

Pleasing God 2 Corinthians 5:6-9

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Each day we're choosing what is _____ to us. Who are you _____? Who is important to you? Today, we're going to explore the _____ to please God. The Scriptures teach us how to _____ God and to be _____ to our fellow man. Romans 12:2 says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your _____, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." The Word of God is good. We should welcome the _____ it brings to our lives. If you want to be a better person, follow the _____ standard found in God's Word.

Each day we're choosing what _____ and the direction of our lives. Some choose a _____ path, while others choose the _____ way. The Lord Jesus said, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). The broad way is _____ and easy. It attracts lots of people, but they may not know their _____. The things that seem attractive and popular may be destructive.

Jesus urges us to _____ the small gate and the narrow way that leads to life. The choice is whether to follow the _____ or to follow Jesus. Choose Jesus, because He alone can lead you to _____ life. The apostle Paul asked, "For am I now seeking the _____ of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). What are you choosing?

Our reading today comes from 2 Corinthians 5:6-9.

The Lord Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father _____ Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I _____ do the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8:28-29). Jesus lived to please His Father in heaven. He was entirely unselfish. He gave up everything to do the Father's will and to save mankind from sin.

Because our world _____ us often to be self-centered, we find it hard to understand how anybody could devote himself totally to the will and pleasure of someone else. Many think that the only way to happiness is to be their own _____ and to serve no one. They think selfish ambition will lead them to greatness. They may even suppose the _____ apply to everyone else, but not to them. The Lord Jesus, who has passed through the heavens, and the King of kings and Lord of lords, however, chose to be a _____.

The Lord explained to his disciples, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over

them, and their great men exercise _____ over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28). The Lord Jesus saw greatness not in possessions or power, but in _____ and _____.

So, we must ask ourselves, “how do we _____ God?” The Scriptures give us the answer. First, we must place our _____ in God. Hebrews 11:1-2 says, “Now faith is the assurance of things _____ for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval.” The blessing of God comes only to those who _____. Hebrews 11:6 says, “And 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 seek Him.” You cannot expect to please God if you _____ to believe in Him or in what He teaches. Believing in God means believing what God says. You believe what He teaches and you’re willing to _____ His instructions.

Second, we cannot _____ sin and _____ sin and still please God. **Read 1 John 2:15-17.** Each day we’re choosing whether we’re going to follow our passions and the love of this _____ or whether we’re going to follow the _____ and love Him.

The world tells us that we may pursue whatever fleshly passion that we _____. But just because the world says something is okay doesn’t mean God is pleased by it. **Read Romans 8:5-8.** You can’t continue following the _____ of the flesh and think God won’t mind. He knows your heart, and a mind set on the flesh cannot please God.

So, Paul urges us, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please” (Galatians 5:16-17). When people follow the flesh and the world, they actually make themselves an _____ of God according to James 4:4. Following the world will do nothing but _____ your life and your soul. Galatians 5:24 says, “Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” My friend, do you follow Christ or do you follow your passions?

Third, we must love God _____ than others. The Lord Jesus said, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it” (Matthew 10:37-39). The Lord expects us to put Him _____ in all things, even before our loved ones. We may have a family member who challenges our _____ to Christ. We cannot let our love for anyone in our family lead us _____ from God or from His teaching. If we let people come between God and ourselves, we’re not _____ of Christ. Though we are to love all people, even our enemies, we must love Christ even more.

John tells of some Jewish leaders who believed in Jesus but loved their friends more than they loved God. John 12:42-43 says, “Nevertheless many even of the _____ believed in

Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for _____ that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.” They believed, but were unwilling to _____ it openly. They didn’t want to lose their status in the community. So, they feared the Pharisees more than God and loved their place in the community more than the approval of God.

Fourth, we must love Christ more than our _____. Paul is the perfect example of someone who gave up _____ in his past in order to follow Christ. **Read what he said in Philippians 3:4-8.**

Paul left his place in Judaism to become a Christian. He “was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions” (Galatians 1:14). But, all that heritage, all of it couldn’t do what _____ could do for him. He wanted Christ! He wanted to be right with God! My friend, do you?

Fifth, we need to _____ the Lord in the way that pleases Him, not ourselves. Worship by its very _____ is a means of honoring, praising, and showing respect for the Person that we worship. We want God to be pleased with our sacrifices. Hebrews 13:15-16 says, “Through Him (that is, through Christ) then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of _____ to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such _____ God is pleased.” God wants His people to _____ their hearts, their lips, and their lives in worship to Him.

God accepted the worship that Abel offered, but He refused to accept Cain or his sacrifices. Hebrews 11:4 explains, “By faith Abel offered to God a _____ sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.” Abel’s gift was by _____, while Cain’s gifts lacked that quality. We need faith in God when we worship. That means that we _____ to His instructions, His commandments, and do them.

Worshippers in Isaiah’s time thought they could live any way they pleased and God would accept their _____. We find these words in Isaiah 1:15-17: “So when you spread out your hands in prayer, (God says) I will _____ My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not _____. Your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.” Their immoral and wicked lives made their _____ unacceptable to God. Only when they repented would God _____ their prayers and accept their worship.

Sixth, we must not let other _____ interfere with our service to God. The apostle Paul told the young preacher Timothy, “You therefore, my son, be _____ in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, you entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of

everyday life, so that he may _____ the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:1-4).

We can get so _____ with our own lives that we _____ our commitment to God. The Lord Jesus described how some hearts were like seed sown on thorny soil. “The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no _____ to maturity” (Luke 8:14). You can hardly serve the Lord when you allow every _____ that blows to come before Him, and His instructions, and the way He wants you to live, and going to church. Whenever you let other things interfere with your _____ God, then you really can’t please Him.

Seventh, God is pleased when His people _____ Him. God told Saul to go and utterly destroy all the Amalekites and all of their livestock, but Saul _____ to obey God. He brought back King Agag; and the best of the sheep and oxen to offer up as sacrifices. God regretted that He had made Saul king, because He _____ back from following Me and has not carried out My commandments. Saul feared the _____ and forgot about God. When he was confronted, the prophet Samuel said, “Has the LORD as much _____ in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in _____ the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than _____, And to heed than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22). Obeying God means doing His will, pleasing Him, and serving Him the _____ that He instructs. Look at your life, look at your attitudes! Are you, pleasing to God? Second Corinthians 5:6-9 says, “Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we’re absent from the Lord—for we _____ by faith, not by sight—we’re of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be _____ to Him.” What is your ambition? How badly do you want to be _____ with God? How badly do you want to be _____ from sin? How badly do you want to be “at home with the Lord”?

God wants you to come home to Him and live with Him _____. He sent Jesus to the cross so you could be _____. God loves you and wants to _____ you. That love and grace of God calls you to _____ to Him in faith and love. Love for God means that you’ll see your sins differently than you did in years past. You’ll wish you had _____ committed them and don’t ever want to commit them again. It’s that penitent, contrite _____ that pleases God. David said about God, “For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You’re not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:16-17).

God wants to forgive you. Trust in Him, trust in His Word; repent of your sins and turn to the Lord; confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God; and be _____ into Christ. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in water. When you’re baptized, you can _____ God’s gift of forgiveness. You can be a child of God and an heir of heaven. Why wait even another day to get right with God? There’s no better day than today to make your calling and election sure!