

For God's Smile 6-12-03 www.bible-sermons.org

(from *Purpose Driven Life* chapters 7-9)

I'm not going to be preaching on fathers but I do want to wish all our fathers a Happy Father's Day! I hope you found your father something nice to show your appreciation for his role in your life. "If you think about it, Adam had more trouble than any of the rest of us buying his father a gift for Father's Day. I mean, what do you get somebody who is Everything?" (from www.MikeysFunnies.com)

We are continuing this series on the *Purpose Driven Life*. Just what is our purpose? What should drive us? What is our Creator's design? We've come through these last two Sundays saying we must find the purpose for which we were created, so that we will be focused on what is important, be less stressed because we're not trying to do it all, find meaning in life, and be prepared for eternity. Listen as the word of God declares our purpose. ³⁶*For everything comes from God alone. Everything lives by his power, and everything is for his glory.* Romans 11:36 (TLB) Everything is for His glory! It's not about me. It's all for Him. The reason everything exists is to bring glory to God.

Glory is the expression of the nature and perfection of God. His perfect love is glorious. His perfect justice is His glory displayed. His mercy and grace in our lives express His glory. Everything that does what it was created to do glorifies God. When birds sing, build nests and fly through the sky they are bringing glory to God. When the ameoba divides and the galaxies spin, they are bringing glory to God. The Bible says the whole earth is full of His glory ([Isaiah 6:3](#)).

The glory of God was seen in Eden, it was seen later by Moses, in the Tabernacle, and in the Temple. In the heavenly city to come, the glory of God will be the light. The world saw the glory of God when they saw Jesus walk the earth ([John 1:14](#)). Jesus perfectly exemplified the attributes of God in everything He did and said. He did exactly what God incarnated Him to do ([Hebrews 1:3a](#)). His life displayed the glory of God.

There are only two creations that refuse to do what they were created to do, fallen angels and unredeemed man. Man is born in sin, and all sin is failure to give glory to God. By the expression, 'give glory to God' I don't mean we add to His glory, but we exhibit His glory. We make it visible, just not to the extent that Jesus did. The Bible commands us to recognize His glory, honor His glory, declare His glory, praise His glory, reflect His glory, and live for His glory. That is our purpose! That is the thing that is bigger than us, the grand purpose for which we were designed. *Isaiah 43:7 (NCV) Bring to me all the people who are mine, whom I made for my glory, whom I formed and made.* Notice the words "*whom I made for my glory!*" You were made to glorify God.

Just as Jesus walked the earth displaying God's goodness, love, righteousness, and all the fruits of the Spirit, so you are called to do the same. That is bringing glory to God! Jesus said He came to bring glory to the Father by doing what God showed Him to do. In *John 17:4 (NLT)* He said, "*I brought glory to you here on earth by doing everything you told me to do.*" Then, when He left, He said it was our turn to do what He did. *John 20:21b (NIV)* "*As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*"

Commented [notes1]: ³And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." *Isaiah 6:3 (NIV)*

Commented [notes2]: ¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. *John 1:14 (NIV)*

Commented [notes3]: ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. *Heb. 1:3a (NIV)*

When you let the life of Christ live through you, enabling you to walk in the fruits of the Spirit, you bring glory to God. Remember God made Adam to be like that. It was the fall that threw us off track. God sent His Son to get us back on track, bringing Him glory through our daily lives. That is what God originally created us to do. St. Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is a human being fully alive!" The enemy of our soul wants us to think that a person totally surrendered to God is a boring, long faced, solemn religious person. That is a long way from God's exciting and adventurous life planned for us. You are an undercover agent in a foreign land doing the covert work of converting people out of the enemy's camp. You do that by being like your heavenly Father, and that brings glory to Him. It's not as if we've come into this mission fully trained and ready. We were in the enemy camp, but we were won over by someone else who was on the Lord's mission. We have to get the heavenly mindset and be trained to cooperate with the Spirit of God that now lives in us. As He teaches us to yield to the life of Christ in us, we begin to express the glory of God. The Apostle wrote "*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*" Galatians 5:25 (NIV) As we begin to learn to keep in step with the Spirit, people around us are drawn to Jesus. That glorifies God!

In the Garden of Gethsemene, Jesus stood at a fork in the road. He could choose a less painful, more self-focused life, or He could do the will of God. His prayer ended, "Not My will but yours be done. Father, glorify your name." Everyday we stand there too. We must decide if we will live for the glory of God or something infinitely less. We must decide if we will rebel and make life about self, or about the glory of our Creator. Settle the issue in your heart. Who are you going to live for? As I was preparing this message God gave me my own little illustration. Monday through Wednesday were just packed with odds and ends. Thursday is my free day. I had a list of things to do for the church and hadn't really started the sermon. I'm trying to find time to build a tree house for my nephews and grandson. That is my relaxation. I really wanted to do that. As calls started to roll in, it began to be apparent that I was not going to have any free time on my free day. Stress and frustration started to mount. Every little thing started to annoy me. Why? Because this was not my will. I started to consider this sermon and began to think what a poor example of this I was being. If I needed to relax, I could trust the Father to give me the time. I needed to yield myself to His plan for my day and delight to do His will and that will bring Him glory. I needed to surrender my will and get excited about doing what He created me to do. I needed to find the joy in preparing the sermon and ministering to people because it would bring glory to the One who predestined my days. As soon as I stopped and prayed, my whole grumpy attitude turned into joy.

