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ministries®

SEPTEMBER 2, 2024

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to CapMin*

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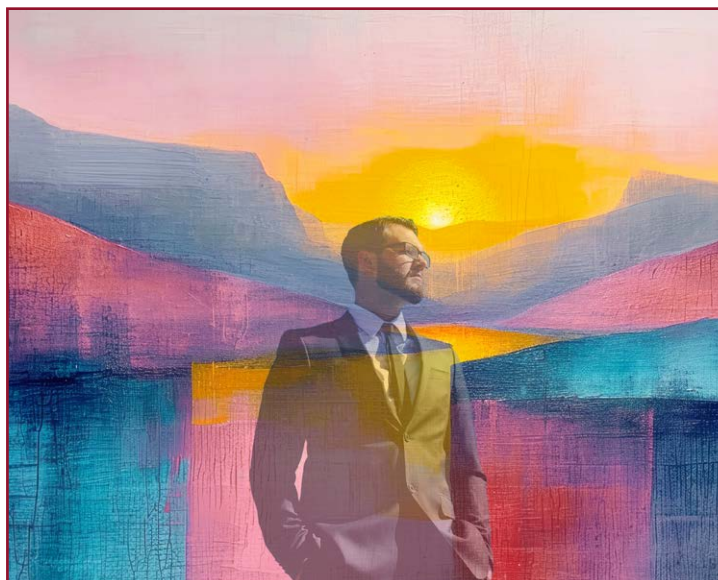


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FOCUSED ON THE WORD

Four Ways to Delight God as a Public Servant



Have you ever wondered what pleases God? Have you thought about what He finds charming, or captivating, or appealing about us clay-pot inhabitants of the earth that He created? Just what is it *exactly* that delights God? Through King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, God tells us precisely what He finds delightful. Isn't it marvelous to have this awareness? Shouldn't we be eager to behave in ways that bring Him delight?

Of all the books of the Bible, Proverbs is, in its tightest context, written to a future public servant, and so the applications in those verses are pertinent and worth heeding for you today. This study examines at least four actions and deeds that public servants need to do to delight God.

Read on, my friend.

Ralph Drollinger

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- Governors:** Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom
- Former Cabinet Members / White House Senior Staff:** Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom
- Senate Members:** Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served
- House Members:** Thursdays 8am, AG Hearing Rm., Longworth 1302, hot breakfast served

The views expressed in each Bible Study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study sponsor.



MINISTRY UPDATE

Pastor Robert Hayden

*Assistant ministry leader
Missouri Legislature*



Pastor Robert Hayden has been named Missouri assistant ministry leader and in that role, will lead Bible studies in the state Capitol when ministry leader Pastor Matt Goodsell is away on his other CapMin job, expanding the ministry in North America. Pastor Goodsell has led weekly Bible studies to legislators, legislative aides, and Capitol staff since 2019. New responsibilities were added in 2023 when he was named CapMin North America global director and charged with growing CapMin throughout the U.S. and Canada. As the new position requires a great deal of travel, he invited his long-time friend, Pastor Hayden to lead in his absence the five weekly Bible studies he

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I. INTRODUCTION

As you may know, I have spent considerable time organizing the Book of Proverbs into various subjects and then expounding on each. After completing this process, I created an exhaustive topical/theological index of the book. This week I would like to probe one of those subjects: all that Solomon said to his son Rehoboam regarding what a public servant can do that specifically delights God. Keep in mind that as Solomon pens this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this advice is in the context of preparing his son to lead the nation.

Delighting God is a very basic concept to Christianity—to know what it is that delights Him is vital to the quality of our relationship with Him! How is it that we, the created, can please our Creator? Of course in answer to that you might think to yourself, “I go to church to worship God, and we know that He finds pleasure in that.” Certainly, showing that devotion is worthy and expected of Christians. Another essential action is making peace with God through His Son Jesus Christ. But outside of those fundamental and essential deeds, what are day-to-day attitudes and actions that the Scriptures specifically say please Him? And specifically relevant to your life, what behaviors and attitudes can you exhibit as a public servant that delight Him? What should you be prioritizing in your life on a daily basis that will best prepare you for what the Bible refers to as the Bema Seat Judgment¹, when, we, as believers stand before our Maker and give an account of our lives. Let us come to the Book of Proverbs with that question in mind.

