

Does God Like Mushrooms on His Pizza?

I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be liars. You also possess endurance and have tolerated many things because of My name, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you: you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then how far you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent. Yet you do have this: you hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. – Revelation 2:2-6 HCSB

When you first fall in love, one of your priorities is finding out everything you can about the likes and dislikes of the object of your affections. What is her favorite color? What perfume does she like? Does she like big parties or small private affairs? It becomes crucial to know all these details because you are trying to attract her, and you don't want to do anything that might cause her to have second thoughts about you.

If you want to get a good idea of what your loved one likes and dislikes, nothing works better than getting good intel from their family and friends. If you want to get a good idea of what God likes and dislikes, nothing is better than checking out what His prophets have rebuked His people for.

With the exception of idolatry, His rebukes have consistently been about unethical behavior. He hates oppression of the poor.¹ He hates it when we pervert justice.² Disregarding others' property rights³ the acceptance of bribes,⁴ dishonest behavior,⁵ swearing falsely,⁶ adultery,⁷ murder and theft,⁸ lying,⁹ and not paying workers a living wage¹⁰ all make the list. As a matter of fact, there is good reason to believe that He even hates idolatry so much because of the resulting unethical behavior!¹¹

Obviously, simply behaving ethically cannot save us¹². The Ephesian congregation mentioned in the opening verses practiced good works, endured persecution faithfully and did not tolerate evil, but it was their devotion to Christ that was lacking. It's not enough to do the dishes, take out the trash and get your clothes in the laundry hamper. These good and necessary habits must be motivated by true love.

Jesus said the Ephesians did have one redeeming factor working for them. They figured out what He hated and started hating it too. Unfortunately, many Christians today try to see how close to the edge of sin they can get without getting too badly singed. They believe God should adjust to their tastes instead of the other way around. By doing this, they are demonstrating an appalling lack of love for God.

Go through the Bible and determine God's likes and dislikes. Then present your life as a living sacrifice to Him¹³– but first be sure to pick out all the “mushrooms.”

¹ Amos 2:7

² Amos 5:7

³ Micah 2:2

⁴ Micah 3:11

⁵ Micah 6:10-11

⁶ Jeremiah 5:2

⁷ Jeremiah 5:8

⁸ Jeremiah 7:9

⁹ Jeremiah 9:4

¹⁰ Jeremiah 22:13

¹¹ Jeremiah 7:31

¹² Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 11:6

¹³ Romans 12:1-2