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Regrets And Resolutions

Dr. T. D. Worthington



“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

I Corinthians 9-24-27

It is World War II, and the British forces were retreating across The Channel. It seemed that victory had already been lost. Most everyone agreed that Britain must surrender while she still could; but not Winston Churchill.

“You ask, what is our aim?” Churchill told his fellow members of Parliament as he took office. *“I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory*

in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be.”

And again, he rallied the British people. *“We shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be,”* he told them. *“We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”*

It took five more long years, but thanks to the Allied armies, the world was freed from Nazi tyranny. And thanks to the bravery of the Royal Air Force, the British never did have to fight on the beaches, nor in the hills or streets of their own country. But it was to Churchill that the victory was most owed, for it was he who had the courage not to give in during the darkest of hours.

Churchill had many admirable attributes: but it was his

determination to keep going even when the odds were against him that makes him a great role model for children today. He was a man of resolution.

Have you made some resolutions for the New Year? If so, by default it would mean you must have some regrets. And now those regrets must be strong enough for you to ask God to empower you to become a person of resolution. Now, there is a difference in a person with a resolution and a person of resolution.

“Resolve” may be defined as: *“to determine or decide upon a course of action.”* **“Resolution”** may be defined as: *“an act of firmness and determination to accomplish that which is resolved upon.”* A resolved person has made a mental determination, a person of resolve has a firmness to actually do it. Resolutions are powerless in the hands of a person without resolve. Benjamin Franklin defined being

a man of resolution as: ***“Resolve to perform what you ought. Then perform without fail what you resolve.”***

Why is this so important? Because being a person of resolution is the key to many of the other virtues. Regardless, if your goal is to achieve patience, to be more faithful at church, to pray more, to be more dependable, none of these can be accomplished without the resolve to perform what you ought. In other words, to make resolution, or to resolve to do a thing is to decide or determine in your own mind a course of action you will pursue.

God himself resolved to do certain things. In **Acts 2:23**, we read: ***“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:”*** Hence, it was God's determined or pre-determined plan for Jesus to die by the hands of wicked men on a cross. So, God made a determination (*a resolution or a resolve*), and He made it ahead of time.

I have grown weary of hearing about resolutions. What we should really be focused on is to be a person of resolution. Which do you want to be this year? The wishy washy, non-committed resolution guy or the clearly focused, results oriented person of resolve? Anyone can make a resolution. Very few have resolve.

Of Regrets

When we are young, it seems that we will live forever. We think there is a limitless supply of sunrises

waiting just beyond the horizon, and the future looks to us like an unbroken road stretching endlessly before us. However, the older we get, the more we tend to look back and marvel at how short that road really was. We wonder how the years could have passed so quickly. We begin to think about the choices we made and the things we have done. In the process, we remember many priceless moments of joy. But we also remember the regrets—*the things we wish we could go back and change*.

For example, many people regret that they failed to become the person they felt they could and should have been. When they look back on their lives, they realize that they never lived up to their potential; that too many accomplishments remained undone. This is not some simple misstep. It is failing to become the person God equipped you to be. Why do we devote so much of our time and energy to things that are so fleeting, so inconsequential, and so superficial? Do we refuse

to see the folly in the pursuit of the trivial? Would it not be wiser for us to follow the Scriptures? God instructs His people to; ***“lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:”*** **Matthew 6:20**

How do we do this? We certainly cannot do this with a dragging-our-feet, staring-at-our-watch, complaining-as-we-go approach to labor. When it comes to living the gospel, we should not be like the boy who dipped his toe in the water and then claimed he went swimming. As sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father, we are capable of so much more. For that, resolutions and good intentions are not enough. We must actually act upon them.

Declaring the power of the Gospel is good, but being a living example is far better. Over the years, I have worked with many Christian people that knew the Gospel just as well as I, but they were lazy and undependable, they could not be trusted, and they refused to





govern themselves. Those who knew them best questioned their faith. Wishing to be more faithful is good; actually being faithful is much better. Announcing that we will dedicate ourselves to be zealous about the work is good; but actually doing it is what will bring heavenly blessings to our lives and leave us with fewer regrets.

