

What Does God Want?

A 15-minute class summary — Pleasant Springs Church, Discipleship School

Full six-lesson series: ps-church.com/discipleship/what-does-god-want

Before you start — notes for the teacher (*not read aloud*)

Timing. About **15 minutes** at a normal teaching pace. The bracketed times are cumulative. The **[8:00] one-family section is the designated cut** if you are short. **Never cut the last two sections** — the whole lesson is aimed there.

 **Who is in the room.** Somebody present has been in church for decades and still privately suspects God tolerates them rather than wants them. Somebody else has signed a card, walked an aisle, and has no idea whether anything happened. **This lesson is for both of them.** Teach it warmly or not at all.

The one correction this lesson makes. Most people assume God's question is *what must I do?* The series' answer is that God's want is **relational, not transactional** — and that the word we translate "faith" means **believing loyalty**, not a signature. Land that and the lesson has worked.

Careful with "believing loyalty." It is not works-salvation and you must not let it sound like it. Say Ephesians 2:8–10 out loud. **Saved by grace, through faith, for good works** — the works are the evidence, never the price.

Scripture. All English, ESV. The Greek and the Septuagint are on the website.

Time of day. Deliberately time-neutral.

Credit it. The series works through **Michael S. Heiser's** short book *What Does God Want?* (Blind Spot Press, 2018). Say his name; it is his frame.

THE SCRIPT

[0:00] Open — the question under every other question

Here is a question people carry for years without ever saying it out loud.

What does God actually want from me?

And most of us answer it the way we would answer a demand. **He wants me to behave. He wants me to show up. He wants me to stop.** We turn the biggest question a soul can ask into a list of chores.

For fifteen minutes I want to give you the Bible's own answer, and it is not a list. This is the six-week series compressed — a study working through a short book by the late **Michael Heiser**, a Hebrew scholar who spent his life making the world of the biblical writers usable by ordinary people.

His answer, and the Bible's, is three words long. **God wants you.**

Let me show you why that is not a slogan.

[1:30] He made you to be like him, on purpose, in a place

Start at the beginning — not with rules, but with a job description.

Genesis 1:26–27 (ESV) — "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion...' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

⚠️ **Notice what the text does not say.** It does not say we *have* the image, like a possession. The grammar is closer to purpose: God made humanity **to image him** — to represent him, to run his world on his behalf. **It is a commission, not a component.**

And you were not the first thing he made, or the only family in the room:

Job 38:4–7 (ESV) — "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?... when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

There was already a household — a heavenly one — singing at the foundation. **And God made a second one, out of dirt, on purpose.** Not because he was lonely. Not because he needed staff.

He made us to enjoy us, and to have us enjoy him.

That is the first thing the series wants you to hear, and it is load-bearing for everything else: **you are wanted before you are useful.**

[4:00] What went wrong, and what God did about it

Then it broke. And the shape of the break is the shape of a family, not a courtroom.

Genesis 3:8–9 (ESV) — "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'"

 **Read that again slowly.** The first thing God does after the worst thing that has ever happened is **go for a walk and call out for the man.**

He is not conducting an investigation. He knows where Adam is. **The question is not for God's information. It is an invitation to come out from behind the tree.**

Everything after Genesis 3 is God getting his family back. That is the whole plot. Not a rescue of souls out of the world — the recovery of a household.

[6:30] He picks one family to reach every family

Then a strange move. God does not start over with everyone at once. He picks one man.

Genesis 12:1–3 (ESV) — "Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

⚠ **Do not miss the last line, because people badly misread this.** God choosing Abraham is not God losing interest in everybody else. The stated *purpose* of the choice is **all the families of the earth**. The one family exists for the sake of the rest.

Election is a rescue mission, not a members' club.

[8:00] And then he comes himself — (cut this section first if short on time)

The whole thing turns on a sentence that ought to stop us cold every time:

John 1:14 (ESV) — "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The word behind "dwelt" is the tabernacle word — **he pitched his tent among us**. The God who walked in the garden looking for Adam moved into the neighbourhood to do it in person.

The cross and the empty tomb are how the family gets bought back.

Not a legal technicality performed at a distance — the Son becoming one of us, and going through death ahead of us.

