



From the Heart of the First Lady

Laboring to Be Acceptable to GOD

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 (KJV) Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

What's Your Ambition?

Many of you may be keenly aware of our featured scripture by now as pastor has been centering his messages on it. So far, there have been many enlightening (and convicting) points brought up as GOD spoke through him over the past several weeks. I believe we could spend the entire year meditating on these two verses and not exhaust the revelation that GOD embedded within them.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 is essentially telling us what we **believe** and how we **behave** must always go together. Likewise, *1 Timothy 4:16* (MSG) charges us to "Keep a firm grasp on both your character [life] and your teaching [doctrine]. Don't be diverted. Just keep at it. Both you and those who hear you will experience salvation." Throughout the New Testament, Paul and Timothy both linked **duty** with **doctrine** because they had a crystal clear understanding that our relationship with GOD is reciprocal – what GOD has done for us must motivate us to do something for HIM. Whether we are new in the faith or seasoned veterans, we cannot forget that the fellowship we enjoy with the LORD was bought at the highest price, comes with certain requirements, and we will be called to give an account for how we stewarded our time and spiritual gifts here on earth.

The Greek word *philotim* that is translated "labour" in the King James Version literally means "to esteem as an honor" -- to be ambitious. Now, before we get further into this topic, let me be very clear: if you are saved, you are already "accepted in the Beloved" according to Ephesians 1:5-6. Being accepted "in Christ" is our standing before GOD. When He looks at us, He sees Christ in us, which means He sees Christ's perfection. We are complete in Him and you cannot add anything to completeness. That is what Christ did for us. However, to be accepted "of HIM" is a different thing. This has to do with how we live our lives. Are we merely content being **in** Christ or do we live our lives **for** Christ? Are we ambitious to be accepted of HIM? This ambition is certainly not implying that we claw and scratch our way ahead or throw each other under the proverbial bus to make a name for ourselves.

There is an ambition that is selfish and worldly and there is also an ambition that honors the LORD. I am referring to the latter. New Testament Scripture tells us several ways we can please GOD:

Prayer:

- ❖ *Abba Father, thank you for bringing me into your family. May I never disappoint you in the way I treat others. May they see in me the qualities of character that can only be attributed to your presence in my life. To you be the glory and the honor, forever and ever, through Jesus my Lord. Amen.*

For instance, it pleases GOD when we present our bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1), and when we live so as to help others and avoid causing them to stumble (Romans 14:13, 18). GOD is pleased with us when we separate ourselves from surrounding evil (Ephesians 5:8-21), and when we faithfully bring our tithes and offerings to HIM (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

Laboring (or being ambitious) to please GOD is not merely a subtle suggestion, but a command in *2 Peter 1:5-8* (NIV) *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Whew, that's alot! Think about it – if we just focus on this, we wouldn't have time for anything that displeases GOD.

Verse 10 tells us that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Not all of us are ambitious; but all of us will be called to give an account for our deeds. Now is the time to prepare so we can meet the LORD with confidence and not shame. *Hebrews 4:13* (NIV) warns us that "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." The Judgment Seat of Christ will be a place of *revelation*; for the word *appear* means "be revealed." As we live and work here on earth, it is relatively easy for us to hide things and pretend; but the true character of our works will be exposed before the searching eyes of GOD. He will reveal whether our works have been good or bad ("worthless"). The character of our service will be revealed (1 Corinthians 3:13) as well as the motives that compelled us (1 Corinthians 4:5).

It will also be a place of *reckoning* as we give an account of our ministries (Romans 14:10-12). If we have been faithful it will be a place of *reward* and *recognition* (1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 4:1-6). For those of us who have been faithful, it will be a time of *rejoicing* as we glorify the Lord by giving our rewards back to Him in worship and in praise. We are ambitious for many things (wealth, popularity, honor, etc.). What is your ambition?