

'Pleasing' Options

The word generally translated in the New Testament as "*pleasing*," or in some cases "*acceptable*," is the Greek term **euarestos** (*yoo-ar-es-tos*), and it means exactly that: *pleasing* or *acceptable* (as that which *pleases*). However, when it comes being **pleasing** there are a few options. For instance, one may seek to:

- 1. Please Themselves.** Surely this is the most popular 'pleasing' option, but it quickly puts one at odds with Scripture. Rom.15:1-3 includes a prohibition against as much in v.1, and also adds that "*even Christ did not please Himself*" in v.3. Additionally, Phil.3:18-9 speaks of those "*whose god is their appetite*" as being "*enemies of the cross of Christ*" who "*set their minds on earthly things.*" Obviously, the wisdom of God revealed in these passages directly contradicts many mantras and most of the so-called "wisdom" of people these days.
- 2. Please Others.** This 'pleasing' option is a bit tricky biblically. On the one hand, passages such as Eph.6:6 and Col.3:22 clearly condemn being "*men-pleasers*" for *slaves* (and comparably for *employees*), and Gal.1:10 and 1Thess.2:4 likewise denounce *preachers* who would speak in such a way to "*please men*" rather than God. However on the other hand, in 1Cor.10:33 the apostle Paul said that he sought to "*please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved.*" And to return to Rom.15:2 adds that we, as Christians, should "*please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.*" So *pleasing others* is not always a "bad" thing, provided that the activity doesn't contradict Scripture and the motives are to spiritually *edify* and *save* them. Obviously, thoughtful discretion is here required since "*God...examines our hearts,*" 1Thess.2:4!
- 3. Please God.** With this third 'pleasing' option we can never go wrong, even if our actions *displease* others or ourselves, cf. Acts 4:19-20 and Acts 5:29! 2Cor.5:9 says that being "*pleasing to God*" ought to be our "*ambition,*" and Eph.5:10 adds that we should *try to "learn what is pleasing to the Lord."* So, if we have the right *ambition* or *goal* coupled with the right *effort/activity* of consulting what God actually says *pleases Him* in His Word, and then *do what pleases God* instead of others or ourselves, we can't go wrong!

But let's add one more wrinkle to these things before we close. What if, rather than merely obligatorily doing *what pleases God* even if, or perhaps especially if, such *displeases us* (reread Jonah 1-4 introspectively), we DECIDE to be *pleased with whatever pleases God*? After all, isn't that the essence of praying "*Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,*" Matt.6:10b? Wait, perhaps that's why we don't often include that phrase in our prayers anymore... we *prefer* that which *pleases us* OVER that which *pleases God*! Think about it, won't you? Let's be *pleased to do what pleases God*. (Philip C. Strong; Viking Drive Church of Christ; 3791 Viking Drive, Bossier City, LA; online at vikingdrivechurchofchrist.com; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)