

HOW DO WE GLORIFY GOD? **PLEASE** HIM!

Over the course of the last several weeks, we have been contemplating the truth that God wants us to **glorify** Him. **Why** should we glorify God? Where do we start, right? The reasons are as infinite as God is!

--One reason is because God created us—and the **creat-ed** ought to give praise to the **Creat-or!**

--Another reason is because God created us for **that very purpose!** Isaiah 43:7 “Even every one that is called by my name: **for I have created him for my glory**, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”

--Yet a third reason is the one we’ve looked at the last couple of weeks and is found in

I Corinthians 6:19-20 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are **not your own?** ²⁰ For ye are **bought with a price: therefore glorify God** in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

--Simply put, we should glorify God because He **redeemed** us—He bought us back from the penalty of sin by **paying our penalty** for us! Since He paid the price, He **bought us!** And since He bought us, we **don’t belong to us**—we belong to Him! Therefore, we should “**glorify** God.”

But... what does it **mean** to glorify God? And how do we go about **doing it?**

First, what does **it mean?** Here are some definitions I gave you during the first sermon of this series:

--to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate

--to cause the dignity and worth of God to become manifest and acknowledged

--to ascribe weight to something by recognizing the real value and worth of it

John Piper, in a sermon entitled “Glorifying God...Period,” gave the following **definition**: “‘Glorifying’ means feeling and thinking and acting in ways that reflect His greatness, that make much of God, that give evidence of the supreme greatness of all His attributes and the all-satisfying beauty of His manifold perfections.”

(<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/glorifying-god-period>).

That’s certainly a **thorough** definition, but a little difficult—in my opinion—to wrap our minds around.

The website “**Got Questions**” has this as a definition: “To glorify God is to extol His attributes, praise His works, trust His name, and obey His Word.” This definition is shorter—and easier to understand—than Piper’s, and also gives us some thoughts on **how** to carry it out.

As I’ve been thinking this over for the last month or so, I wanted to come up with a definition that would be easy to remember—and at the same time provide **practical ways** on how to go about doing it. Although I would not consider this a definition, *per se*, it is easy to remember—and does “spell out” actions we can take to bring glory to God.

I came up with these four words, all beginning with the letter “p”—please, praise, pray, and promote. If we are going to glorify God, we need to please Him...and praise Him...and pray to Him...and promote Him. As you already know from your handout, we are going to be looking at just the first one here this morning.

1. Who we are to please

Not going to spend a lot of time on this one because the answer is obvious—**God** is the one we need to try to please! Not exactly sure who gets credit for coming up with this, but I’m guessing a number of you can **finish this phrase**: “Only two choices on the shelf;” (what comes next?)—“pleasing God or pleasing self.”

--Is this phrase in the Bible? No!

--Does this phrase teach a **Biblical** principle? (Sort of—but not exactly!)

Take your Bibles and turn to Matthew 6, verse 24. Mt 6:24 “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [money].”

Is Jesus saying there are **only two masters** to choose from?

No! What Jesus is saying is that you **can't serve two** at the same time!

Are there **more than two** choices of who we can please—or is it **just** God and self?

The Bible does talk about a **third** group: **men**, meaning “others.”

Galatians 1:10 “For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to **please men**? for if I yet **pleased men**, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

I Thess 2:4 “But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as **pleasing men**, but God, which trieth our hearts.”

The flip side, though, is that often times when we are trying to please **men**, we are doing it so they **praise us!** Jesus said as much in this very chapter.

Look at vs 1-2 (read). **Why** do they “give alms” (meaning gifts for the poor) in such a way as to be seen of men? So they can have the “glory of men.” **A.W. Pink** wrote: “Man will glory either in himself or in God. Man will live either to serve and please himself, or he will seek to serve and please the Lord.”

