

# 2 Corinthians 5:9 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT  
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## Overview of Second Corinthians

2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21
Character of Paul	Collection for the Saints	Credentials of Paul
Testimonial & Didactic	Practical	Apologetic
Past: Misunderstanding & Explanation	Present: Practical Project	Future: Anxieties
Apostle's Conciliation, Ministry & Exhortations	Apostle's Solicitation for Judean Saints	Apostle's Vindication of Himself
Forgiveness, Reconciliation Gratitude	Confidence	Vindication
Ephesus to Macedonia: Change of Itinerary Explained	Macedonia: Preparation for Visit to Corinth	To Corinth: Certainty and Imminence of the Visit
2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21

[2Corinthians written ~ 56-57AD - see Chronological Table of Paul's Life and Ministry](#)

Adapted & modified from [Jensen's Survey of the New Testament \(Highly Recommended Resource\)](#) & [Wilkinson's Talk Thru the Bible](#)

2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

- Greek:** dio kai philotimoumetha, (1PPPMI) eite endemountes (PAPMPN) eite ekdemountes, (PAPMPN) euarestoi auto einai. (PAN)
- Amplified:** Therefore, whether we are at home [on earth away from Him] or away from home [and with Him], we are constantly ambitious and strive earnestly to be pleasing to Him. ([Lockman](#))
- Barclay:** So then it is our one ambition, whether we are present with him or absent from him, to be the kind of people in which he can find pleasure. ([Westminster Press](#))
- ESV:** So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ([ESV](#))
- KJV:** Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.
- Macent:** wherefore I studiously endeavour, whether staying in it, or departing out of it, to be acceptable to him.
- MLB (Berkley):** Therefore we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him, whether absent or present;
- Moffatt:** Hence also I am eager to satisfy him, whether in the body or away from it;

**Montgomery:** And for this reason I also make it home with the Lord.

**NET:** So then whether we are alive or away, we make it our ambition to please him. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** And so whether at home or exiled, we make it our ambition to please him.

**NLT:** So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** It is our aim, therefore, to please him, whether we are "at home" or "away". ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**TLB:** So our aim is to please him always in everything we do, whether we are here in this body or away from this body and with him in heaven.

**Weymouth:** And for this reason also we make it our ambition, whether at home or in exile, to please Him perfectly.

**Wuest:** Wherefore, we make it our aim, whether at home or living abroad, to be well pleasing to Him, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** Wherefore also we are ambitious, whether at home or away from home, to be well pleasing to him,

**THEREFORE WE ALSO HAVE AS OUR AMBITION WHETHER AT HOME OR ABSENT TO BE PLEASING TO HIM: dio kai philotimoumetha, (1PPPMI) eite endemountes (PAPMPN) eite ekdemountes, (PAPMPN) euarestoi auto einai. (PAN):**

- John 6:27; Romans 15:20; 1Corinthians 9:26,27; 15:58; Colossians 1:29; 1Thessalonians 4:11; 1Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 4:11; 2Peter 1:10,11; 3:14
- 2Co 5:6,8; Romans 14:8
- Genesis 4:7; Isaiah 56:7; Acts 10:35; Ephesians 1:6; Hebrews 12:28
- [2 Corinthians 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- **See also "shorter version" of commentary** on 2 Corinthians 5:9

**ESV Study Bible** has the following note on the greater context of 2Co 4:1-6:13 - Paul's Encouragement in His Ministry. Paul explains why, despite his life of affliction as an apostle of Christ, he does not lose heart in his ministry (2Co 4:1-+, 2Cor 4:16-+, 2Co 5:6-+). He then goes on to define further (2Co 5:11-6:2) and support (2Co 6:3-13) the message and character of the new covenant ministry itself

Now let's look at the more immediate **context**...

## THE CONTEXT:

2 Corinthians 5:1-8

**2 Corinthians 5:1-+ For we know that if the earthly tent** (Greek = **skenos** = temporary residence = figuratively our physical body, temporary dwelling places even as a "tent" is temporary, cp similar allusions in Jn 1:14 verb form skenoo = tabernacled", 2Pe 1:14KJV+- noun **skenoma** = tent, tabernacle) **which is our house** (our spirit and soul lives in the house, our body) **is torn down** (euphemism for "falling asleep" or dying), **we have a building from God** (allusion to our glorified body, discussed in 2Co 5:4-+ and more fully in 1Co 15:51, 52, 53, 54, 36-50), **a house not made with hands** (our glorified, resurrection body, cp Mk 14:58, Jn 2:19, 21), **eternal** (in contrast to the temporal state of our earthly bodies) **in the heavens** (in the best place, the abode of God! With the Lord forever 1Th 4:17-+).

**2 Corinthians 5:2-+ For indeed in this house** (our physical body) **we groan** (stenazo - because of the burden of sin in these physical bodies which brings about a), **longing** (epipotheo - describes earnest desiring and present tense = continually yearning) **to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven** (our glorified resurrection body - 1Jn 3:2-+, the final phase of the redemption of our body - Ro 8:23-+);

**2 Corinthians 5:3-+ inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked** (In eternity we will not be bodiless spirits - Note that the saints now in heaven are awaiting their glorified resurrection bodies at the Rapture vs Second Coming. I cannot find a Scripture which definitely describes the character of what I will call the "intermediate state", but we know that Moses and Elijah appeared at the Transfiguration and were clearly

recognizable by Peter = Mt 17:3,4 and Jesus' post-resurrection bodily appearances - Jn 20:19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29).

**2 Corinthians 5:4+** **For indeed while we are in this tent** (temporary bodies), **we groan** (because of the presence of sin and the continual spiritual conflict between **Spirit** versus the **flesh** [Gal 5:17+], and consequently a groaning for glory, a longing for Jesus to return and to receive our perfect, resurrected, glorified body), **being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal** (our present physical life) **may be swallowed up** (all aspects of their old "mortality" -pain, sin, etc) **by life** (eternal life in Christ, Who is our life, cp Php 3:20, 21+).

**2 Corinthians 5:5+** **Now He who prepared** (katergazomai - carefully fashioned) **us for this very purpose is God** (MacArthur - "believers obtain their glorified bodies in fulfillment of God's sovereign plan from all eternity, bound up in His elective decree... God's ultimate purpose in salvation is not justification but glorification"), **Who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge** (Greek = arrabon [word study] - Paul explains how we can be confident that God will indeed give us glorified bodies. Cp Ep 1:13, 14+. His earnest, first installment or "down payment" to be fulfilled in our future glorified body. **Pledge** also pictures an engagement ring, which is appropriate for the Church is the Bride, awaiting the return of her Bridegroom Christ Jesus - see **Second Coming**; This verse also strongly argues **against** a believer losing their salvation!).

**2 Corinthians 5:6+** **Therefore** (points back to the foundational truths Paul expressed in 2Co 5:1-5 and lead to good courage in face of death), **being** (present tense-he continually faced death with confidence and we can too!) **always of good courage, and knowing** (intuitive knowing, that inner assurance given by the Holy Spirit - cp Ro 8:16+) **that while we are at home in the body** (idiomatic way to refer to our physical bodies here on earth) **we are absent from the Lord** (In a physical sense, for spiritually He is in us [Col 1:27+, Ro 8:9+] and always with us [He 13:5+])

**2 Corinthians 5:7+** **for we walk** (peripateo - present tense = we continually conduct ourselves or behave) **by faith** (He 11:1+; Greek = pistis), **not** (absolute negation = "absolutely not") **by sight--** (This is Paul's "simple secret" [albeit not always so simple in practice!] of how we as believers can experience fellowship with the invisible God [cp He 11:24, 25, 26+, He 11:27+] and abundant life in Christ (Jn 10:10b), while still in these decaying physical bodies [cp 2Co 4:16+, 2Co 4:17+, 2Co 4:18+ - **Faith "looks" at the unseen, the eternal!**])

**2 Corinthians 5:8+** **we are of good courage, I say, and prefer** (resolved, pleased, take delight or pleasure) **rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord**

**Comment: MacArthur** writes: The reality of death faces every believer who dies before the Lord raptures the church (**Ed**: cp 1Th 4:13, 14+, 1Th 4:15, 16+, 1Th 4:17, 18+). Those who look forward to receiving their glorified bodies, to the perfections of life in heaven, to the fulfillment of God's purpose for them, and to living forever in His presence will be able to say triumphantly with Paul, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1Co 15:55). ([MacArthur, J: 2Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Therefore (dio)** is a **term of conclusion** in which Paul is saying in view of the truths in 2Co 5:1-8 (and even continuing back to the previous chapter - eg 2Co 4:18+) concerning our guarantee (God's trustworthy pledge = 2Co 5:5+) of a future eternal glorified body we will receive after we leave our earthly body. Every religion, philosophy or creed other than Christianity has grappled **unsuccessfully** with the inevitability of death [and taxes], so this is quite a triumphant **"therefore"** sounded forth by the apostle Paul! May God grant each of us the fullness of His Spirit that we might shout "Therefore" and might be empowered to live "therefore-focused lives" in Christ Jesus our soon coming King of kings! Amen

## **WHAT IS YOUR AMBITION DURING YOUR BRIEF STAY UPON EARTH?**

Whenever I ponder my answer to this question, God's timeless wise words to Baruch come to mind...

