

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

332915 - How can he make seeking Allah's pleasure - and not seeking people's pleasure - his main concern?

the question

How can I make my main concern the pursuit of Allah's pleasure, and not pay any attention to what people say? What are the books that will help me to achieve that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The greatest goal a believer can pursue is seeking the pleasure of the Lord of the Worlds.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): *"Allah has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence; but approval from Allah is greater. It is that which is the great attainment"* [at-Tawbah 9:72].

It was narrated by al-Bukhaari in his *Saheeh* (6549) and by Muslim in his *Saheeh* (2829) that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, will say to the people of Paradise: 'O people of Paradise!' They will say: 'Here we are at Your service, our Lord.' He will say: 'Are you pleased?' They will say: 'How could we not be pleased, O Lord, when You have given us that which You have not given to anyone else among Your creation?' He will say: 'Shall I not give you something even better than that?' They will say: 'O Lord, what can be better than that?' He will say: 'I bestow My pleasure upon you and I will never be angry with you after that.'"

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The main goal of the believer's life is that he seeks the pleasure of Allah alone, with no partner or associate, even if that displeases people. The sign of the hypocrites is that they are keen to please people, even if that angers the Lord of the Worlds.

Allah says regarding the hypocrites (interpretation of the meaning): *"They swear by Allah to you [Muslims] to satisfy you. But Allah and His Messenger are more worthy for them to satisfy, if they should be believers" [at-Tawbah 9:62].*

Things that will help a person to seek the pleasure of Allah alone include the following:

Firstly: Learning about his Lord, so that he will be certain that all things are in His hand, and He alone is the One Who controls all things; He alone is the One Who brings low and raises high; He alone is the One Who grants honour and humiliates; no one can withhold what He gives and no one can give what He withholds; all people have no power to benefit or harm him or themselves, or to cause death, give life or anything else.

Once a person believes in that with certainty, his heart will be attached to his Lord, because he believes that people cannot benefit him except by his Lord's leave, and they cannot harm him except by his Lord's leave alone.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: Know that if the nation were to come together to benefit you with something, they would not benefit you except with something that Allah has already decreed for you, and if they were to come together to harm you with something, they would not harm you except with something that Allah has already decreed for you."

Narrated by at-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan* (2516); classed as saheeh by Shaykh al-Albaani in *as-Silsilah as-Saheehah* (5/497).

Secondly: being certain that people's loving him and being pleased with him only happens with the permission of his Lord, so if he pleases his Lord, He will instill love for him in the hearts of His

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believing slaves.

At-Tirmidhi narrated in his *Sunan* (3267) that al-Bara' ibn 'Aazib (may Allah be pleased with him) said: A man stood up and said: O Messenger of Allah, if I praise someone then he is praiseworthy, and if I criticize someone then he is blameworthy. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "That is only for Allah, may He be glorified and exalted."

This hadith was classed as saheeh by Shaykh al-Albaani in *Saheeh at-Tirmidhi* (2605).

Allah alone is the One Who, if He praises someone, then he is praiseworthy, and if He is angry with someone and criticizes him, then he is blameworthy. As for people, they have no power in that regard except by Allah's leave.

In the hadith it says that it is Allah Who instills love or hate of someone in people's hearts.

It was narrated by al-Bukhaari in his *Saheeh* (3209) and by Muslim in his *Saheeh* (2637) that Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "When Allah loves a person, He calls Jibreel and says: 'I love So and so, so love him.' So Jibreel loves him, then he calls out to the people of heaven, 'Allah loves So and so, so love him.' So the people of heaven love him and he finds acceptance on earth. If Allah hates someone, He calls Jibreel and says: 'I hate So and so, so hate him.' So Jibreel hates him, then he calls out to the people of heaven: 'Allah hates So and so, so hate him.' So they hate him and he is hated on earth."

Thirdly: being certain that focusing on pleasing people and not the Lord of the Worlds is a sign of failure, and the one who does that will end up blameworthy, with no one to praise him; Allah will abandon him and he will have no one to support him. But if he seeks to please Allah alone, Allah will suffice him and he will have no need of people.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "Do not make [as equal] with Allah another deity and [thereby] become censured and forsaken" [*al-Isra' 17:22*].

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Ibn Hibbaan narrated in his *Saheeh* (277) from 'Aa'ishah that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever pleases Allah by angering the people, Allah will suffice him, but whoever angers Allah by pleasing the people, Allah will leave him to the people." Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *as-Silsilah as-Saheehah* (2311).

Look at Ka'b ibn Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him) and how his focus was on speaking the truth and pleasing Allah alone, because he believed that Allah would suffice him if he spoke the truth, and that if his main concern was to avoid angering the people by telling lies, then Allah would soon cause people to be angry with him.

Ka'b (may Allah be pleased with him) said, in the story of his repentance, that he said to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): Indeed, by Allah, if I sat before anyone in this world other than you, I would have saved myself from his anger with an excuse, for I have been given the ability to argue persuasively, but by Allah, I know that if I were to tell you a lie today that you accepted, soon Allah would make you angry with me, but if I tell you the truth today that may make you upset with me, then I hope that Allah will pardon me. No, by Allah, I had no excuse. By Allah, I was never stronger or more well off than when I stayed behind and did not accompany you [on the campaign to Tabook]. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "As for this one, he has spoken the truth. Get up and leave until Allah decides concerning you."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari in his *Saheeh* (4418) and by Muslim in his *Saheeh* (2769).

Fourthly: knowing that there is no way to please people, for man is basically unfair and ignorant, and pleasing people is a target that cannot be achieved, for people are not even pleased with their Lord, so how can you think that they will be pleased with you?!

Al-Bayhaqi narrated in *az-Zuhd al-Kabeer* (180) with a saheeh isnaad from al-Hasan al-Basri that it was said to him: People come to your gathering to pick on any error you may make, so that they

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can make it a reason to gossip about you. He said: Do not worry about it, for I thought of the pleasure of being close to Allah and I hope for that; I thought of Paradise and I hope for that; I thought of al-hoor al-'een and I hope for that; I thought of being safe from people, and I found no way to achieve that. When I saw that people are not pleased with their Creator, I realized that they will never be pleased with a created being like themselves.

Ash-Shaafa'i (may Allah have mercy on him) said to Yoonus ibn 'Abd al-A'la: O Abu Moosa, if you were to strive your utmost to please all the people, there is no way to do that. As that is the case, then make your deeds and your intention sincerely for Allah (may He be glorified in exalted) alone.

Narrated by al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Eemaan* (6518).

So let each person's main concern be to seek the pleasure of his Lord alone, for if He is pleased, that is sufficient for you.

Let your slogan in life and your main concern before the Lord of the worlds be as the poet said:

I hope that my relationship with You is sweeter and life is bitter; I hope that You are pleased and that people are angry.

I hope that what is between You and me is in order, and that what is between me and people is in ruins.

If You love me then everything else is insignificant, and everyone on earth is as dust.

With regard to books, we do not know of any book that has been written specifically about this topic, but we advise the questioner and all Muslims to learn more about Allah, for the more a person comes to know about his Lord, the more his concern will be on seeking the pleasure of his Lord alone, and he will not worry about the displeasure of people.

One excellent book on this topic is *an-Nahj al-Asma fi Sharh Asma' Allah al-Husna*, by Dr.

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Muhammad al-Humood an-Najdi.

We also advise you to read widely in the books of Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali and Ibn al-Qayyim, for their words on this topic are among the most beneficial.

And Allah knows best.