

A Our value in the eyes of God:

❖ How valuable are we to God?

- In Luke 15 we find God seeking out His wayward children (that is, us.)
- In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd, full of joy, invites his friends: “Rejoice with me” (Luke 15:4-6.) In the parable of the lost coin, the woman invites her friends: “Rejoice with me” (Luke 15:8-9.)
- In the parable of the prodigal son, the father explains: “It was right that we should make merry and be glad” (Luke 15:32.)
- From our point of view, the son was totally unworthy of being celebrated (Luke 15:30.) But I am the son, an unworthy sinner. What value has God seen in me?
- We are precious enough to Him to celebrate. His joy is to see us return to Him. Our past doesn't matter. He doesn't even wait for us to come to Him. He runs to welcome us home.

B God's Pleasure:

❖ Can God rejoice?

- If you have ever thought of God as a stern father, always angry at your bad behavior, Zephaniah 3:17 will change your perspective of God.
- In this text we find almost all the ways in which one can say, in Hebrew, “I am glad.” God feels immense joy when we allow Him to save us, when we let Him dwell with us (“in your midst.”)
- He calls us *Hephzibah* [my delight] (Is. 62:4.) He rejoices with us, as a husband does with his wife, because he loves us (Eph. 5:25-27, 31-32.)
- When we are reconciled with God, we enter into a love relationship with Him, and we are assured of His presence with us.

❖ How to please God?

- Is it possible that God takes pleasure in insignificant human beings, when He has a whole retinue of immaculate beings who adore him? What is there in us that can give him joy?
- God's love for us makes us highly esteemed before Him (Is. 43:4.) But there are things in us that please Him, and others that displease Him (Pr. 15:8-9; 2Co. 9:7.)
- The fact that God “loves the righteous” (Ps. 146:8) does not imply that He hates the wicked, but He cannot be pleased with them as He is pleased with the righteous.
- God delights in those who respond to his love.

C Please God:

❖ How can we please God?

- God always makes the first move, offering us His love and salvation (Rom. 5:8.) From there, He leaves us free to choose whether we will respond to His love.
- If so, we can respond with a simple “thank you, see you in Heaven,” or we can look for a way to better please the one who has loved us so much.
- Our response can only be pleasing to God when it is motivated “through Jesus Christ” (1P. 2:5.) It is the work of Jesus and his intercession that makes our actions pleasing to God.
- Only through His mediation can we be considered worthy to be transformed into His likeness (2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2.)

❖ How much faith does it take to please God?

- A basic ingredient to pleasing God is faith (Heb. 11:6.) But we can ask ourselves: Do I have enough faith to please God?
- Jesus spoke of faith the size of a mustard seed (Luke 17:6.) How much faith is that?
- On one occasion, a father brought his son to Jesus' disciples to be healed. They were unable to do so. So when Jesus arrived, the father asked Jesus to perform the miracle (Mark 9:14-18.)
- Discouraged, the father's request included the phrase “if You can do anything” (Mark 9:22,) to which Jesus replied, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes” (Mark 9:23.)
- The father offered the little faith he had: “If you can do something with this, please do it” (Mark 9:24.) A little faith was enough. Jesus accepts even the smallest faith.