

PLEASING GOD OF PLEASING MAN, WHICH WILL IT BE?

By Keith Greer

"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. " {Galatians 1:10}

Paul distinguishes between serving God and serving man. Earlier in this chapter Paul warned about those who were trying to lead these brethren to "another gospel". No matter how persuading their speech, the teaching was error!

Where does man's highest allegiance belong? Can our loyalty be divided? Can we ever compromise truth for the sake of "feelings"? Please read and consider the following passages:

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." {Matthew 6:24}

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." {Colossians 3:17}

Man cannot be divided in his allegiance. God must be first. If man is trying to ride the "proverbial fence", it is taking him away from God, not drawing him closer. Surely we want to be fair to our fellow men, but not at the expense of pleasing God!

Can you think of some examples in the Bible, of those who tried to please man, at God's expense? Allow me to suggest a few:

AARON. Moses is up on Mount Sinai receiving the law. The people become restless. What do they want? Aaron to fashion them "gods" which can go before them. What did he choose to do, please God or please them? Read Exodus 32:1-4.

SAUL. God gave him instructions to destroy the Amalekites and everything that drew the breath of life. The people wanted to bring back the best of sheep and oxen to offer sacrifices unto God. What did he do? Read 1 Samuel 15:14- 23.

SAMSON. Samson was a mighty judge of Israel. He was given great strength by God, with the stipulation not to reveal the source of his power to anyone. Delilah enticed him to reveal the secret. What did Samson do? Read Judges 16:16-24.

What do these three men have in common? All made a decision to please men instead of God. Each paid a high price for their decision. Now let us briefly look at four other examples:

JOHN THE BAPTIST. He was before Herod and told him it was unlawful for him to have his brother's wife. John was a prisoner; the king could take his life. Why not just be silent and say nothing? Read Mark 6: 17- 28.

STEPHEN. In Acts 7 he preaches to a rebellious crowd of Jews. Giving them a history lesson, he plainly shows them the stiffnecked hearts which they had. How did they react? Why not just let them continue in what they were doing? Read Acts 7:22-59.

PAUL. Did the apostle Paul compromise truth to please those to whom he once belonged? Please read Philippians 3:7-13. Did he seek to please God or to please man?

JESUS. What about our Lord? Did He try to please the Pharisees who opposed Him on every front? When men did not like His teaching, did He change it? After His teaching, when men became angry and wanted to kill Him, did He back down? Please Matthew 23.

God's people are always faced with the choice of who they are going to give their allegiance to. God has made His case for the wonderful blessings one can receive by choosing Him. Now a decision must be made by each of us. Who will you seek to please? ***