

## How can we serve God acceptably?

How we, as believers, long to "serve the Living God"! We are told in Heb. 9:14 that the blood of Christ is able to cleanse our consciences from "dead works" so that we can do this very thing. What are the dead works that can stand in the way of our loving service for our Lord? It is easy to see that the works of the flesh listed in Gal. 5:17 - 21 need to be put away, but we need to realize the flesh has its "good" as well as its evil side. The things Paul listed in Phil. 3:5, 6 he once was confident were very good indeed, and boasted in them. Yet, as a believer, he realized they were all just "flesh" (Phil. 3:3) -- just "rubbish" (Phil. 3:8 -- NKJV).

Just as all the works of the flesh had to be abandoned that we might have imputed righteousness, so now, as believers, even the "good" works of the flesh must be set aside that we might experience engendered righteousness. Only the work of Christ **for** us availed for our salvation (2 Cor. 5:21) and now only the work of Christ **in** us will enable us to "serve the Living God." Both the incentive and the ability to do God's good pleasure comes from God working in us (Phil. 2:13), producing (engendering) a day by day righteous walk before Him.

The good works which please the Lord are not those of our own choice, but those "which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). In the flesh we may be able to "act like a Christian" on Sunday, but only God working in us will enable us to carry about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body (2 Cor. 4:9). Fleshly zeal may even make us willing to be jailed for Christ, but only God working in us will enable us to sing there (Acts 16:25).

How can we live such a life? "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8). Walking in the Spirit we will be able to say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

--- William P Heath

Bible Study # 60 < My Documents\bible studies\service > - Microsoft Word

(bibstudy\service.sam -- On AmiPro)