Of Resolutions

One day we will take that unavoidable step and cross from this mortal sphere into the next estate. One day we will look back at our lives and wonder if we could have been better, made better decisions, or used our time more wisely. If you are to succeed in life, you must learn to be a person of resolution. I've seen countless people set out with the best intentions, only to fail because their resolution was weak. But I've also seen many others succeed despite the odds because their resolve to achieve consumed them.

Being a person of resolution is often the determining contributor

in how so many successful people were able to accomplish their goals. I wish the road to victory was a smooth even playing field, that was littered with resources, encouragement, and rest stops, but that is not the case. When obstacles rise up on their path, successful people don't stop. They turn the obstacles into stepping stones and continue striding onward and upward.

Research shows that reaching goals leads to greater joy in life. Yet, while over half of us set New Year's resolutions, just 9% of us succeed in keeping them. Now, maybe some of those resolutions didn't need to be kept, but many of those resolutions were probably good. Being a person of resolve is essential in helping us get the best from our labor, it helps us objectively evaluate our own behavior, and it is crucial for self improvement. Being a person of resolve promotes a deeper level of thought. It promotes the ability to look at a problem or situation from multiple perspectives, to evaluate

all the available information, and to come up with a range of possible solutions or outcomes.

It goes way beyond simple problem solving of the $2+2=4$ kind. Rather, the man of resolve looks for all the ways he might reach the number 4, using addition or subtraction, or multiplication—he will look for multiple options for reaching his goal.

May this be our resolution for this new year: ***I am determined to achieve, and even exceed, the goals in my life! My resolution knows no limits, and I will stay the course, always! I act on my goals! I listen to the voice of God! I deal with the fears that arise in me! I am strong; I am capable; I am motivated; I am resolved; and I go on! I will run the appointed mile, and the next, and the next. Daily, I go on! Daily, I move on! Daily, I stay determined! Daily, I am me, and I am the best that I could be as a child of the Most High!***

Many people may work hard, but they accomplish very little. Some blame it on a lack of focus. Being a person of resolve gives you focus. It causes you to move towards something bigger than you imagined. It gives you a tunnel vision to see through the haze of foggy details.

Much is riding on your decision. Determine to be a person of resolution.



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry for over forty-five years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries and Christian Bible College

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Resolutions For Church Members

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:25

There is a challenge that almost every church is facing today. That challenge is overcoming a declining attendance and membership. Every believer must see his or her church membership as an honor, privilege, and joy.

Christian congregations across America are weak because many



church members have lost the biblical understanding of what it means to be a part of a local church. We join our churches expecting others to serve us, to feed us, and to care for us. We don't like the hypocrites in the church, but we fail to see our own hypocrisies. God did not give us local churches to become country clubs where membership means we have privileges and perks. He placed us in churches to serve, to care for others, to pray for leaders, to learn, to teach, to give, and, in some cases, to die for the sake of the gospel. What might be some good resolutions regarding your church membership during the coming year?

Although we will always appreciate the thousands of listeners that tune in every day, *GoMix Christian Radio* can never replace the importance of your local church. May we all

resolve this year to become active in our church and supportive of our local pastor. May we be a unifying servant within our congregation as we encourage others to do the same.

Someone who is passionate for Jesus should be passionate for what Jesus is passionate about. Jesus is passionate for His church. Just like our Lord, we are to love, identify with, and sacrifice for the local church. Will you join us in a renewed resolution to support our local church during this new year?

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Divine Energy

Who has enough time? When making a daily to-do list, the slots sure seem to fill quickly. Often times, activities have to be moved to the next day's list just to pencil in a few hours here and there to eat and sleep. At the beginning of the week, we think of relaxing when the weekend comes only to find a yard that needs raking, laundry to be folded, and an extra shift at work quietly waiting to pounce on us. Sometimes, the more we do, the more things just seem to add up. Will we ever get ahead? Where is the light at the end of the tunnel everyone talks about?

What if it's not a light at the *end* of the tunnel we should look for? What if we look for a Light *in the midst* of the tunnel?

