



Planned for God's Pleasure

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Chapters 10 & 11

Notes: This Bible Study is intended to be a companion to "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren. The Scripture references in this Bible study are taken from the New King James Version.

Chapter 10 – The Heart of Worship

What does Romans 6:13 tell us about worship?

Romans 6:13 - And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Worship is surrendering our whole being to God for His purposes. This is the heart of worship: surrender.

Why does the word surrender have negative connotations?

Surrender implies losing and no one wants to be a loser. It evokes unpleasant images of defeat in battle, forfeiting a game, or yielding to a stronger opponent. Captured criminals surrender to authorities. If winning is everything, surrendering is unthinkable.

Why then do we surrender to God?

Surrendering to God is the natural response to His love and mercy. If we truly understand what He has done for us, we are compelled to express our gratitude toward Him by surrendering to His agenda...

Romans 12:1 - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

What is the problem with a living sacrifice?

I have heard it told that the problem with a living sacrifice is that the one being sacrificed keeps crawling off the altar. This is humorous but it has an important truth: presenting ourselves as a sacrifice is an act of the will. People have a propensity to withhold some of themselves for themselves and not yield everything to the Lord.

What barriers block our total surrender to God?

Fear, pride, and confusion block our total surrender to God. We don't realize how much God loves us, we want to control our own lives, and we misunderstand what it means to surrender.

How does knowing how much God loves you get rid of the fear of surrender to Him?

The better you get to know God, the more you will come to trust Him and have confidence that He will only act in your best interest. If you know God you will realize that He is not a tyrant but a Savior, not a boss but a Brother, not a dictator but a Friend.

I John 4:18 - There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear

How do you know God loves you? What do the following verses have to say about how we know that God loves us?

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

God said that he loves us.

Psalms 139:3 - You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

We are never out of God's sight; if He didn't love us, this would not be the case.

Matt 10:30 - But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

God cares about every detail of our lives.

1 Timothy 6:17 - the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

God gave us the capacity to enjoy all kinds of pleasure.

Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

God has good plans for each of us.

Psalms 86:5 - For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

God is good to us and forgives us.

Psalms 145:8 - The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.

God is patient with us.

Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The greatest expression of God's love for us is the sacrifice of His Son for us.

Why isn't surrendering to God fatalistically accepting the status quo?

Because God may be calling us to change the status quo. We may need to sacrifice our life to change what needs to be changed.

Why isn't surrendering to God repressing your personality?

As C.S. Lewis observed, "The more we let God take us over, the more truly ourselves we become because He made us." When I follow the world, my personality is a blend of common, politically correct characteristics. When I follow Christ, my true unique personality comes out.

How does trust go hand-in-hand with surrendering to God?

As Abraham followed God's without knowing where He would be led, if we are surrendered to Him we will trust that God is leading us to do what is best for us. Often it is a matter of developing our faith in Him. We don't have to know how, or when, or why we should do what God commands.

Why do people who have their hearts surrendered to the Lord help them form closer relationships with others?

Those who have a good vertical relationship will have good horizontal relationships. Those who are surrendered to the Lord don't have to be in charge, they don't react to criticism and rush to defend themselves. They don't edge others out and demand their rights when they surrendered.

How is the view that most people have about retirement in conflict with the surrendered life?

The world's view of retirement is an extended vacation at the end of your life. Having to lay up for yourself enough money to do this competes with God...

Matthew 6:24 - No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

What is the greatest hindrance to God's blessing in our lives?

Our self-will, stubborn pride and personal ambition in the world all hinder God's blessing in our lives. We will always fail when we try to fulfill God's purposes while focusing on our own agenda.

Is surrendering to God a one-time event in our lives?

No, there certainly is a moment of surrender when we initially surrender our life to the Lord but the practice of surrender is a life-long continuous process. As Paul said...

1 Corinthians 15:31 - I die daily.

This is what Jesus was referring to when He said...

Luke 9:23 - If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

It is necessary to die to our own agenda to follow the Lord's agenda.

What area of my life am I holding back from God?

- I need God's help to overcome my desire to be accepted by others which stands in the way of my confronting them with the gospel due to a fear of being rejected.
- My agenda is that I need to end the evening watching TV. This takes time that could be better used such as reading and studying the Bible.
- I need to be better at setting aside my own agenda to take advantage of opportunities to help others.

