

Abiding Fruit

John 15:16



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The Life that Pleases God 1 Timothy 2:2b, 3

Every Christian is desirous of doing the things that please God. Every Christian desires to live life in such a way that it brings pleasure to God. The Bible is full of how to live life acceptably before God. This kind of life is simply a life lived in accordance with God's will. It is not magical and it is not beyond the reach of every Christian. It does, however, require some effort and discipline on our part. The pursuit of a life that pleases God should be our aim. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:9, "*so whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him.*" Whether it is in life or death, our ambition should be to please God. There is a sobering reason for this. Paul says that we must all appear before God's judgment seat (2 Cor. 5:10).

These verses written to Timothy by Paul are Paul's communication of how believers are to behave in church. He gives strict instructions regarding the behavior of men and women in the corporate worship of God. The chapter is divided into 2 sections. The first section deals with the congregation in worship as a praying church, and that in its praying, certain petitions are to be made. Prayer is to be made on behalf of all men regardless of their position (*all people* in vs. 1 and *for kings and other high positions* in vs. 2). In the second section, Paul deals with the role and function of men and women in corporate worship. The men are to pray lifting holy hands to God in every place of public worship (vs. 8), and the women in getting ready to go to church are to dress modestly (vs. 9, 10) and becomingly, and at the place of worship, they are to show that they understand and have accepted their divinely ordained position of submissiveness to God.

The reason Paul gives for leading a life that pleases God is found in verses 1 and 2 (corporate prayer), and in verses 8 – 15, in the roles and functions of men and women before God in corporate worship and the outflow of that obedience (notice how Paul introduces vs. 8 and following with "I desire then..."). In view of verses 1- 7, Paul now gives instructions concerning men and women, especially in the light of the mediatorial work of Jesus in verses 5 and 6.

Verses 1 and 2 show us a connection between church and state. Christian involvement begins primarily with prayer for those in government positions. It then extends naturally to Christian responsibility in terms of voting as citizens in order to preserve peaceful conditions, in order that Christian worship might be maintained. Where Christian worship is restricted, we are still to pray since God desires to be the Savior of all men (vs. 4), so that leaders may repent and come to Christ, and thus, the Christian may enjoy peaceful conditions. These conditions, once fulfilled, result, Paul says, in leading a peaceful and quiet life that is godly and dignified in every way (vs. 2b).

The Church of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be light in darkness. It must seek to promote godliness within, in order to win the lost without. If there is no godly reverence for God within the Church, then there will no influence outside in the world. This is contrary to much that is taught today in the Church. We are being taught to be relevant and tolerant, to be positive and sensory driven. The only sensory driven experiences I know in the Bible, are seen in the collapse of Isaiah the prophet who saw the Lord in his Glory (Isaiah 6:1 – 7) and was so shaken that he begged God to cleanse him, even his mouth, lest he perish for having seen the Glorious God in all His glory, and in the New Testament, when John the

Apostle sees the Glory of God in heaven in Revelation 4 and 5, and witnesses the sacred response of the four living creatures, who day and night never stop saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come (Rev. 4:8), and the twenty four elders who themselves respond to that exclamation of worship, by falling on their faces before God and cast their crowns at his feet (Rev. 4:9, 10; 5:8).

This extraordinary vision of God is to motivate us to reverence and godly fear. The preservation of this attitude is maintained by seeking the will of God as we pray for government leadership. The result of this kind of praying is the gift of peace to us, so that we can continue to worship God. Notice that this kind of praying is pleasing to God and is good (vs. 3).

Paul uses four synonyms to express the kind of praying we are to engage in. These four terms should not cause us to think that they are the same and therefore simply repetitious. He speaks of "*supplications*" being made. Supplications are petitions made for the fulfillment of certain needs which are felt very deeply. It implies that we recognize our complete dependence on God for everything, and therefore we beseech God to meet that need(s). This is how to pray for healing. Since only God possess the power to heal we must first recognize that He has that power and that we are thus totally dependent on Him to do that which we cannot. Paul uses the word "*prayers*", to express our address to God. This is the more general use of the word for prayer. All of the areas of prayer, such as confession, adoration, intercession, supplication or thanksgiving are covered by this term. Since Paul does use this term along with the other three terms, he probably is thinking of prayer in general usage rather than in specific usage.

Paul speaks of "*intercessions*". This word in the noun form is used only here and in 1 Tim. 4:5. Intercession generally conveys the idea of pleading with God, and this is what is expressed here (but not in 1 Tim. 4:5). We are to plead with God for those in positions of authority. It might even imply placing before God the reason for doing this – so that we can enjoy peaceful lives and continue to worship God in this way. The final word is "*thanksgivings*." In one sense, we complete the circle of our praying by expressing gratitude to God. We receive blessings from Him that we have asked Him for, and so we return thanks to Him for those blessings. These thanksgivings are to be made on behalf of all men, including kings and those in high positions. We are to thank God for these people.

Why pray in such a way? The answer is given by Paul in verse 2. We shall be free from outward disturbance (peaceful). We shall be free from inward disturbance (quiet). This kind of life is described as "*godly and dignified in every way*." Our conduct and attitudes before God and before men will be acceptable to God.

When God sees us pray in this way, it is pleasing to Him (vs. 3). God does not see things the way we see things (1 Sam. 16:7; see also 1 Kings 8:38 - 40). Peaceful conditions imposed by good rulers, does help in the spread of the Gospel. God desires all men to be saved (vs. 4) is used in the same way as in verse 1. It is all kinds of men; men from different groups and backgrounds. In one sense, salvation is universal (only humans are saved), but in another sense it is of course limited (those who are actually saved) It is God's desire that all men without distinction be saved. Rank or race or nationality is not to hinder the work of salvation. It is not a Gospel to Jews only and not to Gentiles. It is salvation proclaimed to all regardless of background. We are to pray for all men, for kings and for those in high positions regardless of who they are. What should we ultimately be praying for? We should pray for their salvation (vs. 4). This pleases God our Savior. This is how to live the right life.

Praying for this in my own life and with you,
Russ

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