

# **Growing in favor with God**

## **July 26, 2020**

**There is one thing we should seek for more than anything else in life...  
And that is God's approval.**

**We want his smile, his approval: we want to be a delight to God.**

**God himself wants close friends. This is the reason God created man.**

**But we are created with the power of choice. Sadly, many ignore God.**

**Some only desire a very casual relationship with God.**

**But I would like a very close relationship with my wonderful creator.**

**I want God to be very pleased with my life.**

**And, I want to reveal him to many other people.**

**The apostle Paul tells us, that Christ himself is our reward, our goal.**

**Paul said, he was pressing toward a mark, a goal.**

**And what was that reward, that prize - it was to win Christ.**

**"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14.**

**Christ himself is the prize. To win him is to have everything.**

**Make Christ your goal - He is the prize!**

## **Growth**

**Our spiritual growth depends upon our love for God, and his wisdom.**

**In Luke 2:52, it says that Jesus increased in wisdom,**

**And in favor with God and man.**

**We need to love God, and wisdom. Growth depends on our love for God. You will do anything when you really love someone**

**Lord, be the love of my life. Remember, Christ himself is wisdom.**

**We will never go astray if our love for God is fervent.  
But if our heart loves many other worldly things, we will go off course.  
We need to pray, Lord, perfect your love in my heart! Amen.**

**The world offers many counterfeits.  
Things that distract us from the real meaning of life.  
In Psalm 16:11 says:**

**“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Psalms 16:11**

**In Psalm 43:4 it declares: “God is my exceeding joy!”  
Christ himself should be our joy and expectation.  
Remember, God wants very close and dear friends.**

**In these last days, the love of many will turn cold - Matthew 24:12  
Why? Because iniquity and worldliness shall abound.**

**This is a warning to Christians. Unbelievers do not have the love of God.  
The love of many will turn cold. Because there is no deep commitment.  
The love for God is very shallow.  
Consider a young woman named Orpah in the book of Ruth 1:14-15**

**Orpah kissed her mother in law goodbye; but Ruth clave unto her. And Naomi said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods” Ruth 1:14, 15, KJV.**

**What is the problem? No depth of commitment.  
There are many Christians today like this.  
There is a shallow superficial love for God, but no real depth.  
When trouble comes in these times, many Christians will turn from God.  
The love of many will turn cold. Again, Matthew 24:12.  
We call these - Fairweather friends**

## Fair weather friends

In America we have an expression that describes shallow relationships. Relationships that are not very deep. We call them fair weather friends. What is a fair weather friend?

Someone is your friend, when things are going well: ... advantages. But when difficulties arise, they turn away from you.

Unfortunately, there are many fair weather friends of Jesus.

In John 6:54-66, we see that many disciples of Jesus turned back. They were offended over some of the things Jesus taught.

John 6:60-61 “Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said, Doth this offend you?”

Many followed Jesus because of the great miracles he performed.

But when he asked for commitment, - many turned back.

John 6:66 - from that time many of his disciples turned back, and walked with Jesus no more.

John 2:23 “many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.” John 6:2 “And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.”

Are we following God only for great spectacular miracles, or provision? We will be tested to see if we really love God with all our heart.

Sadly, when the tests come, Many Christians turn back.

Because their commitment and Love for God is very shallow.

What is the purpose for the coming antichrist. To test our commitment. Jesus warns us - The love of many will turn cold. Matthew 24:12.

## **Born to be tested**

**During this short life on earth, we are here to be tested.  
This is often not understood by many people, even Christians.  
But this is made very clear in Job 7:17-18**

**“What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?”**

**God wants a tested people, who Love him with all their heart.  
Who are not following him for spectacular miracles, wonders, provision..  
But because they love him, and they want His full approval.  
They want to be very close to him for all eternity.  
Remember, to have Christ is to have everything.  
Christ is the source of life. He and his father created everything.**

**In John 1:3 it says: All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. John 1:10\* He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.**

**Remember, this world is temporary. It is going to pass away.  
This short life will soon be over.  
But he who does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:17  
So let's invest in our relationship with our wonderful creator.  
The One main thing God wants from this creation, is close friends.  
Let's be one of those close friends of God, like Abraham.**

**The Lord himself is our inheritance**

In Genesis 15:1, “the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” The Lord himself is our exceeding great reward, and shield.

The Lord himself is our inheritance. Read Deuteronomy 10:9, 18:2:

“Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.”

In Lamentations 3:24 - “The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.” He is my reward, my inheritance, my everything. Joy.

Psalms 18:1-3, “I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.”

“But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.” Psalms 3:3, KJV. Lord, You are my encourager, my protector.

## Obedience -the key to growth

“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected:.”

1 John 2:5. We will continue to grow old in our relationship with God, As we obey him, and listening to what he's saying to our heart.

1 Peter 1:22 tells us “our souls are purified by obeying the truth through the Spirit ... leading us unto unfeigned love of the brethren...”

## Our rejoicing is in him

Not in what he's doing, or how he is using me, or blessing me. But our rejoicing is in Him. Paul said we “rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Phil. 3:3

**Paul further states: he wanted to “be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:” Philippians 3:9.**

**In 3:10 - That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;”**

**Everything in my heart belonging to him.**

## **The outstanding difference between A committed / uncommitted Christian:**

**A committed Christian - involves God in everything, plans, motives.  
Lord, what would you desire in this situation? How can I please you?**

**An uncommitted Christian - leaves God out of his plans.  
He does not want God to upset his desires. And ...  
Does not really believe that God is really interested in his happiness.**

**Yet, what God chooses is what leads do unspeakable joy / happiness**

## **In closing**

**Let's remember this, God wants a bride, without spot or blemish.  
Someone conformed to his image, someone compatible with himself.  
What did Jesus say when he came into the world:  
I've come to do thy will oh father. Not my will, but your will be done.  
May that be the cry of my heart. Amen!**