

Doctrinal Summary of Worship: Learning God's Ways in Order to Please Him

In Ephesians 5:10, the apostle Paul instructs believers to walk as children of the Light who evaluate and identify what is pleasing to God.

“trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.”

The phrase “trying to learn” is translated from the Koine Greek word δοκιμάζοντες (“do-ki-ma-zon-tes”) which more literally means “performing the continuous type of action as a matter of principle to evaluate the character or nature of something in order to distinguish its genuineness or quality based on one’s own initiation.” It describes believers who are walking as children of Light as being the ones who perform the action to determine what is and is not pleasing to God. The determination is made as a result of evaluating the character or nature of what is being considered against the standard revealed in God’s Word. Thus, if the believer is going to please God, he must be able to distinguish between things that do please God and things that don’t please God. The process of evaluating and then determining that something will or will not please God occurs simultaneously to the believer walking in fellowship with God (cf. Eph 5:8). However, the believer is the one who initiates the evaluation process. It stems from his desire to please God and his attentiveness to do so in accordance with what God has revealed will be genuinely pleasing to Him. If the believer is going to be able to identify what is pleasing to God, then he must learn who God is, what God does, and why God does it. This requires him to be transformed in his thought process according to Romans 12:2.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

The word “transformed” is translated from the Koine Greek word μεταμορφοῦσθε (“met-a-mor-phous-teh”) which more literally means, “you all are commanded to be acted upon in a continuous type of action to be changed from the inside to the outside.” It is a command that requires believers to exercise their free will to choose to obey or reject. What believers must choose to obey is to be changed from the inside of them which will result in manifested difference in their outward appearance. The believer does not transform himself but rather is transformed by someone else who does the work. It is the Holy Spirit that transforms the believer, and He does so by means of the word of God.

The word “renewing” is translated from the Koine Greek word ἀνακαινῶσαι (“ah-nah-kai-noh-sei”) which more literally means, “instrumentality of a process that makes something new by replacing what is older and inferior in quality with something that is new and superior in quality, based on response.” It identifies the removal of man’s inferior ways and thoughts from the believer’s mind for the replacement of them with God’s superior ways and thoughts (cf. Isaiah 55:8). It is a process that the Holy Spirit carries out in those who are walking with God and learning His Word. Thus, it is based on response to the believer being first in fellowship and, second, being taught God’s Word.

As believers walk with God and receive His word (cf. James 1:21) they allow the Holy Spirit to renovate their thought process. This allows the believer to then evaluate different opportunities, directions, and circumstances to identify what is pleasing to God in them. By learning to think God’s way the believer learns what pleases Him and is better equipped to worship God by accomplishing God’s will instead of his own. Thus, believers who are worshipping God learn His ways so that they may please Him.