[9:30] So what does he want from me?

Here is the question everyone is actually asking, and here is where the series does its most useful work.

Jesus' opening announcement:

Mark 1:14–15 (ESV) — "...Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe** in the gospel.'"

Now. **That word "believe."**

In modern English, *believe* usually means agreeing that something is true. *I believe Paris is in France.* You can believe that and never move a muscle.

⚠ **That is not what the New Testament word means.** The Greek word behind it — and its Hebrew cousin — describe the trust you place in a **covenant partner**: trust that produces **fidelity**. The series calls it **believing loyalty**. Paul has his own phrase for it:

Romans 1:5 (ESV) — "...to bring about the **obedience of faith** for the sake of his name among all the nations."

Obedience of faith. Not obedience *instead of* faith. Not faith *without* obedience. **Allegiance to a risen Lord.**

And before anyone hears that as "so I have to earn it" — **no**, and Paul closes the door himself:

Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV) — "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for** good works..."

⚠ **Read the preposition.** Created **for** good works. The works are what the gift *produces*, never what it *costs*. You are not buying a seat at the table. **You are being seated, and then you start behaving like family.**

[12:30] And what it is all for

Where does it end? Not with a rescue helicopter. With a household, and a wedding.

Revelation 21:3–4 (ESV) — "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes..."

The same verb as John 1:14. He pitched his tent among us in Bethlehem; he pitches it among us for ever at the end. **The story finishes where it started — God living with his people — except now nothing can break it.**

Revelation 19:9 (ESV) — "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

An invitation to a supper. That is the last picture. Not an inspection. Not a ledger.

[13:45] Close

So — what does God want?

He does not want your religious performance; he has never been short of admirers. **He wants you** — to image him where you live, to belong to his household, and to hold to Jesus with a loyalty that actually changes how you spend a Tuesday.

And if you have sat in church for thirty years quietly suspecting God **tolerates** you, hear the oldest question in the Bible again. God walks into the wreckage of everything and calls out, **"Where are you?"** — not to accuse, but **because he wants the person who is hiding.**

1 John 3:1 (ESV) — "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."

And so we are. Not "and so we might be if we keep it up." **So we are.**

Let's pray.

Father, thank you that you did not make us because you needed us, but because you wanted us. Thank you that when we hid, you came looking, and when we could not come back, you came yourself. Take from us the idea that we are tolerated, and give us instead the settled loyalty of people who know whose house they are in. Make us imagers of you where we live, this week. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

If you only remember three things

1. **You are wanted before you are useful.** God made a second family, out of dirt, on purpose — to enjoy them, not to staff a project.
 2. **"Where are you?" was not an interrogation.** It is what God does after the worst thing happens: he comes looking. Everything after Genesis 3 is him getting his family back.
 3. **"Faith" means believing loyalty** — allegiance to a risen Lord — and it is a **gift**, not a payment. Created *for* good works, never *by* them.
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The full series — ps-church.com/discipleship/what-does-god-want

Working through **Michael S. Heiser**, *What Does God Want?* (Blind Spot Press, 2018). All scripture in **Septuagint (LXX)** and **ESV** side by side.

Lesson	What it covers
1 God Wanted a Family	Why we exist; the supernatural family and the human one; imagers
2 What Went Wrong	The fall, the loss of the family, and why God did not give up
3 God Picks One Family	Abraham to Israel — one line as a rescue mission for the world
4 Jesus — God With Us	Incarnation, cross, resurrection: how the family is bought back
5 Believing Loyalty	What faith actually is — allegiance, not bare mental assent
6 The Family Restored Forever	New heavens and new earth; the marriage supper of the Lamb

Discussion starters — if you have time after

1. Finish the sentence honestly: *"I think God mostly wants me to _____."*
Where did that come from?
 2. "You are wanted before you are useful." Is that easy or hard for you to believe about yourself?
 3. God's first move after the fall is to come looking. Has that ever been your experience of him?
 4. Does "believing loyalty" sound like good news or like pressure? Talk about why.
 5. The last picture is a **supper**, not an inspection. What would change this week if you believed you were invited rather than assessed?
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