

[How to Please God \(lifehopeandtruth.com\)](http://lifehopeandtruth.com)

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How to Please God

by Mike Bennett

So let's look at seven ways the Bible tells us we can please God.

1. Having faith pleases God.

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

This passage identifies faith—belief in God and believing He will do what He says He will do—as a prerequisite for pleasing God. It also gives a prime example of this kind of faith: Enoch (verse 5). Enoch lived in the increasingly evil world before the Flood, but he didn't go the evil way other people were going. Instead, he “walked with God” and “he pleased God” (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5).

Enoch not only believed in the Creator God, he believed God would come to earth with “ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment” (Jude 1:14-15) and make everything right. Enoch knew that ungodly deeds bring evil results and must be replaced by godly deeds—walking the way God walks—for this world to experience real peace and joy.

When we believe in God and believe what He says, that faith will also please God.

2. Being spiritually minded pleases God.

“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:6-8).

The Bible contrasts two mind-sets: the normal, human one (the fleshly, carnal mind) and the one led by the Spirit of God (the spiritual mind, verse 9). Thus having the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and leading us is another prerequisite for pleasing God.

In Acts 2:38 the apostle Peter summarized the process God has set for us to follow to receive His Spirit: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Leading up to the passage in Romans 8, the apostle Paul explained his own experience with the two mind-sets. As challenging as he shows the process of change is in Romans

7, he makes clear that Jesus Christ will deliver us (verse 25) and that as a result of the change we become beloved “children of God” (8:16-17). Does this please God? Yes! Jesus said there is “joy in heaven over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:7). God loves to add to His family.

3. The fear of the Lord pleases God.

“The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy” (Psalm 147:11).

It’s not that God delights in having us be terrified of Him. Psalm 147 describes God as the One who “heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds” (verse 3). The passage praises His mercy, His knowledge (He knows the names of all the stars!) and His power to save the humble (verses 4-6). The Bible tells us to fear God, not because it is good for Him, but because it is good for us to accurately recognize that He is more powerful than anything else. Acknowledging this shows our deep respect for Him.

The proper fear and respect of God will motivate us to avoid sin (Exodus 20:20). It reminds us that God will hold us accountable for our actions.

Fearing God allows us to rely on Him and revere Him—which can deepen our love for the All-Powerful God who cares enough to stoop down and deliver a puny little human like me!

For more about what it really means to fear God, see the article [“Fear of the Lord: What Does It Mean?”](#)

4. Studying and following Jesus Christ’s example pleases God.

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Matthew 17:5).

During a vision of the future Kingdom of God known as the [transfiguration](#), God impressed on Peter, James and John the preeminence of Jesus Christ. Jesus truly was the Son of God, and there is no one who has pleased God more! We should all hear Him and follow His example.

Jesus said He always did “those things that please Him” (John 8:29), so we should study the four Gospels to learn how we, too, can please God. See our articles [“Gospels”](#) and [“How to Study the Bible.”](#)

5. Obeying God pleases Him.

“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Samuel 15:22).

In this passage, the prophet Samuel expressed God's displeasure with Israel's first king Saul. Saul had disobeyed God's direct command with the excuse that "the people" had wanted to give what should have been destroyed to God instead. But God doesn't want our physical gifts if we are going to break His laws to give them!

Again, God doesn't command us to obey just because it is good for Him, but because it is good for us (Deuteronomy 10:13). His laws and commands are beneficial; and as a result of obeying Him, we grow in godly, righteous character—we become more like Him! This is how to please God.

The fact that obeying God is pleasing to Him is expressed in various ways throughout the Bible. God has "pleasure in uprightness," He will bless those who "keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me" and who "abstain from sexual immorality" and avoid breaking any of God's commandments (1 Chronicles 29:17; Isaiah 56:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-3).

6. Doing God's will pleases God.

"[May God] make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:21).

If we want to learn how to please God, we must seek God's help to always do His will as well. What is God's will? God's desires, His commands and His plans are expressed throughout the Bible. In fact, the Bible was given to us to show us His will and to help us in a sense read His mind. Studying the Bible, meditating on it and praying about it are keys to gaining deeper understanding of His will.

God's will for us goes beyond just knowing what He wants. It involves doing "every good work"—working at maturing spiritually and becoming more like God (Matthew 5:48).

Jesus Christ set the ultimate example of doing God's will when He faced the terrible scourging and crucifixion for our sins, yet prayed, "Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). He was willing to give Himself totally to show His love and to do His Father's will.

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7. Giving the sacrifices He wants pleases God.

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the [sacrifice of praise](#) to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:15-16).

We saw earlier that God rejected sacrifices that were gained through disobedience. But there are sacrifices that He is “well pleased” with, including giving praise and thanks to Him and sharing with others. These reflect His teaching on love expressed in the two great commandments that summarize the rest of His law:

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40).

8. Pleasing God, not man

It’s a natural human tendency to seek to please other people—those we can see. We can find it harder to focus on pleasing God—the One we cannot see.

Jesus pointed out the problem with seeking to please man while pretending to try to please God. In [the Sermon on the Mount](#) He said, “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:1). He made similar comments about praying and fasting to gain favor from men (verses 5 and 16).

Instead, we should do these things privately, “and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly” (verse 4).

The apostle Paul uses an interesting term to describe doing things just to be seen by others: *eyeservice*. “Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God” (Colossians 3:22).

Paul himself understood the importance of pleasing God, not man. “But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:4).

When we think about it, we realize that God is the ultimate source of all the good things we have received, even those things that come through family, friends and other people.

He has given us all our blessings, and life itself. And He offers us eternal life as His children (1 John 3:1)! He deserves all our honor and worship.

As King David wrote, “Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable [or, beyond our understanding]” (Psalm 145:2-3).

The angels in God’s presence clearly see this. Revelation describes the 24 elders casting their crowns before God’s throne and saying, “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory

and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

What if we haven't been pleasing God?

The Bible clearly labels things that displease God and hurt us. The main label it uses is *sin*. Since we all have sinned (Romans 3:23), we all have displeased God.

Thankfully, God loved us so much He made a way to wash away our past sins and allow us to start afresh. Jesus Christ's sacrifice made this possible, and the Bible explains the process He wants us to follow. The apostle Peter summarized it in Acts 2:38:

The beautiful thing about repenting of sin is that even this pleases God. “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Conversion is the process of changing from displeasing God to pleasing Him with His help. Study the key scriptures outlining this process in our booklet [Change Your Life!](#)

The beautiful thing about repenting of sin is that even this pleases God. As Jesus said, “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10).

9. The benefits of pleasing God

No matter how much we give God, we can never come close to scratching the surface of what He has done for us—much less what He wants to do for us. In this life He offers awesome benefits, such as this general principle:

“When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7).

Still, in this life Christians will face persecution and tribulation, but as Jesus Christ said, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

And in the future, He has an incredible gift in store for His faithful flock:

“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

One of the most exciting descriptions of the utopian Kingdom of God was recorded by King David, a man after God's own heart. He wrote, “You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11).