

## 125 – How to Please God

Before we begin our study tonight, I want to share very quickly that I am studying what to me is a potentially revolutionary perspective regarding satan – that when we are dealing with wicked characteristics within ourselves as human beings, we are dealing with an opposing or accusing force, which is what the word, satan, means in Hebrew. I did not arrive at this perspective through my own study; rather, I uncovered it in my reading of Harold Smith's newsletter, He that Has An Ear, to which you have heard me refer before at times. I've corresponded with HaRold about this subject and I have found him to be entirely earnest and pointed toward faithfulness to the word of God in its purity from a specifically Hebrew or Hebraic perspective. It turns out that this Hebraic view is quite different from ours, especially in its ancient form. For example, it appears that the Hebrew scriptures do not point to satan as a persona at all, but as a quality of wickedness or a force of opposition to God's word wherever it may appear. References to satan as "he" may in fact be figurative and not literal. In any case, I am plowing through a truly alarming turn in my own understanding that I sense God's anointing all over, and I can't shake it, try as I might. I won't say mjore now, except that I hope to share with you what I've found and submit it to you to check for yourselves in a few weeks, Lord willing. I've often thought that Christians have given satan far more credit and ascribed satan far more power than than "he" deserves. Suffice to say for now that what we may think of as "the enemy" or "the adversary" messing with us is not an entity per se, but wickedness inherent in ourselves or others, which, because it is by definition opposing God's word, puts us in opposition to it and at cross purposes with Him.

I am not fit for socializing, it seems. This past Thursday thru Sunday, I delivered the eulogy at two memorial services and was surrounded by family and old friends, some of whom I knew from when I was 5 years old thru my adulthood in Cleveland Ohio. Former neighbors I saw every day, and church folk I saw every week growing up. Suddenly, a sea of memory came rushing in, accompanied by the sounds of familiar voices and sights of familiar faces, all tempered with age

and experience. Conversations came in waves, some breaking quickly in my face, while others were perceived from a distance. Activity swirled and spun everywhere.

### **Ecclesiastes 1:8-9, 14**

All things are full of weariness;  
a man cannot utter it;  
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,  
nor the ear filled with hearing.

<sup>9</sup> What has been is what will be,  
and what has been done is what will be done,  
and there is nothing new under the sun.

...

<sup>14</sup> I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

### **Ecclesiastes 2:11**

<sup>11</sup> Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, *all* was vanity and a striving after *wind*, and there was *nothing* to be gained under the sun.

What is all this seemingly pointless conversation and activity around me? I wondered in my spirit, throughout the weekend, as I mingled among people who I knew or loved or both. This is what I heard:

“This is what I took you *out* of, saved you *from*, and gave you the gift of purpose...Mine. Your life *matters* because it is *Mine*. You live *for* Me and *to* Me. What you are seeing is the emptiness of purposelessness that characterizes the life of *all* flesh *apart* from Me.”

### **Ecclesiastes 2:26**

<sup>26</sup> For to the one who pleases *Him* God has given *wisdom* and *knowledge* and *joy*,

How many do you know who want more wisdom and knowledge and joy in their lives? Probably most everyone you see on a daily basis, right? How many do you know who actually HAVE any of those three in their lives, never mind all of them?

The disconnect between reading this scripture – or any scripture for that matter – and receiving wisdom, knowledge and joy is in four words we just read from the scripture: “the one who pleases *Him* .”

This begs the question, “are we *pleasing* Him”?

When we KNOW Jesus; when we Know the Father, to the extent that our mortal minds can penetrate Him, we discover that our lives are not our own, but are His, and that He has bought our lives with the blood of Jesus Christ. When we know that, we discover lives of purpose, as the Father molds us and shapes us like a potter who shapes a vessel and delights in the work of his hands.

Apart from His presence, His Spirit alive and operating in us, just as surely as His word is living and operative, there can be found no purpose at all. bought with a price, as the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

#### **Ecclesiastes 4:6**

<sup>6</sup> Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

#### **Ecclesiastes 5:1-2**

To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. <sup>2</sup> Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.

Don't be surprised, when the conversations around you turn to nothing more important than real estate, cars, sports and careers, that you find your spirit grieving over the emptiness in the lives even of those you love and who love you, but may not have a clue who you are to God. Maybe they go to church; maybe

they tithe and serve with all good intentions, but have no life in their spirits because the Lord stands at their sides and they do not recognize Him nor invite Him in. If they did, they would discover what you already know: following Jesus trades the life of all flesh in this eon for the life of the Spirit now and the glorious change of our bodies, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the Day of the Lord Jesus. The parable Jesus told in John 14 is how the world around us is to this day and, I suspect, will be until His feet touch the Earth again, and all the nations bring tribute to Him in Jerusalem.

As we go through the scriptures tonight, I invite you to make a list of what pleases God. What Pleasing God looks like, and then, on your own, in His presence, look at where you are in your walk with him. Do your own inventory, and take.

