

## #281 "What Brings God Pleasure"

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Scripture is saturated with verses describing what brings God pleasure. The answers are quite illuminating and encouraging for those in whom the Lord delights.

1. God takes pleasure in His plan of salvation and in His Son Jesus Christ. "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him," says Colossians 1:19. Jesus was God in human flesh, and He was the only possible way to save sinners. Hebrews 10:6 says, "In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure." (see also v. 8) In other words, the sacrifices of old were insufficient to save but showed man his need for atonement through a perfect sacrifice. The story from Jesus' birth through His perfect life to His sacrificial death and powerful resurrection is the glorious plan of God. He delights in what He has accomplished through Jesus, and He wants people to be as moved as He is. Isaiah 53:10 says, "But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand." The Father wasn't happy to see His Son's pain, but He delighted in His obedience, knowing the good it would do and the honor His Son would receive. "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations." (Isaiah 42:1)

2. God takes pleasure in seeing sinners repent. Some people are convinced that God is cruel and vindictive, even enjoying seeing people die. The Bible paints a different picture. Ezekiel 18:23 says, "'Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,' declares the Lord God, 'rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?'" (see also v. 32 and 33:11) While God is just to pour out His wrath on the wicked and judge the unjust, He gives them time to repent because of His great patience and love. He will wait as long as possible, but, after a person dies, judgment is appointed (Hebrews 9:27). God does not rejoice when the wicked die because He knows they must be punished, and He would rather they repent and live. He wants all people to come to know Him, but He will not force their hand. God has great joy when a sinner repents. "I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15:7)

3. God takes pleasure in those who are His own (Psalm 149:4). God refers to those who belong to Him as the apple of His eye (Psalm 17:8, Zechariah 2:8). He has great delight in them, and He is loyal to them to the utmost. Psalm 22:8 says, "Commit yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him." He fights for them (Deuteronomy 3:22), He helps them (Psalm 46:1), and He is their fortress and refuge (Psalm 144:2a). Psalm 35:27 says, "Let them shout for joy and rejoice, who favor my vindication; And let them say continually, 'The Lord be magnified, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant.'" Things might be tough in life, but God is there, His approval is what counts, and He will reward the faithful one in due time (Galatians 6:9). The righteous win in the end, and He will keep this promise because He adores His own and will be eternally and abundantly fair and generous

with them. True prosperity belongs to those who love Jesus above all else and who trust Him when He says that at His right hand in heaven are pleasures forever (Psalm 16:11).

4. God takes great pleasure in seeing believers grow in holiness as He works in their hearts to make them more like Himself. Philippians 2:13 says, "For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." God delights in seeing believers walk by faith as His grace empowers them. Psalm 37:23 says, "The steps of a man are established by the Lord, And He delights in his way." As a parent, I can actually feel myself glow when I watch my baby smile at me, wave at me, stand up on his own, crawl for the first time, bounce to the tune of a song, and eat his first foods. God is a heavenly Father Who takes great joy in our baby steps of faith as we keep growing in obedience, faith, hope, and love.

Application:

We need to recognize just how much God's holy delight and good pleasure is part of the whole gospel equation and the whole eternal life package. The future home of the people of God will be called "My delight is in her" because the Lord delights in His people (Isaiah 62:4). *Did you catch that? **The actual name of the dwelling place of God's people in heaven will be words of spoken love: "I delight in you."*** Doesn't that just radiate hope and resonate with the idea that God dotes upon His children? The gospel is being saved from sin, death, and hell, and repenting from sin and putting one's faith in Christ is crucial and essential. *But we must not neglect the reality that the Christian life is fundamentally knowing God through Jesus (John 17:3), **and it is a relationship defined more than anything else by perfect love (1 John 4:18).*** God loved the world so much that He even let His Son be born into it and then killed by the people He created. He did this because He wanted them to know Him, to love Him, and to be loved by Him. **God adores those who receive Him, and He wants that fact to encapsulate everything that they know and understand and experience about Him.** God shouts to His children from the heavens that they are loved, doted upon, adored by Him, and even bought with the precious price of His own precious Son's blood (1 Corinthians 6:20). An all-powerful, good, and loving God adores us. That He considers us so special is what makes us special (Psalm 144:3). His love is our life and our hope (Psalm 144:15). *The gospel's work is not just what we have been saved from but what we have become in Christ and will one day be with Christ.* This eternal bond of love with our Creator and Savior cannot be disregarded or diminished in our hearts and minds.

Conclusion:

Isaiah 46:9-10 says, "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, *And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.*'" (italics mine) In other words, God's eternal purpose is tied directly to His good pleasure. His ultimate purpose in the world is to have a beautiful bride one day (i.e., all who have believed in Him by faith) to celebrate heaven with (Revelation 19:7-9). His desire is that His people will enjoy Him forever. This they will do when they see Him face to face because, finally, any leftover doubts about just how

much He adores them will be eradicated. **Scripture says that God will accomplish His eternal plan according to His good pleasure, and you, dear Christian, are the living proof.**