

# Pleasing God – Not Man

## UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

**Theme:** Seeking God's approval rather than the approval of others.

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4

**Memory Verse:** For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. - 1 Thessalonians 2:3

## The Children's Sermon

A lot of people think the only way to find happiness is to get a good grade at school or a promotion at work or make lots of money. If all we do is aim to please people, we will be frustrated and disappointed. But in the Bible, it says that we should aim to please God. So that in everything we do, we should work to please God and not man. The Bible says that when we live to please God, we will have a full life ... a happy life.

Do you know that in God's eyes, you are so much more than the grade on your report card? Because of God's grace... In God's eyes, you are covered with gold stars!

Now, let's talk more about Pleasing God. Pleasing God doesn't mean we have to be perfect because nobody is perfect except God. But it means trying our best to do what God likes. It's like when you try to make a drawing for your mom or dad. You want them to be happy when they see it, right? Pleasing God is like that. We try to do things that make God happy.

One way to please God is by being kind. When you see someone sitting alone, you can go and sit with them. Or, if someone drops their books, you can help pick them up. These little acts of kindness show God that we love Him because we are loving others.

Another way to please God is by saying thank you. We can thank God for our food, our family, and our friends. When we say thank you, we show God that we see all the good things He gives us. It's like when someone gives you a present, and you say thank you. It makes them feel good. Saying thank you to God makes Him happy too.

We can also please God by listening. This means listening to our parents, teachers, and most importantly, listening to God. We listen to God by reading the Bible and praying. When we listen to what God says, we learn how to live in a way that pleases Him. It's like when you listen to your teacher's instructions and do your work well. Your teacher is happy, and you feel good too.

Pleasing God is not just for Sundays when we go to church. It's for every day. Whether we are at school, at home, or playing with friends, we can always find ways to please God. It's like having a special friend you want to make happy every day, not just on their birthday.

Sometimes, trying to please God might seem hard. We might mess up or forget. But the good thing is, God is very forgiving. When we say sorry and try again, God is pleased with our effort. It's like when you're learning to ride a bike, and you keep falling off. But you get back up and try again. Your parents are proud of you for not giving up. God feels the same way about us.

Pleasing God makes our hearts happy. It's a different kind of happiness than just getting what we want. It's a deep joy that comes from knowing we are living the way God wants us to. It's like the happiness you feel when you give someone a gift, and they really love it. Pleasing God fills us with that kind of joy.

So, remember, Pleasing God is the best way to find true happiness. It's not about being perfect or having everything we want. It's about trying our best to do what God likes, being kind, saying thank you, listening, and trying again when we mess up. And the most wonderful thing? God sees all our efforts, and He is pleased with us. Just like you are covered in gold stars in God's eyes.

Let's end with a prayer: Dear God, thank you for loving us and showing us how to live a happy life by Pleasing You. Help us to remember to be kind, to say thank you, to listen, and to try our best every day. We want to make You happy because You make us so happy. Amen.

## Bible Memory Verse

**For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. - 1 Thessalonians 2:3**

You Will Need:

- Plain white paper
- Colored pencils or markers
- Envelopes

Get Ready:

- Gather all materials on a large table.

-Write the memory verse on a board or large paper where all children can see it.

Do This:

1. Ask each child to draw a picture on the white paper that they think represents honesty and truthfulness, inspired by the memory verse. Encourage creativity!
2. Once they have finished their drawings, have them write the memory verse on the back of their picture.
3. Finally, let each child place their drawing in an envelope and exchange it with someone else. Encourage them to share why they chose their particular drawing and what the verse means to them.

## Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Bibles or printed copies of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4
- Large poster board
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Costume props (optional, for role-play)
- "Approval" stickers (stickers that say "Good Job!", "Well Done!", etc.)

Get Ready:

- Write "Seeking God's Approval" at the top of the poster board.
- Set up a small "stage" area for role-play if using costume props.
- Have the Bibles or printed scriptures, markers, sticky notes, and costume props (if using) ready on a table.
- Prepare a brief explanation of the passage, focusing on seeking God's approval rather than human approval.

Do this:

1. **\*\*Introduction to Scripture\*\***: Start by reading 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4 together.

Discuss what it means to seek God's approval rather than the approval of others.

Highlight how Paul and his companions were not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.

2. **\*\*Role-Play Activity\*\***: Split the children into small groups. Assign each group a scenario where they must decide between seeking God's approval or seeking human approval (e.g., being honest even when lying might make you more popular, choosing not to cheat on a test even when others are doing it). Let them use costume props to act out their scenarios. After each performance, discuss as a class how seeking God's approval played out in the scenario.