Have you ever been working outside or in a workshop when the sun begins to go down? Little by little things get harder to see. Although you may be trying to hurry and doing your absolute best to get your work done, you're slowed down by the absence of light. So it is

with all of our daily tasks. When we forget to put the Lord first in our lives and spend time with Him, we may as well be working with the lights out. Sure, we might get a little done here and there, but are we really being efficient and working to the best of our abilities?

C. H. Spurgeon said in his sermon titled Jesus In Our Midst, "*Oh brother, oh sister, I beseech you do not estimate yourself according to your ability, according to your experience, your learning and the like, but according to that divine energy which rests upon you if you are called of God to service.*"

We have a Divine Energy today! We have our very Creator at our fingertips. He is ready and willing to offer His guidance throughout your day. Maybe all you have is five minutes to spare on your drive to work. Hey, it's a start! Seek His guidance in *all* things. It might not make your day any less busy, but it will make it more productive and a little less stressful. Go ahead, work with the Light on!

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How Can This Be?

Mrs. Sherry Worthington

What just happened? Why would God choose me to be the mother of the Christ child? I am no better than anyone else. I am just an ordinary Jewish girl. Why would the angel call me highly favored and blessed among women? I know that God has chosen me, but I am so undeserving.

Oh my! How will I ever explain this to Joseph? He is not going to believe me. I wouldn't believe me. I must tell him. What about my parents? No one is going to believe me. They are all going to think I was with another man. I need your help, God. How do I tell them? How do I tell Joseph I am pregnant?

I don't know how long it was before Mary told anyone about the angel's proclamation. It may have been right away, or she may have thought about it for days. When a Jewish couple was espoused, it was like being married without

living together. The engagement period was taken very seriously. If she was unfaithful, she could have been stoned. All of this must have been going through her head. **Luke 1:26-38** shares how the angel proclaimed Mary the chosen one. We must realize Mary could have refused, but Mary chose to be obedient. In verse 38, Mary says, **"Be it unto me according to thy word."** In other words, she said, "Yes, I will do it."

Just as Mary was a chosen one, Joseph must have been chosen, too. When we look at Joseph, we learn some things about him. Mary was right. Joseph did not believe her. But he did not react in haste. He pondered over what to do. Most of us would have been emotional and reacted out of hurt or anger, but not Joseph. He loved her and did not want her hurt. **Luke 1:19-25** tells us of Joseph's reaction. Perhaps he was lying on his bed thinking to himself.

How could Mary do this to me? I thought she loved me. I cannot believe she would be unfaithful to me, and she has the nerve to say it was the Christ child in her womb. She even said an angel told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, and He would be the Son of God. Does she think I am a fool? Why would I believe such a story? Maybe, I can put her away privately, and no one will know.

Then Joseph's thoughts were interrupted by an angel as well. This angel verified everything Mary had told him. Can you imagine the thoughts that rushed through his mind? I am not sure from Scripture the total chronology. When did Joseph marry Mary? Was it before Mary went to see Elizabeth, or perhaps it was when she was at Elizabeth's home? Did Joseph go with Mary to Elizabeth's house. Judah was 100 miles away. Zacharia was a priest. Is this a possibility? Joseph probably

stayed awake thinking about what to do next. Wouldn't he be planning how to do this discreetly. Can you imagine what Joseph may have been thinking after the angel's visit?

What kind of father can I be to the *Son of God*? *How can I, a sinner, be the earthly father of the Saviour of the world? What could I possibly teach Him? What is our family going to think? People will think that we have been unfaithful to our vows and had relations before our marriage vows were complete. We will cause all of our family shame. Okay, Lord, I will do as you say. If you have chosen us to be your Son's earthly parents, then we will do our best to honor you. I must admit. I don't feel up to the task. I am afraid. I will marry her right away.*

We find Joseph obedient to God's voice. He does not say maybe tomorrow. He does not say in a little while. He does not argue with what God told him to do. He just does it. Joseph obeys other times in the Scriptures, too. He immediately obeys. Joseph obeys when the angel commands him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt because the child's life is in danger. The Bible says, ***"When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt."*** **Matthew 2:14.** He did not even wait until morning. He obeyed right away. What would have been the consequences if Joseph had waited?

