

MAKE IT YOUR AIM TO BE WELL-PLEASING TO JESUS CHRIST!
2 Corinthians 5:9-10
(Part 1)

www.prshockley.org

This series is part three of a four part series on decision-making and the will of God. This particular sermon, “Make it Your Aim to be Well-Pleasing to Jesus Christ” is broken down into two parts with the latter (Part II) expanding the application of this passage in the direction of raising sons and daughters who will walk with God. The audio messages are available of this four part series are available at www.pinevalleybible.org under audio ministry, “special messages.”

I. INTRODUCTION:

Jorge Rodriquez was meanest most stubborn bandit on the Texas-Mexico border. The guy would often slip across the line, raid the banks of South Texas, and steal 'em blind. Before they could catch him, he would race back into Mexico and hide out. No matter how hard the law tried, they could never catch him.

Finally the Texans got fed up with the nonsense and decided to put the toughest Texas Ranger they had on the case. Sure enough, that got the job done. After only a few days of searching, the Ranger found the bandit in a dingy, dusty saloon south of the border. He bolted into bar, pulled out both guns, and yelled, “Okay, stick 'em up, Jorge; you're under arrest! I know you've got the money.”

Suddenly a little guy over the corner butted in. “Wait, wait...just a minute, senior,” he said. “Jorge does not speak English. He's my amigo, so I'll translate for you.”

The Ranger explained, “Look, we know he's the bandit we've been looking for. We know he's taken thousands and thousands of dollars-about a million bucks actually. We want it back NOW! Either he pays up or I'll fill him full of holes. You tell him that!”

“Okay, okay! I'll tell him... I'll tell him.” So the little fellow turned to Jorge and repeated in Spanish everything the Ranger had said. The Texas Ranger, not knowing a word of the language, waited for the bandit's reply.

Jorge listened, frowned, then responded in Spanish, “Okay, they got me. Tell him to go down to the well just south of town, count four stones down from the top of the well, then pull out the one loose stone. All the money I have stolen I've hidden behind the stone.”

Then the clever little translator turned to the Texas Ranger and translated with a shrug, “Jorge says, ‘Go ahead, you big mouth; go ahead and shoot' cause I'm not telling you where the money is.’”¹

Communication! Communication! Communication!

Consider this statement:

¹ Chuck Swindoll, *The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart*, 100-1.

According to researchers, between 70 to 88 percent of Christian teens are leaving the church by their second year in college. That means modern American Christianity has a failure rate somewhere around 8 (almost nine) out of ten when it comes to raising children who continue in their faith.”² What is that message communicating?

While these numbers are astonishing, they are not surprising. Consider the following: Researcher George Barna states that 85 percent of “born again teens” do not believe in the existence of absolute truth. Over 60 percent agreed that “nothing can be known for sure except the things you experience in your own life. In other words, what counts as true knowledge is experience. While experience is important, it is not the best tool for knowing what is true or false, right or wrong. For example, “I do I really need to commit suicide in order to know that suicide is not a good idea?”

But there is another problem: *Ambiguity of spiritual truth reigns supreme in our homes and churches.*

According to the largest study of teen religion to date, a research team at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill discovered that while U.S. teenagers are very religious, their religion is largely ambiguous. Here is the main reason why:

The ambiguity is due in large part to the lack and attention devoted to spiritual matters compared to other activities (e.g., sports).” They state... “Our research suggests that religious congregations are losing out to school and the media for the time and attention of youth.... Most teens know details about television characters and pop stars, but many are quite vague about Moses and Jesus. Most youth are well versed about the dangers of drunk driving, AIDS, and drugs, but many haven’t a clue about their own tradition’s core ideas. Many parents also clearly prioritize school and sports over church or youth group attendance.”³

Not only do we have horrific statistics facing us today, not only does theological ambiguity reign supreme in many of our homes and churches, another reason why college students are losing their faith is because we have falsely assumed that our children have clearly grasped the truth about the supernatural realities that shape their lives. In fact, Barna Group goes so far as to show that even church leaders have dangerously assumed that their church members have clearly grasped the truth.⁴

Many people, even in the church, don’t understand the very basic structure of the supernatural realm. Barna writes:

God is thought of as a great benevolent force; Jesus is seen as a ticket to heaven; the Holy Spirit has little space in our thoughts, words, or prayers; and Satan is laughed off as a

² Voddie Baucham, *Family Driven Faith* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 10-11.

