

Purpose Driven Life, III

Making God Smile (Chpt 8-10)

February 15, 2004

(8) PLANNED FOR GOD'S PLEASURE

- This week's reading assignment was chapters 8-10.

Q: Are there ever times when you feel insignificant?

Maybe you compare yourself to others and wonder, "Why am I here? What in the world is my purpose?"

You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created everything, and it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created. - Revelation 4:11 NIV

God didn't need to create you, but he chose to create you for His own enjoyment. You exist for His benefit.

For the Lord takes pleasure in His people ... - Psalm 149:4 NAS

Q: Do you believe that? Or, when you read it do you retranslate it as: "The Lord takes pleasure in His other people ... and he puts up with you."?

Shar and I created two children, Keaton & Shaz; we take great pleasure in our two people. So, I kinda know how God feels.

- We've moved twice; both times we've taken 'em with us!
- We honestly never even considered leaving them behind!

God considers you valuable enough to keep you with Him for eternity. What greater significance could you have?

- Part of my purpose is to bring God pleasure

Part of His joy comes from observing you; watching you enjoy the creation He made for you.

One of my favorite photos of Keaton (when he was young) is of him enjoying my creation! [Scene of Keaton in the bathtub.] It's not as elaborate as God's creation ... but I was limited to foam-soap and bubble bath!

So, part of God's joy comes from simply observing you; but there's a greater joy that comes from interacting with you. A parent's greatest joy comes from nurturing, loving, and developing a relationship with their children as they grow.

Anything and everything we do that brings pleasure to our Heavenly Father by interacting with Him is an act of worship.

- Worship is so much more than singing and praying.

Every activity, except sin, becomes worship when we do it with an attitude of praise and a heart of thanksgiving.

(9) WHAT MAKES GOD SMILE?

In the benediction each week, I say, "May the Lord make His face shine upon you." This is from Numbers 6:25; the NLT says:

May the Lord smile on you ... - Numbers 6:25 NLT

I want God's face to shine on me; so did the psalmist.

Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your decrees. - Psalm 119:135 NIV

There's a strong connection between growing in the Lord's decrees (commands) and putting a smile on His face. There was a time when the whole world had turned against God, and only one man cared about bringing Him pleasure:

The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. ... But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. - Genesis 6:6,8 NIV

Rick points out that from Noah's life we can glean **Five Acts of Worship** that make God's face shine.

1. God smiles when we love Him

[Noah] consistently followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with him. - Genesis 6:9 NLT

God's heart isn't stirred by religious tradition. He longs for what any parent does: heart-felt, reciprocated love.

- This means time in His presence and passion in our worship.

2. God smiles when we trust Him

It was by faith that Noah built an ark to save his family from the flood. - Hebrews 11:7 NLT

Trusting God means having faith that He knows best; this means. This means that I won't compromise my conscience to get what I want, and I will trust that He's in control of the results.

3. God smiles when we serve Him

So God said to Noah ... Make a boat from resinous wood and seal it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Construct an opening all the way around the boat, 18 inches below the roof. - Genesis 6:13-16 NLT

Noah used his abilities to do what God asked. Like a proud parent, God enjoys watching you use the talents He gave you.

- We don't bring Him pleasure if we burry our abilities.
- We can't please Him by trying to be someone we're not.
- We're expected to discover the fullness of who we are.

4. God smiles when we obey Him

So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him. - Genesis 6:22 NLT

Like Noah, God has given us a specific set of instructions (His Word) and a blue-print to follow in Christ. And when it comes to the clear teachings of the Bible, we're not allowed to pick and choose which commands to follow, nor is procrastination an option.

- Delayed obedience is disobedience.
- Partial obedience is disobedience.

5. God smiles when we appreciate Him

Noah thanked and praised God the Old Testament way:

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and sacrificed on it the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose. - Genesis 8:20 NLT

God smiles when we express our adoration and gratitude to Him.

- We praise Him for who His is
- We thank Him for what he's done

(10) THE HEART OF WORSHIP

At the very core of loving, trusting, serving, obeying, and appreciating the Lord, is surrender.

If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross daily, and follow me. – Luke 9:23 NLT

We can't simultaneously be self-serving and Christ-serving.

- The heart of all worship is surrender

Surrender is an unpopular word; it implies losing control, admitting defeat, yielding to a stronger opponent. And yet, this is exactly what God wants us to do: give up and give in ... to Him. Do things His way.

The thing is, we may be weakened when we surrender to an enemy, but we're strengthened when we stop fighting an ally.

- Like an army mistakenly battling an ally coming to help.
- Like a child struggling against a doctor trying to heal.

A turning point in every believer's life is when we discover that the biggest hindrance to God's blessing in our life isn't others, it's us. And victory only comes through surrender

- There's an act of surrender and an attitude of surrender

First there's the moment we surrender our lives to the Lord, and then there's the practice of surrendering moment-by-moment.

- Raising our hands in worship is a gesture of surrender.

As we learn to surrender day-by-day our focus changes:

- From: How much pleasure I'm getting out of my life.
- To: How much pleasure God's getting out of my life.

And we understand the significance and the joy that is to be found in the fact that our Creator takes pleasure in us ...

So we make it our goal to please him ... - 2 Corinthians 5:9 NIV