You may wonder if you will have the strength to truly let go of your life and live for God. Listen to this promise from His word. 2 Peter 1:3 (Message) *Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God.* It's the road less traveled, but it is the road you were made to travel.

What does the Bible tell us specifically about the ways to glorify God? First, we must understand that we can bring God pleasure. In fact, that is why He created us. Revelation 4:11 (NLT) *You created everything, and it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created.* Psalm 149:4a (TEV) *The Lord takes pleasure in his people.* God has emotions. The Bible says that He grieves, gets jealous, angry, feels compassion, pity,

sorrow, sympathy, as well as happiness, gladness and satisfaction. He loves, delights, gets pleasure, rejoices, enjoys and even laughs! He wired us very much like Himself. We are made in His image. He designed us for His pleasure, and that also means He wants us to have pleasure in life when it is in the proper perspective. Pleasure is not a goal, but by-product of bringing God pleasure.

The Bible calls pleasing God "worship". Anything you do that brings pleasure to God is worship. You may think of worship as a church service, prayer, or as a type of music. Certainly every act of our Sunday morning service should be worship. We want it all to be pleasing to God. We want it all to give Him pleasure. I want the music to please His heart. When we sing to Him about His greatness and thank Him for the wonderful things He has done in our lives, He is pleased. When we pray and ask for His will and blessing in the service and in our lives. He is pleased. Even when we share the announcements of things we are doing during the week or have planned, if it is focused on Him, He is pleased. Did you ever think of the announcements as a part of worship? The offering is a time of worship when we give with thankful hearts because we recognize every good thing in our life is from Him. That pleases him.

Many times we are too focused on self in the worship service. If we leave the service thinking, "I didn't get much out of worship today", then we had the wrong focus. It is not for us to get something, but for us to give God pleasure. Funny thing is, when we please Him, it fills us with joy. If we just come to go through our weekly routine, it won't please the heart of God. But if we come to express our passion and commitment to Him through song, offerings, and hearing the instruction from His word, He will be pleased. That in turn fills us with joy, because we are doing what we were created to do.

Whatever you do, if you do it to honor Him, as if you were doing it for Jesus, He will be pleased. 1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV) *"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."* Worship can be our whole life. From the time we wake in the morning with a prayer of thanks and a plea for direction, till we lay our head on the pillow at night with a thankful heart, every hour of our life can be worship and please the heart of God. Romans 12:1 (MSG) *"Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering."* It is a lifestyle of relational love with the One who loves you. Ephesians 5:10 in the Message words it this way, *"Figure out what will please Christ, and then do it."*

In Scripture we find an example of a man who lived for God's smile, Noah. The world in which he lived was so corrupted that the only solution was to wipe it out and start again. The only man that put a smile on God's face was Noah. Genesis 6:8 (LB) *"Noah was a pleasure to the Lord."* In his life, we can see five things that made God smile.

The first is to love God above all else. Genesis 6:9b (NLT) *"Noah consistently followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with Him."* The world around Noah had deteriorated into utter selfishness, but he refused to follow the world. His love for God kept him in fellowship with God, and that fellowship kept Noah pleasing to God. That fellowship caused God to smile. God made you to love you and receive your love in return. How easily we formalize our relationship with God and go through routines! God spoke through one of the prophets and said, *"I don't want your sacrifices- I want your*

love; I don't want your offerings – I want you to know me." Hosea 6:6 (LB) Imagine that! The eternal God wants to know you intimately in relationship. He wants your love. That is why the Great Commandment is to love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength (Matthew 22:37-38). When you love Him, He smiles.