(<https://lifeisworship.com/2015/03/24/just-two-choices-on-the-shelf-pleasing-god-or-pleasing-self/>)

God, of course, wants us to do that which **pleases Him!** Notice what Paul wrote to the recently-saved believers in Thessalonica. **I Thess 4:1** “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to **walk and to please God**, so ye would abound more and more.”

What about you? Are you striving to please **you**—or are you striving to please **God?**

2. When we are to please God

When are we to please God? Only **on Sunday**, right? And only while we are **at church!**

We **don't have** to please God **Monday through Saturday**...and we don't have to please Him at work...and we certainly don't need to please God when we are **on vacation!**

I'm being facetious, of course! We are to please God at **all times**...and in **all places**...and under **any and all** circumstances and situations. Does the Bible say that? Notice **I Corinthians 10:31** “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or **whatsoever ye do, do all** to the glory of God.”

--Do you see any “exception clauses” or “loop-holes” there? There aren't any, are there?

--What about Jesus? Did Jesus “take any breaks” from pleasing God? He didn't, did He?

John 8:29 “And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I **do always those things that please Him.**”

I'm not a mind-reader, but my guess is that about now some of you might be having thoughts like:

‘Wait a minute, Pastor! Are you saying that I can't **ever do** what **I want** to do? And that God doesn't want me to **enjoy anything**—and that He **never** wants me to have any “fun”? **Is that** what you are saying?’

No; that's not what I'm saying either! The Bible plainly states that God has **given us things to enjoy!** **I Timothy 6:17** “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who **giveth us richly all things to enjoy;**”

And let's not forget that Jesus called His disciples to **rest** when they had been “extra busy.”

Mark 6:31-32 “And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and **rest a while**: for there were many coming and going, and they had **no leisure** so much as to eat. ³² And they departed into a **desert place by ship privately.**”

Please know that they didn't “take a ship” **into the desert!** That obviously doesn't work!

But...they did take a ship (or boat)—to a **deserted place**...away from the crowds...so they could **rest!**

So how do we reconcile these two seemingly contradictory thoughts? How do we put into practice “pleasing God” at **all times** and “enjoying ourselves” **some** of the time? I certainly don't have all the answers, but I do think it is important to think through this a little bit. Some people fall into a pattern of thinking where they become **almost paralyzed** out of fear that they are **not pleasing God enough.**

In fact, one of our daughters (not Abbey) went through a time in her life when she was constantly “second-guessing” whether or not she was pleasing God—or just pleasing herself!

3. Ways to avoid paralysis over who you are pleasing

So how do we avoid living in a state of fear and *feeling guilty* when we are enjoying ourselves? First off—in the way of a disclaimer—I realize this **does not apply** to everyone. Very few believers are pre-occupied with thoughts like: “Am I pleasing *myself* too much? Am I *not pleasing God* enough?”

Sadly, too many believers are on the **opposite side** of the spectrum: They are all about **pleasing themselves** and don’t seem to care at all whether or not they are **pleasing God!**

So why am I bringing up something that may **only apply to a few?** I honestly **don’t know!** Maybe there is someone struggling in this area that I don’t know about—or maybe someone is on the verge of falling into that way of thinking and this will help them not to! At any rate, **God took this sermon in a direction** that was different than I thought it would be going! I really don’t know how else to explain it!

So...what are some truths that can help us avoid being paralyzed with fear about **who** we are pleasing?

A. God *changes us* so that we enjoy what *pleases Him!*

Psalm 37:4 “Delight thyself also in the Lord: and **He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.**” Does that mean God gives us **whatever we want whenever we want it?**

No! The key to this verse is “delighting” ourselves in the Lord!

--If we delight in **the Lord**, we will also delight in **His Word**.

--As we read and obey God’s Word, God uses it to “renew our minds.”

Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be **ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

As our **mind is renewed**, He changes the desires of **our** heart to align with the desires of **His** heart! That means **His** desires become **your** desires—and they are **good** desires because they **came from Him!**

In essence, then, you and God “are on the same page” because what pleases **Him** pleases **you!** And we certainly shouldn’t feel guilty about being taking pleasure in what is pleasing to God!