"Seekest thou great things for thyself? **Seek them not:** for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh", saith the LORD, "but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest." (Jer 45:5KJV)

Baruch Records God's Word thru Jeremiah  
(Click to enlarge Gustave Dore's Woodcut)

**Comment:** [Baruch](#) (see [ISBE entry #1](#)) was a young man of good birth and great promise who left that behind to fulfill his life purpose by serving the Lord through his assistance to Jeremiah in his divinely appointed

prophetic call (Je 1:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). As a result, not only did the **Jehovah** spare his life when all the others who had fled into Egypt were losing theirs (cp Mt 16:25, Mk 8:35), but his name has been known and honored by God's people every generation since. And, of course Jesus promised far more to those with a **God saturated vision and ambition**

"Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life." (Lk 18:29,30, cp Lk 14:26, 27, 33, Mk 8:36, 37, et al).

Beloved, may Paul's ambition to be pleasing to the Living God, prompt each of us to take a moment and ponder what will be the eternal fruit of our present ambitions, for as God reminds us our...

"days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so (we flourish). When the wind has passed over it, it is no more; and its place acknowledges it no longer." (Ps 103:15)

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever. (Isa 40:8)

Read and **meditate** on **Eph 5:16-notes**; Consider reading **John Piper's** online book [Don't Waste Your Life](#) or the online sample of [Life As A Vapor](#).

## HOW BRIEF IS OUR LIFE ON EARTH?

Below are some passages that relate to the brevity of our life on planet earth. May God's Spirit enable us to **meditate** on them that we might be motivated to seek to make 2Cor 5:9 our "**life** (transforming) **verse**" to praise of the glory of His matchless grace. Amen!

**Shortness of our lives:** Job 7:6, 7 9:25, 26 14:1, 2 Ps 37:2<sup>±</sup> Ps 39:5, 6<sup>±</sup> Ps 90:4, 5, 6<sup>±</sup>, Ps 90:9, 10<sup>±</sup> Ps 102:3<sup>±</sup>, Ps 102:11<sup>±</sup>, Ps 103:15,16<sup>±</sup> Ps 144:4<sup>±</sup> Isa 38:12,13 40:6,7 Jas 1:10, 11<sup>±</sup>, Jas 4:14 1Pe 1:24<sup>±</sup> 2Ki19:26 (Note that Job speaks a great deal about the brevity of life. **Interesting** to ponder in view of what had transpired in his life.)

**Have... ambition** (5389) (**philotimeomai** [word study] from **philos** = friend, loved + **time** = honor) means literally to be fond of honor, to be actuated by love of honor and hence to strive or seek for honor and hence to be ambitious. In later Greek it came to denote restless eagerness in any pursuit, hence, "to strive eagerly, to be zealous." **Philotimeomai** thus evolved to picture one who was to earnestly aspire to something, implying strong ambition for the goal in view. The emphasis is on yearning that a particular thing will be accomplished and fully give oneself to do the task. The **present tense** emphasizes that Paul's goal was to continually conduct himself in a manner that pleased his Lord and Master.

**Gromacki** picks up on the above definition commenting that "When a redeemed sinner perceives all that God has done for him and all that he is in Christ, then he will live and serve out of love for honor. He will want to honor his God and the name of Christ that he bears. ([Stand Firm in the Faith: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians](#))

**Philotimeomai** - "desire earnestly", "Make it one's aim" (Plummer)

**John MacArthur** - Paul used **philotimeomai** two other times in his writings (the only other times it appears in the New Testament). In Romans 15:20 he wrote, "I aspired [from **philotimeomai**] to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation"; while in 1 Thessalonians 4:11 he exhorted the Thessalonians, "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you." Though Paul used different Greek words, the same point is made in 1 Timothy 3:1: "If any man aspires [from **oregō**] to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires [from **epithumeō**] to do." There is a central place in the Christian life for noble ambition, for a passion for what is excellent and honorable. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

The **2Cor 5:9KJV** is somewhat misleading suggesting that we need to "**labor**" so that "**we may be accepted by Him**." Paul is not suggesting that believers must "**labor**" to be "**accepted**" by Christ. No works of ours could ever please God. Only His works done in and through us as we abide in the Vine, Christ Jesus, are acceptable to His holy eyes. Most other versions are rendered to convey the more accurate sense that we as believers are to have as our highest ambition the earnest desire to please Christ.

**BDAG** explains the etymology of this word and how it relates to the Greek word for honor noting that "special honor (time) was accorded persons who rendered exceptional service to the state or other institutions, and many wealthy persons endeavored to outdo one another in philanthropic public service... have as one's ambition, consider it an honor, aspire, with focus on idea of rendering service ([Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#))

**Plummer** comments that **philotimeomai** "in meaning and construction is thus equivalent to spoudazein (**spoudazo**) (1Th 2:16, Gal 2:10, Ep 4:3, 2Ti 2:15). "We make it a point of honor" is a translation which looks neat, but is not preferable to "desire earnestly" or "make it our aim" ([Plummer -ICC on 2Corinthians](#))

**Philotimeomai** - 3x in 3v - Both of the other NT uses also describe **godly ambition**...

Ro 15:20+ And thus I **aspired** (KJV = strived) to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation;

1Th 4:11+ and to **make it your ambition** to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you;

**Our ambition** - KJV = "We labor". **Bengel** describes this ambition (2Co 5:9) as "the sole legitimate ambition." (*una ambitio legitima*). Let us not play at Christianity as we would the popular game called "Trivial Pursuit", but let us devote ourselves, ambitiously, zealously to the cause of Christ! There is no better and more profitable way to pass our short time on this earth which John says is also passing away and even its lustful desires (1Jn 2:17-+).

Normally one would not think "**ambition**" a good thing in a life initiated and daily enabled by grace (undeserved divine favor and divine power- 2Co 12:9+), for as Thomas Adams once said "**Ambition**, like the grave, is never full." Paul however elevates the meaning of **ambition** from the normal selfish, fleshly ambitions that drive fallen men to seek to be number one (someone has well said the "number 1" is "next to nothing"! Pun intended!) and instead uses it to refer to a "holy ambition". Here are two good tests for us to follow as we seek to live a life pleasing to God. (1) Will it make others stumble? (2) Will I be ashamed if Jesus should return?

So many in the Western World (and yes, even genuine believers) bow low to the god "mammon" (cp Mt 6:24KJV+) and have as their life **ambition** to achieve worldly riches (albeit transient) rather than the eternal riches found only in a knowledge of and relationship with Christ (Col 2:3-+, Mt 6:21-+), and will **one day** (believers = 2Co 5:10-+) painfully, regretfully understand from their experience the truth of the proverb which says...

Do not weary yourself to gain wealth. Cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings. Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens. (Pr 23:4, 5) ("Amen" or "O my!") (cp He 13:5-+)

**James M Scott** rightly observes that "Paul does not put his own preferences first. Like the synoptic portrayal of Jesus in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36 par.; cf. John 12:27), Paul subordinates his own will to the will of God. To please God in all things is the apostle's highest goal (cf. Ro 12:1-+, Ro 12:2-+; Ro 14:18-+; Php 4:18-+; Col 3:20-+). To bring praise and honor to God is Paul's constant aim. ([Scott, J. M., New International Biblical Commentary: 2 Corinthians. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.](#))

**Philip Edgcumbe Hughes** writes that "In arresting contrast to the ambition of this world, it is centered, not on self, but on the Saviour; its goal is to please Him. Hence Paul's injunction to the Colossians: "Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,... heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:17,23).([Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes](#))

**John Trapp** - Our hope of heaven makes us active and abundant in God's service. The doctrine of assurance is not a doctrine of liberty, but the contrary, 1Jn 3:3-+.

