Who Are You Trying To Please?

Ponder: Pleasing people and pleasing God

Scripture: "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men?" (Galatians 1:10a, NKJV).

The apostle Paul's enemies may have convinced some of the Galatians that he was a men-pleaser. However, the evidence proved otherwise.

The word "persuade" would be much more accurately translated "seek the favor of." It is virtually synonymous with "please" in the next part of the verse. In fact, it was Paul's enemies who were seeking to please men (see Galatians 6:12, 13). Their fellow-Jews, whether believers in Christ or not, were pleased to have them binding circumcision and other elements of the Law of Moses upon the Gentiles. Paul, on the other hand, shows in the last part of 1:10 why it is not logical that he would be a men-pleaser:

"For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (v. 10b). At one time, Paul (Saul of Tarsus) had been anxious to please his fellow-Jews. Therefore, he had viciously persecuted Christians. Now, however, he was on the receiving end of persecution because of his devotion to Jesus Christ. Had he still wished to please men, he certainly would have joined with the Judaizers in binding Jewish legalism upon the Gentile Christians. That would have ended all of the persecution he received from the Jews, for they would have been happy with him. As a bondservant (slave) of Christ, though, Paul had no rights of his own. His only goal was to please his Lord. Preaching a perverted gospel in order to avoid persecution wasn't even an option!

Who are you trying to please? All normal people enjoy it when others are pleased with them. Going out of your way to irritate people accomplishes nothing good. Nevertheless, pleasing other people must not be our primary goal. If you are a Christian, you are a slave of Christ just as Paul was. Job one is to please the Lord! If other people are pleased too, that's icing on the cake.

Whether it is the doctrine you teach or the behavior you model, make it your aim to please God regardless of what other people think, say, or do.

Song: "I'd Rather Have Jesus"