

## PLEASING TO GOD

### God's Word:

*I Thessalonians 2:1-13*

### Key Verses:

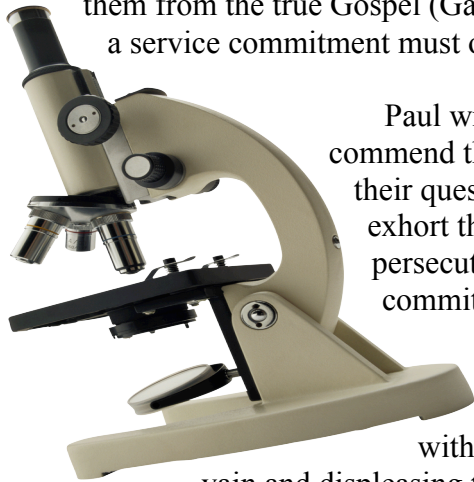
"BUT JUST AS WE HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY GOD TO BE ENTRUSTED WITH THE GOSPEL, SO WE SPEAK, NOT AS PLEASING MEN, BUT GOD WHO EXAMINES OUR HEARTS."

I THESSALONIANS 2:4



### Breaking It Down:

After spending years pleasing the Jews by persecuting Christians, Paul was unashamedly a God-pleaser. He encouraged others to be the same. He specifically advised the Galatians, for example, not to let anybody or anything (even angels) sway them from the true Gospel (Galatians 1:6-8). In Paul's opinion, a message or even a service commitment must originate with God to be considered of value.



Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonian believers to: (1) commend their steadfast faith, while simultaneously addressing their questions regarding the afterlife and other issues; (2) exhort them to remain faithful in the face of continuing persecution; and (3) spark individual motives for continued commitment to Christ and the church community.

Paul also addressed the issue of pleasing God to acknowledge that many Christians grapple with feelings of inadequacy, believing their efforts are in vain and displeasing to God. Paul made it clear that pleasing God is inversely related to pleasing mankind (I Thessalonians 2:4), meaning that the more you please God, the less you will strive to please others, and vice versa.

Above all else, faith is a key element to pleasing God. Indeed, as Paul stated in Romans 14:23, “Whatever is not of faith is sin.” Similarly, Hebrews 11:6 says: “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” There is no way around it: God requires faith first, service second. Faith denotes a belief in God as the only true God. It also denotes trusting God in all we do.

We know we are serving in faith and pleasing God when we display faith in our character and in our interactions with people in the church, and in the world. Our desire to serve Him based on our commitment to Christ will require pure motives as we serve in our homes, churches, school, places of employment, and communities. Those pure motives will always please God, even if people may not be pleased.



### **Living It:**

“Why did he do that?”  
“Why in the world would she ever do that?” These are our questions when we hear of some of the astounding misdeeds people do that cause harm to themselves and/or others. Wrong motives routinely lead to sinful or illegal actions.



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For Christians, having right motives is nearly impossible without a commitment first to please God. When we unflinchingly look at the root of why we serve at church, for example, we may realize that many activities are conducted simply to gain favor with people or to retain a spotlight for ourselves. God is not pleased with such motives. Can you pinpoint a time when your motives negatively impacted you at school, church, home, or work? How did you recover from that experience? What steps did God lead you through to help you purify your motives and restore fellowship with family, friends, and your church?





### **Understanding it:**

1. What did Paul do after being mistreated in Philippi (II Thessalonians 2:2)?
2. What was the one compelling motive for Paul's service (I Thessalonians 2:4)?
3. How do wrong motives promote the belief that all Christians are hypocrites?
4. What are some ways Christians can avoid succumbing to wrong motives?



### **Doing It!**

So why are you really doing them as an extension are you doing them for your This week, pray for God's home, school and on the job if of any wrong motives. Then ask don't honor God. In those specific period of time, ask God Christ-like fashion that brings honor to Him.



involved in your various activities? Are of your faith, which pleases God? Or own glory or to please someone else? guidance regarding your activities at you work. Ask Him to help you get rid for courage to cease those activities that instances where you are committed for a to give you the grace to finish your term in a