee life. Does God call us to either?

What things do you do to make sure you are obeying the Word of the Lord?

Is obedience important given that we are saved by grace? Explain.

How concerned are you with obeying your authorities? How does your pride affect this?

What are the things Jesus commanded you to obey (John 14:15)? Are you obeying them?

How much do you “see” Jesus? (John 14:21) What is the correlation between Jesus showing Himself and our obedience?

Does your sin lead to brokenness that leads to repentance that leads to obedience? Explain.

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Contentment

God is pleased with contentment

- 1 Timothy 6:6-7
- Hebrews 13:5-6
- Job 1:21-22
- Philippians 4:12,13

God hates bitterness and discontentment

- Zechariah 8:17
- Ecclesiastes 4:7,8
- 1 Samuel 8:5-9
- Hebrews 12:15

Other verses

Scripture Insight

How do you practice contentment in your life? Do you view it as great gain?

List some times in your life where God has never left you or forsaken you. How does remembering these things help in times of discontentment?

God says He hates (Zech 8:17) when we plot evil against others. Often our “plotting” are bitter thoughts. Is there any bitter roots growing in you that you need to deal with?

Have there been times you see the things “other nations” (1 Samuel 8:5-9) have, but you don’t and want it? How do you deal with these desires? How does knowing you have Christ affect this?

What area(s) of your life do you find yourself most easily able to complain about? What about that area(s) are you discontent with? What would it look like to have Godly contentment in that area(s)?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Encouraging Speech

God is pleased with encouraging speech

- Proverbs 10:20
- Proverbs 12:18
- Proverbs 18:21
- Romans 14:18
- Hebrews 3:13
- Hebrews 10:25
- 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

God hates discouraging speech and blaspheme

- Leviticus 24:10-16
- James 3:5-10
- Ephesians 4:29,30
- Ephesians 5:4
- 2 Corinthians 13:10
- Proverbs 15:4

Other verses

Scripture Insight

How closely do you watch what comes out of your mouth? Think of all the different social situations (home, work, church, etc). What would I conclude if I followed you around today and listened to everything you said?

How often are you encouraging others?

How much sarcasm and joking do you use in your speech? Do you think it is pleasing and encouraging to God and others? Why or Why not?

What kinds of speech do you fill your head with when you have the chance to control what you listen to? (Movies, music, books, news, etc) Do you think this influences your speech?

If you struggle with your words, have you considered (Matthew 12:34,35)? What do you think is at the root of the things you say?

Think back to the Gospel (ref verses on page 4), what are some key things that should happen to our speech if we fill our mind with the love of God?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Faith

God is pleased with our faith in Him

- John 14:11-14
- Matthew 8:5
- Matthew 14:22-33
- Matthew 17:20
- Hebrews 11
- Romans 1:17
- Romans 4:19-25
- Colossians 1:3-8
- Revelation 2:10

God hates idolatry or faith in other things

- Matthew 8:23-27
- Matthew 13:58
- Proverbs 3:5-8
- 1 Peter 4:3
- 1 Corinthians 10:14
- Psalms 146:3-6
- Psalms 118:8-11

Other verses

Scripture Insight

Jesus rebukes the disciples for having faith in their senses and not Him (Matthew 8:23-27). When was a time your senses all cried out “no way this will be ok”, but Jesus came through differently? What does that do to your faith?

How do you grow your faith in Jesus Christ?

Examine your life; are there people or things that you are putting your trust or faith in more than God? What are they and why?

Looking through the Gospels (I referenced only a few), what was one of the main themes Jesus wanted people to get? Why do you think this is so important to them and to us?

How solid is your faith in Jesus Christ right now? What do you think it would take to make it stronger?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Fear of the Lord

God is pleased when we fear Him

- Genesis 22:9-12
- Psalms 147:10-11
- Psalms 25:12-15
- Proverbs 8:13
- Luke 1:50
- Psalms 31:19
- Psalms 103:17
- Psalms 128:1-2
- Proverbs 1:7
- Isaiah 33:6
- 2 Corinthians 7:1

God hates fear of man

- Proverbs 29:15
- John 7:1-8
- John 12:42
- Matthew 10:28
- Romans 12:2
- Galatians 1:10

Other verses

Scripture Insight

How much of your life is sustained by your own strength?

What does it look like to fear the Lord?

Do you fear the Lord enough to lay down whatever He calls you to (Gen 22:9-12)? What has He called you to lie down or put to death that you are still holding on to?

Whose approval do you care most about in your life? Do your actions line up with your answer?

Why do you think God put so much emphasis on us fearing Him? How do you think this helps us?

How does the Gospel and the fear of the Lord work together?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Fruit of the Spirit

God is pleased with growth in the fruit of the Spirit

- Galatians 5:22
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
- 2 Peter 1:5-9

God hates growth in worldly fruit

- Colossians 3:5-9
- Ephesians 4:31-32
- Mark 7:20-23
- 1 Peter 2:1,2

Other verses

Scripture Insight

How much does the fruit of the Spirit and/or the definitions of love define your life?

How are you trying to grow in the fruit of the Spirit and love?

Do you see any areas where you are staying the same or growing in the fruit of the world? If so, what are you doing about it?

Think about your close relationships (wife, kids, parents, friends, etc). What would it look like to live out the fruit of the Spirit daily? What is specifically stopping you?

