

Grace Bible Church of Rancho
PURSUING WHAT PLEASES THE LORD

Sermon Series, Booklet 1

Introduction

As individual Christians and as a local church, we need to be pursuing what pleases the Lord. What does that mean? Ephesians 5

1. Pursuing what pleases the Lord means living as a Christian. *v. 8*
2. Christians are children of light. *vv. 8-9*
3. Being children of Light means being children of God. *vv. 8-9, 1*
4. Being a child of God means that you try to imitate Him, *v. 1*
5. Imitating God means living like God in every way possible, *v. 10*
6. We live like God when we become more like Jesus Christ
 - Pursuing what Pleases the Lord means growing in our knowledge of Jesus Christ and living as faithful imitators of Him in every way possible.
 - This fits our church mission: *for God's glory by being faithful followers of Christ who know God's unique greatness, value that above everything else, and live to make Him known to others.*

Definition

1. What is Pleasing to the Lord? Eph. 5:9
 - God is pleased with His glory, Jeremiah 9:23-24
 - God is pleased with His Son, Matthew 3:16-17
 - God is pleased with His gospel, Isaiah 53:10
 - God is pleased with His word, Isaiah 42:20
2. What is Pursuing it?

exerting intense effort toward a goal—

 - Pursuing means fleeing some things and going after other things. 1Timothy 6:11, 2Timothy 2:22
 - Pursuing means choosing the best things—being selective 1Corinthians 14:1 .
 - As believers, we need to pursue eternal, lasting things. Proverbs 12:11
3. What keeps us from pursuing what Pleases the Lord?
 - The world
 - The flesh
 - The devil

God is Pleased with His Glory

1. We need to understand God's glory
 GOD'S GLORY IS HIS UNIQUE GREATNESS (Ex. 33, Jer. 9)
 - He is uniquely great in His loving kindness
 - He is uniquely great in His justice and righteousness;
 - He is uniquely great in His wisdom (Jer. 9:23)
 - He is uniquely great in His power (v.23)
 - He is uniquely great in His riches (v. 23)
2. We need to admire God's glory . . . Jeremiah 9:23-24

Pursuing God's Glory

1. By dying to your own glory, 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 2:20
 - Practice your crucifixion
 - Love God's glory

Jeremiah 9:23-24, How do we pursue God's glory?
2. By boasting in God's glory
 - Think and talk about His uniqueness
 - Think and talk about God's greatness
3. By understanding and knowing Him
 - A right relationship with Him, v. 24; exemplified by Christ, Jn. 10:14-15, Luke 10:14-15, 22; experienced by us through Christ, 2 Cor. 4:6, 1 John 5:20,
 - A committed comprehension of Him; study to know and understand God, Jer. 4:22; not satisfied with what you know about God, Phil 3:10-14
4. By trusting Him, Jer. 9:23-24, Ps. 52:7-8, Isa. 12:2
 - Trust God to be Who He is for you: Creator, Judge, Father; Wise, Creative, Loving, Accepting, Gracious, Merciful, Just
 - Romans 12:1-2; Romans 11:33-36

God is Pleased with His Son

Let's soar over Biblical revelation to see some of the wonder of God's Son. Mat. 3:16-17, 12:15-18 (*Isa. 42*), 17:1-5 (*Mark 9:8*); Eph. 5:2, **Colossians 1:9-20**. Why is God pleased with His Son?

1. Because He is God's appointed King
 - Over a kingdom of rescue from the rule of darkness (Eph. 5:3-5)

- Over a kingdom of light, v. 13
- 2. Because He is God's qualified redeemer, v. 14
 - Jesus paid what God required to forgive us of our sins.
 - Jesus provided the righteousness to be accepted by God.
- 3. Because He is God's visible image, v15a *Perfect imitator of God*
 - Jesus explains God to us by what He says and does, Col. 2:9, Heb. 1:3,
- 4. Because He is first in rank over all the creation, v15b
 1. As the first-born, has a position of priority over creation
- 5. Because He is the Creator of all things v. 16
 2. He was the Father's instrument in creation, John 1, Isa. 44:24
 3. He was the reason for the creation
- 6. Because He pre-existed all things v.17a, Micah 5:2
- 7. Because He sustains and controls everything v. 17b
 - Holding together the creation and our lives
 - Working all things together for His glory and our good
- 8. Because He lovingly rules over the church, v.18
- 9. Because He made resurrection and eternal life a reality v.18
 - 1 Corinthians 15:12-22; 55-57
- 10. Because He is fully God v.19
 - John 17:1-6, 10:23-30, 14:5-11; 17:11
- 11. Because He is God's reconciler to bring peace vv. 20-22

God is Pleased with His Gospel

The Gospel is the central story of the Bible and Jesus is the main character of that story; John 3:3; 1:12-13; Eph. 5:1; John 3:14-19, 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 1:16

1. Because of what it is—the power of God, Rom. 1:16
 - See our church's gospel presentation at graceofrancho.com
2. Because of what it does—saves those who believe it, v. 16
 1. Do you believe the gospel? Have you experienced its power in your life?
 2. I did, in 1989; and my life changed
 3. God is pleased with the gospel because of what it continues to do in those who believe, 1 Cor. 15:1
 - Sin is still present, but its authority over you is destroyed

- You need the gospel throughout your Christian life
- Your life should be about the gospel—about what God is doing through His Son for His glory and your good.