II. WHAT DOES NOT DELIGHT GOD

To begin this inquiry, we must quickly observe that despite what many people

think, God is not delighted by our attempts to save ourselves. Those who know little of the Bible are surprised to hear that, believing God must be pleased or delighted by all their efforts to be a good person and consequently earn their way into heaven. But consider this: if such were the economy of salvation, then God sent His Son needlessly to die an agonizing substitutionary death to atone for our sins; there was no reason for Him to do that if a sinner could earn his own way to heaven!

Why would God send His Son on such a mission if you could save yourself?

This is the very point the Apostle Paul makes in the New Testament book of Galatians (2:21) when He states to the wayward church in terms of its understanding of the biblical doctrine of salvation:

“I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”

The *law* that Paul is speaking about is the Old Testament *law*, and it was never intended by God to save anyone. Rather, God’s intended purpose of the *law* was for it to act like a tutor to show us our need for Christ (cf. Galatians 3:24) since we all should realize we cannot keep the OT *law* perfectly. Earlier in the epistle (2:16), Paul states in regard to this:

“A man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.”



Importantly then, what delights God in relation to our salvation is not our self-righteous efforts to save ourselves. The Old Testament states that man's economy of salvation via self-righteousness and meritorious self-effort are in God's eyes the equivalent of *filthy rags* (cf. Isaiah 64:6, NKJV). Man's thoughts regarding how he gets to heaven are usually quite different from what the Bible reveals; such human thinking is far from pleasing to God. To the contrary, God finds it abhorrent! This distinction must be made at the outset of any study that attempts to explore the ways to delight God.

In summary of this first point, whereas our efforts to save ourselves are displeasing to God, trusting by faith in Christ for your salvation is extremely pleasing to God! Subsequent to receiving that free gift, what practices of public servants delight Him the most? Here's what Solomon says—I think you'll find this intriguing!

III. GOD DELIGHTS IN YOUR JUSTICE

One observation that the astute student of Scripture will notice in studying what delights God is that the answer is often in contrast to actions and deeds that God finds abominable. What God calls abominable and delightful are often found in polarizing contrast throughout Proverbs (these are known as contrasting Proverbs) as you will see here.

A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight (11:1).

The undergirding attitude and characteristic of someone who seeks *justice* is equivalent to equal concern for the wel-

fare of another person in all our personal dealings. This underlying perspective on life is essential to any quest or concern for *justice*.

Personal disregard for another is the seedbed of injustice.

Further, reverence for the fact that every human being has been made in the image of God is the only presuppositional basis for equivalent concern for others: regardless of status, race, appearance, or accomplishment.

Something to Think About

Underlying respect and concern for the welfare of others is not the product of evolutionary theory; it is instead the product of believing all of mankind is created in His image. Equivalent concern and respect can only stem from such a belief in origins. Without creational underpinnings, equal justice for other fellow human beings is in no way achievable because in essence, deep down, an evolutionist believes that only the "fittest" survive.

Additionally, the pursuit of justice is dependent on and proportional to the existence of a "Philippians 2 attitude": *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus* (vv. 3–5). It is utterly impossible to think

VERSE OF THE WEEK



Proverbs 11:20

The perverse in heart are an abomination to the Lord, but the blameless in their walk are His delight.



When you display skill at living life for His glory, God is greatly *delighted!*





Continued from page 2

established in the Capitol. At the required CapMin training, Pastor Hayden said he learned about the biblical priority for ministering to political leaders. “My eyes have been opened to the importance of the Christian responsibility to teach God’s Word to public servants and stand up for the Gospel message,” Pastor Hayden said. “Everyone needs to be given the opportunity to accept Christ.”

of others as *more important than yourself* if you think you are most important!

The reason God *delights* in the *just weights* of public servants is because *just weights* are essential to a nation’s sustainability in a corrupt and fallen world. Solomon’s use of *just weights* contrasts the *false balances* merchants would employ in trade during his time. The concept expanded and applied today includes the public servant’s management of the various affairs of the state: policies, laws, and actions are necessary for civil government to maintain a level playing field for all. Rules of fair trade, proprietary protection of intellectual property such as trademarks, patents and copyright laws, employment laws, punishment of criminals, proportional penalties for tort violations, equal treatment of all under the law, etc.—all of these facets are essential to the integrity of culture and the progression of commerce. Without *just weights* so to speak, the advancement of a society and its economy will be continually thwarted and crippled by evildoers. It follows, and is developed more fully in the New Testament, that