[David Brainerd](#) echoed Paul's ambition to please God when he said "I do not go to heaven to be advanced but to give honor to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or low seat there... My heaven is to please God and glorify him and give all to him and to be wholly devoted to his glory.

**J Philip Arthur** - We are familiar with the kind of gratitude that looks back to the cross. ('If Jesus did all that for me, how can I refuse him anything?') Paul was buoyed up by what we might call gratitude looking forward. In view of all that God was going to do for him, he made it his aim to be 'well pleasing to him' (2Co 5:9). Can we not do the same? The Almighty has promised us glory and a new nature which cannot sin. He has even promised us full enjoyment of himself. Can we not do a little more than we do at present in return? (Strength in Weakness)

**Adam Clarke** elaborates on the sense in which Paul used the verb to have **ambition** explaining that as "we act at all times on the principles of honor; we are, in the proper sense of the word, **ambitious** to do and say every thing consistently with our high vocation: and, as we claim kindred to the inhabitants of heaven, to act as they do. ([Adam Clarke Commentary](#))

**R Kent Hughes** writes "My three-year-old golden retriever, Daisy, provides me with a canine example of the desire to please because that is all my dog wants to do. Daisy dutifully watches me and listens for my voice inflections or gestures that indicate my pleasure. Her posture seems to say, "Just tell me what you want and I'll do it!" Daisy doesn't bark. She doesn't jump up. She doesn't paw the door or screen to get out. She doesn't steal food, and she doesn't beg. She just stares at the door until I am overcome with

guilt. Daisy worships me. Actually, she's not perfect. She demands affection. And while she doesn't go into the off-limits living room when I'm home, she does sneak in to peer out of the window to see which way her master has gone. So when I'm away from home, I'm not sure that she always makes it her aim to please me. Bad dog! A sentimental example from the lips of a dog-lover? Yes! But this is instructive. Daisy isn't very smart. She doesn't understand abstractions. She doesn't think much beyond her toys and her next meal and how to get a scratch between the ears. She can't read. She has no eschatology—no doctrine of the future, of resurrection, of judgment and reward. Daisy's Plus Ultra is the next dog biscuit. But though she has no doctrine of future reward, she wants to please her master. How much more we should want to please Christ Jesus, our Master. ([Hughes, R. K. 2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word. Crossway](#))

In his letter to the Galatians **Paul** asked...

For (Paul now explains why he had invoked a curse [Gal 1:8, 9] which might seem too harsh to some - the point is that he would not have said that if he had desired the approval of men rather than God!) am I now seeking (currying, trying to win over) the favor of men (his primary ambition before his regeneration, was to persecute Christians and please fellow Jews) , or of God? Or am I striving (zeteo - aiming at trying) **to please** men? If I were still trying **to please (aresko)** men, I would not be a bond-servant (**doulos** - Paul was surrendered wholly to Christ's will and devoted to Him to the disregard of his own interest - What a high, holy example Paul sets for all believers! This should be be our "ambition".) of Christ. (Galatians 1:10)

**Comment:** Apparently Paul had been accused of trying to curry favor with men. Paul responds that his primary, overriding ambition was to please God, not to please men. He would not fashion and shape his message just to please his audience (Acts 20:27, Gal 4:16, 1Th 2:4-+). His primary motive was to be pleasing to God. I like what someone once said "*It's dangerous to try to be number one, because it's next to nothing.*"

**Leon Morris:** There have always been preachers who have sought popular acclaim above all else, and there are some still. It is part of fallen human nature that even those charged with the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel can fall into the trap of trying to be popular rather than faithful.

**Grant Richison has a pithy comment/application:** In the seeker service approach today, there is a danger in diluting the message so that the unchurched cannot decipher the true gospel. The seeker service methodology is biblical to the extent it is an accommodation to the culture of people in the 21st century. The methodology of the seeker service is not biblical if it modifies the message (**Ed:** cp 2Ti 4:2-+, 2Ti 4:3, 4-+). If we adapt the message to reach people, then we are in the business of currying favor with men. There is no biblical justification for flattering men to gain a following.

**If we trim the edges off the Gospel,  
we become religious shadow boxers.**

We are not in the business of winning a popularity contest when it comes to presenting the truth of the gospel. Truth is as rigid as the multiplication table and cannot be bent and adapted even to an unchurched culture.

**When we perform a religious toe dance with a gospel of latitude,  
we dance the gospel right out of God's ballroom.**

The unadulterated gospel of grace is not popular for it is not easy to tell people that they are lost (**Ed:** And destined for an eternity of unimaginable torment and tragic separation from their Creator) and need a Saviour. People want to hear that they can do something about their salvation... Those who court popularity at the expense of truth will forfeit the message of Christ, the message of grace (**Ed:** And the context of 2Cor 5:9 they will emphatically **NOT** be pleasing to the Lord!). ([Galatians 1:10 Verse by Verse Commentary](#))

**Kistemaker** adds that "Whether believers are in or out of the body does not matter, for their aim (**Ed:** "ambition") is to please the Lord... Paul is not addressing those who have died and are with the Lord. He is speaking to the readers who are alive. He is exhorting us to serve the Lord in such a manner that both God and our fellow men always take pleasure in our conduct (Ro 14:18-+; Heb 13:21-+). ([Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. NT Commentary Set -Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Baker Book](#))

**Spurgeon** once describe his **ambition** "I know of nothing which I would choose to have as the subject of my **ambition** for life than to be kept faithful to my God till death."

**WRONGLY MOTIVATED**



## AMBITION

**Wiersbe** reminds us that "There is an **ambition** that is selfish and worldly, but there is also a holy ambition that honors the Lord. Paul's great ambition was to be well-pleasing to Jesus Christ. The Judaizers ministered to please men and enlisted them in their cause; but Paul ministered to please Jesus Christ alone (Gal 1:10). A man-pleasing ministry is a carnal, compromising ministry; and God cannot bless it.

**William Bridge** gives us a good reminder of the danger of **selfish ambition** advising us to "Seek not great things for yourself in this world, for if your garments be long they will make you stumble."

The Puritan **Thomas Brooks** was even more pointed warning that "**Ambition** (Pride) is a gilded misery, a secret poison, a hidden plague, the engineer of deceit, the mother of hypocrisy, the parent of envy, the original of vices, the moth of holiness and blinder of hearts, turning medicines into maladies and remedies into diseases. High seats are never but uneasy and crowns are always stuffed with thorns. ([The Unsearchable Riches of Christ](#))

**Whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him - Amplified** = "Therefore, whether we are at home [on earth away from Him] or away from home [and with Him]." In 2Cor 5:8 he Paul had just described being **absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord**. From this immediate context then **at home** in this verse means with the Lord and **absent** means away from the Lord in his earthly body. **Home or absent** contrasts the present life with the eschatological (future) existence with Christ (ultimately in our new bodies). Paul's point is that whether alive on earth or standing before the Lord, he will seek a life of dedication, service and praise to His great God. In short, his life will be an unbroken anthem of purpose and praise from present to future designed to bring pleasure to the heart of His Lord.

**At home** (1736) (**endemeo** from **en** = in + **demos** = people > **endemos** = "one who is in his own place or land") literally means to be among one's people. The verb **endemeo** then simply means to be present in any state or with any person. In the present context **endemeo** is an idiom for being alive. **Vine** notes that **endemeo** is "used metaphorically of the life on earth of believers, 2Co 5:6, "at home (in the body)"; in 2Co 5:8 of the life in Heaven of the spirits of believers, after their decease, "at home (with the Lord)," rv (kjb, "present"); in 2Co 5:9, "at home" (kjb, "present") refers again to the life on earth. In each verse the verb is contrasted with **ekdemeo**, "to be away from home, to be absent"; in 2Co 5:6, "we are absent," i.e., away from "home" (from the Lord); in 2Cor 5:8, "to be absent" (i.e., away from the "home" of the body); so in 2Cor 5:9, "absent." The implication in being "at home with the Lord" after death is a testimony against the doctrine of the unconsciousness of the spirit, when freed from the natural body. (Vine, W E: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. 1996. Nelson) **Grundman** adds that neither **ekdemeo** and **endemeo** is "used in the Septuagint (LXX), they occur in the NT in 2Co 5:6, 8, 9. to express the thoughts (1) that bodily existence is absence from the **Lord**, and (2) that full fellowship with the **Lord** is possible only apart from this existence. We and the **Lord** are in separate spheres. **Faith** overcomes the separation (2Cor 5:7) but is not the final reality. We thus desire ("prefer") to be out of the present sphere and at home with the Lord so as to enjoy the full fellowship of sight. Nevertheless, even in the present sphere the desire to please the Lord gives direction to life (2Co 5:9). ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

Paul has just used **endemeo** in a similar sense in 2Cor 5:6. = Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are **at home** (**endemeo**) in the body we are absent (**ekdemeo**) from the Lord (+)

**Endemeo** - 3x in 3v - 2 Cor 5:6, 8, 9.

**Absent** (1553) (**ekdemeo** from **ek** = from or out of + **demos** = people, populace, crowd, popular assembly) from **ek** = from or out of + **demos** = originally a "divided portion," the division of a people or territory, the people as inhabitants of a land or city) literally means to be away from people. **Ekdemeo** originally described movement from a geographic location and was used in Greek with the meaning of to leave one's country or take a long journey. The Jewish historian Josephus writes that "Elisha the prophet, at that time, was **gone out of** his own country to Damascus". To leave. To be in exile. To be absent from a place where one normally belongs. To emigrate. To travel. **Parepidemois** meaning a sojourner is a derivative of **demos**.