Don't we realize God trusted Joseph with His Son? How many of us would have gotten right out of bed to obey? We would have said, *"Okay, Lord. I'll get on it in the*

morning. I am sure you don't mean now." Could we have been trusted with the amazing honor of raising Jesus?

Then Joseph was told by an angel to return to the land of Israel since Herod was dead. He went into Israel, but Joseph became concerned because he heard Archelaus reigned in Judea. He was afraid to go further. So, Joseph was warned in a dream to go to Nazareth. How many times does Joseph listen to God? I am sure there were many more times Joseph



was obedient that are not recorded in God's Word.

What is our excuse for not obeying God? Well, if an angel appeared to me, I would listen. Joseph had an angel talking to him, so he has an advantage over us. If an angel came and told me to do something, I would do it. Would we really? Does Joseph really have an advantage over us?

We have God's Word and the Holy Spirit living inside of us. Joseph did not have the Scriptures he could hold in his hand. The Holy Spirit made appearances, but He did not live inside of Joseph as He does in

us today. Joseph had faith in God, just as we should.

I cannot imagine being chosen to be Jesus' parent. That would be such a daunting task. However, we each have been chosen to carry out God's will for our lives. Each task that God gives to His children is important and designed just for us. No job is insignificant if you have said "Yes" to God.

Some people may feel they have messed up too bad to be a part of God's will. They don't feel He can use them anymore. Many times, we get off the chosen path, and God designs a new plan, but we are never thrown away or discarded. He loves us so much. Just as Peter strayed and denied our Lord, we may stray, but He forgives us.

My Father in Heaven perfect. My earthly father loved me even though I messed up so often. If my earthly father can forgive and have faith in me and he was not perfect, my Heavenly Father who has a perfect love for me will always love me, even when I mess up. He may change my path, but He will always be with me.

In this New Year, may we each search for God's perfect will for us. Don't hesitate! Say, *"Yes, Lord,"* and do it now. Be like Joseph, and don't hesitate.

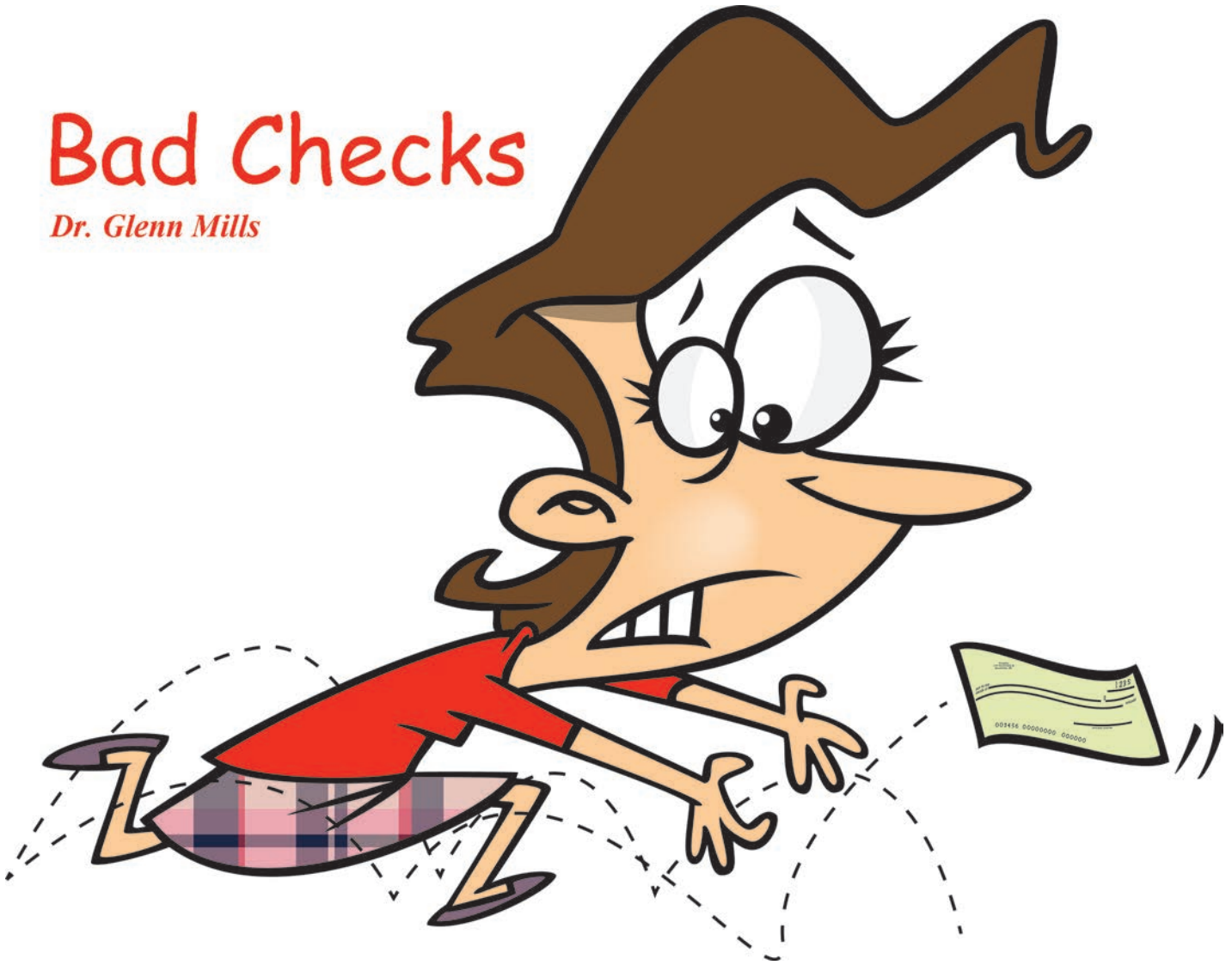
Happy New Year!



