

# True Desires

F. A. Hughes.

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At the commencement of another year it is well for us to pause and consider our outlook, what we are looking for. Men in the world, men of ability and skill, are looking well ahead; five year plans are giving way to ten year plans. Industrially, economically, politically, nationally, internationally, and perhaps more than all else, scientifically, men are planning great things. Only today a sober national paper speaks of men discovering the secret of and the ability to produce life within the next THOUSAND YEARS. The underlying motive in this ambition, doomed to failure, is the displacement of God in the minds and affections of men. The solemn climax to this is seen in Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, 2 Thess. 2: 3-4, "Let no man deceive you in *any manner*, because (it will not be) unless the apostasy have first come, and the man of sin have been revealed, the son of perdition; who opposes and exalts himself on high against all called God . . . so that he himself sits down in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God," (New Trans.). We do well to turn away from, and refuse to be influenced by, these apostate thoughts and ambitions of men.

It is refreshing to see the ambitions of the one to whom mercy was shown in order that he might be a "pattern" to them which believe, the Apostle Paul (see 1 Timothy 1: 12-16). In three places he uses a word, translated three different ways in English, but the same word throughout; a word meaning an "eager or earnest desire to do something," and the word further implies that what is desired to be done is of value in the eyes of the one who so desires.

The first instance is in 2 Cor. 5: 9, and speaks of his desire or ambition, GODWARD. The new translation reads, "Wherefore also we are zealous (*Philotimeomai*), whether present or absent, to be agreeable to Him." Paul in his outlook did not have the approval of man in view, nor was he concerned about the honours of this world; his sole thought was, as he expresses himself in other places, to be "agreeable to Him." This involved a pathway entirely separated from the current of man's mind, but it resulted in the joy and peace and triumph peculiar to a walk in communion with God.

The second use of the same Greek word is found in Romans 15: 20, and is translated "strived" in the Authorised Translation. We again quote the New Translation, where the word is given as "aiming." "And so aiming to announce the glad tidings." This is the substance of the apostle's ambition MANWARD. We may well pause before the challenge of it, especially if we consider the exercise and labour involved in the remaining part of that verse, "not where Christ *has been* named, that I might not build upon another's foundation," etc.. We are awaiting our Lord from heaven; this is the hope, the precious outlook of the believer, the ultimate goal to be conformed to His image. This hope has been give to us through the gospel; and could there be a greater ambition, a more blessed or happier way of life, than to bring these "glad tidings" by manner of life and by word of mouth to men now estranged from God, and ignorant of His mighty power and love? These "glad tidings" are still "the power of God unto salvation."

The third, and so far as we can trace, the only other reference to this word is in 1 Thess. 4: 11, where it is translated in the Authorised Version as "study." "Seek *earnestly* (the same word) to be quiet and mind your own affairs, and work with your (own) hands, even as we charged you, that ye may walk reputably towards those without, and may have need of no one," (or of nothing), (New Trans.).

This is Paul's desire for the SAINTS; and who shall measure the blessedness and safety of a walk

in response to such desires? As we know, it is found in an epistle in which references to the coming of the Lord, the rapture and the appearing, abound; and as this wonderful event, and the Person who fills out the event, is more before our affections, how gladly shall we seek grace to carry out the exhortation of such a Scripture.

We find ourselves in a time of much running "to and fro," and the much increase of knowledge, as mentioned in Daniel 12: 4, but our part is to "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him." This will deliver us from the restlessness of the futile ambitions of men, and, as in quiet communion with God, will form those features in each of us which will give pleasure to Him, and enable us to be marked by power in testimony to men.