³ Ibid., 11.

⁴ “A Field Guide to Spiritual Beliefs” By David Kinnaman (November 2007).

medieval fabrication. How can the church be the church when millions of committed Christians don't even take a biblical view seriously? See ignorance is not really bliss.

Not only our sons and daughters leaving the Christian faith by the droves, but when you consider the fact that we have now entered into a post-Christian, sensate, sex-saturated culture, why aren't we making a greater impact upon society...especially when we have the following?

1. The best answers to the deepest problems in life;
2. A worldview that has real explanatory power;
 - a. We are able to account for the physical beginning of the universe;
 - b. empirical design that is evident in biological systems and cosmos;
 - c. Metaphysical non-materialistic realities such as mathematics and laws of logic (e.g., law of non-contradiction);
 - d. Objective moral values, duty, and accountability.
 - e. Objective beauty;
 - f. The existential need for God as evidenced across our globe;
 - g. Miracles;
 - h. The uniqueness of Scripture;
 - I. The historical account of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ;
3. An enduring hope that is rooted in actual history;
4. Union with Jesus Christ by means of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13);
5. A rich heritage of ideal exemplars (ranging from early church fathers who protected and defended the Christian faith to people like St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas; William Tyndale; William Farel; Hudson Taylor; Billy Graham, Francis and Edith Schaeffer, Amy Carmichael; David Livingstone; John Newton; William Wilberforce; Jim and Elizabeth Elliot, D.L. Moody; Corrie Ten Boom; Billy Graham; Ravi Zacharias);
6. An opportunity to witness people exchanging their destinies, discontentment, and despair, for eternal life, contentment, and hope by placing their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.

One way to impact society is to raise children up who will walk with God. Given the fact that it is estimated that as many as 88% of teens who profess Christianity walk away from their faith by the end of their freshman year of college, something has to be done and I believe that in Paul's statement found in 2 Corinthians 5:9 we have a crucial key in raising sons and daughters who will walk with God.

So, this morning I'm going to present my third message in my four message series on moral-decision-making and the will of God.

In my series I've been focusing on the decisions we make, the habits we create, and the consequences we live with.

1. In my first message last Sunday night I gave an account for the justification and models for moral decision-making used by evangelicals. We also examined the ways evangelicals handle moral conflicts.
2. Last Wednesday I gave a presentation on how to discover and do the will of God.
3. In this lesson we are going to examine 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 a central truth by the apostle Paul and apply it to the current crisis among Christian families. Thus, the title of my message is, "Make it your aim to be please Jesus Christ!" (Part 1): Part 2 will be this evening whereby I will list 12 reasons why college students are abandoning the faith and what we can do about it.

II. EXPOSITION OF 2 CORINTHIANS 5:9:

⁹ Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Setting the Context:

A. "Therefore, we make it our aim."

1. The word, "*Therefore*" helps us be sensitive to the context at hand. It points us back at least to verses 5-10. In this passage, Paul presents a contrast between our present and future dwellings.

- a. The question is raised?

What about the believer who dies before he or she has followed God faithfully for very long? Will such a person experience no glory in the future? Paul explained that there are three bases for comfort in such a case. All Christians who die will receive an immortal body (v. 1). This is by itself a substantial gift of glory. Second, all Christians, including those who die soon after becoming believers, presently possess the Holy Spirit who is God's pledge of our future complete glorification (vv. 4-5). Third, death begins a new phase of existence for all believers that will be far superior to what we experience now (vv. 7-8).

- b. Interestingly, verse 8 is one of the passages in Scripture that implies that believers will go immediately after their death; they will be with Jesus in heaven

- c. The conclusion from verses 5-10 is that "We need never despair, therefore, when we walk by faith believing what God has revealed He has in store for us. Nevertheless the fact that we now walk by faith and not by sight reminds us that the fellowship that we enjoy with the Lord now, while genuine, is inferior to what we will experience." Like Warren Wiersbe states, "Heaven was not simply a *destination* for Paul: it was a *motivation*."⁵

⁵Wiersbe, 1:645.

d. Now we come to verses 9-10:

“So then whether we are alive or away, we make it our ambition to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be paid back according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or evil.” ESV Translation:

Let’s look more carefully at verse 9.