**Absent** - In this context means "asleep" (Used as a euphemism for death but only for believers! = Jn 11:11, 1Th 4:13, 1Co 15:51, see verb **koimao**) or dead. This expression along with at home is used to contrast the present life with the eschatological (future) existence with Christ (ultimately in our new bodies). Paul's point is that whether alive or dead, will be a life of dedication, service and praise to His great God. In short, his life will be an unbroken anthem of purpose and praise from present to future. **May God grant us the grace to imitate Paul's example, so that our joy might be full forever in Christ. Amen.**

**Vine** writes that **ekdemeo** "came to mean either (a) "to go abroad, depart"; the apostle Paul uses it to speak of departing from the body as the earthly abode of the spirit, 2Co 5:8; or (b) "to be away"; in the same passage, of being here in the body and absent from the Lord (2Co 5:6), or being absent from the body and present with the Lord (2Cor 5:8). Its other occurrence is in 2Cor 5:9.

**Ekdemeo** - 3x in 3v - 2 Cor 5:6, 8, 9.

**Moulton and Milligan** - Greek secular uses - "but if we change our residence, or **go abroad**, we shall give notice," "that no time be lost in his **departure**"

**Louw and Nida** - *ekdemeo ek to somatos* = an idiom, literally 'to leave home from the body'.

**Pleasing** (2101) (**euarestos** from **eu** = good, well + **arestos** = pleasing, desirable, proper, fit, agreeable from **aresko** = to please or be pleasing/acceptable to) means that which causes someone to be pleased. It is something which is well approved, eminently satisfactory, or extra-ordinarily pleasing. **Euarestos** - 9x in 9v - Ro 12:1, 2; 14:18; 2 Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; Phil 4:18; Col 3:20; Titus 2:9; Heb 13:21. NAS = acceptable(3), pleasing(3), well-pleasing(3).

**John MacArthur** on **pleasing** - Paul used the adjective **euarestos** (pleasing) frequently in his writings. In Romans 12:1–2 and 14:18 he used it to speak of behavior that is acceptable to God. He urged the Ephesians to try "to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (Eph. 5:10). He described the Philippians' financial support of him as being "well-pleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18). In Colossians 3:20 he noted that children's obedience to their parents "is well-pleasing to the Lord." **Euarestos** also appears in Titus 2:9, where it describes slaves who are pleasing to their masters. Godly ambition seeks to please the Lord in all aspects of life (Col. 1:10). Nowhere is the focus of Paul's ambition more clearly articulated than in 1 Corinthians 4:3–5+. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

God's will is **well-pleasing** because you cannot add anything to the will of God and in any way improve it. You could not take anything away from it and make it better. God's will is **totally acceptable**.

**J R Miller** asks "What is the standard of success in the sphere of the unseen and the eternal? It is the doing of the will of God. He who does the will of God—makes his life radiant and beautiful, though in the world's scale he is rated as having altogether failed in the battle. He who is true, just, humble, pure, **pleasing God** and living unselfishly—is the only man who really succeeds—while all others fail. ([My Will--or God's Will](#))

**A W Pink** rightly reminds us that "God's Word is the daily bread of the "blessed" man—is it so with you? The unregenerate delight in pleasing self—but the joy of the Christian lies in **pleasing God**. It is not simply that he is interested in "the Law of the Lord," but he **delights** therein (Ps 1:2-+). There are thousands of people, like those in cults, and, we may add, in the more orthodox sections of Christendom, who are keen students of Scripture, who delight in its prophecies, types, and mysteries, and who eagerly grasp at its promises; yet are they far from **delighting** in the authority of its Author and in being subject to His revealed will. The "blessed" man delights in the precepts of the Word. There is a "delight" —a peace, joy, and satisfaction of soul—pure and stable, to be found in subjection to God's will, which is obtainable nowhere else. As John tells us "His commandments are not grievous (burdensome)" (1Jn 5:3), and as David declares "in keeping of them there is great reward" (Psalm 19:11-+). ([The Blessed Man](#))

The unregenerate delight in pleasing self—but the joy of the Christian lies in pleasing God. ([The Counsel of the Wicked](#))

Note Paul's use of **euarestos** in Titus 2:9-+ where he charges bondservants (doulos [word study]) to submit themselves to the will of their master in all things so that they might be well-pleasing to their masters. We as believers also have a Master, but ours is in heaven, which makes Paul's charge even more pressing for all who call Jesus "**Lord**" (kurios [word study])! Beloved, may we never be among those who have to hear Jesus' solemn words...

And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do (present tense = as the general habit of your life. Jesus is speaking of direction, not perfection) what I say? (Lk 6:46)

**Comment:** To call Jesus Lord must be coupled with obedience to Him as Lord. To not do so is a dangerous deception which could end in eternal separation (cp Mt 7:21-+, Mt 7:22, 23-+). As the NET Bible note says "*Respect is not a matter of mere words, but is reflected in obedient action*" To be well pleasing to God is to do His will, for as Samuel had to painfully point out to King Saul "to obey is better than sacrifice, to heed than the fat of rams." (1Sa 15:22)

## WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST GOAL YOUR ONE PASSION?

Paul's service on earth was carried out so that it would **bring pleasure to the heart of his Lord**, whether he was still on earth or



whether he was standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ. To be **well pleasing** was Paul's highest goal, and should be the goal of every believer.

**Whatever you do  
Do all to the glory of God.**  
1 Corinthians 10:31

**Adam Clarke** - Through the love we have to God, we study and labour to please Him. This is and will be our heaven, to study to love, please, and serve Him from Whom we have received both our being and its blessings. ([Adam Clarke Commentary](#))

**Whatever we do,  
it is because Christ's love controls us.**  
2 Corinthians 5:14

## **HOW TO BE PLEASING TO THE LORD**

### **(1) We are pleasing to the Lord when we like Paul do not become entangled in the affairs of the world.**

**2 Timothy 2:3, 4** **Suffer hardship** (aorist imperative = command to do this now, to be willing to do it without hesitation when [not "if"] the suffering comes!) with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier in active service **entangles** (**empleko** and in the **present tense** describes intertwining with the world as a progressive process, not just an occasional "hiccup". E.g., we need to ask ourselves "*Are my possessions possessing me?*", "*Where are my affections... my heart?*" - see Col 3:1+, Col 3:2+, Mt 6:21+, Mt 6:24+) himself in the affairs of everyday life, **so that he may please** (**aresko** - note that this verb is the root of **euarestos** which Paul uses here in 2Cor 5:9) the one who enlisted him as a soldier (Jesus has "enlisted" us in His "army").

**Comment:** **So how can we fulfill the ambition to be pleasing to God?** Clearly by making life choices that do not result in our becoming more and more entangled with the day to day affairs that occupy (and worry) the crooked and perverse generation (Php 2:15+) that is "tethered" to this present, passing, perverted world. (As an aside, compare the destructive effects of the world on the sown seed of the Word = Mt 13:22, Lk 8:14, Mk 4:18, 19)

### **(2) We are pleasing to the Lord when we walk like Enoch walked with God (by faith).**

**Hebrews 11:5+** **By faith** Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was **pleasing** to God.

**Comment:** From Hebrews 11:6 we see that Enoch's **pleasing** God was proof that he believed God and believed that He was a Rewarder of those who sought Him! Enoch walked by faith not sight. A walk of faith is reflected in obedience (not perfection but general direction of one's behavior and conduct.) A faith that is not accompanied not obedience gives no evidence that it is genuine (saving) faith! Do not misunderstand - obedience did not save Enoch, but it did demonstrate that he truly believed God was the only God and that He would reward him (which He did by rapturing him to Heaven!)

