

**Campus Church of Christ Jail Ministry**  
**Teacher's Guide**  
**Series 1: Lesson #5**  
**"You Were Planned for God's Pleasure", Part C**  
(from *The Purpose Driven Life* <sup>1</sup>)

(all **green** text is for the teacher)

**Preparation:**

1. Read the sections for Days 13-14 in *The Purpose Driven Life*.
2. Review the scripture references in the lesson and related passages in your Bible; there are too many to use in the class, so be selective.
3. Read through the teacher's version of the lesson; make notes / changes as desired.
4. Pick up the following from the Jail Ministry Table:
  - attendance/prayer request sheets
  - enough copies of lesson handout for the inmates in your pod (Remember, **don't** staple the pages.)
  - correspondence courses to give out to inmates who desire one
5. Other optional materials to bring:
  - White board marker and eraser
  - Sharpened pencils for inmates to use (be sure to collect all of them before they leave the room)

**Before and as students arrive:**

1. Welcome students and distribute student handouts
2. Make sure that any inmates who don't have a Bible know that they can fill out an inmate request form to get one that is provided to the jail by the church.
3. Pass the attendance roster / prayer request sheets around.
4. Always extend a greeting of encouragement and hope as inmates are arriving.
5. Open the class / lesson with a prayer.

**Focus points for this Lesson:**

(main points to emphasize through the lesson and to summarize in conclusion. If white board and marker are available, as you conclude and summarize each point, write it on the board.)

- God wants all of me – heart, soul, mind, and strength
- God is pleased with our worship
  - if it comes from our spirit; i.e. it is authentic
  - when it is done according to truth; i.e. it is accurate according to the Bible
  - if it is thoughtful; i.e. we are mentally engaged
  - when it is a "living sacrifice"; i.e. it costs us something
- God is real no matter how I feel.
- It is our faith, not our feelings, that pleases God.
- Trust God to keep His promises.

# “You Were Planned for God’s Pleasure”, Part C

## Introduction

In our previous lessons, we have been discussing what worshipping God really is as well as what it is not. We have identified that worship is how we live our lives in our relationship with God every moment of every day and not just something that we do when we go to church. It is all about making God our best friend, surrendering our own will to Him and doing our best to please Him through our love, faith, trust, and obedience. In this lesson, we will dig even deeper into what it means to please God in our worship to Him.

## (Day 13)

**Worship That Pleases God** can be summed up in Mark 12:30 (**verse to remember**) *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”*

**From this passage, what do you think is required to please God in our worship of Him?** (responses and discussion)

Clearly, God wants all of our being to be involved in worshipping Him – our heart, the source of our emotions; our soul, the spiritual part of us; our mind, the intellectual, rational part of us; and our strength, our physical body and our will.

God also tells us what He wants from us when we worship Him in **John 4:23** where Jesus says, *Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.* In this scripture, we find two things that God expects to find when we worship Him, our spirit and truth.

As clarification, in this passage the worship God in spirit is referring to spirit with a lower case “s” as in a part of ourselves, not to THE Holy Spirit with a capital S. With our spirit means that our worship is coming from the deepest part of us, our heart and soul. God wants real, not pretend, devotion. While we may fool other people, we cannot fool God. He can see what is in our hearts and knows whether our worship is real or imitation.

## **I Samuel 16:7b (NLT)**

*People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at a person's thoughts and intentions.*

## **A worshipful life must be authentic**

**Is there a singular correct way to worship God authentically?** (responses; discussion)

Because God made each of us with a unique set of qualities and characteristics, a worshipful life for one person may be different from another person in order to be authentic. Gary Thomas, author of the book, *Sacred Pathways*, has identified nine

different ways that we can worship God based upon the unique qualities that God has given each of us. For example, some of us were wired in such a way that we best glorify God in the natural world – outside. Another person may worship Him through their ability to sing or act or paint. A third person loves and glorifies God by loving and caring for others. Yet another person studies, thinks, and teaches to glorify God and share Him in this world. We can't and we shouldn't even try to copy someone else in the way we use our lives to worship God. They were made from a different mold and we don't fit it! We need to understand the unique gifts and abilities that God has given us and then use them in our worship to Him. We cannot make a genuine connection with God in a way that is contrary to who He wired us to be. What better way to praise Him for how He made us than to use it for His glory and praise! (p. 103)

### **A worshipful life must be accurate**

Besides worshipping God in spirit, we must worship Him in truth. To worship God in truth includes several things.

1. We must worship the God who has revealed Himself to us in the Bible, not a god that we design because we don't like everything about the God in the Bible.
2. We must know what truth is and the only place to find that is in the Bible. Then we must put that truth into practice.
3. Our feelings should never be used to determine truth. Just because something feels right doesn't necessarily make it right.
4. This is an area where we worship God with our minds. So we need to be mentally engaged, not just going through the outward motions.