2. Concentrating on the phrase, “*We make it our aim*” or “*we also have as our ambition.*”
 - a. “**we make it our aim**” Is a phrase that means that “*we aspire to, to strive earnestly, to make it our aim.*”^{6 7}
 1. Notice here: “*we make it*” assumes personal responsibility.
 2. It is a mindset, it is what drives our planning, our purposes, our goals; it is what generates our behavior, actions, and responses: It is a way of life, the chief mindset being a goal in mind.

My wife went rock climbing last summer. And she said to me that when you are rock climbing you focus on the very place that your fingers you need to grasp. With absolutely nothing else on your mind you will strategically put your feet, knees, and eyes where they need to be in order to get those fingers to the proper crevice. Likewise, when your aim is Christ every aspect of your being earnestly strives to take you further up.

Or think about it this way:

A person I know once said that his goal in life was to make money. From the moment he woke up and went to bed, everything he did was bent towards accomplishing that goal. He said he would think about first thing in the morning and last thing when he went to bed. He is a very successful business man.

Well, as good as that goal of making money is, it is not to be the overall goal of the Christian life. The overall goal of the Christian life is to be pleasing to Him. If money comes, praise God. If not, praise God. See, if he could have translated that ambition whereby he was bent to pleasing God, what a dynamic person he would be as a believer. His distinctiveness as a believer in Christ would be clearly evident to all who know him.

⁶ φιλοτιμέομαι [*philotimeomai* /fil-ot-im-eh-om-ah-ee/] v. Middle voice from a compound of 5384 and 5092; GK 5818; Three occurrences; AV translates as “strive” once, “labour” once, and “study” once. **1** to be fond of honour. **1A** to be actuated by love of honour. **1B** from a love of honour to strive to bring something to pass. **2** to be ambitious. **2A** to strive earnestly, make it one’s aim.

⁷James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996), G5389.

Returning to the text:

3. The “we” includes more than the apostle Paul. The “we” refers to believers, and in particular, the one and only Corinthian church.
3. This mindset, this way of living is further emphasized in what comes next in the text: “*whether present or absent*” or it might read in your Bible, “*whether we are alive or away.*”
 - a. This phrase is what is called a merism. A merism is figure of speech for “*always.*” It is two parts that represent a whole.

So, let me re-translate this passage so far with the context of vv. 5-10 in mind: Because the fellowship that we enjoy with the Lord now, while genuine, is inferior to what we will experience in the future, our ambition, our inner drive, must be to please God always.

- a. Now we come to the word, “*please.*” “**We make it our aim, whether present or alive, to please Him.**”
 - b. In the N.T. this word “*please*” is used only once of acceptance of man. This is found in Titus 2:9. In this passage, Paul exhorts Titus to “*Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative.*”
 - c. Other than this one passage, the word “*please*” is always used of God’s attitude towards human conduct.
 - d. The word “*please Him*” is not to be thought of in a casual sense.
 - e. Rather, this word refers to “**God’s attitude towards human conduct.**” Let me say it again. The word “*please*” refers to God’s attitude towards human conduct. Thus, what pleases God should be both the goal and motive of the Christian life.
 - f. This word doesn’t only merely that we seek to please Him, but that we are to seek to live in such a way that is well-pleasing to Him.
4. While this word occurs 10 times, it is used at least 5 different ways.⁸ Pleasing God is associated with consecrating oneself as a living sacrifice before God, meet practical needs, walking as children of light in world of deceivers, children being