**Genesis 5:22** Then **Enoch walked with** (Hebrew = **halak** = speaks of movement, and thus means to physically walk but here figuratively describes one's behavior - see discussion below) God 300 years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters.

**Resources** related to Enoch's Walk with God:

- [Enoch Walking with God - J C Ryle](#)
- [The Character and Translation of Enoch - J A James](#)
- [Enoch Walked with God by Edward Griffin](#)
- [Hebrews 11:5 Enoch's Translation - Charles Simeon](#)

**Genesis 5:24** **Enoch walked with** (Hebrew = **halak**; **Lxx** = **euaresteo** = "well-pleasing to") God and he was not for God took him.

**Comment:** The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates both uses of the Hebrew verb "**walked**" with the Greek verb **euaresteo** = well pleasing. Brenton's English translation of the Lxx is "*And Enoch was well-pleasing to God...*". It follows that the Hebrew verb **halak** clearly describes not just a physical walk but the general

conduct of one's life. In all of the OT examples in this section we find depictions of men whose lives were characterized not by *perfection* but by *direction*, that is, by a general tendency toward godliness and toward their future promised home in heaven. As a corollary, if you believe you are headed **for heaven in the future**, your life should reflect it **on earth in the present**! If it does not, you might be deceiving yourself (study 2Cor 13:5-+) and your life might not be pleasing to God now or then! (cp Mt 7:21+, Mt 7:22, 23-+)

As an aside the **Lxx** translates "**took**" ("God took him") with the verb **metatithemi** which literally means to convey or transfer from one place to another!

**NET Bible** has an additional interesting insight on the **Hebrew verb halak**: The construction translated "walked with" is used in Ge 5:22, 24 and in 1Sa 25:15, where it refers to David's and Nabal's men "rubbing shoulders" in the fields. Based on the use in 1Sa 25:15, the expression ("walked with") seems to mean "live in close proximity to," which may, by metonymy, mean "maintain cordial relations with."

**John Angell James**: We now turn to the description of his character and conduct given by the writer of the Book of Genesis—"Enoch walked with God." Nothing can be more beautiful, comprehensive, or expressive than these few words. They contain a figure of speech—and what a figure! The allusion is to two people voluntarily and pleasantly walking together, and conversing confidentially with each other. They are friends, for "how can two walk together except they are agreed." They are conscious of each other's presence, as two people in such a situation necessarily must be. They are engaged in actual fellowship; there is communion and interchange of thought by speech. They are going the same way and engaged upon the same subject. Thus did Enoch walk with God. He was, like Abraham afterwards, the friend of God, having, as a sinner, come into a state of reconciliation with God by repentance and faith in the promised "Seed of the woman." He loved God as the effect of God's love to him, they were friends, and the patriarch knew and rejoiced in it. He lived as in the presence of God—he endured as seeing Him that is invisible, he acted "as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye," and was checked in temptation, stimulated in duty, and comforted in affliction, with Hagar's appeal, "O God, You see me." His private, domestic, and social life was ever regulated by the assured belief that he was always and everywhere in the presence and under the notice, even to the state of his heart, of an observant God. He maintained habitual communion with God, not only by those public acts of worship and sacrificial rites, which doubtless, he celebrated before the eyes of the scoffing generation amidst which he lived, not only at the domestic altar around which he gathered his household, nor even in the usual acts of his own private and personal devotion—but also in the constant frame and tenor of his devout and holy mind. His soul was in habitual communion with God, by its thoughts, its aspirations, and its unutterable breathings of confidence, affection, and intense desires. He exercised a divine friendship, a confidential, yet reverential familiarity, and talked with God as a man talks with his friend.

*In vain our fancy strives to paint  
The moment after death,  
The glories that surround the saint,  
When he resigns his breath!*

*Thus much, and this is all we know—  
They are completely blessed,  
Are done with sin, and care, and woe,  
And with their Savior rest!*

**HALLELUJAH!**

## **HOW THEN SHALL WE WALK BELOVED?**

**Thomas Reade**: O, blessed Jesus, open my understanding, that I may understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:45). Show me Yourself in all the fullness of Your power- in all the freeness of Your love. Guide me by Your Spirit, for **it is not in man** (not in our power, our self effort, our own natural strength) that walks to direct his steps.

Study, O my soul, the records of eternal life. There you will discover, through the teaching of the Spirit of Truth, whether you are a pilgrim on the road to Zion. In that precious Book you are informed how you are not to walk, if a believer in Jesus—

Walk not after the flesh. (Ro 8:13KJV+)

Walk not after the course of this world. (Eph 2:2+)

Walk not in darkness. (1Jn 1:6, Pr 2:13, Jn 8:12)

Walk not by sight. (2Co 5:7+)

Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. (Eph 4:17KJV+)

These important passages stand as beacons, to guard you against the threatened danger...

Lord! you have said, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." (Isa 42:16KJV) Fulfill this gracious promise to your servant, who is now seeking to walk in the light of your countenance, and by the guidance of your Holy Spirit. Cause me to walk in your statutes faithfully unto the end. Renew my strength that I may run and not be weary, and walk and not faint; yes, that I may mount with wings like an eagle, until I reach your abode of glory. (Isaiah 40:31+)

Search the Scriptures again, O my soul, and learn from these oracles of truth, how you are to walk as a believer, and how you may be assured that you are a believer, if your walk be correspondent to these sacred marks (**Ed**: Dear saint, let us make such a blessed walk our goal in this one brief life)—

Walk with God. (Ge 5:22)

Walk after (according to) the Spirit. (Ro 8:4, 5+)

Walk in Christ (Col 2:6+).

Walk by faith. (2Co 5:7+)

Walk in love. (Eph 5:2+)

Walk before God with all your heart (1Ki 8:23, 61, 11:4, 15:3,14, 2Ki 20:3 1Chr 12:38, 28:9, 29:19, 2Ch15:17, 16:9, 19:9, 25:2)

Walk in truth. (1Ki 2:4, 3:14, Lev 26:3, 4, Lk 1:6, Ps 86:11+)

Walk in wisdom toward those who are without. (Col 4:5KJV+)

Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. (Eph 5:15KJV+)

Walk in the light. (1Jn 1:7, Jn 8:12, 12:35, Ps 56:13+, Ps 89:15+, Isa 2:5, Isa 9:2, Rev 21:24+)

Walk as a child of light. (Eph 5:8+)

Walk in the fear of the Lord. (Neh 5:9, Pr 23:17, Dt 8:6, 10:12, 2Chr 6:31, Acts 9:31)

Walk worthy the vocation with which you are called. (Eph 4:1KJV+)

Walk in newness of life. (Ro 6:4+)

Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. (Col 1:10+)

Walk worthy of the Gospel of Christ (Php 1:27+)

Walk worthy of God, who has called you unto his kingdom and glory. (1Th 2:12+, cp 1Pe 2:9+)

Walk to please God (1Th 4:1+)

Walk as Christ walked. (1Pe 2:21+, Jn 13:15, 1Jn 2:6)

BELOVED OF THE LORD

MAKE THIS YOUR PRAYER...

Blessed Emmanuel! you know that I desire to walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, but to walk with my whole heart "in the way of your laws, and in obedience to your commandments," to walk by faith in your blood and righteousness, to the honor and glory of your holy name. Like Enoch and Noah may I walk with you. Like Abraham may I walk before you with a perfect heart. Like David may I set the Lord always before me.

Oh! Allow me not to walk in the vain imagination of my heart; but in mercy teach me the good way

wherein I should go. Then when I walk in the midst of trouble you will revive me; yes, when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I shall fear no evil, for you will be with me, your rod and your staff they shall comfort me. O God, who declares your Almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity; mercifully grant unto me such a measure of your grace, that, running in the path of your commandments, I may obtain your gracious promises, and be made a partaker of your heavenly treasure through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen. ([Thomas Reade 1841 - Christian Meditations or The Believer's Companion in Solitude - Walking with God - Genesis 5:22 - a recommended read!](#)) ([Index to All 70 Christian Meditations](#))  
(Cross references added)

Oh! that like Enoch I may walk  
With God in fellowship divine,  
Enjoy the witness of his love,  
And in his blessed image shine.  
When you shall call me hence away,  
I then shall prove the promise true;  
While hastening to the eternal world,  
Your glory, Lord, bursts on my view.  
Like Abraham may I talk with You,  
As friends converse who dearly love,  
And taste the comforts of your grace,  
'Till I shall reach the world above.  
As blessed Elijah, strong in faith,  
Was borne aloft on wings of fire,  
So may my heart on You be fixed,  
Ascending on intense desire.  
O may I walk with You in love,  
And live, as ever in your sight,  
Until far removed from sin and woe,  
I walk with You arrayed in white.