Mrs. Worthington has five children and twelve grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.

Bad Checks

Dr. Glenn Mills



“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”
Ephesians 2:8

Have you ever written a bad check? Maybe it was an accident, maybe it wasn't. While some people don't really care if they write a bad check, it is very disturbing for others. For those who do care, it can be very embarrassing. Even some of the most responsible people have written a bad check by total mistake. To write a bad check simply means the funds are not available to cover the amount of the check written.

I remember a situation I once had over a bad check. I was selling a four-wheeler in great condition. A man and his wife wanted to purchase this item for their family. I requested they bring cash for the purchase. When they arrived, all they had was a check. It was the weekend, and the banks were closed. He proudly

told me he was a deacon at his church and his wife worked with the children there as well. They promised me the check was good and I believed them.

What happened next? You guessed it! The check bounced so high I wondered if it would even return to earth. I called the bank only to be informed this was a norm for this couple. The lady at the bank took pity on me and helped me get the money owed me. Lesson well learned.

Thank God, not everyone is like that couple. Most people do care and want to do right, especially when it comes to paying what they owe. People who are serious about their finances can pretty much tell you what they have in their accounts at any given time. They are careful with credit cards, keep their checkbooks up to date, and pay their bills on or before they are due. I know God smiles on such behavior.

The Bible says a lot about being responsible in every area of life. While many of us would never write a bad check on purpose, we often write them to God. Imagine that! Writing God a bad check! How can that be possible? Please allow me to share a few ways I feel we do this.

We do this when we feel our works are a payment owed to God instead of a response given from the love we have for all He has done. We don't work for our salvation. We work because of our appreciation for our salvation. **Isaiah 64:6** says all our works are like filthy rags. Even with the awesome gifts and talents God has given us, we will fall extremely short if we try to use them without the help of the Holy Spirit. Just like a bad check! There is not enough in our works account to cover what God has done for us. Plus, we are trying to pay for a free gift.

Trying to earn God's love and approval by being spiritually busy is another bad check. We think if we do enough spiritual things for God, we will pay Him back for all He has done for us. It can't be done. We don't have enough in our spiritual bank to cover that check. God has given us grace that we can't earn or pay for. God will never be in anyone's debt.