Question for you: Are you **noticing that change** in your life? Are you growing in your pleasure of things that please God? I sure hope so! If not, it is most likely because you are **not delighting** in God or His Word!

B. God *awakens within us* an appreciation for Him as the Giver!

I’m guessing most of us have witnessed young children—or grandchildren—opening gifts at Christmas time.

When they’re in **their 2s and 3s**, they will tear off the paper, look at the gift, set it down, then hurry off to open up the next one—especially if there are a lot of them!

When they get a little older, they learn **to thank the person** who gave them the gift—but often need to **be reminded** to do so. “Little Johnnie, what do you say to your Aunt Martha?”

Eventually, though, they come to the point where they are **genuinely appreciative** of the giver—and not just the gift!

I think we as **believers go through** that same kind of transition. When we are a **new** believer, we are often enamored with the gifts—the blessings—we receive from God. As we grow in our relationship with God, though, we grow in our appreciation of Him as the Giver!

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,”

When we recognize the **gifts are from Him**—and we praise Him as the Giver of them, He is pleased! And we should not feel guilty about **pleasing** Him—or **praising** Him!

Here’s one more way to avoid feeling guilty when we “rest”: **C. God will tell us when it’s time to rest!** Just as **Jesus recognized** the need for His disciples to “come aside and rest a while,” God knows **when we need a rest** and will call us aside to rest! **How** does He do that? In one sense, **He already has!** How? By giving us a **day of rest!** **Exodus 23:12** “Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the **seventh** day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.”

Am I saying we have to observe the Sabbath? Nope; I’m not saying that at all! What I am saying is this: God established **one day in seven** as a day of rest and I’m not going to feel guilty for taking a day off each week.

And you shouldn't either! Here's another thought along the same lines: The Pharaoh of Egypt during Moses' time used harsh task-masters—**not God!** Why do I bring that up? To remind ourselves that sometimes we put **on ourselves**—or allow others to put on us—a load that is heavier than God puts on us!

Lastly, let's consider... **4. How we are to please God**

I think you'd agree that **knowing** we should please God is **one** thing—but **doing it** is quite another!

So **how** do we go about pleasing God? Here's the MAP: M-A-P. I gave you this last December when we were talking about adding the spiritual qualities that are listed in II Peter 1 and it certainly fits here.

First, **Motivation**. In order for us to please God, we need **to want to** please God. What should motivate us to please God? Here's a clue: It starts with an "I," ends with an "e," and has four letters. What's the word?

Love, right? Please turn to John 14.

--Vs 15. "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Who is speaking? Jesus! What is our **motivation** for obedience? Love for Jesus!

--Vs 21. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me..."

How do we **demonstrate**—how do we prove—our love for Jesus? By **keeping His commandments**.

--Vs 23. "...If a man love me, he will keep my words..." Again, love for Jesus is proven by obedience to Him!

--Vs 24. "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings..." **Lack** of obedience indicates what? Lack of love!

What about you? Are you motivated—**by love**—to please God? Children, when they are young, often obey their parents because **they fear the consequences** that come with disobedience. That's how it was, "back in the day," anyway—and that is what motivated me!

I don't remember exactly how old I was—at least 12 because it was after I was saved—but I came to a point in my life where I began to obey my Dad because I loved him—not because I feared being punished. I believe God desires the same in us. He wants us to "grow out of" **obeying Him out of fear**—and "grow into" obeying Him out of love! In order to please God, we need to be motivated—but motivation is **not enough**.

Along with **motivation**, we need... Awareness.

What do we need to be aware of when it comes to pleasing God? **Three** things:

1) First—in order to please God—we need to be **aware** of what pleases God! Quite profound, isn't it? But before you pass it off as the most "duh Pastor" quote of the day, don't miss the point: God has given us—in His Word—**what pleases Him** and too often times we care so little **about pleasing Him** that we don't even want to know what pleases Him!