⁸ In the NT it is used only once of acceptance by men, i.e., at Tt. 2:9: δούλους ἰδίοις δεσπόταις ... εὐαρέστους εἶναι. Otherwise it is always used of God’s attitude towards human conduct. It is characteristic of the NT, however, that only once is the judgment εὐάρεστος used retrospectively, i.e., at Phil. 4:18: δεξάμενος ... θυσίαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ. For Paul εὐάρεστος τῷ θεῷ (ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ [Hb.], ἐν κυρίῳ) is a goal of the Christian walk, as in R. 12:1 f.: παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ... τῷ θεῷ εὐάρεστον; R. 14:18: ὁ ... ἐν τούτῳ δουλεύων τῷ Χριστῷ εὐάρεστος τῷ θεῷ; Col. 3:20: ὑπακούετε τοῖς γονεῦσιν ... τοῦτο γὰρ εὐάρεστόν ἐστιν ἐν κυρίῳ; cf. Hb. 13:21: ποιῶν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ εὐάρεστον ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ. What is well-pleasing is affirmed in no casuistical sense to be what is ἄξιον τοῦ κυρίου. In both expressions Paul comprises both the goal and the motive of the Christian life, and he admonishes us in vital and continually new seeking to “test” what is εὐάρεστον, Eph. 5:10: ὡς τέκνα φωτὸς περιπατεῖτε ... δοκιμάζοντες τί ἐστιν εὐάρεστον τῷ κυρίῳ, cf. 2 C. 5:9: φιλοτιμούμεθα ... εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι; cf. also Hb. 12:28. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vols. 5-9 Edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 Compiled by Ronald Pitkin., ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976), 1:457.

obedient to parents, and as one is being equipped to do the will of God, God is working in the believer that which is pleasing to Him through Jesus Christ.⁹

g. So, once again, this word doesn't merely say that we seek to please Him, but that we are to seek to live in such a way that is well-pleasing to Him.

B. We must also bear in mind that one of Paul's reasons for be well-pleasing to Christ is one that is applicable to each of us. One day in the future we will have to account for our deeds. This is a fact; it is going to happen; and there is no excuse, exemption, or exception that will get you around from this future event. Listen to verse 10 as I read the words.

a. **It is used in Paul's discussion of the consecration of the believer's life to the will of God in Romans 12:1**

1. In his discussion of the consecration of the believer's life it is used Romans 12:1 & 2 it is used twice: "Therefore, I exhort you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice-alive, holy, and pleasing to God-which is your reasonable service. 2 Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God-what is Good and well-pleasing to Him.

b. **It is also used to describe the Philippian church's gift to the apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul's needs were met in the church's gift to Him. Philippians 4:18:**

1. Paul writes, "For I have received everything, and I have plenty. I have all I need because I received from Epaphroditus what you sent-a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, very pleasing to God. Unpack this.

c. **It is also used in Paul's letter to the church Ephesus chapter 5:8-10. In his exhortation to live in the light, allowing no one deceive you with empty words, and become participants with them, he commands them to walk as children of the light. He says in verses 8-10:**

1. (vs. 8) For you were at one time darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light- (vs.9) for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth-(vs. 10)-trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

2. Therefore, there is a dynamic relationship between that which is comprises or consists of the fruit of the light: goodness, righteousness, and truth and learning what is pleasing to the Lord.

d. **We also see the word "pleasing" used in Paul's commandment to children in Colossians 3:20: "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing in the Lord."**

e. **In the benediction and conclusion in the Book of Hebrews, the author states the following:**

Hebrews 13:20-21: *"Now may the God of peace who by the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ (vs. 21) equip you with every good thing to do his will, working in us what is pleasing before him through Jesus Christ."*

1. Here God affects His will in and through the believer what is pleasing before Him through Jesus Christ.

2. "Equip" means to prepare for use (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17). The same Greek word, *katartidzo*, describes elsewhere a doctor setting a broken bone, a general preparing his army for battle, and a fisherman mending his net (cf. Matt. 4:21).

3. Here there is also a dynamic association between equipping you with every good thing to do his will, working in us what is pleasing before Him.

1. At the Judgment Seat of Christ (also called the Bema) which follows the Rapture of the Church, Jesus will reward His children on the basis of their deeds. This is not a judgment to determine whether we will enter heaven but one to determine to what extent He will reward us who enter heaven.¹⁰ (Luke 19:17) In his previous letter to the Corinthian church he had mentioned this judgment (1 Cor. 3:12-15) with particular reference to Christian teachers (1 Cor. 4:1-5). Now he affirmed that **all** Christians will be evaluated at **the judgment seat of Christ** (cf. Rom. 14:12),
2. Every Believer in Christ will be recompensed **for the things** they have **done** in their earthly lives (**while in the body**). Their **good** deeds will evoke one response (cf. 1 Cor. 4:5; Eph. 6:8) and the **bad** (*phaulon*, “worthless”) will evoke another (1 Cor. 3:15; Col. 3:25).
3. Salvation is not the issue here. One’s eternal destiny will not be determined at the judgment seat of Christ; that was judged at the cross and bestowed upon the believer the moment he or she believed. Salvation is by faith (Eph. 2:8-9), but deeds issuing from that faith (1 Thes. 1:3) will be evaluated.