**Civil government is
God’s primary means of
manifesting His restraint
in a fallen world.**

Public servants must realize that in addition to being a *just* person, upholding *justice* in office is a role that has been given to the institution of civil government (cf. Romans 13:1–8; 1 Peter 2:13–14). Therefore, in order to be found *delightful* on the day of judgment, be *just* today! This is one of the main reasons He has appointed you to serve in government! Uninhibited personal graft and corruption, *unjust weights*, stall the benefits God otherwise intends for a nation, its com-

merce, and its people. The violation of fairness is illustrated in various developing countries wherein the prosperity of the whole is inhibited by *false balances*: all in the nation suffer as a result. Charles Bridges, one of my favorite commentators on Proverbs, states the following regarding our passage under study, Proverbs 11:1:

How valuable is the Book of God in its minute detail of principles for every day’s conduct! Commerce is a providential appointment for our social intercourse and mutual helpfulness. It is grounded with men upon human faith, and with God upon Divine faith. Balances, weights, money, are its necessary materials.

Given America’s strong Judeo-Christian heritage and underpinnings, historically speaking, when people cheat they are prosecuted and punished. We are blessed in America in that we have an acculturated sense of just commerce. But our blessing decreases as we slip from our moorings into an acculturated woke secularism. We have lived in a society where *unjust weights* are tolerated more and more; the examples of this are both recent and blatant.

The trend toward *unjust weights* can only be reversed via the ideological convictions of the state’s leaders. Not only does the enforcement of *justice* prosper a nation, but, in specific Scripture says *justice delights God!*

Here is an additional, parallel, and expansive Proverb related to your quest for personal and corporate *justice* as a *delight* to God (12:22):

Lying lips are an abomination to the



LORD, but those who deal faithfully are His delight.

Those who deal in unjust balances will soon find themselves possessing *lying lips*. *Unjust balances* and *lying lips* are synonyms in terms of a person's identifiable character. Both actions are displeasing to the Lord. When we cheat at trade or politics, we end up misleading others and hurting not only ourselves, but the overall progress of the nation. *His delight* is in those who are not *unjust* and don't *lie*, who *deal faithfully* with all others.

IV. GOD DELIGHTS IN YOUR BLAMELESSNESS

The perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, but the blameless in their walk are His delight (Proverbs 11:20).

In providing this insight to Rehoboam (and by extension other civil leaders) regarding how to *delight* God, Solomon employs a Hebrew tense by and in the word "*their*" to connote the application of the principle to many. He is not using a singular pronoun. At the risk of seeming to make a jump-switch in the flow of thought, notice 1 Samuel 14:6. It serves to illustrate and amplify the plurality (versus the singularity) of the application:

Then Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "Come and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; perhaps the LORD will work for us, for the LORD is not restrained to save by many or by few."

Without going into greater contextual detail, what is being said here in relation to this point in our outline is this: when God lifts His arm in vengeance against those whom He finds abominable, it mat-

ters not to Him to use one man or a group of men. The fate of the Genesis flood, the Egyptian army in pursuit of Moses, and the chastening of Israel in the wilderness serve to illustrate this idea of an efficacious plurality. God in His absolute righteousness judges those who are perverse in heart, who stand in contrast to His precepts *be they one or many*.

Conversely, God *delights* in the *blamelessness* of one or many. Further to our contextual understanding of the passage, those who are *blameless* are not those who may think they have made themselves *blameless*, but rather those in a fallen world whom He has made *blameless*, or upright by His imputation of grace. In a NT sense, the *blameless* are those who are *His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works* (Ephesians 2:10). Those who have come to faith in Christ, who are *His workmanship*, will possess an internal, continual desire to please Jesus Christ with their life. They will possess an innate compunction to live *blamelessly* in their walk.²

First Timothy 3:2 provides a keen insight to aid in defining what it means to attempt to live a *blameless* lifestyle; the parallel NT Greek word for the OT Hebrew word *blameless* is often translated *above reproach*. What does *above reproach* mean? No one can legitimately pin wrongdoing on you. It is the Greek word *anepileptos* which means "not able to be held" in the sense of a criminal whose charges had to be dropped due to a lack of evidence which proved his innocence. Paul is using a word that was commonly known in the culture of his time that would have communicated more specifically the intended idea than perhaps *above reproach* does today in English. But his use of the word is not meant to connote sinlessness (cf. Romans 3:23;

George Washington



"I now make it my earnest prayer that God would ... most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of the mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion."