What does John 14:15 say?

"If ye love me, keep my commandments"—but you need to **know them** in order to obey them!

Any idea **how many commandments** there are in the New Testament? One result from an on-line search suggested 1050; another stated there were 684 passages!

How would you even begin to break that many commandments down into manageable categories? Thankfully, we don't have to do that **because Jesus did it for us!** Please turn now to Matthew 22, beginning with vs 35. Follow along as I read through vs 40 (read). There you have it! All the commandments summed up into **two!** But those two aren't easy to follow, are they?

--Do you **love God** with all your heart, soul, and mind?

--Do you **love your** neighbor as yourself? And let's not forget that when someone asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor," Jesus gave them the parable of the Good Samaritan to show us that our "neighbor" is anyone who has a need—not just the people who live next door!

Besides being aware of what pleases God, we also need...

2) Awareness of the opportunities He gives to please Him. We all have multiple times throughout the course of a day to do that **which pleases God**—or that which displeases Him. **When my wife** asks me to do something for her, I have a choice in not only **my actions**—but also my attitude. **When a driver** on the road does something that I don't appreciate, I have an opportunity to please God in my **attitude/actions**—or displease Him. When someone **says something that is discouraging** to me, I have an opportunity to choose to please God in how I react—or I can choose to react in a way that does not please God.

One more thing we need to be aware of.

We need... **3) Awareness of the sinfulness** of our heart. We are naturally selfish and self-serving and just being aware of that will help us fight against it.

How can we go about pleasing God?

First, we need to be motivated by love for God.

Second, we need to be aware of the commandments of God...and the opportunities God gives us to please Him...and the sinfulness of our hearts. And an awareness of the sinfulness of our heart will lead us to...

Pray!

Is it hard to live a life that is pleasing to God? It's more than hard—it's **impossible!** That's why we need **to pray!** God needs to **help us** do it—and we need to ask for His help!

Jesus Himself said in John 15:5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: **for without me ye can do nothing.**"

We can't do anything—spiritually—without the help of God!

Phil 2:13 "For it is **God which worketh in you both to will and to do** of His good pleasure."

--God gives us the will—the desire; the want to—and the ability to do what pleases Him.

Phil 4:13 "I can do all things **through Christ** which strengtheneth me." Through Who? Through Christ!

Heb 13:20a-21 "Now the God of peace... ²¹Make you perfect [equip you] in **every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight**, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

The writer of Hebrews prays that God would equip them to do His will, working in them to do what is well pleasing to God!

Back to where we started. God wants us to glorify Him. Does **disobedience** bring honor and praise to God?

No—it doesn't—but **obedience** does! How do we go about pleasing God? Follow the M-A-P!

--We need to be **motivated** by His love for us to please Him.

--We need to be **aware** of what He commands...and the opportunities that He gives...and the sinfulness of our hearts.

--And we need to **pray** and trust Him to help us do what He wants us to do!

May God stir within us a desire to love Him—and prove our love for Him by obeying Him!

So what would God **have us do** in light of what we've heard this morning?

1. First, ask yourself this question: Is there a **desire within** me to please God?

--If you have **no desire** to please God—if thoughts of pleasing God rarely cross your mind—it is for one of two reasons:

1) You've become hard-hearted and are no longer thankful that God saved a wretch like you! If that's you, you need to repent—you need to ask God to forgive you—for being ungrateful that He died for you!

2) A second reason for having no desire to please God is this—you are not saved...you are not born-again...you are not forgiven...you are not on your way to heaven! Why do I say that?

--Because when you become a child of God, the Holy Spirit moves in and gives us the "want to" to please God!

2. Another question we should ask ourselves is this: Am I reading my Bible? If not, do you **really want to please** God? Jesus plainly stated that if you love Him, you will do what He says! But we need to know what He says in order to do it!