So, let me re-translate this passage again with the context of vv. 5-10 in mind: Because the fellowship that we enjoy with the Lord now, while genuine, is inferior to what we will experience--our ambition, our inner drive, must be to please God always--For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- C. ⁹ **Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.** ¹⁰ **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

Therefore, in summary:

- a. Motivating Paul in this perseverance was his **goal to please** his Lord. Why, because of the anticipation to be in fellowship with the Lord not only now, but in the future.
 - b. Contributing to this goal was Paul’s knowledge that he would one day be evaluated by his Master. He wanted to please Him and to hear from Him, “Well done, My good servant!”¹¹
- D. How do you make it your aim to please the Lord? The answer to that question I believe is powerfully stated in Romans 12:1-2:

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. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

¹⁰Cf. Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 4:5; 9:24-27. See Zane C. Hodges, *Grace in Eclipse*; Arlen L. Chitwood, *Judgment Seat of Christ*, pp. 25-34.

¹¹John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:566.

1. Let me summarize Romans 12:1-2 in one statement.

Not merely a decision, but a life of consecration. Not merely consecration, but separation. Not merely separation but transformation.

a. It is not merely a decision to live for him but a life of consecration.

1. You are setting yourself apart unto a lifestyle of being a living sacrifice. In other words, you come to the point whereby you recognize that in dying you truly live- in surrendering you win.
2. It is a decisive way of life rather than a hasty or flippant decision (e.g., eating right). The emphasis on the word “present” is not making this once-for all decision. Rather the emphasis is a kind of qualitative summary of your life. Sure, it requires the decision, but the emphasis is on the qualitative nature of your life.

b. It is not merely consecration, but separation from the world.

1. It is refusing, moment-by moment (present tense), to not allow the world to form or mold you.
2. We have to remember that character is the sum-total of one’s habits. And a habit is a disposition to think, feel, desire, and act in a certain way without even having a tendency to will consciously to do so.
3. Therefore, we have to examine our habits and see whether they are distinctly Christian or rather worldly. This will include separating ourselves from the ideas, attitudes, intentions, desires, and actions of the world.

c. It is not merely separation, but transformation by the renewing of the mind.

1. It is allowing God to transform your mind and heart. The best way to aim at pleasing God is to both rightly know and appropriate God’s truth in our lives, dependent upon the Holy Spirit. A mind dedicated to God’s truth will produce godly thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions. As you live out your life dedicated to being a living sacrifice, you will gradually notice that your thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions aim Godwardly. What is mandated is intimate fellowship with the Lord.
2. To be sure, you will still need to mortify the flesh for your sinful appetites and tendencies will always be lurking; we are frail creatures, never immune to sin.
3. Nevertheless, seriously taking ownership of God’s truth you will foster habits of excellence and possess a skilled disposition that

will enable you to realize the crucial possibilities that constitute godliness.

Not merely a choice, but a life of consecration. Not merely consecration, but separation. Not merely separation, but transformation. I use another phrase to try to capture the essence of seeking to be well-pleasing to God. I call it the “doing and undergoing.”

How do we know if we are making it our aim to please Jesus Christ. Well I've put together 55 indicators that may assist us in critically pondering whether we really are earnestly aiming our lives toward God, seeking to be well-pleasing to Him. You can read all fifty-five indicators on my website: www.prshockley.org under the tab “Spiritual Life.” To be sure, these indicators should be viewed as “*road signs*.” Some of these “*road signs*” are related and some are more important than others. Nevertheless, these indicators are designed to provoke critical self-evaluation which may motivate us with resolved and determination, by His enablement and our yieldedness to Him, to be sacrifices that are living, holy, and pleasing to God. Therefore, what indicators are there that we are being well-pleasing to God? Consider the following (they are in alphabetical order):