Another way in which you can cause God to smile is by trusting Him completely. In Noah's day there had never been rain. The pre-flood world was a very different place. Every morning a mist watered the plants. The waters above filtered out harmful rays of the sun. When God spoke of flooding the earth, Noah had nothing to relate to. He hadn't seen rain, and the ocean was very far away. What is a boat? Noah had never seen such a thing. He could have doubted and questioned, but instead he trusted that God knew what was best for his life. He withstood the 120 years of mocking. "Oh that? That's crazy Noah; thinks he hears from God. He's building some kind of floating zoo. What a goof!" No one else had a boat in his or her front yard. But Noah kept on trusting God until the day when everyone else wished they had a boat in their front yard too. Trusting is an act of worship. It makes God smile! Hebrews 11:6 (NIV) *"Without faith it is impossible to please God."*

God smiles when we obey Him with our whole heart. This undertaking was full of details that only God could give. He told Noah what wood to use, how to seal it, exact dimensions, the number of floors, and the various numbers of animals. Noah's response to all these unheard of things made God smile. It was recorded that *"Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him."* Genesis 6:22 (NLT) Most of us don't pay that much attention to what God speaks to our hearts, but notice the descriptive words about Noah's obedience, 'everything' and 'exactly'. That made God smile. What words would be used to describe your obedience? I often ask the Lord to help me act without hesitation or reservation. It seems like it is our nature to question and doubt. I know God wants to make His will clear to us. It is good to question our hearing, until God makes it perfectly clear. Then it comes down to our willingness to obey. The heart that jumps to obey without reservation or hesitation causes God to smile.

David prayed, *"Just tell me what to do and I will do it, Lord. As long as I live I'll wholeheartedly obey."* Psalm 119:33 (LB) We are good at partial obedience. It is when it really costs us that we find out if we are living to please God or self. Remember this, obedience is an act of worship. Disobedience is rebellion. Obedience demonstrates your love. Disobedience, anything short of complete obedience is disobedience, shows a lack of love. Jesus said, *"If you love me, you will obey my commandments."* John 14:15 (TEV)

Continual praise and thanks makes God smile. Doesn't it encourage you when someone acknowledges a gift of hard work with a word of appreciation? God continually invests into our lives. Praise and thanks are continually due Him. When Noah got off that boat, he could have been whining about how long he was penned up with all those stinky animals. Instead he was grateful to be alive and to have been God's vessel to start the human race over. The first thing he did was to build an altar and offer a sacrifice. Today we offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. We praise God for who He is and thank Him for what He has done. *"I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD."* Psalm 69:30-31 (NIV) When we praise and adore Him, He smiles, and our hearts in turn are filled with joy.

Commented [notes4]: ³⁷Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. Matt. 22:37-38 (NIV)

God smiles when we use our abilities. When Noah landed in the cleansed earth, God told him to be fruitful and increase in number. He gave him all things that moved for food. Noah was to do just what humans do. Just as other creatures glorify God by doing what He made them to do, Noah and his family were to have families, plant crops, hunt, cook meals and enjoy life. Sometimes we get the idea that the only time God is pleased with us is when we are reading our Bible or in a church service. God is pleased when you enjoy this life He gave you. When you enjoy His creation, He smiles.

When you watch your children growing up, you smile when they have fun. You enjoy them learning and playing and even sleeping. It is the same with our heavenly Father. *"He has shaped each person in turn; now he watches everything we do."* Psalm 33:15 (MSG) Every thing you do, except sin, can be done to the delight of God. Your work, play, learning, and leisure can all give God pleasure. There was a time when I had such intensity about always being in service to God. Then we had a tour guide job that took us to the Caribbean. Our guest was not well and had to rest every other day. We took the opportunity to enjoy the trip on our own. It hit me like a revelation, that God had orchestrated all that and enjoyed us enjoying His creation. Sometimes we can get too serious. Life is serious, but it is also to be enjoyed when God provides. This verse suddenly made sense, *God ... generously gives us everything for our enjoyment.*
1 Timothy 6:17 (TEV) As you recognize and thank Him for that enjoyment, He smiles!

God doesn't expect you to instantly mature. He knows you are growing. He watches you stumble and improve. The growth gives Him great joy just as a parent enjoys seeing his child grow. He didn't start liking you when you became perfect. He loved you from the start. Aim for perfection, but don't expect it until you see Him. Psalm 103:14 (GWT) says, *"He certainly knows what we are made of. He bears in mind that we are dust."*

Each of us has been given unique abilities. God created us with special talents and He delights to see us use them. Some people refuse to develop a talent because it is not perfect from the start. God wants you to exercise your gifts, physical and spiritual. He delights to see you use both. *In the film Chariots of Fire, Olympic runner Eric Liddell says, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast, and when I run, I feel God's pleasure." Later he says, "To give up running would be to hold him in contempt." "There are no unspiritual abilities, just unused ones."* - Rick Warren

God looks at the attitude of the heart. Do you live to see Him smile? Listen to how the Apostle Paul said it, *"More than anything else, however, we want to please him, whether in our home here or there."* 2 Corinthians 5:9 (TEV) *When you live in the light of eternity, your focus changes from "How much pleasure am I getting out of life?" to "How much pleasure is God getting out of my life?"* God is looking for people like Noah. *"The Lord looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who are wise, who want to please God."* Psalm 14:2 (LB) It is the only goal worth living for. Will you make it yours?