

What Does God Want? (4)

By Bob Young

Representatives who are reflections of his glory with rejoicing

What does God want? What is the message the church is called to share? I am thinking about ministry, I am thinking about mission work. I am thinking about local evangelism, worldwide evangelism. I seek more complete, clearer understanding. I wish to focus and sharpen the message the church.

This is the last in a series of studies: What Does God Want? The primary application should be personal. I must understand the answer. A secondary application seeks to understand how we can more effectively take the gospel to our world. How can we make clear what God wants from human beings, his creation made in his image? I have previously set forth that God desires that we **recognize him, respect him, and respond to him**. God wants to be known, God wants to be worshiped, God's redemptive purpose in re-creation in Jesus Christ is rebirth and renewal making possible restored relationships, reconciliation. These are broad categories that deserve more study than our brief introductions have provided.

In this lesson, let me set forth and support the claim that God desires that our **relationships** reflect his presence in the world.

For the Jews, as Jesus summarized the law, the two great commands were love for God and love for one's fellowman. That God puts his image within us changes how we react and interact with other people. Relationships established on the basis of God's presence in the world and in our lives as disciples of Christ shapes every relationship—with other disciples, in our family, and even with those who are not disciples. These relationships are properly guided by recognizing the nature of God, and his desire for respect and response.

The idea that we are representatives is captured by the "ambassadors" concept set forth in 2 Corinthians 5. We are experienced, we are seasoned, we are spiritually savvy, we reflect spiritual principles and values in our lives, our priorities, our talk, our attitudes.

The idea that we are reflections of his glory is set forth in the closing verses of 2 Corinthians 3. We see his glory, mirror-imaged in our own lives as we are transformed from glory to glory. We reflect his glory. We are not the glory, his is the glory, glory revealed in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. 4:4-6. We see, we help others see.

Finally, with rejoicing. This idea was not in my original list and did not appear in my second list. But after I presented some of these ideas in an advanced Bible class at McAlester Christian Academy, a student wrote me suggesting that rejoicing certainly should be included as a part of God great desire for the lives of those who are Christ-followers.

The brevity of this final lesson does not speak to its importance. Ultimately, this is where the validity of these ideas is demonstrated, in how we live our lives. The brevity of these thoughts does allow a brief review.

What does God want?

God reveals himself. Why? Because he wants to be known. God is a personal God, he wants to be known personally, he wants to be known correctly, as he is.

God is worthy of and desires worship. His nature is worship-worthy. God desires respect and reverence, again based on who he is. These truths begin to come into view in the Old Testament as God penetrates the human dilemma.

God desires our response. God recreates with the purpose of restoring relationships.

We are enabled as reflections of his glory, modeling rejoicing.