

Explore the Bible: July 26

by Laura Lee Leathers

Pleasing God • Proverbs 15:33-16:11



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In the 1970s, grocery shopping in Germany was a unique experience! Home refrigerators were the size of a dorm fridge; therefore, trips to the store were necessary several times a week. In the store, the biggest obstacle was the language barrier. However, at one particular store a young German woman was learning English. Since I was learning Deutsch, our encounters meant language practice. When I said, “Danke Schoen” (thank you), her reply was, “Pleased.”

Have you ever studied the words please, pleased, and pleasing, in regard to their usage throughout the Bible? Who pleased God, and why? What pleases God? The following are a few verses to ponder as we think upon the subject of pleasing God: Hebrews 11:6; 13:15-16, 21; Romans 8:6-8; Psalm 147:11; John 8:29; 1 Samuel 5:22.

Wisdom Demonstrated (Prov. 15:33; 16:8). While studying Proverbs, the “fear of the LORD” should leap off the page because of its frequency. In verse 33, it takes on a dual role. “The fear of the LORD teaches wisdom, and the wisdom of God teaches the fear of the Lord” (LifeWay). As we pursue wisdom, we are to do so with humility – a contrite, revering heart. This demonstrates our dependency and need for God. Psalm 147:11 (ESV) states, “but the LORD takes pleasure in

those who fear him..."

Next, rather than pursuing material wealth we are to pursue the great wealth gained through wisdom. It's obtainable when you fear the Lord, trust Him, ask for wisdom, and seek Him. In verse eight, there is a contrast between ill-gotten gain and the benefits of a little bit gained with righteousness. It's about our priorities: God first. because He is our greatest treasure.

Accountability Established (Prov. 16:1, 4-5, 9). "We plan, God laughs," is an old Yiddish proverb, and there is a lot of truth in it. Many times our planning leaves God out of the process. We map and strategize how our lives should go, but no one but God knows what a day will bring! Verse one tells us words may flow from our mouth, but the LORD puts the proper answer on the tongue. We are held accountable.

In Proverbs 6:16-19, Solomon writes about the six things God hates. As you read, note how the list starts with the head, then the heart (center), and ends with the feet. The onset of planning begins in the heart (v. 1), and from there the path (evil schemes or good plans) is followed. Nevertheless, "The LORD works out everything to its proper end" (see Prov. 19:21; 20:24; Jer. 10:23), and everyone will be held accountable.

Motives Matter (Prov. 16:2, 10-11). Motives play a significant role in our behavior. For example, what is the real reason for doing a good deed? Or an evil deed? Is the motive to please people, or God? Notice verse two, "...but motives are weighed by the LORD." Then, in verses 10 and 11, the reader is given two examples of proper motivation: the decisions made by a king, and the use of accurate measures by a merchant. When the heart is saturated with God's wisdom, the right actions flow from the heart.

Blessing Assured (Prov. 16:3, 6-7). Living under God's wise counsel, believers learn to surrender their choices and

decisions to His Word and Will. Note the promises in this text. "He will establish your plans" (v. 3). He is orchestrating our lives for His purposes and His glory. His blessings are the forgiveness of sin. His faithful love challenges us to turn from evil and practice peace with even our enemies (vv. 6,7, LifeWay).

Ask yourself, do I please God through my attitude and actions? "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence, there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Ps. 16:11)."

Danke Schoen!

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