— George Washington, first president of the United States, commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, member of the Continental Congress, president of the Constitutional Convention, "Father of His Country," judge.

George Washington, *The Last Official Address of His Excellency George Washington to the Legislature of the United States* (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1783), p. 12; see also *The New Annual Register or General Repository of History, Politics, and Literature, for the Year 1783* (London: G. Robinson, 1784), 150.



Noah Webster



“All the ... evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible.”

— Noah Webster, American Revolutionary War soldier, judge, legislator, educator, “Schoolmaster to America.”

Noah Webster, *History of the United States* (New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1832), 39, “Advice to the Young,” 53.



Ecclesiastes 7:20). Rather, it is the idea that there are no glaring sins at present that bring into question one’s suitability to lead morally.³

But in reality (and as a public servant you especially get this), even though you may conscientiously attempt with all your heart, soul and might to live *above reproach*, aka *blamelessly*, there will be those who despise and falsely accuse you regardless! To illustrate this from Scripture notice the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1–9. Verses 10–11 follow the virtuous verses of 1–9!

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness. ... Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”

Even though in your heart you attempt to live *blamelessly*, you will be *falsely* blamed for many things. It follows that God knows your inner desires, and if you aspire to live *blamelessly*, you find *delight* with Him! *“Blessed are the pure in heart”* states Jesus in Matthew 5:8.

V. GOD DELIGHTS IN YOUR PRAYERS

To be *delightful* to God, we have seen that the follower of Christ must live *justly* and *blamelessly* with and before others. Thirdly, we must live *prayerfully*. States Proverbs 15:8:

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.

False religious leaders and false religious systems often try to deceive others with ascetic, sacrificial rituals that give an outward aura of righteousness. God is not

fooled by outward ritualistic forms of false pretense that are unrelated to the heart, and we should not be fooled either. Scripture is clear that only the prayers of the repentant and regenerate are *His delight* (cf. Isaiah 1:15). Herein the repentant and regenerate are termed *the upright*. Romans 1 reveals that every man knows of the defilement of his or her heart (but this knowledge is often suppressed); and only when we cry out for God’s mercy in repentant prayer does God hear us. James 4:6 further informs this respective principle when it states, *God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble*; only contrite prayers are *His delight*. This is an essential prerequisite to anything that can be said further about *prayer* from a biblical perspective—especially in an increasingly secular, syncretistic America where it is falsely believed that “being a person of faith” is all that is required to be heaven bound and an effective praying person.

With the aforementioned in view, notice what specific *prayers delight God*. In 1 Timothy 2:1–4 the Apostle Paul lists four kinds of *prayers* that every follower of Christ Public Servant should *pray* to garner God’s *delight*:

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The specific meaning of each of the four descriptors of prayer: *entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgiving* follows. Keep in mind that they describe varying aspects of *effective* evangelistic



praying (this evangelistic inclusion is informed by verse 4) to *be made on behalf of... kings and all who are in authority*. In their tightest context, each of these four aspects of *prayer* is intended to motivate the believer to seek to bring the lost to Christ (cf. v. 3). They are

A. ENTREATIES

The Greek root word for *entreaties* is *deesis*. It literally means “to lack, to be deprived; to be without something.” Its use in the context of *prayer* both here and elsewhere throughout Scripture carries the idea of one’s realization of the needs of the lost. The believer is motivated to *pray* by this sobering theological reality: that God might supply each sinner the remedy for sin via the Cross of Christ (cf. Ephesians 2:1–3). The enormity of the sinner’s needs, that each one is lacking and lost apart from the work of Christ should impel us to *pray* that God would touch them with His grace and forgiveness and lead them to salvation. Such *praying delights God*.

B. PRAYERS

This is the only use of this Greek word in Scripture, *proseuche*. It is simply translated here as *prayers*. The word connotes exclusively *prayers* of worship and reverence. The contextual idea is that evangelistic *prayers*, i.e. when the sinner is converted by the work of the Holy Spirit bringing one to trust in Christ, brings great glory to God! Hence we are motivated to *pray* evangelistic *prayers* because God is worshipped, revered and glorified when He miraculously reaches down into the impenetrable, hardened soul of a sinner and bestows the wonderful gift of new life in Christ. Such *praying delights God*.