Below are the other OT (Lxx) uses of **euaresteo**... when it is used to translate the Hebrew verb **halak**, to walk with...

**Genesis 6:9** These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah **walked with** (Hebrew = **halak** ; **Lxx** = **euaresteo** = "well-pleasing to") God.

**Comment:** Dearly beloved of the Father, if you sense the flames of your ambition to please Christ have cooled and your walk with Him is not what it once was, then let the prayerful poignant words of William Cowper's great hymn be in your heart and on your lips...

***Oh, for a closer walk with God,  
A calm and heavenly frame,  
A light to shine upon the road  
That leads me to the Lamb.***

*Where is the blessedness I knew,  
When first I saw the Lord?  
Where is the soul refreshing view  
Of Jesus and His Word?*

*What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!  
How sweet their memory still!  
But they have left an aching void  
The world can never fill.*

*Return, O holy Dove, return,  
Sweet messenger of rest!  
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn  
And drove Thee from my breast.*

*The dearest idol I have known,*

*Whate'er that idol be  
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
And worship only Thee.*

***So shall my walk be close with God,  
Calm and serene my frame;  
So purer light shall mark the road  
That leads me to the Lamb.***

[Choral version:](#)

[Vocal Version - uses 1st & last stanza](#)

**Genesis 17:1** Now when **Abram** was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; **Walk** (A reflexive [you yourself is the idea] imperative or command in Hebrew = halak ; **Lxx** = **euaresteo** = be "well-pleasing to" in the present imperative = make this the habitual practice of your life!) before Me, and be blameless.

**Genesis 24:40** "And he said to me (**Isaac** speaking), 'The LORD, before whom I have **walked** (Hebrew = halak ; **Lxx** = **euaresteo** = "well-pleasing to"), will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives, and from my father's house;

**Genesis 48:15** And he (**Israel or Jacob** is speaking - Ge 48:14) blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my fathers **Abraham** and **Isaac** **walked** (Hebrew = halak; **Lxx** = **euaresteo** = "well-pleasing to"), the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,

**Psalms 26:3** (**David** writes) For Thy lovingkindness is before my eyes, And I have **walked** (Hebrew = halak; **Lxx** = **euaresteo** = "well-pleasing to") in Thy truth.

**Spurgeon:** If we were not so forgetful of the way of mercy in which God walks toward us, we should be more careful to walk in the ways of obedience toward him. **And I have walked in Thy truth.** The psalmist was preserved from sin by his assurance of the truthfulness of God's promise, which truth he endeavored to imitate as well as to believe. Observe from this verse that an experience of divine love will show itself in a practical following of divine truth; those who neglect either the doctrinal or practical parts of truth must not wonder if they lose the experimental enjoyment of it (cp Jn 7:17).

**Some talk of truth,  
it is better to walk in it.**

Some vow to do well in future, but their resolutions come to nothing; only the regenerate man can say "I have walked in thy truth."

**Psalms 56:13** For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may **walk** (Hebrew = halak; **Lxx** = **euaresteo** = "well-pleasing") before God In the light of the living.

**Spurgeon:** That I may walk before God in the light of the living, enjoying the favor and presence of God, and finding the joy and brightness of life therein. Walking at liberty, in holy service, in sacred communion, in constant progress in holiness, enjoying the smile of heaven -- this I seek after (**Ed:** cp "my ambition... to be pleasing to Him"). Here is the loftiest reach of a good man's ambition, to dwell with God, to walk in righteousness before Him, to rejoice in His presence, and in the light and glory which it yields. Thus in this short Psalm, we have climbed from the ravenous jaws of the enemy into the light of Jehovah's presence, a path which only faith can tread.

**Psalms 116:9** I shall **walk** (Hebrew = halak; **Lxx** = **euaresteo** = "well-pleasing") before the LORD In the land of the living.

**Spurgeon:** This is the Psalmist's second resolution, to live as in the sight of God in the midst of the sons of men. By a man's **walk** is understood his way of life: some men live only as in the sight of their fellow men, having regard to human judgment and opinion; but the truly gracious man considers the presence of God, and acts under the influence of His all observing eye. "Thou God sees me" is a far better influence than "My master sees me." **The life of faith, hope, holy fear, and true holiness is produced by a sense of living and walking before the Lord,** and he who has been favored with divine deliverances in answer to prayer finds his own experience the best reason for a holy life, and the best assistance to his endeavors. We know that God in a special manner is nigh unto His people: what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? (2Pe 3:11-+)

In summary, walking with or before God speaks of a close relationship with Him and describes the lives



of **Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac** and **David**, all of whom walked in a manner that was **pleasing to God**! May their tribe increase among those of us who are privileged to be in the New Covenant and who therefore possess the indwelling Spirit, which leaves us no excuse to not obey Paul's command to walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16-+). **And as we walk by the Spirit we will walk in a manner that is pleasing to God, not because we are so good, but because God's grace is so amazing! Amen? Amen!**

### **(3) We are pleasing to the Lord when we like Noah believe He is God and He is a Rewarder.**

**Hebrews 11:6+** And without faith it is impossible to **please** Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

**Comment:** Note that without faith is not just "**difficult**" to please Him - It is **impossible**! The point is that nothing but faith pleases God, at least as far as human beings are concerned! Faith that pleases God, (1) believes that He is the only real and true God who exists and (2) believes that He is a good God, a God Who rewards faith, for example with the "rewards" of forever forgiveness and Christ's imputed righteousness.

**C H Mackintosh:** (Faith) glorifies God exceedingly, because it proves that we have more confidence in His eyesight than in our own.

**Matthew Henry:** The practical belief of the existence of God, as revealed in the word, would be a powerful awe-band upon our souls, a bridle of restraint to keep us from sin, and a spur of constraint to put us upon all manner of gospel obedience.

**William Newell:** These two elements seem most simple, but, alas, how many professing Christians act as if God were not living; and how many others, though seeking after Him, are not expecting from Him as Rewarder!

### **(4) We are pleasing to the Lord when we are doing good and sharing with others.**

**Hebrews 13:16+** And **do not neglect** (present imperative with a negative = a command to stop neglecting implying some were already neglecting it) doing good and sharing (**koinonia**); for with such sacrifices God is **pleased**. (Cp Gal 6:7+, Gal 6:8+, Gal 6:9,10+, contrast Ps 51:16<sup>+</sup>, Ps 51:17<sup>+</sup>).

### **(5) We are pleasing to the Lord when we speak forth a message that is not man-pleasing but God-pleasing.**

**1Thessalonians 2:4+** For we (Paul, Silas, Timothy, 1Th 1:1 -+) speak as messengers who have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to **please** God, not people. He is the one who examines the motives of our hearts.

### **(5) We are pleasing to the Lord when we abstain from immorality.**

**1Thessalonians 4:1+** Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and **please** God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. 2 For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

**Octavius Winslow has the following devotional on this passage** - What are some of the footprints of this walk (1Th 4:1)? How may we trace it? **Unreserved obedience is an undoubted mark of pleasing God.** An obedience that asks no abatement of the precept, but that follows the Lord fully in its observance, not from an enlightened judgment, but from a love-constrained heart- walking, as did the primitive saints, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly- is indeed well-pleasing to God. Oh! let there be no reserves in our obedience! Let us withhold from Christ no part of His purchased inheritance, but surrender all at His feet, whose heart's blood was the purchase price of all.

"Lord, however strait be the path, painful the cross, and self-denying the precept, sincerely would I walk uprightly in all Your ways, and fully follow You in all Your commands, leaving the consequences of my simple and implicit obedience to Your control. I can endure the repulsion of the world, the alienation of friends, the coldness of relatives, and can take the spoiling of my earthly goods joyfully, if You, my Lord, sustain me with Your grace, cheer me with Your presence, and solace me with Your love."