3. **\*\*"Approval" Sticker Challenge\*\***: Give each child a few "approval" stickers. Challenge them to go through the next week looking for opportunities to seek God's approval in their actions rather than seeking praise from others. When they do something they believe was done for God's approval, they can place a sticker in their Bible or on a personal item as a reminder of their choice.

4. **\*\*Reflection Poster\*\***: Have each child write or draw on a sticky note an example of how they can seek God's approval over human approval in their daily lives. Stick these notes on the poster board. Hang the poster in the classroom as a reminder of their commitment to value God's approval above all.

5. **Closing Prayer**: Wrap up the activity with a prayer, asking God to help each child remember to seek His approval in all they do, knowing that His opinion is what truly matters.

## Snack Activity: Heavenly Approval Fruit Pizzas

You'll Need:

- Whole wheat English muffins
- Cream cheese (softened)
- Honey
- Various fruits (strawberries, blueberries, kiwi, grapes)
- Small plastic knives
- Plates

Get Ready: Wash all the fruits and cut them into small pieces. Make sure the cream cheese is softened for easy spreading.

Do this:

1. Start by explaining 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4, emphasizing how Paul and his companions sought approval from God rather than from people. Discuss how we can also seek God's approval in our daily lives.
2. Give each child a half of an English muffin. Let them spread cream cheese on their muffin half using the small plastic knives. This represents the foundation of our faith, which is seeking God's approval.
3. Then, have the children decorate their 'fruit pizza' with the various fruits. Encourage them to create a design that represents their understanding of seeking God's approval. For example, they could create a heart to symbolize love, a cross to represent faith, or any design they feel led to make.

4. As the children enjoy their fruit pizzas, encourage a discussion about the importance of doing things with the right intentions, aiming to please God rather than seeking the approval of others.

## Game Activity: God's Approval Quest

You'll Need:

- A large open space (indoors or outdoors)
- Several small objects to serve as 'treasures' (e.g., stones, small toys)
- Two boxes or containers to serve as 'Approval Boxes'
- Labels or markers to differentiate the boxes (one labeled 'God's Approval', the other 'People's Approval')
- Printed verses from 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4

Get Ready: Place the 'Approval Boxes' at opposite ends of the play area. Scatter the 'treasures' around the play area, ensuring some are more hidden than others. Each 'treasure' should have a verse or part of a verse from 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4 attached to it.

Do this:

1. Divide the children into two teams. Explain that they are on a quest to seek approval, but they must decide whose approval is more important: God's or people's. Each team will collect 'treasures' and decide which box to put them in based on the verse attached to the treasure.
2. When a player finds a 'treasure', they must read the verse out loud to their team. The team will discuss and decide if the verse represents seeking God's approval or seeking people's approval, then place the treasure in the corresponding box.

3. After all treasures are collected, gather the children and discuss the choices made. Highlight how seeking God's approval is more important than seeking the approval of others, referencing the treasures placed in 'God's Approval' box. Conclude by reading 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4 together, emphasizing how Paul sought to please God rather than people.

## Craft Activity: Seeking God's Approval: A Crafty

### Reminder

You'll Need:

- Construction paper (various colors)
- Markers or crayons
- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- String or yarn
- Hole punch

Get Ready: Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4 together as a class. Discuss what it means to seek God's approval rather than the approval of others.

Do this:

1. Have each student choose their favorite color of construction paper. On the paper, they will draw and cut out a large heart. This heart represents their own heart.
2. Using the markers or crayons, instruct the students to write 'God's Approval' at the top of the heart. Below that, they should write or draw things they can do to seek God's approval based on the scripture (e.g., being honest, showing kindness, spreading the Gospel).



3. Once they have filled their heart with these ideas, have them punch a hole at the top and thread a piece of string or yarn through it. This will allow them to hang their heart somewhere they will see it daily as a reminder to seek God's approval above all else.

## Prayer Activity: Seeking God's Approval

You'll Need:

- A Bible or printed copies of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4
- Blank index cards or small pieces of paper
- Pens or pencils
- A 'Prayer Box' (any small box or container)

Get Ready: Before the activity, create a 'Prayer Box' by decorating any small box or container. Print out or ensure you have enough Bibles for the scripture reading.

Do this:

1. Start by reading 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4 together as a class. Discuss what it means to seek God's approval rather than the approval of others. Emphasize the importance of being honest and true to God's message, as Paul was.
2. Ask each student to reflect on a time they were more concerned with what others thought of them than what God thought. Have them write this moment on an index card or piece of paper, without writing their names, to keep the activity anonymous.
3. Collect all the cards and place them in the 'Prayer Box'. Lead a prayer asking God to help everyone in the class, including yourself, to seek His approval above all others. Pray for courage and strength to be true to God's word, just like Paul. After the prayer, you can choose to discuss as a group or keep the prayers between the students and God.