

The Proper Aim of a Christian's Life

by James Smith

The core message of this sermon is that every Christian should aim to please God in every aspect of life and consider His glory in every decision.

Scripture: Proverbs 16:7, Matthew 5:16, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Corinthians 5:9, Ephesians 5:10, Colossians 1:10, Colossians 3:23, 1 Thessalonians 4:1, Hebrews 13:16, 1 John 3:22

Topics: "Pleasing God", "Glorification"

Description

James Smith preaches on the importance of aiming to please God in every aspect of our lives, emphasizing that as Christians, our daily goal should be to seek God's approval in all that we think, say, and do. He highlights the need for believers to constantly ask themselves if their actions align with pleasing God, reminding them of the significance of glorifying God in all areas of life. Smith urges listeners to prioritize pleasing God above all else, emphasizing that God's approval should be the primary focus in decision-making, relationships, and daily activities.

Transcript

"Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God , as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more!" 1 Thessalonians 4:1

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do -- do it all for the glory of God!" 1 Corinthians 10:31

"And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God." Colossians 1:10

Every servant should habitually aim to please his master.

Every wife should habitually aim to please her husband.

Every child should habitually aim to please his father.

But every Christian is the Lord's servant , the Lamb's bride , the child of God; therefore his daily, hourly aim, should be to please God. He should never lose sight of this for one hour -- but in every place, in every circumstance, in every undertaking, ask, "Will this be pleasing to God?"

God is pleased or displeased . . .

with every thought we think,
with every word we speak,
with every action we perform,
with every emotion we feel.

Perhaps we do not sufficiently realize this. We think, speak, feel, and act -- without ever considering whether we are pleasing God, or not. But this ought not to be, for He . . .

gave us our being,
redeemed us from sin and damnation,
called us by His grace, and
has blessed us with innumerable and interminable blessings

-- and all that we may glorify Him! And how can we glorify Him but by habitually aiming to please Him? If I forget or lose sight of this, I forget and lose sight of the principal end of my being, and well-being.

What makes Heaven so happy? Just this -- all there keep the eye and heart intently fixed upon this one thing -- pleasing God. What would make us permanently and solidly happy on earth? Only this -- to aim always and in everything to please God. Ah! if we did this, we would have . . .

few cares,
few fears,
and no falls!

The bosom would be a stranger to anxiety, and the heart to foreboding. The Savior's prayer which He taught his disciples would be in a great measure answered, "Your will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven."

Well, shall we go on as we have done -- or shall we seek a change? We have not, perhaps, in everything, and at all times, sought principally to please God. But Paul says, "You ought to please God!"

Both reason and revelation unite in saying that we, as believers in Jesus, as partakers of the grace of God, as those who are absolutely dependent on God, who are so richly supplied by God, who are so infinitely indebted to God, and who are expecting to receive a crown and kingdom from God -- ought in everything to endeavor to please God!

The precepts of His word direct us how we may do this, and the Holy Spirit is ready to help our infirmities -- if we heartily desire and fervently ask Him.

Let each of us, then, in future, propose that the end of my life, is to please God. And let us often, very often, ask in reference to particular points, "Is this pleasing to God?" For instance, the manner in which I employ my spare time -- the amount of time I give to sleep, to recreation, to entertainment. Many Christians seem never to think whether the way in which they spend their time is pleasing to God or not. If

they did, would they ever go to some entertainments, or indulge in certain pleasures? Would the world have so much of their time, and the prayer-closet so little? How much time is wasted in frivolous ways, which are neither conducive to the health of the body, nor calculated to promote the spirituality of the mind.

How many squander their money on dress, ornaments, or delicacies for the body -- who never relieve the poor, or supply the needs of the sick, or contribute to establish God's cause in the world; or if they do so at all, it is not in due proportion to their means. The pence are given to the Lord -- the pounds are spent in the gratification of SELF!

If, when I am going to lay out money in ornaments or dress, or indulgences for the table, I was to ask, "Is this pleasing to God?" -- would it not check my lavish expenditure? Would it not often change the course in which my money flows?

Just so with those who hoard up much, adding house to house, field to field, pound to pound -- while the needs of the widow and the fatherless, and the funds of God's church are not supplied by them, if they were to ask, when making their purchases, or paying their money into the bank, "Is this pleasing to God?" -- would they not often give more -- and hoard less? We think so. And would not the reflection be more pleasing on a sick-bed or dying pillow? We think it would.

We all have influence, and in the case of a contested election, or in order to carry some party question -- we prove that we have. We can influence some, it may be many. We can influence them for good or for evil.

Now, in making use of our influence for worldly objects, and in withholding it from spiritual objects -- do we not sin? Are we not displeasing God? Ought we not to ascertain what influence we have, and how we may best exert it, so as to please God? Are we not accountable for the use or abuse of our influence? Is it not a talent, an important talent? Was it not given us to employ for God and the good of our fellow-men? Is it not important, then, in reference to using our influence, to ask, "Is this pleasing to God?"