### **A worshipful life must be a *living sacrifice* to God**

**When you think about sacrifices to God, what comes to mind?** (responses and discussion)

#### **Romans 12:1 (NLT)**

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*

**How can we be living sacrifices?** (responses and discussion)

1. A dead sacrifice can't do anything but lay there.
2. As we see from this scripture, to be a living sacrifice requires the presence of our living physical bodies as well as our mind and heart. If our whole self is involved, there is no way our worship can be passive. It has to be active!
3. A living sacrifice has the ability to get off the altar and leave if it wants to. What pleases God is our willingness to stay!
4. Sacrifice is just that, giving up something. It has to cost us something before it can please God.
5. When we focus on God, we sacrifice our self-centeredness

6. God is pleased with many different sacrifices as we see from scriptures throughout the Bible. (refer students to the list of scriptures on their handout) A few of these include: "thanksgiving, praise, humility, repentance, offerings of money, prayer, serving others, and sharing with those in need." (p. 105)

Worship, whether it is in an assembly or our life style, should never be dull and unsatisfying. If we are doing all the things we need to do to make it pleasing to God, while it may at times be challenging, it is also going to be highly satisfying and pleasing to us. It will be a spirit and truth filled outpouring of our mind, heart, soul, and strength to our Lord God, our Best Friend, as we go through each day of our lives.

### Additional scriptures

Hebrews 12:28	John 4:23	Hebrews 13:15
Psalm 7:17	Ezra 3:11	2 Samuel 24:24
Psalm 149:3	Psalm 150:3	Nehemiah 8:6
Matthew 6:7	1 Corinthians 14:40	1 Corinthians 14:16-17
Romans 12:1	Psalm 50:14	Hebrews 13:15
Psalm 51:17	Psalm 54:6	Philippians 4:18
Psalm 141:2	Hebrews 13:16	Mark 12:33

### (Day 14)

#### When God Seems Distant

Sometimes is just feels like God is far, far, away – "somewhere out there" as the song lyrics once proclaimed. Life is rough and where is God? I feel my prayers are not being heard. I don't feel like or want to worship. I feel abandoned by God.

**Do these statements express how you have felt at any time in your life?  
What common theme did you hear running through those statements?**

(responses and discussion; possible responses: feelings / emotions; God isn't near or doesn't care)

**Focus Point:** God is real no matter how I feel.

One of the most important reasons for using our minds in our relationships, including our relationship with God, is that our feelings or emotions are not always reliable. While God gave us emotions, and they are an important part of relationships, if we relied on them exclusively, we likely would only worship Him when we felt close to Him or felt good about worshipping. So our feelings alone could hinder our relationship with God.

Every person who has or seeks a relationship with God has or will go through a period of time when God is silent. King David (**clarify if necessary**), who may have been the closest friend to God besides Jesus, often complained to God about His apparent absence with statements like: (p. 108) (**refer students to the list of scriptures on their handout**)

*"Lord why are you standing aloof and far away? Why do you hide when I need you the most?" "Why have you forsaken me? Why do remain so distant? Why do you ignore my cries for help?" "Why have you abandoned me?"*

While David may have felt like God had abandoned him or was ignoring him, God promises otherwise.

**Verse to remember: Hebrews 13:5b (NIV)**

*God has said,*

*"Never will I leave you;  
never will I forsake you."*

**Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV)**

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."*

God keeps His promises. If He says He will NEVER leave us or abandon us, then He will not! **If God never leaves us or abandons us, why does it sometimes seem that He has?** (**responses and discussion**)

God admits that He sometimes "*hides His face from us*". (**Isaiah 45:15**)

We also have numerous examples in the bible when God was silent. He was not gone. He just chose to remain silent.

**Why do you think God would hide Himself from us or remain silent at time in our lives?** (**responses and discussion**)

While sin can and does separate us from God, it does not always account for these times of seeming separation. It is perfectly normal to have periods in our lives when God is silent and, as we have seen from examples such as King David, it is also perfectly acceptable to pour out our emotions to God about that silence. In actuality, these are time when God is maturing and testing our faith. They are times that grow our relationship with Him IF we are faithful. "When you are a baby Christian, God gives you a lot of confirming emotions and often answers the

most immature, self-centered prayers so you will know He exists. But as you grow in faith, He will wean you of these dependencies.” (P. 109)

One of the most common mistakes Christians make is seeking an *experience* – emotional, instead of seeking God – spiritual. God’s continual and eternal presence is a fact while awareness of His presence is a feeling. It takes faith to believe in His presence when we do not feel His presence. And, **it is our faith, not our feelings, that pleases God.**

### **How can admitting your hopelessness and feelings of abandonment to God be a statement of faith? (responses and discussion)**

In the OT, Job gives us a beautiful example of this. In one day, he lost his children, all of his material possessions, and became very sick. For the first 37 chapters in the Book of Job, God remains silent while Job tries to understand why all this has happened and unloads every emotion he feels as he cries out to God in anguish. The amazing and encouraging part of this story is that God allowed Job to unload on Him, but also that, in spite of it all, Job’s faith and trust in God was not shaken.