We owe Him everything. His desire is not what we can do for Him, but what we are willing to do with Him. Sadly, many in ministry burn out trying to please God by working long hours, performing many duties, carrying heavy loads, neglecting family, and pushing others to join the rat race. It's all bad checks.

The "law" was the religion you would perform; whereas "grace" is the relationship we accept and respond to with

love. We are obligated by the law, but we are motivated by the Spirit. **Romans 7:6** says we are to serve in the "newness of spirit" and not the oldness of the law.

Trying to live holy and pure without the help of the Holy Spirit is another bad check. We cannot be pleasing to God without His Spirit. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help us in every area of our lives. We are bankrupt in ourselves, but we are abundantly blessed in Christ. He redeemed us by His sacrifice. Only Jesus could write God a good check to cover our debt. I pray today we will all be careful not to write God another bad check, but realize our debt is paid in full with Jesus as our Lord.

Jesus signed the check of our atonement to God with His own blood. God desires a relationship with us, more than any works we could ever do. While we should desire to serve Him, it should be motivated by love and appreciation.

God wants us to rest in Him and enjoy our time with Him. When He wants us to do something, He will let us know and the Holy Spirit will lead us. We are all ministers. Our object is not to pay Him back, but to lovingly serve Him with the gifts He has given us. Just learn to accept His love and merciful grace while also accepting the fact you cannot pay for it in any way. If you try, you will just be writing God another bad check.



Dr. Glenn Mills is a long time supporter of GoMix Christian Radio and a full-time Evangelist with Glenn Mills Ministries. More information is available at www.glennmillsministries.com



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Delighting God

What delights you? The answers to that question may be as numerous as the people answering. Some may say that a gift they received for Christmas delighted them. Others may cite the pleasure they received in watching little ones delight in the celebration. We can delight in many everyday pleasures. All of us who know Christ as our Saviour can relate to the spiritual delight that we gain from being part of the family of God.

Have you ever thought about what delights our Heavenly Father? **Psalm 149:4** says, *“For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people...”* Is it possible for us to give God pleasure? How do we delight God? His Word gives us several suggestions.

We can delight God by obeying Him even more than sacrificing to Him (**I Samuel 15:22**). Obedience brings greater delight to God than our most precious sacrifices. When His children submit to His will, we bring Him great pleasure. Watching His children deal honestly delights Him (**Proverbs 11:1, 20; 12:22**). Are we honest in all of our dealings, and do we sense the smile of God when we are?

In **Proverbs 8**, wisdom is personified, and in verse **30**, Wisdom says, *“Then I was by him (the Lord), as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight...”* Can we not infer that we bring delight to God when we exercise the wisdom that He gives to us?

Proverbs 15:8 says, *“...the prayer of the upright is his delight.”* It is truly amazing to realize that the Almighty Creator actually delights in communing with us! **Jeremiah 9:24** declares, *“But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”* God delights in revealing Himself to us. Our mutual fellowship brings delight to Him as we talk to Him and we listen and observe as He reveals Himself to us.

One day as I pondered what it means to delight God, a thought came to me very clearly out of the blue. I wondered, *“Does God like peanut butter?”* I must admit that I had never considered that before, and I initially found it to be an odd thought. I like peanut butter, but I have no idea whether heaven has peanut butter. Apparently, peanut butter was not invented until 1895, so Jesus never had the opportunity to taste it while on earth. Peanut butter milkshakes especially delight me. Wouldn't it be nice to share one with Jesus Himself? Would that delight Him? Of course, I can't do that now, but maybe I can. In **Matthew 25:40**, Jesus states, *“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”* So I decided to find a friend with a similar love of peanut butter milkshakes and treat her to one. I think we delighted Him in doing so.

Can you think of a special way to delight God today? What can you do to make Him smile? Looking for ways to delight Him would be a good practice to put into place. Ponder that.



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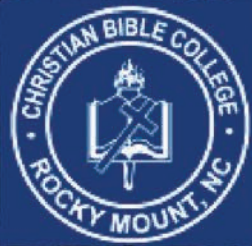


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