Chapter 11 – Becoming Best Friends with God

The Bible says that God desires to be many things to His people, which of these is the most awesome: Creator, Lord, Judge, Savior, Redeemer, Friend?

To me, the idea that Almighty God wants to be my personal friend is an awesome thought. Yet we see this in many of the characters in the Bible... Adam and Eve walked in the garden with the Lord; Moses and Abraham were called friends of God; David was a man after God's own heart; Job, Enoch and Noah all had close friendships with God.

How did the New Testament make it even easier to be friends with God?

Jesus demonstrated the lengths God would go to reconcile us to Himself.

What did the veil of the temple being torn in two from top to bottom when Jesus died on the cross represent?

The veil symbolized our separation from God that God opened up making direct access to Him. No longer was it necessary to have priests as intermediaries who took hours of preparation in order to approach God. Now, by going to Jesus, we are able to go directly to God ourselves.

Are we limited to going only to Jesus, what about going to the Father and the Holy Spirit?

Because of the reconciliation that Jesus has done, we can now go directly to the Father and to the Holy Spirit as well.

I John 1:3 - truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 13:14 - The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Jesus revealed His desire to be friends with His disciples. What is the proof that God wants to be friends with us in John 15:15?

John 15:15 - No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Certainly Jesus who is God said He calls His disciples friends. Also, He said that He reveals to His friends what He and the Father is doing. So the revelation we have from God is proof that we are His friends.

What has God revealed to us that He is doing?

In the time Jesus spoke to His disciples on earth, He was preparing to redeem mankind. Today, God is building His church and getting things ready for Jesus to return.

What does Exodus 34:14 reveal about the kind of close friendship God desires to have with us?

Exodus 34:14 - for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Just as God intended one man to be married to one woman, He wants us to have an exclusive relationship with Him. God wants us to know Him intimately, that is why He is jealous concerning our worship.

The Purpose Driven Life describes six ways to be a close friend of God (2 in this chapter and 4 in the next). What is the first way to grow closer to God?

God wants us to be in constant conversation with Him...

1Thessalonians 5:17 - pray without ceasing

How do we pray without ceasing, how is this practical?

This means that God wants to be included in every activity, every conversation, every problem, and every thought we have. God wants us to converse with Him about whatever we are doing or thinking at the moment.

How can you carry on a conversation with God when you are not alone with Him?

Time alone with God is important but this should not be the only times that you are aware of His presence and He is invited to be a part of what you are doing.

Why isn't it necessary to get away from your daily routine to worship God?

God is with you all the time, no place is closer to God than where you are at right now...

Ephesians 4:6 - one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

In order to speak continuously with God, what is the best kind of prayers to use?

In order to speak continuously with God, short prayers are better than long ones. In fact long prayers often become an occasion for wandering.

What are some examples of short prayers that honor God in our thoughts?

"You are with me" "I receive your grace" I'm depending on you" Help me trust you." Or a short passage of Scripture: "for me to live is Christ" You will never leave me" You are my God."

Will these continuous prayers throughout or day give us more of an experience of the presence of God?

Not necessarily, to seek an experience with God is missing the point. We don't praise God to feel good but to do good. Being continuously aware that God is always present and caring about the details of your life is a lifestyle of worship.

Besides praying continuously, what is a second way to establish a friendship with God?

Continual meditation – thinking about God's Word throughout the day. As a cow ruminates its cud, we should ruminate or muse on who God is, what He has done, and what He has said.

Psalms 119:15 - I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.

Why is it so important to spend so much time considering what God has said?

It is impossible to be a friend of God without listening to Him and understanding what He has said is necessary to know Him.

How is the meditation the Bible advocates different from what New Agers and Hindus advocate?

The New Age and Hindu meditation is emptying your mind of all thoughts, the Bible wants us to think about what God has said.

How can meditating help people who worry about things in their life?

Rather than thinking about their circumstance, they can switch their attention to God's Word. The more you think about God's Word, the less you have to worry about.

What is another benefit of meditating on God's Word?

As we grow more intimate with the Lord, we'll learn His secrets...

Psalms 25:14 - The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

What can I do to remind myself to think about God and talk to Him more throughout the day?

- Pick a verse to memorize and meditate on throughout the day.
- Keep a journal on my daily concerns and wisdom the Lord provides me as I consider His Word. If I have it handy, I'll use it.