

Northeast Church of Christ

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From the Pen of Paul: *Pleasing God*

“AND WHATSOEVER WE ASK, WE RECEIVE of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (I John 3:22). “Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God, which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13).

To please is to cause delight. The Lord delights in those who fear. “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy” (Psalm 147:11). “For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation” (Psalm 149:4). “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecc. 12:13). The word “fear” here means “to reverence.” Thus, God finds pleasure and delight in those who reverence Him and keep His commandments.

Since we are informed that when Jesus returns, He “shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (II Thess. 1:7-9), it seems that all would be extremely interested in seeking to please God.

However, there are some who cannot please Him. Paul writes, “So then they that

are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:8). To be “in the flesh” is defined in this chapter as living after the flesh and being carnally minded. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh” (Rom. 8:5a). “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die” (Rom. 8:13a). Those living after the flesh, as opposed to those living after the Spirit, cannot please God. Far, far too many are attempting to be pleasing to God today while living after the flesh. But, Paul informs us that this cannot be.

Others would not please God. Cain would not (Heb. 11:4; Gen. 4:7). King Saul would not. Samuel asked him, “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings, and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (I Sam. 15:22). (Go back and reread I John 3:22 above.) And, like so many today, Saul was claiming to be pleasing to God while standing in direct disobedience to His commands (I Sam. 15:13, 20). Others who fall into this same category are Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2), and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-5).

We also find examples of those who did please God. Enoch is a prime example: “for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Hebrews 11:5b). I cannot think of a single thing that could be said about anyone's life that would be better than what is said here about Enoch. The apostles pleased God (Acts 4:20; 5:20, 29). Paul always worked to please God. He wrote, “For do I now persuade men, or God?

“What are your feelings about all the translations of the Bible we have today? Are they safe to follow?”

THE DEVIL HAS DONE HIS WORK WHEN IT comes to the so-called translations of today. He has tried to corrupt the very text of the Bible.

Many of the so-called translations are not translations but mutilations: they are not versions but perversions. One can find his doctrine taught in one of these modern translations if he will look long enough. Some of these modern one-man versions of the Bible were done by those that did not know the Greek and Hebrew languages. They are nothing more than a one-man commentary on the Bible or parts of the Bible: and they are false commentaries at that. I shall give you some examples.

The New International Version on Psalms 51:5: “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” This translation teaches that little babies are born sinners. It teaches that they are sinners when conceived. This is false to the core. We sin when we transgress the law of God (I John 3:4). How could an unborn baby transgress God's law? How can a born baby disobey the Word of God?

The Amplified Version on Ephesians 5:19: “Speak out to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, offering praise with voices (and instruments), and making melody with all your heart to the Lord.” This version teaches that it is all right to use mechanical instruments of music in worship to God. They were honest enough to place the man-made in parenthesis. The original language does not have “and instruments” in it. This is just some fellow's idea about the matter.

The Revised Standard Version on Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” The original says “a virgin shall conceive.” These translators tried to destroy the miraculous conception of Christ. A young woman might be a virgin and she might not be a virgin.

The New English Bible on I Corinthians 14:19: “Thank God, I am more gifted in ecstatic utterance than any of you.” These translators are trying to make a mouthful of nothing but mutterings equal to speaking in tongues. Tongues were always languages in the Bible (Acts 2:4-6). The word “ecstatic” is not in the Greek text. Devilish people place things like this in the Bible.

Today's English Version on Acts 20:7: “On Saturday evening we gathered together for the fellowship meal.” There are two false things in this translation with reference to Acts 20:7. First, the original Greek says it was the first day of the week and not “Saturday evening.” Second, the original Greek says they were taking the Lord's Supper and not eating a “fellowship meal.” The devil is working in people who do this type of thing.

The Living New Testament on I Corinthians 2:14: “But the man who isn't a Christian can't understand and can't accept these thoughts from God, which the Holy Spirit teaches us. They sound foolish to him, because only those who have the Holy Spirit within them can understand what the Holy Spirit means. Others just can't take it in.” This translation teaches that the Holy Spirit must dwell in a miraculous way within a person before he can understand what the Bible says. This is so foreign to the truth that it is deplorable. If the Holy Spirit interpreted the Bible for us, then we would all see the Bible the same and there would be no division among us.

The most dependable versions today are the King James Version of 1611, American Standard Version of 1901, and the New King James Version. For other versions of today, you must watch out. I would suggest that you throw them away when it comes to using them in the classroom and in Bible study.

—Malcolm L. Hill

Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10). And of course, Jesus pleased His Father. At both His baptism and Transfiguration, God announced from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17; 17:5).

How may you and I please God? Since it is said of Jesus that God was well pleased in Him, let's see how that was accomplished. Jesus said, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34). And again in John 5:30b He tells us, “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the

Father which hath sent me.” He even tells us that, “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me” (John 6:38). And, the defining statement is made in John 8:29: “I do always those things that please Him.”

What are the results of pleasing God? God “takes us” (Heb. 11:5). He accepts our service (John 9:31; Acts 10:34-35). He answers our prayers and gives us what we ask (I John 3:22). And He gives us a home (Rev. 22:14). Are you seeking to please God?

—Paul M. Wilmoth