

What Pleases God: Being Spiritually Minded

Ponder: What rules your life?

Scripture: “So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:8, NKJV).

Today’s Scripture ranks as one of the most misunderstood and misapplied passages in the Bible. Many sincere people believe and teach that we can’t please God as long as we have a material (fleshly) body, because the blood and tissue making up our body is inherently sinful. If that’s true, what would be the point in even trying?

No, the “flesh” to which Paul refers isn’t blood and tissue. Obviously Jesus pleased God, yet He Himself partook of the same flesh and blood that characterizes us (Heb. 2:14). It was “in the days of His flesh” that He prayed in Gethsemane (Heb. 5:7).

God placed certain appetites within us. They are not inherently sinful. They can be satisfied in keeping with His will; but they can also be satisfied in sinful ways. For example, we may eat reasonable portions to satisfy hunger; but gluttony is sinful. Sexual appetite is lawfully fulfilled in marriage; but fornication violates God’s word. Even Jesus needed rest and sleep; but slothfulness displeases God.

The “flesh” problem, then, isn’t a matter of blood and tissue. It’s an issue of mindset. “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh; but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:5). Though most English versions capitalize “Spirit,” Paul is more likely contrasting “the flesh” with our own spirit. Are you spiritually-minded or fleshly-minded? That is the question!

“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6). Allowing the flesh to satisfy its appetites in sinful ways brings spiritual death! It isn’t blood and tissue (flesh) that is opposed to God, but “the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be” (Rom. 8:7). It’s the mindset, not the material!

You will please God if your spirit regulates the behavior of your flesh in keeping with His word. Are you of such a mind?

Song: “All To Jesus I Surrender”

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for the example of our Lord who took upon Himself flesh just like ours. Help us to be spiritually minded as He was, and to please you as He did. In His name, Amen.