

Doctrinal Summary of Worship: Pleasing God by Satisfying His Desires

Though the believer in Christ is not presently face to face with God, Paul identifies that the believer's pursuit is to be pleasing to God in 2 Corinthians 5:9.

"Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him."

The phrase "have as our ambition" is translated from the Koine Greek word φιλοτιμούμεθα ("phil-o-ti-mou-meh-thah") which more literally means, "we really participate in being acted upon in a continuous type of action to diligently exert ourselves in carrying out an activity out of a love for the honor and value achieved as a result of the activity." It identifies the diligent pursuit to accomplish an achievement which is motivated by the honor or value that comes from its accomplishment. It is a virtuous pursuit of honor and excellence rather than a vainglorious pursuit of self-promotion. By walking with God and worshipping Him, believers participate in being acted upon to exert themselves in activity that results in honor and value. That exertion is to exist as pleasing to God.

The word "be" is translated from the Koine Greek word εἶναι ("ei-nai") which more literally means, "to perform the continuous type of action to exist in the state of being." It identifies a state of existence in which the believer continuously purposes to operate. That state of being is identified as "pleasing to Him."

The word "pleasing" is translated from the Koine Greek word εὐαρεστοι ("eu-ah-res-toi") which more literally means, "good for satisfying the desire of someone or something, based on initiation." It describes something as being able to be used to satisfy the personal desires of another. Paul uses it to complete the idea of the state that believers are to have as a matter of purpose. They are to continually exist in the state of being good for satisfying God's desires.

Worshipping God includes the believer's diligent exertion to exist in the state of being good for satisfying God's desires. Since God's desires are always righteous, satisfying God will always result in honor and value. Pursuing the honor and value that comes from pleasing God is a part of the believer's spiritual life by which he worships God. Additionally, believers who participate in being led by the Holy Spirit to do God's will accomplish eternal works together with God resulting in eternal reward and honor that will become evident at the Judgment Seat of Christ, when each believer's grace-based works carried out by faith become evident (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-14).

The believer's ability to be pleasing to God is something that must be learned by understanding who God is, what He does, what He wants, and how He operates. Thus, if the believer is going to exert himself in order to be pleasing to God, he must understand what actually will please God. This requires that the believer learn and evaluate possible actions to determine whether they will genuinely satisfy God's desire (cf. Eph. 2:10).

Unlike Cain, who attempted to satisfy God with what he personally desired to offer as a sacrifice, the believer is to learn what actually pleases God and exert himself diligently to be pleasing to God by obediently walking in the light with God in order to carry out the works that God has prepared for him to walk in. Doing so results in honor and value for the believer and simultaneously glorifies God. As believers seek to and succeed in becoming pleasing to God they worship Him by satisfying His desires.