

Three Things That Please God

A short Bible study on faith, obedience to parents, and purity

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

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	Can you actually make God happy? Yes! The Bible names specific things that please Him. Three of them are faith that seeks Him, obedience to parents, and a pure life. Jesus did all three perfectly, and His Spirit helps us do them too.
SCRIPTURE	Hebrews 11:6 · Ephesians 6:1-3 · Colossians 3:20 · 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 · Matthew 3:17 · Luke 2:51
LENGTH	About 20 minutes
BEST FOR	Upper elementary and middle school
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles and a whiteboard

Start here: what makes God smile?

Ask: "What do you do that makes your parents or a coach really happy?" Then ask: "Do you think you can make God happy?" Some students think God is always disappointed with them. But the Bible actually tells us what pleases Him.

At Jesus' baptism, the Father said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Jesus said, "I always do those things that please Him" (John 8:29). When we trust Jesus, God gives us His Spirit to help us live in a way that pleases Him too. Here are three things the Bible specifically says please God.

1 Faith: a heart that seeks God finds Him

Hebrews 11:6 says it is *impossible* to please God without faith. Faith has two parts:

- **Believe that He is:** God is real, and He is who the Bible says He is.
- **Believe that He rewards those who seek Him:** God isn't hiding from you. When you look for Him, you'll find Him.

God promises, "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Faith isn't just knowing facts about God. It's trusting Him enough to come to Him.

2 Obedience to parents: a heart that obeys lives better

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.'" **EPHESIANS 6:1-3**

Paul says the same thing another way: "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord" (Colossians 3:20). Obeying your parents is one of the clearest ways to please God at your age.

Even Jesus did this. As a boy, after the time He stayed behind at the temple, He went home with Mary and Joseph "and was subject to them" (Luke 2:51). The Son of God obeyed His earthly parents!

Obey is what you do: following instructions. **Honor** is how you do it: with respect, without eye-rolling, arguing, or grumbling. God attaches a promise: things go better for those who honor their parents.

FOR THE LEADER

"In the Lord" matters. God never asks a child to obey a parent or any adult who tells them to sin, keep a harmful secret, or do something unsafe. If a student shares that they're being hurt at home, follow your church's child-safety and reporting policy right away. Also remember that some students live with grandparents, foster parents, or one parent; apply this to whoever God has placed over them.

3 Purity: a heart that is pure enjoys life more

"We urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God" (1 Thessalonians 4:1). Then Paul explains: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality" (4:3). "For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness" (4:7).

Purity means keeping your body, mind, and relationships clean before God. That affects what you watch, what you joke about, and how you treat friends of the opposite sex. Paul goes on to say purity also includes loving others well, living a quiet, responsible life, and working hard (4:9-12).

God isn't trying to steal your fun. A pure heart has nothing to hide, no regrets to carry, and friendships that are real and safe. That's a better way to live.

When you blow it

None of us does these things perfectly. Jesus did. When we fail, we can come back to Him, confess, and be forgiven (1 John 1:9). Pleasing God starts with trusting Jesus, not with trying harder on our own.

TALK IT OVER

1. Did you know you could please God? How does that make you feel?
2. What are the two parts of faith in Hebrews 11:6?
3. What is the difference between obeying and honoring your parents?
4. Why do you think it matters to God that Jesus obeyed Mary and Joseph?
5. How does purity make life better, not worse?

TAKE IT HOME

Pick one of the three to work on this week. **Faith:** spend five minutes each day seeking God in prayer and His Word. **Obedience:** obey the first time, without complaining. **Purity:** remove one thing from your phone, playlist, or habits that pulls you away from God. At the end of the week, thank God for His help.

Faith, obedience, and purity: three ways to make your Father smile.

From fifty years of youth ministry by **Ron Whittam**. Share freely with your students and leaders. · The Youth Ministry Living Room · qrprogramming.com/livingroom

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