



Four Ways To Delight God As A Public Servant

NOVEMBER 11, 2013

The past seven weeks we have been studying Government and Economics. I trust the series has been helpful to further establish convictions in this regard that are steeped in God's Word. That has been my intent and desire.

I was planning on studying out three more subjects on the topic, but they are such political hot potatoes that I am thinking it is not prudent to do so at this time. I will wait for a better time in the future.

I think that after such a long and heavy-duty series that is it time to study something that is a little more devotional in nature and refreshing to the soul.

Accordingly what follows is a study from Proverbs – which as you know was written to a future Public Servant – relative to what God says through Solomon specifically delights God. Proverbs reveals at least four things that Public Servants need do to delight God.

Read on my friend!

Weekly Bible Study During Session

Wednesday Mornings 8:00 AM Sharp. Capitol Building Family Room H324
Hot Breakfast Served.

Robert Aderholt, *Alabama*
Michele Bachmann, *Minnesota*
Spencer Bachus, *Alabama*
Marsha Blackburn, *Tennessee*
Jim Bridenstine, *Oklahoma*
Paul Broun, *Georgia*
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INTRODUCTION

As you know, I have spent considerable time in the past organizing the Book of Proverbs into various subjects and examining all the Proverbs related to that certain subject, i.e. creating an exhaustive topical/theological indexing of the book. This week I would like to examine one of those subjects: all that Solomon said to his son Rehoboam regarding what it is that a Public Servant can do that specifically delights God. Keep in mind that as Solomon pens this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that his advice is in the context of preparing his son to lead the nation.

This subject is a very basic concept to Christianity – to know what it is that delights God is important. How is it that we, the created, can please our Creator? Of course we go to Church to worship God and we know that He finds pleasure in that, but outside of that and of course making peace with God through His Son Jesus Christ – what are other day-to-day attitudes and actions that Scripture specifically says please Him? And specifically relevant to your life, what things can a Public Servant do that please Him? Let us come to the Book of Proverbs with that question in mind.

To begin this inquiry, we must observe quickly that despite what many people think, God is *not* delighted by attempts to save oneself. 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 it stands to reason that God sent His Son *needlessly* to die an agonizing substitutionary death to atone for our sins.

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 NT Book of Galatians (2:21)....

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 was the OT **law**; and it was never intended by God to save anyone. Rather, God's intended purpose of the law was that it act like a tutor to show us our need for Christ (Gal. 3:24) since everyone should realize they cannot keep the OT law perfectly. Earlier in the same chapter (vv. 15-16) 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 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" (Isa. 64:6). Man's thoughts regarding how one 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 the introduction, whereas efforts to save one's self are displeasing to God, trusting by faith in Christ for your salvation is extremely pleasing to God! it should go without saying that trusting in Christ for your salvation finds favor with God and all of heaven rejoices!

What then, according to the Book of Proverbs (and I will expand upon elsewhere in the Scripture) are



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the things that delight God? In other words, if salvation is acknowledged as a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8,9) then subsequent to receiving that free gift, what practices of Public Servants delight Him the most? Here's what Solomon says....

I. 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 the things He 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....

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

Honesty in our personal dealings is essential to pleasing God. Furthermore as a Public Servant, a nation's establishment, sustainment and enforcement of justice is critical. This includes the Public Servant's management of various things in civil government in order to maintain a level playing field: rules of fair trade, proprietary protection of intellectual property such as trademarks, patents and copyright laws, punishment of criminals, penalties for tort violations, etc., is 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 stumped by evil.

GOVERNMENT IS GOD'S PRIMARY MEANS OF MANIFESTING HIS RESTRAINT IN A FALLEN WORLD

Public Servants must realize this role given to the institution of Civil Government in Scripture (cf. Romans 13:1-8; 1Peter 2:13-14) by God and act accordingly in order to be found pleasing to Him – that's why He has appointed you to serve in

Government. Uninhibited personal graft and corruption stall the benefits God intends for a nation and its commerce. This idea is illustrated in various developing countries such as the former Soviet Union, Nigeria, or even Mexico, 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 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.

We are blessed in America in that we have an acculturated sense of just commerce. When people cheat they are prosecuted and punished. We live in a society where **unjust weights** are appropriately intolerable. But even though this is culturally ingrained (for the most part people who cheat on Wall Street and elsewhere get their due recompense) in order for such to be maintained and ingrained in the future it must be the ongoing ideological conviction of the state leader. Not only does the enforcement of justice prosper a nation, it **delights** God, says Solomon to Rehoboam.

Now note an additional, parallel and expansive passage related to this idea in Proverbs....

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 **lying**. Such actions are not pleasing to the Lord. When one cheats at trade or politics, they end up misleading others and hurting not only themselves, but the overall progress of the nation. God **delights** in those who are **faithful** to the truth.