Pursuing Christ and the Gospel

We need to pursue Christ and the gospel by growing up into Christ and the gospel, Eph. 5:8, 13, 15.

1. Growing up to know Christ and the gospel experientially: you must mature in your knowledge of Christ and the gospel, Eph. 4:13, Phil. 3:8-10; 12-15; 2 Peter 1:1-8; 3:18
2. Growing up to reject all others: you must mature in your commitment to live for Christ and the gospel more than anything else
 - Your own pride and achievement Phil 3:7-8
 - Your old realm and ruler, Col. 1:13, Eph. 5:8-11 (flesh, world, devil.
 - Your own life lived for yourself, Luke 9:23-25; 14:26-27; 18:29-30
3. Growing up to give Him first place in everything (Col. 1:19)
 - Listening to Him—submission, Mark 9:7
 - Coming and learning of Him—rest, Mat. 11:29
 - Following Him—obedience, Mat. 28:22
 - Believing in Him—dependence, John 11:26
 - Seeking Him—diligence, Matt. 6:33; 1 Chron. 15:13, 16:10, 16:11, 22:19, 28:9; 2 Chronicles 7:14, 12:14; 15:2, 15:12, 16:12, 19:3, 20:4; 26:5, 30:18-19.
4. Growing up to be like Christ, Eph. 5:1-14, 15; Rom. 8:28-29, 2 Cor. 3:18
 - to desire what He desired—God’s glory/fame (Jesus said, I have glorified you . . .)
 - to delight in what He desired—God’s will
 - to do what He did—to do What pleases God, Eph. 5:9, Gal. 5:19-24

God is Pleased with His Word

God is called, “Light.” Christians are called children of Light, and God calls His word “Light.” Eph. 5; Psalm 119:105, 130; Prov. 6:23. Why is God pleased with His word?

1. Because the Bible is about Him—It reveals Him

God is both the sovereign, all-powerful Creator, and the gracious, condescending God who reveals Himself:

 - in providence, e.g Gen 37–50; 50:19–20; Esth 6:1ff;
 - in miraculous events (e.g., Exod 3; 1 Kgs 18),
 - in prophetic words (the “word of the LORD” repeatedly “comes” to the prophets)
 - in poetry and songs (e.g., Psalms).
 - in promises (Isa. 11, Isa. 9, Isa 65, Joel 2, Jer 31; Ezek 36, 37.
 - in Jesus Christ, God’s Son. Heb. 1:2; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3; Col 1:19; 2:9; John 1:1, 14, 18)
 - in the Spirit (John 14–16; 16:7–11; 15:27; 14:19–26; Eph 1:13–14
 - in person (Phil 2:11; cf. Rev 19–22).
2. Because it is His Self-Disclosure
 - it is God telling us about Himself
 - God is a talking God (Gen. 1:1ff;
3. Because He used human authors to record it
 - The various human authors represent concrete cultures, languages, historical events, assumptions, and idioms
 - They are witnesses to the reality and nature of God
4. Because it is one big, true story
 - It is not an abstract system of thought
 - The Bible tells one story with many different parts and people.
 - The Bible is accurate in every way—including history
 - If the Bible is not accurate in the history it records, we have no divine message because the message is tied to the history
5. Because it is preserved for us in writing.
 - Jesus presupposed that we hear God speak through word, Mat. 22:31
2. Because it is inspired and authoritative.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16, “breathed out by God.” Inspiration does not refer to the writers of the Bible; it refers to what the authors wrote;
 - 2 Peter 1:20-21 The Holy Spirit guided the writers so that they used their own vocabulary, background,

learning, and personality, but the result was exactly what God wanted recorded.

- As, the inspired word of God, the Bible is authoritative
3. Because it is at work in us
 - God has designed His word to work in us—to change us into the image of Christ who is the living word, the one whom God is ultimately pleased with.

4 Bible Examples of Pursuing What Pleases the Lord

1. Noah, Gen. 6:5-9; 13-14; 7:1, 23;
 - The story of Noah teaches us that we must have changed hearts to desire and do what pleases the Lord. That change can only come through Christ—God’s ark of salvation.
2. Daniel
 - Daniel shows us that pursuing what pleases the Lord means choosing in our hearts to live under God’s sovereign rule. We decide, by His grace, to live in obedience to Jesus Christ no matter what pressures are around us to go the way of least resistance.
3. Job, 1:1, 8-11, 20-22; 13:15; 40:1-4; 42:1-6;
 - Pursuing what pleases the Lord as displayed by Job means trusting God’s power and wisdom and goodness even when all of life seems to contradict it. We must follow Christ with hope in Him no matter what difficulties He brings. Now that may be hard to swallow.
4. Paul, Phil 3:7-15,
 - Paul pursued what pleased the Lord by placing Christ as the pinnacle of all that he valued. Knowing Christ and pressing on to become like Christ though that knowledge meant more to him than any achievements. Neither could any failure keep Him from running after Christ.

As a church, we must agree on the primary things that please the Lord and chose to pursue them. May God help us to turn our attention and affection to the Lord and pursue His glory, His Son, His gospel, and His word with all our hearts and lives.