



Whose Approval Will You Seek?

A Teaching Outline

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Approval

Those who seek the approval of man are not servants of Christ.

Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

Do you spend your life trying to please everybody? Paul had to speak harshly to the Christians in Galatia because they were in serious danger. He did not apologize for his straightforward words, knowing that he could not serve Christ faithfully if he allowed the Galatian Christians to remain on the wrong track.

Whose approval are you seeking—others' or God's?

Pray for the courage to seek God's approval above anyone else's.

Follow only the words spoken by the Lord.

Exodus 24:3

Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!"

To understand this unusual covenant ratification ceremony, we need to understand the Bible's view of sin and forgiveness.

God is the sovereign Judge of the universe. He is also absolutely holy. As the holy Judge of all, he condemns sin and judges it worthy of death.

In the Old Testament God accepted the death of an animal as a substitute for the sinner. The animal's shed blood was proof that one life had been given for another. So on the one hand, blood symbolized the death of the animal, but it also symbolized the life that was spared as a result.

Of course the death of the animal that brought forgiveness in the Old Testament was only a temporary provision, looking forward to the death of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:9-10:28).

A strong people will glorify only the Lord.

Isaiah 25:3

Therefore a strong people will glorify you; Cities of ruthless nations will revere you.

Isaiah honored and praised God because he realized that God completes his plans as promised. God also fulfills his promises to you. Think of the prayers he has answered, and praise him for his goodness and faithfulness

Speak only what the Lord has commanded and it will come to pass.

Lamentations 3:37

Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it?

Parents discipline children to produce right behavior. God disciplined Judah to produce right living and genuine worship. We must not complain about corrective or instructive discipline in our lives but learn from it, trusting God and being willing to change. We must allow God's correction to bring about the kind of behavior in our life that pleases him.

The Lord will bring to light that things hidden in the darkness

1 Corinthians 4:5

Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who both will bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

It is tempting to judge fellow Christians, evaluating whether or not they are good followers of Christ. But only God knows a person's heart, and he is the only one with the right to judge.

Paul's warning to the Corinthians should also warn us. We are to confront those who are sinning (see 5:12, 13), but we must not judge who is a better servant for Christ. When you judge someone, you invariably consider yourself better—and that is arrogant.

Be honest and sincere in seeking God's approval.

Hebrews 11:2

For by it the men of old gained approval.

Believing that God exists is only the beginning; even the demons believe that much (James 2:19, 20). God will not settle for mere acknowledgment of his existence. He wants your faith that leads to a personal, dynamic relationship.

But does faith make sense, really? Do you believe because faith makes sense, or because faith doesn't need to make sense?

Some Christians think people cannot understand God and should not try. Others believe that nothing true is irrational, including true faith. The truth is, God gave us minds that should be developed and used.

To ignore intellectual growth is to live a stunted and naive life. God wants our trust and faith, even while we ponder and wonder about so many matters mysterious to us. Even so, we do not believe in a void nor leap into the dark.

Faith is reasonable, though reason alone cannot explain the whole of it. So use your mind to think things through. But leave room for the unexplainable works of God.

Sometimes we wonder about the fate of those who haven't heard of Christ and have not even had a Bible to read. God assures us that all who honestly seek him—who act in faith on the knowledge of God that they possess—will be rewarded.

When you tell others the Good News, encourage them to be honest and diligent in their search for truth. Those who hear the Good News are responsible for what they have heard (see 2 Corinthians 6:1, 2).

Your knowledge of God's miracles and wonders gain God's approval.

Acts 2:22

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—

Everything that happened to Jesus was under God's control. His plans were never disrupted by the Roman government or the Jewish officials. This was especially comforting to those facing oppression during the time of the early Christian church.

He whom the Lord commands receive the approval of God.

2 Corinthians 10:18

For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.

When we do something well, we want to tell others and be recognized. But recognition is dangerous—it can lead to inflated pride.

How much better it is to seek the praise of God rather than the praise of people. Then, when we receive praise, we will be free to give God the credit.

What should you change about the way you live in order to receive God's commendation.

Those who accept Christ are acceptable to God.

Romans 14:18

For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Believers are called to accept one another without judging our varied opinions. However, when the situation has to be faced, how should we deal with those who disagree with us? Paul's response is that all believers should act in love so as to maintain peace in the church.

Sin is not just a private matter. Everything we do affects others, and we have to think of them constantly. God created us to be interdependent, not independent. We who are strong in our faith must, without pride or condescension, treat others with love, patience, and self-restraint.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*.

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