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II. GOD DELIGHTS IN YOUR BLAMELESSNESS

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

In providing this insight to Rehoboam (and by extension other civil leaders) regarding how to please God, the Hebrew tense of **their** connotes the application of the principle is appropriate to one or many. At the risk of seemingly making a jump-switch in the flow of thought, notice 1Samuel 14:6. It serves to illustrate and amplify the singularity or plurality of this idea:

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 matters not to Him if it is 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. God in His absolute righteousness judges those who are **perverse in heart**, who stand in contrast to His precepts be they one or many, an individual or a nation.

On the other hand it is God who **delights** in the **blamelessness** of one or many. 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" (Eph. 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 **blameless in their walk**.

1Timothy 3:2 provides a keen insight to aid in defining what it means to attempt to live a **blameless** lifestyle; the NT Greek word for **blameless** is often translated "above reproach." i.e., no one can legitimately pin some wrongdoing on you. Keep in mind however that even though you may conscientiously attempt with all your might to live above reproach, aka **blamelessly**, there will be those who despise you regardless. To illustrate this from Scripture notice the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-9. But even though you might live a life characterized by the virtues of a beatitudinal life, nonetheless verses 10-11 follow verses 1-9!

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness ...Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on account of Me.

It follows that even those who attempt to live **blamelessly** will be falsely **blamed** for many things. As a Public Servant you know what I mean.

III. GOD DELIGHTS IN YOUR PRAYERS

In order to be found delightful to God, we have seen that the follower of Christ must live justly and blamelessly. Thirdly, live prayerfully....

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 off an outward aura of righteousness. God is not fooled by outward ritualistic forms of false pretense that are unrelated



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to the heart, and we should not be fooled either. Scripture is clear that it is only the **prayers** of the repentant and regenerate that are His delight (cf. Isaiah 1:15). Romans 1 reveals that every man knows of the defilement of his or her heart (this knowledge is often suppressed); and it is only when we cry out for God's mercy in repentant prayer that God hears us. James 4:7 further informs this respective principle when it states, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Contrite prayers delight God. This is a prerequisite to anything further that can be said about prayer.

With the aforementioned in view, now notice what specific prayers delight God. In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 the Apostle Paul lists four kinds of prayers that every believer and Public Servant should pray....

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ 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 conclusion is informed by verse 4) to **be made on behalf of.... Kings and those in authority**. 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. Eph. 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**. What it means is this: It connotes exclusive prayers of worship and reverence. The contextual idea is that evangelistic prayers, when the sinner is converted by the work of the Holy Spirit bringing one to trust in Christ, bring 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 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. Not always, but typically it is only when we are willing to befriend and work with (older) 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 so as to win them to Jesus! Such praying and actions delight God.

D. THANKSGIVING



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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. 2Cor. 5:20) believers are given a role by God to play in the salvation of others. 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.

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/for Him.

In summary, the believing Public Servant is to go to God on behalf of **all men, for Kings and those in authority** seeking their salvation motivated by these four facets of intimacy with God. But before I leave this passage, note one other thing about 1Timothy 2:1-4 in terms of promised results....

The idea **that we may lead a gentle and quiet life in all godliness and dignity** (1Timothy 2:2b; aka the American Dream) found in this passage of Scripture *is not conditioned upon the success or the number of conversions resulting from our evangelistic prayers – rather it is based on whether or not this is a priority!* This is a very important insight, I think. The word at the beginning of this passage, **first** *protos* means “first in priority.” In other words **in order that we may lead a quiet life in all godliness and dignity** result not from the results of evangelistic praying, but from being obedient to the discipline itself! Wow! Here then is a key biblical component to rebuilding America: faithful evangelistic prayer.

IV. GOD DELIGHTS IN YOUR WISDOM

8:30 Then I was beside Him, as a master workman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him.

The antecedent to the pronoun **I** in this passage is wisdom. Wisdom is being personified; remember that Solomon in chapter eight of Proverbs personifies wisdom (which is a form of Hebrew prose). The pronoun **Him** has as its antecedent Jesus Christ. With those clues in mind, let us attempt to figure out what this Proverb is saying!

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 doing, this Proverb declares that that wisdom was Jesus’ **delight** – to give Jesus wisdom in creation! (cf. Matthew 3:17). 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/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!

SUMMARY

Per Proverbs, God expects those whom He has appointed to governmental leadership to be *just, blameless, prayerful* and *wise*. Herein we have seen Solomon instructing his son to live and lead with personal and civil justice, blameless character, humble evangelistic prayer and God-given wisdom. Are those virtues a part of your civil leadership? Scripture says that these four specific qualities, when practiced by civil leaders, please God. May God greatly bless you as you focus on what He wants out of His personal relationship with you.