

How can I please God?

Is it by being in the 'right religion' - ie a matter of culture or birth?

See what Paul says about his own Jewish ancestors, who experienced God's favour (1 Corinthians 10 v2-5):

They were 'ALL under the cloud' of God's guidance and protection.

They were 'ALL baptised into Moses' by association with God's call.

They 'ALL ate the same food and drink' which God provided 'as a picture of the coming gift of Jesus Christ'!

'BUT'

'With MOST of them God was NOT well pleased!

Or even by the most zealous carrying out of that Religion?

See what the writer to the Hebrews records of Jesus (Hebrews 10 v5):

'In sacrifices and offerings You have taken NO pleasure! (WHAT A DEVASTATING JUDGEMENT on the receivers of the Old Covenant!)

Then Jesus says He's been sent (v7-9) to:

Take away the Old ('first) way (by answering the penalty called for by God's Law)

And - to bring in the New ('second')Way. 'You've given me a body (a human life) TO DO YOUR WILL.'

And was God pleased with that?

(Matthew 3v17) God says from heaven for ALL to hear,' This is my beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased.' Remember that this was BEFORE Jesus did any preaching or works of power, so it was the quality of His human life that had pleased God. Jesus says quite simply,' (John 8 v29) I ALWAYS do the things which please Him.'

How? - because it was the attitude of His life. He'd 'laid it down' for God to take up for Himself:

(John 10 v17) 'This is why my Father loves me, because I lay down my life, so that I may receive it back again (from His Father).'

He's talking about a quality of Love for God and for His fellow humans for which He's prepared to lay down ALL His own wishes.

Dangerous? Foolish? No! - because He has total trust (Faith) in the nature/character and will of His God and Father.

This faith is the ONLY way to please God that the Bible shows.

How can we follow the Man who pleased God?

Or to use the words of the crowd after the feeding of the 5000 by Jesus, 'What can WE do so that WE can work the works of God' (John 6 v28).

Jesus replies, 'Believe in the One He sent'.

That's the beginning. 'Without Him we can do NOTHING'. (John 15v50)

This obedient faith in the Father and the Son is the only way to change from those who don't please Him into those who do.

Hebrews 11 records the people in the Old Testament who by their faith pleased God. Verse 6 - 'Without faith it's IMPOSSIBLE to please Him, for those who come to God must believe:

- a. That He is!
- b. That He rewards those who seek Him'.

If I come away from trusting in God's attitude to me expressed in Jesus Christ, I can't please Him. Self-preoccupation, or hard times, that take me away from trusting in His love will do that. Hebrews 10v38 calls it a 'shrinking back' into myself.

'Believe me,' says Jesus to His followers, so often!

No Fear! No Quitting!

Faith in God has the same consequence in my life as in Jesus's life:

'I lay it down for God to take up.'(Romans 12v1) That way I do His will, and please Him, says v2. Not a dead sacrifice but a fragrant, living one.

This is expressed in LOVE. Because God IS love. (1John 4v13-16) (Ephesians 5v1,2) 'Walk in love AS CHRIST loved....and gave His life....a well pleasing fragrance'.

This is the 'new commandment' Jesus gave to his followers. (John 13v34)

It's found in ;

- a. Giving (Philippians 4v18)
- b. Keeping His commandments. (John 13v34, 1 John 3v22,23.)
- c. Sharing what I have, especially the testimony of the person ('name') of God and doing good. (Hebrews 13v15,16,20,21)
- d. Praying for 'ALL men'. (1 Timothy 2v3)
- e. Making Peace, and building up your fellow believers. (Romans 14v18,19)
- f. Suffering wrong with patience (1 Peter 2v20)
- g. Obeying my parents if I'm still a child. (Colossians 3v20)
- g. Even being an obedient employee. (Titus 2v9)

All these are a description of how Jesus demonstrated God's own character to us - no wonder we need to receive the same Life (His Spirit) to please Him. Read 1 Corinthians 13. Put in 'Jesus' instead of 'Love'. Then put in your own name instead! BELIEVE HIM!