**Another footprint may be described in the walk of faith by which the Christian journeys to His heavenly home.** As unbelief is most dishonoring, so faith is most honoring to the Lord Jesus. What a

revenue of praise accrues from it to His name! To repair to His sufficiency- with our anxiety, the moment it occurs; with our corruptions, the moment they are discovered; to His grace- with our sorrow, the moment it is felt; to His sympathy- with our wound, the moment it is inflicted; to His love- with our guilt, the moment it is detected; to His blood- oh! do you do not think that this walk of faith is most pleasing to the Lord?

**Let us beware of that which impairs the simplicity of this our walk, and causes us to stumble or turn aside.** We must be cautious, in the varied circumstances of our history, of applying first to a human arm for support, or to a human bosom for sympathy. With this the Lord cannot be well pleased. But let us not hesitate to bear them at once to the one-appointed source of all our supply; disclosing our needs to the full Savior; our wanderings to our heavenly Father; our griefs and burdens to our elder Brother and Friend; and in thus walking by faith, we shall have the divine assurance in our souls, our rejoicing this- the testimony of our conscience that we please the Lord.

**Oh, let us seek closely to resemble the two illustrious examples set before us in the word, of this high and holy walk.** The minor one- because purely human- of **Enoch**, who "before he was taken up had this testimony, that he pleased God." The higher one- because the human was blended with the Divine- of **Jesus**, who could say, "I always do those things which please Him."

**(6) We are pleasing to the Lord when we preach His message which to the world is foolish.**

**1Corinthians 1:21** For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was **well-pleased** through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

**(7) We are pleasing to the Lord when we offer Him broken and contrite hearts.**

**Psalms 51:16** For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. **17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

**(8) We are pleasing to the Lord when we are declaring praise to His Name.**

**Psalms 69:30** I will praise the name of God with song, and shall magnify Him with thanksgiving. **31** And it will **please** the LORD better than an ox or a young bull with horns and hoofs.

**(9) We are pleasing to the Lord when we are discerning His will, walking worthy and bearing fruit (cp Jn 15:8).**

**Colossians 1:9-10** For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to **please** Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

**(10) We are pleasing to the Lord when we petition Him for a heart that hears and obeys.**

**1Kings 3:9** "So give Thy servant an understanding (shama' = hear with reverence and obedience; give undivided attention in listening) heart to judge Thy people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Thine?" **10** And it was **pleasing** in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.

**(11) We are pleasing to the Lord when we have a reverential awe (fear) of Him and depend on His mercy.**

**Psalms 147:11** The LORD **favors** (Hebrew = ratsah = is pleased with) those who fear Him, Those who wait for His lovingkindness.

**(12) We are pleasing to the Lord when we experience answers to our prayers.**

**1John 3:22** and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are **pleasing** in His sight.

**(13) When we are pleasing to the Lord he may bring peace with our enemies.**

**Proverbs 16:7** When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

**(14) We are pleasing to the Lord when we present our whole heart to Him.**

**Romans 12:1-2** I urge you therefore by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice,

**acceptable** (euarestos - well pleasing) to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

#### (15) We are pleasing to the Lord when we do His will

**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.

#### (16) We are pleasing to the Lord when

**Romans 14:18**+ For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. 20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

#### (17) We are pleasing to the Lord when we do not participate in but even expose the unfruitful deeds of darkness

**Ephesians 5:10**+ trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 (+) Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

#### (18) We are pleasing to the Lord when we bring our offerings to Him

**Philippians 4:18**+ But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, **well-pleasing** to God.

#### (19) Children are pleasing to the Lord when they submit to their parents

**Colossians 3:20**+ Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

#### (20) We are pleasing to the Lord when we surrender to Jesus Christ that He might work out His perfect will in our lives

**Hebrews 13:20**+ Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, 21 equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is **pleasing** in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Pondering these preceding passages pointing out how to please our Lord will help us to live with one eye on eternity, so that we "may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." (1Jn 2:28).

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**Rod Mattoon** - Paul's love for the Lord motivated him to labor for Christ. This word "labor" is from the Greek word philotimeomai {fil-ot-im-eh'-om-ahee} which means "to be motivated and fond of honor; to be ambitious; to strive earnestly; to make something your goal." Paul is not expressing the ambition to be somebody who is great or famous. He esteemed it an honor and made it the goal of his life to be well-pleasing or accepted of the Lord. He was not seeking ambition to glorify himself. Jeremiah warned us about doing this.

Jeremiah 45:5a—And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not:

Romans 12:16—Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

We are to live in harmony with others and are not to be so proud that we cannot enjoy the fellowship of ordinary, simple people. We are not to think we know it all and have an inflated opinion about ourselves.

God wants us to have the attitude of glorifying and pleasing Him. It should be our desire to hear His "Well Done!" He has not called us to be successful or number one, He has called us to be faithful servants to Him. The desire to please the Lord Jesus Christ will help you to live with one eye on eternity for you know that one day you will see Him. This brings us to an important question, "How do you please the Lord? What is involved in pleasing the Lord Jesus Christ?"

#### Pleasing the Lord with Your Life

##### 1. DO not entangle yourself in worldly affairs.

2 Timothy 2:3, 4—Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

##### 2. It DEMANDS we have faith in the Lord.

Hebrews 11:6—But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

**3. It involves DOING what is good & DISTRIBUTING or sharing with others.**

Hebrews 13:16—But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The word "communicate" means "to share."

**4. A DAILY walk with the Lord is very important.**

Hebrews 11:5—By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Genesis 5:24—And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

**5. It's the DUTY of all Christians.**

1 Thessalonians 4:1—Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

**6. It should be the DESIRE of all servants of God.**

1 Thessalonians 2:4—But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

**7. DEFERENCE & DOCILITY to parents pleases the Lord.**

Colossians 3:20—Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

**8. The DUMBNESS of preaching pleases God. (Dumbness to the world)**

1 Corinthians 1:21—For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

**9. The DEVELOPMENT of a broken, contrite heart pleases Him.**

Psalms 51:17—The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

**10. DECLARING praise to the Lord pleases our king.**

Psalms 69:30, 31—I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

**11. DISCERNING & DOING the will of God & DEEDS that are fruitful please God.**

**(THOUGHT:** PRAY THIS PRAYER FOR YOURSELF AND ALL BELIEVERS YOU USUALLY PRAY FOR -- GOD WILL ANSWER THIS EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY, BUT NOT DOWN HERE! UP THERE!)

Colossians 1:9-10—.... For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; [10] That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

**12. DECENCY or purity in our lives pleases God.**

Malachi 3:3-4—... And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. [4] Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

**13. The DESIRE for God's Wisdom pleases Him.**

1 Kings 3:9-10—... Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? [10] And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

God is willing and ready to give us His wisdom if we will seek it from Him.

James 1:5a—If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,.....

**14. The DELIGHT, DISPASSION, & prosperity of those that serve the Lord delights Him.**

Psalms 35:27—Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

**15. DEVOTION to the Lord & DEPENDENCY upon His mercy brings pleasure to Him.**

Psalms 147:11—The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

**16. DIVINE answers to prayer are the result.**

1 John 3:22—And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

**17. It DEVELOPS peace with enemies.**

Proverbs 16:7—When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him Do you please the Lord with your life? I hope so. The goal and passion for pleasing Him will help you to live with one eye on eternity. You will look forward and not dread the day when you meet Him face to face.

Dear Master for this coming year  
Just one request I bring:  
I do not pray for happiness  
Or any earthly thing --  
I do not ask to understand  
The way Thou ledest me,  
But this I ask: Teach me to do  
the thing that pleaseth Thee.  
I want to know Thy guiding voice,  
To walk with thee each day.  
Dear Master make me swift to hear  
And ready to obey.  
And thus the year I now begin  
A happy year will be --  
If I am seeking just to do  
the thing that pleaseth Thee.

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**THE POWER OF  
PLEASING GOD!**

**Richard Baxter** writes on the importance of **pleasing God** in our daily battle with our fallen flesh "But, indeed, nothing but the love of pleasing God, can truly cure the love of flesh-pleasing: and such a cure is the cure of every sin. ([Read the full article by Baxter entitled The Sinfulness of Flesh-Pleasing](#))

**Smith** writes that "We must seek to **please Him**."

**Everything we do,  
either pleases, or displeases,  
the Lord.**

Man by nature never troubles himself about **pleasing God** (Ro 3:9)—but if the Spirit of God dwells in us, the grand end of life, and the principal aim in every action will be, to **please God**. The highest eulogy that could be passed on Enoch was, that before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

**Let us please God—  
and then it is of little consequence  
whom we displease!**  
([The Way to Be Wealthy and Happy](#))

Remembering our former state of powerlessness to please God should stimulate us to make it our present ambition to please Him. In Romans 8 Paul writes that...

the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on



the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does (absolutely) not subject itself to the law of God, for it is (absolutely) not even able (no inherent power/ability because there is no indwelling Spirit) to do so; 8 and those who are in the flesh (in the sphere of the fallen flesh) cannot (continually have absolutely no inherent power or ability to) **please God**. (Ro 8:6, 7, 8+)

**Plumer comments:** So far from pleasing God, all the unregenerate are continually offending him. Their very best works are but splendid sins! They do some things which God requires, and abstain from some things which God forbids--not because they love God or His law, but because it promotes their health, or wealth, or honor to do so.