1. Attachment to the world decreased; desire to be in God's heavenly presence increased.
2. Attraction to sin decreased; Love for God increased.
3. Burden for the salvation of others increased; sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ present.
4. Chastisement is absent; God's ministry through your life is present.
5. Confession of sin is sincere; submission to God is clear.
6. Desiring the best for others imparted, jealousy subsided.
7. Double-mindedness is absent; harmony with the brethren is present.
8. Encouraging others is your practice; inspiring others by your actions is contagious.
9. Faithfulness is present; good deeds are evident.
10. Friends you hold dear; strangers will be few.
11. Impurity has decreased, holy living will be present.
12. Independence from God decreased; dependency upon God developed.
13. Innocence protected, purity preserved.
14. Insensitivity to the Holy Spirit decreased; Tenderness to Him increased.
15. Integrity is clear; your intentions are honorable.
16. Jesus is magnified; the testimony of Christ is witnessed.
17. Habits scrutinized, desires analyzed.

18. Your home is a haven to your family; a spiritual retreat to many.
19. Hypocrisy is minimal; disciple-making multiple.
20. Investment in self decreased; investment in the lives of others increased.
21. Joy of living life well is present; bitterness is absent.
22. Joy is experienced in the midst of trials; perseverance is present in tribulation.
23. Legalism rejected, God's liberating grace accepted.
24. Liberty in Christ exercised; causing others Christians to stumble will be restrained.
25. Liberation from sin is evident; freedom from guilt is present.
26. Living for the lust of the flesh decreased; living by means of the Spirit is more consistent.
27. Living *for* the will of God increased; yielding to temptation decreased.
28. Living out your theology is present; Christ's ministry in and through your life will be evident.
28. Mercy to the guilty is offered; compassion is presented.
29. Peace of God present; strife with others absent.
30. Personal ambitions released; God's purposes realized.
31. Pettiness decreased; desire for the well-being of others increased.
32. Personal rights relinquished; edification of others promoted.
33. Practicing holiness present; grieving the Holy Spirit absent.
34. Pursuit of sin decreased; pursuit of God increased.
35. Pride decreased; humility increased.
36. Promises kept; trusting in God's timing promoted.
37. Rather than being self-centered; your affections are God-centered.
38. Resentment rejected; grudges gone.
39. Retaliation for wrongs suffered decreased; forgiveness of others increased.
40. Selfishness decreased; servant-hood increased.
41. Self-sufficiency demoted; self-surrender promoted.

42. Sober thinking present; being watchful clear.
43. Stewardship of God's resources preserved; benevolence bountiful.
44. Testing God's patience diminished; redeeming your time practiced.
45. Timidity towards peer-pressure is absent; resistance toward the devil firm.
46. Toleration of immorality decreased; faithfulness to God increased.
47. Understanding of the frailty of life increased; neglect of the spiritual disciplines decreased.
48. Unity promoted; disunity dissuaded.
49. Vain pursuits of pleasure becoming infrequent; meeting the practical needs of others common.
50. Wisdom is present; Scripture is seriously studied.
51. Wise living is your pattern; fearing God is your practice.
52. Words are few; numerous are your noble actions.
53. Words are carefully spoken, the tongue is controlled.
54. Your love for the unlovely is clear; your affection for the hurting is plain.
55. Your ministry is effective; souls are being changed for the better by knowing you.

What does it look like to behave distinctly Christian? Listen to the words of A.W. Tozer.

“A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One whom he has never seen, talks familiarly every day to Someone he cannot see; expected to go to heaven on the virtue of Another; empties himself in order to be full; admits he is wrong so he can be declared right, goes down in order to get up, is strongest when he is weakest, richest when he is poorest, and happiest when he feels worst. He dies so he can live, forsakes in order to have, gives away so he can keep, sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, and knows that which passeth knowledge.” ~ **A. W. Tozer, *The Root of Righteousness*.**

III. HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?

- A. I suggest that if we desire to raise sons and daughters who walk with God, we need to make it our aim to be pleasing to God. And that begins in our souls and naturally permeates in our homes.
- B. While tonight I will be presenting part-two of this message whereby I will offer 12 ways on how we may raise sons and daughters to walk with God, **this morning I want to juxtapose two different ways of communicating God to our children: First**

approach is “*I want my children to make up their own minds about religious instruction.*” When parents decide not to teach religious instruction to their children, they are in fact, teaching them a powerful set of beliefs with terrible consequences:

THE DECALOGUE OF A SENSATE CULTURE:

Why is Morality in Decline in Western Culture?