C. PETITIONS

This Greek word for *petitions* is *enteuxis*. It appears only here and in 1 Timothy 4:5 in all of the New Testament. It means, “to fall in with someone.” The idea here is that one gets involved with the sinner with a deep sense of understanding their plight. One does not *pray* for the lost with a cold, detached, mechanical attitude, but with love and concern regarding their eternal future and destiny in hell. Not always, but typically it is only when we are willing to befriend and work with unbelievers over a long period of time that we see them come to Christ. We need to *fall in with people* who are not of our stripe to win them to Jesus! Such *praying* and actions *delight God*.

Greek Word Insights Revealing Four Motives to Pray

1. *Deesis*: We entreat Him because we are sensitive and in concert with the needs of the lost.
2. *Proseuche*: We pray to Him and give Him glory because of His power to save.
3. *Enteuxis*: We petition Him because we are concerned for their future without Christ.
4. *Eucharista*: We thank Him because we are grateful for the opportunity to witness of and for Him.

D. THANKSGIVING

Lastly in this compact list of four motivations for *prayer*, and forms of *prayer*,

the believer is motivated to *pray* for the lost because it is a great privilege granted to them by God! As ambassadors for Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:20) believers are given a role by God to play in the salvation of others. This is an amazing, startling, and sobering truth! Accordingly, we are *thankful*, for such a noble privilege and our *prayers* to God of *thanksgiving* (*eucharista*) are a reflection of that! Such *praying delights God*.

In summary, the believing public servant is to go to God *on behalf of all men, for Kings and all who are in authority* seeking their salvation motivated by these four facets of intimacy with God. All four facets of evangelistic *praying delight God*.

VI. GOD DELIGHTS IN YOUR WISDOM

In Proverbs 8:30 *wisdom* is being personified by Solomon. The antecedent to the pronoun “*I*” in the following passage is *wisdom*:

“Then I was beside Him, as a master workman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.”

Remember that Solomon in chapter eight of Proverbs personifies *wisdom* (the literary genre of personification is a beautiful form of Hebrew prose—as is personification in writing today). Further, the pronouns *Him* and *His* has as their antecedents Jesus Christ! With those clues in mind, let us attempt to figure out what this Proverb is saying and how it relates to our thesis this week.

In essence the passage reveals in its larger theological context that *wisdom* stood with the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ in His creative acts. In so do-



ing, this Proverb declares that *wisdom* was *His delight*—to give Jesus *wisdom* in creation! (cf. John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16–17; Genesis 1:16–17; Hebrews 1:1–2). God delighted in giving Jesus Christ the skill (skill is what *wisdom* is) to create the world! It follows that in that same way that God delighted in giving Jesus the skill to create the world, He *delights* in giving you and me the skill to live in the world!

The point is this: *God delights* when you partake of His *wisdom* or skill as we live in this world! Every time you manifest *wisdom* in the way you conduct yourself in the here and now, God is *delighted!* When you display skill at living life for His glory, God is greatly *delighted!*

VII. SUMMARY

God says, through King Solomon in His book of Proverbs, that He expects those whom He has appointed to governmental leadership to be just, blameless, prayerful, and wise! Herein we see from Scripture a direct admonition to public servants, that to gain *His delight* you must lead with personal and civil *justice*, *blameless* character, humble evangelistic *prayer*, and God-given *wisdom!* Are those virtues a part of your personal life as you strive to provide civic leadership? Scripture says that these four specific qualities, when practiced by civic leaders, *delight God!* May God greatly bless you as you focus on what He desires out of you after giving you such a high and noble calling!

1. Cf. Romans 14:10–12; Second Corinthians 5:10.
2. In theology this is known as the perseverance of the saints.
3. For more on the idea of being *above reproach* and what it means biblically to be *blameless*, confer with Philippians 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; Hebrews 13:7; and 1 Peter 5:3. In each of these passages, the NT writer indicates that spiritual leadership is accomplished primarily exemplarily. The idea of imitation of the leader's faith is often in view throughout the NT. One cannot lead by example who has questionable character. It follows that exemplary character is important to God and is the reason He *delights* in it.



*Making Disciples
of Jesus Christ
in the Political Arena
Throughout the World*



Capitol Ministries provides Bible studies, evangelism, and discipleship to political leaders. Founded in 1996, Capitol Ministries has started ongoing ministries in more than forty U.S. state Capitols and dozens of foreign federal Capitols.

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