See detailed discussion by James Smith - [The Way to Please God](#) —below are the 11 "bullet points" that Smith addresses (click [link](#) for full discussion of each point)...

1. If we would please God—we must receive right views of him into our minds.
2. If we would please God—we must first be reconciled to him, and live at peace with him.
3. If we would please the Lord—we must exercise filial confidence in him.
4. If we would please the Lord—we must keep the eye directed to him in all things.
5. If we would please God—we must endeavor cheerfully to acquiesce in his will.
6. If we would please God—we must be clothed with humility.
7. If we would please God—we must honor his beloved Son.
8. If we would please God—we must watch and strive against inward sin.
9. If we would please God—we must be zealous in his cause.
10. If we would please the Lord—we must carefully avoid what displeases him; especially, loving the present world.
11. Finally, if we would please the Lord—we must in all things aim at his glory. [Reference](#) )

**F B Meyer** in his book **Five Musts of the Christian Life** describes the 4th "must" as **THE "MUST" OF SERVICE** -

"And He **must** needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4). GOD is prepared to undertake the direction of every human life which is placed at His disposal. The question of guidance is therefore of imperative importance for each living soul, as it passes out into this mortal life. Since God says, "All souls are mine," (Ezek 18:4) He must have, therefore, a distinct purpose for each, and sends each out with resources within reach sufficient to supply all its need (1Pe 4:10, 11+), according to His riches in Christ Jesus (Php 4:19+). It may even be that before the soul joins the body, it stands before its Maker to receive its directory or charge. Our Lord at least said: "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world" (Jn 18:37). At the close of our earth-life we shall again stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of the things done in the body, whether good or bad (2Co 5:10).

The Greek word in Ephesians 2:10+, translated **workmanship**, might be transferred bodily into our language as **poem**. We might therefore read the verse thus,

We are His poem, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them.

Nothing can give us more confidence as we look out on our life than that God is not only prepared to unfold His program for us, but is also prepared "to make all grace abound towards us, that we, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2Co 9:8). He will not only supply seed to the sower, but will also be responsible for his food! Thus our lives will become enriched to all liberality, which shall elicit from many hearts, thanksgiving to God.

One Saturday afternoon, Dr. Gunsaulus of Chicago was preparing for his sermon on the following day. While thus engaged, his nephew, a flippant, careless fellow, rather lightly asked him the topic on which he was preparing to preach. He learned that it was on those words of our Lord:

'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.'

Rather jauntily he said: "What do you think I was born for?"

His uncle replied: "I don't know," and his nephew answered, "Neither do I."

As he went along the street, he came to a theatre which had caught fire, while crowded with people, and many were being

crushed and trampled to death by the mad rush for the door. The young fellow at once threw off his coat, and began dragging out body after body of these people, some dead and others dying, till he was stricken by a burning timber, knocked almost senseless, and carried to the nearest hospital.

Dr. Gunsaulus reached his bedside just in time to hear him say: "Uncle, for this cause I was born, and for this I was sent into the world, that I might save those ten people." (**Ed:** I cannot help but think of Jude's command [present imperative] to continually be about the business of saving others, snatching them out of the fire! [Jude 1:23])

There was a tragedy there, that none of us ever wish to meet. But, **what a comfort it will be at last, to feel that we have glorified Christ's name and have finished the work which He gave us to do.** (F. B. Meyer. Five Musts of the Christian Life)

LIVE A LIFE OF "HOLY AMBITION"!

#### **F B Meyer (Our Daily Walk) Devotional on 2Co 5:9...**

THERE IS scope for ambition within the sphere of the Christian Faith, and to be without it is to miss an influential incentive to high and holy endeavour. Our Lord does not destroy any natural faculty, but directs it to a worthy object. Instead of living for material good, or the applause of the world, we must stir ourselves to seek those things which are the legitimate objects of holy ambition. In two other passages the Apostle Paul uses this same word (**philotimeomai**). 1Th 4:11-+; Ro 15:20-+

#### **There is the ambition of daily toil**

"Be ambitious to be quiet, to do your own business, to work with your own hands." (1Th 4:11+)

In the age in which the Apostles lived there was much unrest, and in the case of the Christian Church this was still further increased by the expectation of the approaching end of the world; many were inclined to surrender their ordinary occupations, and give themselves up to restlessness and excitement, all of which was prejudicial to the regular ordering of their homes and individual lives, But the injunction is that we are not to yield to the ferment of restlessness; we are not to be disturbed by the feverishness around us, whether of social upheavals or for pleasure or gain.

#### **The ambition to be well-pleasing to Christ.**

At His judgment-seat (2Co 5:10) He will weigh up the worth of our individual mortal life, and He is doing so day by day. Not only when we pass the threshold of death, but on this side, our Lord is judging our character and adjudicating our reward. Let us strive to be as well-pleasing to Him in this life, as we hope to be in the next.

#### **The ambition of Christian work--**

"Being ambitious to preach the Gospel." - (Ro 15:20-+)

The great world lies open to us, many parts of it still unevangelized; and all around us in our own country are thousands, among the rich and poor, who have no knowledge of Christ. Let us make it our ambition to bring them to Him, always remembering that the things we do for Christ must be that which He works through us in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ro 15:18-+, Ro 15:19-+).

**PRAYER** -Give us grace, O Lord, to work while it is day, fulfilling diligently and patiently whatever duty Thou appointest us; doing small things in the day of small things, and great labours if Thou summon us to any; rising and working, sitting still and suffering, according to Thy word. AMEN.

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**Ray Pritchard** in his comments on 1Peter 1:17-+ ([Living in the Fear of God](#)) has some interesting thoughts that should motivate us to align our present earthly ambitions with those of Paul here in 2Co 5:9...

1Pet 1:17 (+) reminds us that we call on a Father who judges impartially. To call God our Father is a comfort. To say that He is our judge isn't quite so comforting. Note the **present tense**. God is judging you and me at this very moment. And because He is God, He judges impartially. The word means without a mask (aprosopoleptos [word study]). When God judges, He sees right through the little masks we put on to make ourselves look better to others. God isn't fooled.

And He judges us according to our works. That concept troubles some people. "Aren't we saved by faith?" Yes, we are. We are saved by faith, but we are judged by our works. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that since you are saved by faith, your life doesn't matter. During the last presidential debates, one of the candidates reminded us that faith without works is dead. He was quoting Jas 2:26-+. It was a good quote, and rightly used. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6+), and the faith that pleases God will always produce a life of good works.

**As Christians, our works will be judged, not to determine our eternal destiny, but to determine our rewards in heaven.**

The sad part about that is that some people will discover in that day that they wasted their life on earth. Because they built with “wood, hay and stubble,” they will see their life burn up before them. Others will discover that because they built with “gold, silver and precious stones,” their life will stand the test of God’s fiery gaze at the Judgment Seat of Christ (see 1Co 3:11, 12, 13, 14, 15). No Christian will escape the searching gaze of the Lord Jesus Christ. All roads lead to the Judgment Seat of Christ.

**What should we fear?** We should fear living as though we don’t believe in God at all. When we give in to anger, rage, malice, greed or lust, we are living as if we don’t believe in God. When we turn to pornography to satisfy our lust, when we let hurtful words fly out of our mouth, when we defraud each other, when we seek revenge, when we lie about one another, when we forget the hurting people around us while hoarding up treasure for ourselves, when we have to be Number One and win every argument, every game, every competition, when we cannot lose gracefully and with dignity, we are living as if we don’t believe in God. When we complain about how persecuted we are, when we moan about how hard we have it, when we gossip about how easy someone else has it, we are living as if we don’t believe in God. At that moment, we are **practical atheists** even though we may go to church every Sunday.

In thinking about this principle, the words of a children’s song came to mind:

Oh, be careful little hands what you do.  
Oh, be careful little hands what you do.  
For the Father up above is looking down in love.

([Living in the Fear of God](#) - Bolding and notes added)