~ adapted from *What We Can't Not Know* by J. Budziszewski (Dallas: Spence, 2003), 162-3.

“*I want my children to make up their own minds about religious instruction.*”

When parents decide not to teach religious instruction to their children, they are in fact, teaching them a powerful set of beliefs with terrible consequences:

1	It is not important for children to know anything about God	What adults think about Him makes no difference.	6
2	The questions which children naturally ask about Him requires no answers.	By implication, God does not make any difference either; God is not treated as God.	7
3	Parents know nothing about God that is worth passing on.	If anything is to be treated as God, it will have to be something other than Him.	8
4	To think about Him adequately, no preparation is needed.	*There is no important connection between one's spiritual life and behavior (e.g, the adolescent years).	9
5	*The physical body is more valuable than the immaterial soul.	This is the true creed, and all other creeds are false.	10

* By Paul R. Shockley; Professor J. Budziszewski offers eight articles of belief in the “traditionless in religion.”

www.prshockley.org

Second approach to communicating God to our children is as follows: Make it your family's maxim to be well-pleasing to Him; a maxim is a rule of conduct. But I even want to go beyond a maxim: make it your master-value. What I mean by that is that all other things in life are to be valuable to the extent that they can contribute to be well-pleasing to Jesus Christ. How?

C. Refuse the unspiritual. Don't merely refuse the unspiritual, cultivate a Christ-like character. Don't merely cultivate a Christ-like character, delight in God as a way of life.

1. Refuse the unspiritual:

a. Refuse to allow the unspiritual to have a growing fascination in your life and in your home. So many times our lack of focus on God is not outright rebellion but preoccupation with other things.

2. Cultivate a Christ-like character.

a. Don't merely aim for obedience of Scripture. Rather, seek to build a virtuous character that desires, wishes for, and pursues to be well-

pleasing to Christ. These virtues of intellectual and moral excellence are derived from those biblical commands or principles. For example, the virtue truthfulness is derived from telling the truth. The virtue benevolence is derived from command to meet the practical needs of others. But there is a larger aim here. We practice them not only for obedience, but for the building of character. Moreover, these are characteristics that are desired just as having a good job is desired when one leaves home. How is this possible? It not only begins by practice and consistent effort at character building, but must be desired, wished for, and pursued. How can be it desired, wished for, and pursued?

3. Delight in God as a family...as a way of life. Don't merely see the God of the Bible and the commandments of God as merely an obligation. Delight in Him. By word and example, your children need to see you praying. Your children need to see you in His Word. Your children need to have you teach them. They need to see you delighting in Him just as you delight in your hobbies.

**Not merely a refusal of the unspiritual, but pro-actively cultivating a Christ-like character.
Not merely character-formation, but delighting in God as a way of life.**

III. IN CONCLUSION:

In his May 30th devotional of *My Utmost For His Highest*, Oswald Chambers states:

Suppose God tells you to do something that is an enormous test of your common sense, totally going against it. What will you do? Will you hold back? If you get into the habit of doing something physically, you will do it every time you are tested until you break the habit through sheer determination. And the same is true spiritually. Again and again you will come right up to what Jesus wants, but every time you will turn back at the true point of testing, until you are determined to abandon yourself to God in total surrender. Yet we tend to say, "Yes, but suppose I do obey God in this matter, what about...." Or we say, "Yes, I will obey God if what He asks of me doesn't go against my common sense, but don't ask me to take a step in the dark."

Jesus Christ demands the same unrestrained, adventurous spirit in those who have placed their trust in Him that the natural man exhibits. If a person is ever going to do anything worthwhile, there will be times when he must risk everything by his leap in the dark. In the spiritual realm, Jesus Christ demands that you risk everything you hold on to or believe through common sense, and leap by faith into what He says. Once you obey, you will immediately find that He what He says is as solidly consistent as common sense.

.... Trust completely in God, and when He brings you to a new opportunity of adventure, offering it to you, see that you take it. We act like pagans in a crisis-only one out of an entire crowd is daring enough to invest his faith in the character of God."

Will you be that daring?