Reasons For Serving God

Intro: As a basis for our study turn to 1 Pet. 4:1-6 “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 3For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: 4Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: 5Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. 6For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

Man has a choice, he may serve God or Satan; cf. Joshua 24:15 “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” To serve Satan may bring pleasure now but eternal hell after this life; Rom. 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Jam. 1:13-15 “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” On the other hand to serve God means life now and eternally; John 10:10 “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” Rom. 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Peter give us some reasons for serving God.

I. The Death of Christ
A. 1 Pet. 4:1 “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;”
B. Jesus death was a demonstration of God’s love and care for man.
   1. 1 John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
   2. Rom. 5:6-10 “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”
C. 1 John 4:19 “We love him, because he first loved us.”
D. Love for God will cause one to obey God.
   1. John 14:15 “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”
   2. 1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”
E. Rom. 2:4 “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”
F. Paul reminded Titus to urge people to a zealous life by reminding them of this; Tit. 2:14 “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

II. They Had Sufficiently Served Sin.
A. If you feel that you are a debtor to sin, you have now paid that debt.
   1. Rom. 8:12 “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.”
   2. Rom. 6:7-8 “For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:”
B. Sins listed:
   1. Lasciviousness.
      a. Means unbridled lustful excesses; absence of restraint.
b. Mark 7:21-23 “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22Thiefs, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

c. Corinthians; 2 Cor. 12:21 “And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.”

d. Sodom and Gomorrah; 2 Pet. 2:7 “And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.”

2. Lust
   a. Means a strong desire.
   b. 1 Pet. 2:11-12 “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

3. Excess of wine (drunkenness).
4. Revellings (drinking and dancing parties (immoralities).
5. Banquetings (drinking bouts).
6. Idolatries.
   a. Putting something in life before God.
   b. 1 John 5:21 “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”
   c. Col. 3:5 “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:”

III. SO ONE MAY INFLUENCE OTHERS TO SERVE GOD.

A. There was an observable and recognized change in the lives of those who had become Christians; 1 Pet. 4:4 “Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:”
   1. The criticism of the sinner was an admission to the change that God’s people had experienced.
   2. They had turned from sin to serve God; 1 The. 1:9 “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;”

B. Mat. 5:14-16 “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

C. 2 Cor. 3:2-3 “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: 3Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.”

D. 1 Tim. 4:12 “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

IV. ALL MUST GIVE ACCOUNT TO GOD.

A. 1 Pet. 4:5 “Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.”

B. Judgment is as sure as death; Heb. 9:27 “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

C. 2 Cor. 5:10 “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.”
   1. All must appear.
   2. We will not be judged by the criticisms of sinners.
   3. We will be judged by Christ.

D. Mat. 25:31-46
   1. It will produce a separation.
   2. It will result in eternal blessings or condemnation; Mat. 25:46 “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
E. Those who had already died when Peter wrote would also face God in judgment; 1 Pet. 4:6 “For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

Conclusion: This should prompt us to serve God, but we must do it with reverence and respect; Heb. 12:28 “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” To serve Satan is to do so at his souls expense; Rom. 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” To serve God is life and peace; Rom. 8:6 “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”