How does the knowledge that Jesus Christ loves you perfectly and treats you with these fruits affect your ability to share them with others?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Giving

God is pleased with a giving spirit

- Psalms 37:21
- Proverbs 3:9,10
- Proverbs 11:24
- Hebrews 13:16
- Ephesians 4:28
- Malachi 3:8-11
- Matthew 5:38-42
- Luke 12:15
- Luke 12:32-34
- 2 Corinthians 9:10-14
- 1 Timothy 5:8

God hates selfishness

- Jonah 4:5-10
- 1 Corinthians 10:24
- 1 Corinthians 10:33-11:1
- Romans 15:1-3
- Philippians 2:4,5
- Philippians 2:20,21
- James 3:16

Other verses

Scripture Insight

How much of your time, money, and stuff do you give or devote to others?

What do you think your giving would look like if Jesus were in control of your checkbook and your day planner? Would it look different?

What is the biggest area in your life where you see selfishness? What would that area look like if you submitted it to Christ?

Would you say you look out for your own interest or those of Christ more? Why?

Do you believe Malachi whole-heartedly? Do your giving habits reflect your believe?

What is the hardest thing for you to give (money, time, stuff, energy, etc)? Why do you think its hard? How can you give that to someone this week?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

His Glory

God is pleased with His Glory and our humility

- Exodus 14:4
- Isaiah 57:15
- Isaiah 66:2
- John 12:28
- Galatians 6:14
- Isaiah 40:9-10
- Isaiah 48:9
- John 11:40
- 2 Corinthians 4:6

God hates our pride

- Jeremiah 44:15-22
- Isaiah 37:21-29
- Isaiah 39:2-7
- 2 Samuel 22:28
- Ezekiel 16:49
- Proverbs 8:13
- Luke 1:51
- James 4:6
- Romans 12:16

Other verses

Scripture Insight

Is there pride in your life like that of those from Judah (Jeremiah 44), where you have done something your own way, without consequence, for so long you will not listen to the Lord to change it?

Are there any areas in your life where you are like Hezekiah (Isaiah 39)? Where you have taken pride in something you think you have done, shown them off to everyone, and give no glory to God?

Do you find yourself boasting of Christ or yourself more? What does it look like to boast in Christ? (Gal 6)

How do you battle the sin of pride? How do you grow in humility?

How do you give glory to God on a daily basis?

Look up with word contrite. Does this describe your heart when you are proud, sin, or rob God's glory?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Purity

God is pleased with purity

- Psalms 24:4-5
- Psalms 101:3
- Psalms 141:3,4
- Matthew 5:8
- Philippians 4:8
- 2 Corinthians 7:1
- Hebrews 13:4
- Ephesians 5:9
- 1 Corinthians 6:17

God hates impurity and evil desires

- Leviticus 20:7-24
- Matthew 5:27-30
- Colossians 3:5
- Ephesians 5:3-7
- Ezekiel 23

Other verses

Scripture Insight

What would you consider to be a “hint of sexual impurity” (Ephesians 5:3-7)?

How seriously do you take your sexual purity? What measures & disciplines do you have in place to make sure you are pure?

How often do you compare your entertainment choices to Philippians 4:8? Why do you think God is concerned with what we “think on”?

In Matthew 5 Jesus speak of radical surgery to remove impurity from your life. Is there anything you need to “cut” out of your life? Are you willing to make the cut?

Notice the hard language God uses in Ezekiel Ch 23, this is what your idolatry looks like to Him. Are there areas where you have prostituted yourself out to idols? Are there areas you need to repent of your “lust for other things” besides God?

How does mediating on the Holy Spirit, the very Spirit of God, living in you (1 Cor 6:17) affect your ability to live a pure life?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Justice

God is pleased with justice and unity

- Psalms 11:7
- Micah 6:7-8
- John 17:20-26
- Isaiah 61:8
- Ephesians 4:1-3
- Jeremiah 51:56

God hates injustice, division, and violence

- Genesis 6:13
- Malachi 2:16-17
- Psalms 11:5
- 1 Corinthians 12:21-27

Other verses

Scripture Insight

How do you act justly in your everyday life (Micah 6:7-8)?

Are there any areas of violence or strife in your life that are left unresolved? How could the Gospel impact these areas?

What are you actively doing to build the unity of the body of Christ?

If the Lord is a God of retribution (Jeremiah), then why don't you get what you deserve for you sin?

Do you think the consequences of our sin are God's justice? Is it the same for both believers and none believers?

What role does Jesus Christ play in God's plan of justice?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.

Love

God is pleased with love

- Proverbs 8:17
- Exodus 34:6-7
- Ephesians 4:2-3
- John 13:34-35
- John 15:12-13
- 1 John 4:8-21
- Matthew 5:43-48

God hates our hate for each other

- 1 John 3:14,15
- Matthew 5:21-26

Other verses

Scripture Insight

How do you live out Matthew 5:23,24? How zealous are you to restore relationships?

How often do you meditate on how much God loves you through Jesus Christ? How do you see that manifesting itself in your love for others?

Mediate on 1 John. If we do not love each other we are still dead. Examine yourself; are you growing in love year after year?

How can you show love, with your actions, to those who are close to you?

How can you show love, with your actions, to those who are just acquaintances?

How do you show love to your enemies and those that are against you?

How do you grow in love?

Life Actions

Write down 2 things God has shown you in this section that you can change about your life that will please God more. Think about how to implement them in your daily life. Pick one to work on this week.

1.

2.