#### **Luke 14:26**

"A certain man made a great dinner, and invites many.

17 And he dispatches his slave at the dinner hour to say to those invited, 'Come, for already, it is ready!'

18 And they all begin, from one motive, to make excuse. The first said to him, 'I buy a field, and I have felt the necessity of coming out to see it. I am asking you to have me excused.'

19 And a different one said, 'I buy five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I am asking you to have me excused.'

20 And a different one said, 'I marry a wife, and therefore I can not come.'

21 "And, coming along, the slave reports these things to his lord. Then being indignant, the householder said to his slave, 'Come out quickly into the squares and streets of the city, and lead in here the poor, and cripples, and blind, and lame.'

22 "And the slave said to him, 'Lord, what you enjoin is done, and still there is place.'

23 And the lord said to the slave, 'Come out into the roads and stone dikes, and compel them to enter, that my house may be crammed.

24 For I am saying to you that not one of those men who are invited shall be tasting of my dinner.'"

25 Now vast throngs went together with Him. And, being turned, He

said to them,

**26 "If anyone is coming to Me and is not hating his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and still more his soul besides, he can not be My disciple.**

**27 And anyone who is not bearing his cross and coming after Me, can not be My disciple.**

28 "For which of you, wanting to build a tower, is not first seated to calculate the expense, to see if he has the wherewithal?-

29 lest at some time, he laying a foundation and not being strong enough to finish up, all those beholding should begin to scoff at him, 30 saying that 'This man begins building and is not strong enough to finish up!'

31 "Or what king, going to engage another king in battle, will not, being seated, first plan to see if he is able to meet, with ten thousand, him who is coming against him with twenty thousand?

32 Otherwise, surely, at his being still at a distance, he, dispatching an embassy, is asking the terms of peace.

**33 Thus, then, everyone of you who is not taking leave of all of his possessions, can not be My disciple.**

34 "Ideal, then, is salt. Yet if even the salt should be made insipid, with what shall it be seasoned?

35 Neither is it fit for the land nor for manure. Outside are they casting it. Who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

I thank God for a life of purpose, lived for and to the Lord:

#### **1 Peter 4:**

1 Christ, then, having suffered for our sakes in flesh, you also arm yourselves with the same thought, for he who is suffering in flesh has ceased his sins,

2 by no means still to spend the rest of his lifetime in the flesh in human desires, but in the will of God.

3 For sufficient is the time which has passed by to have effected the intention of the nations, having gone on in wantonness, lusts, debauches, revelries, drinking bouts, and illicit idolatries,

4 while they are thinking it strange of you not to race together into the same puddle of profligacy, calumniating you;

5 who shall be rendering an account to Him Who is holding Himself in readiness to judge the living and the dead.

## **2 Corinthians 5:14-6:2**

14 For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died.

15 And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes.

16 So that we, from now on, are acquainted with no one according to flesh. Yet even if we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we know Him so no longer.

17 So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!

18 Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation,

19 how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the word of the conciliation.

20 For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ's sake, "Be conciliated to God!"

21 For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him.

## **Chapter 6**

1 Now, working together, we are also entreating you not to receive the grace of God for naught.

2 For He is saying, "In a season acceptable I reply to you, And in a day of salvation I help you." Lo! Now is a most acceptable era! Lo! Now is a day of salvation!

## **Psalms 52:2**

I cry out to God Most High,  
to God **who fulfills** his purpose for me.

God will fulfill His purpose for me, IT is a given. My prayer is that I do everything in accord with, in agreement with His purpose.

So, back to the question, if “pleasing God” is the way to wisdom, knowledge and joy from His hand, what does “pleasing Him” look like?

### Romans 8:6-17

6 For the disposition of the flesh is death [that can't be pleasing to God], yet the disposition of the spirit is life and peace, [that must be pleasing to God]

7 because the disposition of the flesh is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither is it able.

**8 Now those who are in flesh are not able to please God. [OK, so now we know what not to do. We know what DOESN'T please Him]**

9 Yet you are not in flesh, but ***in spirit***, if so be that God's spirit is making its home in you. Now if anyone has not ***Christ's spirit***, this one is not His.

10 Now if ***Christ is in you***, the body, indeed, is dead because of sin, yet ***the spirit is life*** because of ***righteousness***.

11 Now if ***the spirit of Him*** Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its ***home in you***, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying your mortal bodies ***because of His spirit making its home in you***.

12 Consequently, then, brethren, debtors are we, not to the flesh, to be living in accord with flesh,

13 for if you are living in accord with flesh, you are about to be dying. Yet if, ***in spirit, you are putting the practices of the body to death, you will be living***.

14 For whoever are being ***led by God's spirit***, these are ***sons of God***.

15 For you did ***not*** get ***slavery's spirit*** to fear again, but you got the ***spirit of sonship***, in which we are crying, "***Abba, Father!***"

16 ***The spirit*** itself is testifying together with ***our spirit*** that we are children of God.