So also as to the connections I form, and the relationships into which I enter, the first question should be, "Will this please God?" A Christian is about to enter into partnership, to commence or carry on a business -- what should be his first object? Assuredly to please God, for if he loses sight of God's glory, and seeks only his own worldly advantage -- God may blow upon it, and if it does not end in ruin, it may introduce him to trouble, care, anxiety, and perplexity, which will spoil his peace, rob him of his spiritual enjoyments, and make his life anything but desirable! Men of business should often ask in reference to their transactions, "Is this pleasing to God?"

A godly man is about to choose a wife, or a godly woman has an offer of marriage -- what should they do? What should be the principal aim? What should decide the point? Just an answer to this question, "Will it please God?" If they can, after much thought, prayer, regard to God's Word, and close examination, conclude, "Yes, it will please God" -- then they have reason to expect the smile of Heaven upon their union, the blessing of God upon their household, and real happiness in their connection with each other -- but not else.

Do not forget that you ought not only to please yourselves -- but to please God! And not only so -- but you should aim to please God first and principally -- before you please yourselves.

For example, say that I am a laborer, and am about to engage in an employment -- "pleasing God" should be my guide. The place may be respectable, the employment may be easy, the remuneration may be good; but can I have time for closet prayer? Can I have liberty to attend the means of grace? Can I adorn the doctrine of God my Savior here? Or, looking at the subject on all sides, and comparing it with other situations that may offer, I should ask, "Will it glorify God for me to enter into this employment?" Or, "Is it pleasing to God that I should enter into such an engagement, or undertake such a service?" This is the point, and we should stick to it. This is the rule, and we should walk by it.

Again, as to the way in which I perform duty . Many things are done -- which are not well done. The way of doing them does not reflect honor on God, or do credit to ourselves. If I do anything out of fear, slavish fear -- it is wrong. If I do anything merely to silence conscience -- it is wrong. If I do anything merely to please men, or to raise myself in their estimation -- it is wrong.

My object in everything I do -- should be to please God. The one grand end of my life, the grand thing I am to aim at -- is to please my Heavenly Father. I have . . .

nothing to dread but His frown,

nothing to fear but His displeasure,

nothing to seek but His approbation.

If my Heavenly Father is pleased with me -- it is enough.

In prayer, in praise, in exercising benevolence, in every public duty, in every arduous enterprise, in every self-denying undertaking -- I should just ask, "Is this pleasing to God?" If so, all is well. But His word must decide the question -- and will always do so. In general,

if we do all to the glory of God,

if we do all lovingly or in a spirit of love,

if we do all to edify believers, and to win lost sinners --

then it is no question that God is pleased with us.

In a word, in reference to . . .

the spirit we manifest,

the temper we indulge,

the object we aim at,

the design we have in view, and

the motive that influences us in every enterprise --

we should seriously ask, "Is this pleasing to God?"

Beloved, if we do not please God -- then it matters little whom we please! And if we do please God -- then it is of small importance whom we displease. What a comfort it is when . . .

the world frowns on us,

Christians misunderstand us, and

professors misrepresent our conduct

-- to have the inward conviction, "my aim was to please God!" -- and to go to the throne of grace to render an account, and feel the light of our Father's countenance lifted up upon us, assuring us that he is pleased with us.

On the other hand, suppose that . . .

the world smiles on us,

Christians think well of us,

and professors applaud us

-- but we have an inward conviction that in what we have done -- we have sought ourselves before Jesus, and have been influenced by some carnal motive, instead of a simple desire to please God -- and we go to the throne of grace to lay our work at our Father's feet -- and He refuses to acknowledge it -- there is no sweet smile, no access to His loving heart, no light from his countenance beaming upon us! What is the world's smile, what the opinion of our fellow-Christians, what the plaudits of professors -- without the approbation of God? Ah, what?

My brother, my sister -- our Heavenly Father is pleased with our poorest performances, with our most imperfect services, with only a cup of cold water given to one of His children -- if our object is to please Him! In all that we do -- He looks into our hearts, to see what we are aiming at. He is displeased or pleased -- with all we do. It is one thing for Him to accept our persons in Jesus, to pardon our sins for the sake of Jesus, and another thing to be pleased with our works, as the works of His beloved child. Of the former we should be assured, and the latter we should constantly aim at.

O what a mercy to be permitted to do anything for God, to visit His sick, to relieve His poor, to circulate His truth, and to speak well of His name! And what a comfort it is to know that our God is easily pleased -- that it is not the amount of what we do -- but the motive from which we do it, that He looks at! "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man has, and not according to that a man has not."

Whatever we do, let us "do it heartily, as to the Lord -- and not to man." Whatever we do, let us "do all in the name of the Jesus Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father, by Him." Whatever we do, "whether we eat or drink -- let us do all to the glory of God." Whatever we do -- let it be our object, aim, and end -- "to please God."

And -- in the future, when any work presents itself, when any untrodden path opens before us, and any influence urges us forward, or any object attracts us onward -- let us ask, "Is this pleasing to God?" And before we proceed, let the question be decided; nor let us dare engage in any enterprise, enter into any relationship, or undertake any work -- but from the conviction, "This will please God!"

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