#### **Job 1:20-21 (NIV)**

*At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship <sup>21</sup> and said:*

*"Naked I came from my mother's womb,  
and naked I will depart. <sup>[a]</sup>*

*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;  
may the name of the LORD be praised."*

In spite of it all, “Job still found things to praise God for: (refer students to the list of scriptures from Job on their handout)

- That God is good and loving. (10:12)
- That God is all-powerful. (42:2; 37:5, 23)
- That God notices every detail of my life. (23:10; 31:4)
- That God is in control of my life. (34:13)
- That God has a plan for my life. (23:14)
- That God will save me. (19:25)“

We must **trust God to keep His promises.** “During times of spiritual dryness you must patiently rely on the promises of God, not your emotions, and realize that He is taking you to a deeper level of maturity. A friendship based on emotion is shallow indeed. So don’t be troubled by trouble. Circumstances cannot change the character of God. God’s grace is still in full force; He is still *for* you, even when you don’t feel it. In the absence of confirming circumstances, Job held on to God’s Word. He said, *‘I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.’” (Job 23:12 NIV)*

Possibly the greatest challenge we will face in living a worshipful life to God is when we don't feel His presence. We need to remember that "when we feel abandoned by God yet continue to trust Him in spite of our feelings, we worship Him in the deepest way." (p. 112)

### **Additional scriptures**

1 Samuel 13:14	Acts 13:22	Psalms 10:1
Psalms 22:1	Psalms 43:2	Deuteronomy 31:8
Psalms 37:28	John 14:16-18	Hebrews 13:5
Isaiah 45:15	Job 23:8-10	Psalms 51
Ephesians 4:29-30	1 Thessalonians 5:19	Jeremiah 2:32
1 Corinthians 8:12	James 4:4	Job 1:20-21
Job 7:11	Job 29:4	Psalms 116:10
Job 10:12	Job 42:2	Job 37:5,23
Job 23:10	Job 31:4	Job 34:13
Job 23:14	Job 19:25	Job 23:12
Job 13:15	2 Corinthians 5:21	

### **Conclusion**

In this lesson, we have looked at several human examples of how to live a life of worship that is pleasing to God. The best example of all, however, is Jesus. His life was a living example of loving God with his mind, heart, soul, and strength. During His life, He loved God by using His mind to teach God's will and His heart to show God's love and compassion. He connected with God at the soul level by being obedient to His Father in every way and communicating with Him about everything.

The use of His physical strength was best shown during His last hours when He had been beaten so badly and lost so much blood that He could hardly stand up, yet He never gave up. He carried the cross. When He had been stripped naked and hung upon the cross for the whole world to see and mock, He still loved God

and He still loved us. He wasn't a living sacrifice, He was THE living sacrifice! Because of His love for us and His obedience to His Father, He willingly took upon Himself the sin of all mankind. In so doing, for the first time in eternity, He was separated from God all because of our sin. God could not look at Sin and had to turn His face away. Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus remained faithful even when God was silent. "Jesus could have saved Himself, but then He could not have saved us." (p. 112)

Why did He do this? For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)**

"Jesus gave up everything so we could have everything. He died so we could live – forever. That alone is worthy of our continual thanks and praise. Never again should we wonder what we have to be thankful for." (p. 113)

### **Closing the lesson / class:**

Close the lesson with a **prayer**

Offer the booklet, "**Am I Saved?**" to any who may want a copy.

Offer **correspondence course packets** to those who desire them.

Let inmates know that **if they desire to be baptized**, they should fill out an inmate request form on which they should indicate that they wish to be baptized by someone from Snellville Church of Christ. Invite them if there is time to stay and talk with you about this after the others leave.

If time permits, teach the song. Read the words together first and make sure the meaning is clear. Sing the first verse for them to hear the tune (or play a recording if available – bring a boom box), then sing together.

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#### **References:**

<sup>1</sup>Warren, Rick. ***The Purpose Driven Life***, Purpose #1. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

All scripture references are from <http://www.biblegateway.com/>

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