### 1 Thessalonians 2:3-4

our entreaty is not out of deception, nor yet out of uncleanness, nor yet with guile

4 but, according as we have been **tested by God** to be **entrusted with the evangel**, thus are we speaking, **not as pleasing men, but God, Who is testing our hearts.**

You who are listening now, know that Barbara did not accompany on my trip to Pittsburgh and Cleveland last week. It was appointed by God for me to go alone. When I read this scripture in 1 Thessalonias 2:4, I realized, in part at least, that my going alone was because, having been tested by God, as Paul wrote, I have been entrusted with the evangel, which I spoke at every opportunity during my trip, also as Paul wrote: not as pleasing men but God, who is testing our hearts. And that's the other purpose for my going alone, that God might test my heart. Can I be trusted to be alone in the world but not be OF the world? What I discovered is that this set apart life that Barbara and I live for God's purpose is not suited for, and has little patience for the kind of useless and empty conversation and activity that surrounds us in the lives of people who live for and to what the Apostle John wrote about:

### 1 John 2:17

everything that is in the world, the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and the ostentation of living, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

In **verse 18**, John continues,

he who is doing the will of God is remaining for the eon.

Doing the will of God looks pleasing to Him, doesn't it?

### Hebrews 11:

6 Now apart from faith it is **impossible** to be well pleasing, for he who is coming to God must **believe that He is**, and is becoming a **Rewarder** of those who are **seeking Him** out.

There's a simple 3 step process in Hebrews 11:

1. Believe that He is
2. Believe that He is becoming a rewarder of those who are seeking Him out



3. Be seeking Him out.

### **Philippians 4:18-19**

18 Now I am collecting all, and am superabounding. I have been filled full, receiving from Epaphroditus the **things from you**, an odor fragrant, a sacrifice acceptable, **well pleasing to God**.

19 Now my God shall be filling your every need in accord with His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

### **Hebrews 13:16**

16 Now of **well doing and contributing** be not forgetful, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

### **Matthew 7:21**

21 "Not everyone saying to Me 'Lord! Lord!' will be entering into the kingdom of the heavens, but **he who is doing the will of My Father** Who is in the heavens.

### **Matthew 12:50**

For anyone whoever should be **doing the will of My Father** Who is in the heavens, he is **My brother and sister and mother!**"

### **Matthew 17:17**, but start with verse 13

13 Now Jesus, coming into parts of Caesarea Philippi, asked His disciples, saying, "Who are men saying the Son of Mankind is?"

14 Now they say, "These, indeed, John the baptist; yet others Elijah; yet others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 He is saying to them, "Now you, who are you saying that I am?"

16 Now answering, Simon Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Now, answering, Jesus said to him, "Happy are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood does not reveal it to you, but My Father Who is in the heavens.

### **Luke 10:22-24**

"All was given up to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and **who the Father is** except the Son, and whomsoever **the Son may be intending to unveil Him**."

23 And being turned to the disciples, He said privately, "***Happy are the eyes that are observing what you are observing!***

24 For I am saying to you that many prophets and kings want to perceive what you are observing, and they perceive not, and to hear of Me what you are hearing, and they hear not."

#### **John 6:38-40**

I have descended from heaven, not that I should be doing My will, but the will of Him Who sends Me.

39 Now this is the will of Him Who sends Me, that all which He has given to Me, of it I should be losing nothing, but I shall be raising it in the last day.

40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who is beholding the Son and believing in Him may have life eonian, and I shall be raising him in the last day."

#### **John 14:21, 23**

21 He who has My precepts and is keeping them, he it is who is loving Me. Now he who is loving Me will be loved by My Father, and I shall be loving him and shall be disclosing Myself to him."

23 "If anyone should be loving Me, he will be keeping My word, and My Father will be loving him, and We shall be coming to him and making an abode with him."

#### **John 15:7-17**

7 If ever you should be remaining in Me and My declarations should be remaining in you, whatever you should be wanting, request, and it will be occurring to you.

8 In this is My Father glorified, that you may be bringing forth much fruit, and you shall become My disciples.

9 "According as the Father loves Me, I, also, love you. Remain in My love.

10 If ever you should be keeping My precepts, you will be remaining in My love, according as I have kept the precepts of My Father and am remaining in His love.

11 These things have I spoken to you, that My joy should be remaining

in you, and your joy may be filled.

12 "This is My precept, that you be loving one another, according as I love you.

13 Greater love than this has no one, that anyone may be laying down his soul for his friends.

14 You are My friends, if you should be doing whatever I am directing you.

15 "No longer am I terming you slaves, for the slave is not aware what his lord is doing. Yet I have declared you friends, for all that I hear from My Father I make known to you.

16 Not you choose Me, but I choose you, and I appoint you, that you may be going away and be bringing forth much fruit, and your fruit may be remaining, that anything whichsoever you should be requesting the Father in My name, He will be giving it to you.

17 "In these things I am directing you, that you may be loving one another.

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you: the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)