

Milk & Honey

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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

Pleasing God

Carl Knott

"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

Most people live to please themselves, even among evangelicals. The lament of the Apostle Paul is even truer today: *"all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's"* (Phil. 2:21). The Bible teaches plainly that it is privilege, not a burden, to live to please God. Yet how difficult it is to find believers who understand that they are servants of Christ; that their purpose in life is to do God's will and please Him. They are rare gems, and have been since Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve fell into sin and did what pleased themselves instead of what pleased God.

The Scriptures are clear that the focus of the life of the believer is not himself or herself, but Christ, not just on Sunday at meeting times, but all day and all week, all throughout life. Let's consider what the Lord has to say about pleasing Him.

In John 8:29 we read, *"...I do always those things that please Him."* Don't we wish that we could say that? But, alas, we can't, and therein lies our problem. How many homes have been broken, lives ruined and wasted, friendships damaged and churches split because of people who lived to please themselves! No, these words in John 8:29 do not describe our life, but that of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. His was a fragrant life lived in the will of the Father, for the pleasure of the Father. Are we followers of the Lord? If so, we should walk in His steps, imitate Him. 1 John 2:6 says, *"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."* This is not directed at preachers, elders or missionaries, but at every true believer and follower of the Lord. No Christian is given permission to live his life to please himself. All Christians are called to follow and imitate Christ. We believe that Psalm 40:8 speaks prophetically of our Lord, when in it the psalmist declares, *"I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart."*

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that *"without faith it is impossible to please God."* It does not say that without faith it is impossible to please self or others, or be on good terms with the world. All that can be achieved without a grain of faith. But faith pleases God, He wants to be believed and trusted, and He deserves it! And in order to live and behave in a way that pleases Him, we must trust Him. Feelings, logic, and looking around to see what others are doing, are things that derail us. We must *believe God*, which is not the same as believing *in* God. It means to trust Him inherently, completely, to put God first, before emotions, logic, family, tradition, personal likes, common sense, and before what the majority thinks or does. Unless we believe Him and follow Him this way, we cannot please Him.

In 2 Timothy 2:4 we learn from Paul that as the soldier pleases the one who called him to be a soldier, so it should be with the Christian. That phrase in verse 4, *"...that he might please,"* succinctly states the life-purpose of the spiritually minded person. Elsewhere the Apostle calls believers to be imitators of him even as he is of Christ. We should ask, as Paul did, *"Lord, what will thou have me to do?"* (Acts 9:6), not out of curiosity, but with a commitment to *do* whatever He desires. And if we ask the Lord, how will we know the answer? We will not find it in the newspaper, on television or radio, nor on the internet. To know what God wants us to do, we need to be reading God's Word, and deepening our understanding of Him and His ways. Life is full of obligations and pleasures that consume our time, and most of them have little eternal importance. In order to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we need to be living in His Word. We need to read it daily, study it diligently, and meditate on it devotionally.

Another passage that speaks clearly of pleasing God is Hebrews 11:5, with Genesis 5:22. The great chapter on faith in Hebrews is not a museum, but a manual. It is not to admire, but to learn from and imitate. The Lord tells us there that Enoch pleased God and walked with Him. Now, why would the Lord tell us that, except for the obvious reason that this is what He desires from us. Before Enoch was translated, he had this testimony, that he pleased God. That was God's testimony concerning Enoch. When someone dies, folks generally try to say something nice about the deceased,

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Relations With Our Brethren

1 Cor. 8:9-12

R.V. Court — Precious Seed May-July 1992

In this passage we see Paul speaking to some in the Corinthian church who have “knowledge.” He was probably indicating by this word that their apprehension of the things of God and of the new liberty that has become theirs through Christ is greater than that of others with the same church, who possibly have not been saved so long, and are not so advanced spiritually as the others. They had all been brought up amidst idolatry, and knew that most of the meat sold in the marketplace had previously been offered to idols, and the recently saved were not sure what their attitude should be in relation to eating this meat as food. They still felt that in some way the meat was affected by its previous offering to idols, and their conscience was not clear about eating it. The better taught Christian had learned that the meat in the market place was simply meat and he could with a good conscience eat it. Now, says Paul to the ones with “knowledge,” be careful how you act in this matter—your weaker brother is watching you, and if he sees you eating that about which he is uncertain, he may be inclined to do the same, although his conscience is telling him that he ought not to do so. He is thereby stumbled.

Paul asks a very important question in verse 11, “through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, *for whom Christ died?*” Surely he is saying, “be very careful how you act in relation to weaker believers—they are precious to Christ—how the Lord loved them!” He stresses the same point in Romans 14:15 and reiterates, “Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died.” In the background the apostle sees the cross and see the preciousness of all those who have been redeemed by blood. Surely, if I love the Lord, I shall not want to hurt others who also love Him. If I sin against them by my example, I am sinning against Christ. It may not be eating meat offered to idols; my example may be in relation to smoking, drinking, cinemas, gambling, etc.—how tragic if my example in relation to these things, or other doubtful things, led a younger believer to follow me and his spiritual life become a disaster. How can I look at Calvary and see the love of my Lord for my fellow-believer and then do that which will harm him? “Let this mind be in you.” *

York Bible Study Program

On March 13th John Gordon will be teaching on the book of Colossians. If a number are coming please call (717) 767-2900, or email us at res0vway@verizon.net, and let us know how many are coming so the proper amount of food can be prepared for lunch.

Thank You!

We want to thank each one who financially supported Spread The Word in 2003. Your gifts have enabled us to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to provide spiritual food for the Lord’s people around the world in this last year.

Nearly \$76,000 was distributed to nearly 150 commended workers in North America and to assembly related ministries. Nearly \$14,000 was also ministered from our General Funds to other ministries which spread the Gospel, including Gospel printing ministries, prison ministries, and assembly camps.

In addition to the over 80,000 issues of *Milk & Honey* which were distributed in over 30 different countries, there were Gospel tracts, teaching booklets and books printed. Almost all of these were distributed free-of-charge.

Many teaching booklets were given to prison ministries and to assemblies at home and aboard.

Your gifts have also supported the Bible Study Program, which continues to be well attended by 40–50 students each month (September to May).

Note: There are no salaries or funds given to any individual who serves in the ministries of Spread The Word. The office is located in the home of the editor of *Milk & Honey*, who is a commended worker, but no funds donated to Spread The Word are used to meet any of his personal expenses associated with providing office space, or with expenses associated with other ministries in which he is involved.

Spread The Word, Inc. 2003 Income-Expense Report

Beginning Balance		\$68,337.23
Income		
Suggested –Workers/Widows	\$75,989.98	
Tax Deductible Gifts	53,557.89	
Other Income	3,240.53	
Literature/Tape Sales	<u>1,017.53</u>	
Total Income	\$133,805.93	
Expenses		
Funds To Workers & Widows	\$75,989.98	
Postage/Shipping	18,063.13	
Ministry from General Fund	13,700.30	
Printing	12,493.67 *	
Conference Expenses	3,951.00	
Bible Study Program	3,447.40	
Office Supplies & Expenses	2,897.38	
Equipment & Software	818.20	
Literature/Tape Expenses	312.79	
Miscellaneous	<u>00.00</u>	
Total Expenses	\$131,673.85	
Net Change		2,132.08
Ending Balance		\$70,469.31

* Not including outstanding orders

