

Pleasing People
Characteristics of a People-Pleaser

Introduction:

- I am very excited about how God might use this class in our individual sanctification process.
- In varying degrees and in varying capacities we are all guilty of the sin of "People-pleasing."
- We all have a desire to root for approval and acceptance and some of us will go to great lengths to get it.
- The challenge with this particular sin is that it is deeply rooted, deeply seated, in our hearts.
- This desire to want to please others motivates the way we speak, it motivates the way that we act, it motivates the way that we think...
- A love of acceptance and desire for approval isn't a new fad...
- Ever since the fall, since the introduction of sin into the world, man has been trying to track down the elusive shadow of approval.
- Just to illustrate this, turn to Genesis 3:8-13...
- The context here is familiar: Adam and Eve have disregarded God's command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and verses 8-13 give us insight into the moments just following the fall.

"And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife *hid* themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was *afraid*, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "*The woman* whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "*The serpent* deceived me, and I ate."

Genesis 3:8-13

- What is motivating Adam and Eve in this passage? Fear... (V.10)
- Fear of what? Being found out. Having their sin exposed.
- What does their fear lead them to do? Hide. (V.8)
- And when they are exposed, what does their desire for approval lead them to do? Blame shift. (V.12-13)
- Our insatiable desire to be liked and accepted causes us to spend all of our time and energy protecting the idol that we have erected in our hearts – the idol of self-love.
- You see people-pleasing is prideful idolatry.
- We stop believing what God has said about us (Our position in Christ)
- And we feel like we need to make up for what we lack.
- People-pleasing involves neglecting God and replacing him with a cheap substitute.
- What are the characteristics of a people-pleaser?
- The list that we will look at this morning is not exhaustive.
- Lou Priolo writes, "The presence of even one of the following characteristics should be all that is necessary to convict us of the presence of a toxic level of pride in our lives."

1. He fears the displeasure of man more than the displeasure of God.

Not only does the people-pleaser **love** the wrong thing (the approval of man rather than the approval of God), he **fears** the wrong thing as well. He fears the disapproval of man more than the disapproval of God. Fear can lead us into **danger**.

The **fear** of man lays a snare... **Proverbs 29:25**

Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for **fear** of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from **man** more than they glory that comes from **God**. **John 12:42-43**

It is better to be **rejected** by men and **approved** by God than to be approved by man and rejected by God.

When a people-pleaser interacts with others, his thoughts immediately and instinctively run in the direction of selfishness, anxiety, and fear.

A people-pleaser is not a peacemaker, but rather a **peace-lover**. A peacemaker is willing to endure the discomfort of a conflict in the hope of bringing about a peaceful resolution. A peace-lover is so afraid of conflict that he will avoid it at almost all costs. He is so concerned about “keeping the peace” with his fellow man that he is often willing to **forfeit** the peace of God that comes from standing up and suffering for the truth.

2. He desires the praise of man above the praise of God.

The Pharisees wanted approval so much that they spent a great deal of their **time** and **effort** doing those things that would bring them glory from men.

They do all their deeds to be **seen** by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they **love** the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. *Matthew 23:5-7*

The people-pleaser offers service to man and God that is contaminated by **impure** desires. His first thought is not “How will God be glorified in what I am about to do?” but rather “How will others **perceive** me when I do what I am about to do? For him the question is not “What will God gain if I do this? But “What will I gain?”

He is concerned if not consumed with the establishment and maintenance of his own **reputation**. His heart so craves being held in high esteem by others that little room is left to entertain thoughts of what he might do to acquire the praise of God. He puts much more **value** on pleasing man than on pleasing God.

If the source of my ambition is the treasure I obtain
If I measure my successes on a scale of earthly gain
If the focus of my vision is the status I attain
My accomplishments are worthless and my efforts are in vain

3. He studies what it takes to please man as much (if not more than) what it takes to please God.

The people-pleaser is so intent on gaining approval that he spends much of his time **studying** the interests, aversions, words, inflections, and body language of people. He is often inordinately **sensitive** to the countenances of those he is trying to please.

4. His speech is designed to entice and flatter others into thinking well of him.

Simply stated, the people-pleaser is a **wordsmith**. His words are designed to **cover** his flaws and to persuade others to see him in the best possible light. He is a hypocrite who, for fear of being found out or for the purpose of making others think better of him than he really is, **disguises** himself.

He rarely reveals to others the truth about who he really is inside especially his struggle with **sin**.

He finds it difficult to say “**no**” to those who make requests of him, even when he knows that saying “**yes**” will not be the best choice.

5. He is a respecter of persons.

Being approved by an “**important person**” makes the people-pleaser feel more important. He courts the favor of those who possess what he **wants**. His kindness to them is not based on their need or God’s glory, but rather on his **gaining** advantage.

The people pleaser has a hard time being **objective** in judgment because his desire for approval is stronger than his desire for justice. He wrongly makes “distinctions” because he **evaluates** others based on the basis of what is most important to him rather than on the basis of what is most important to God.

6. He is oversensitive to correction, reproof, and other allusions of dissatisfaction or disapproval on the part of others.

The people-pleaser **overreacts** to any hint of disapproval. He feels a pinprick as keenly as he feels a knife in the back. He is overly sensitive because he is overly concerned about his own **glory**. He sees constructive criticism and feedback for improvement as a **threat** to his reputation rather than as an opportunity to grow or as an indication of the reprover's love for him. Being oversensitive is nothing less than pride.

This oversensitivity may take the form of anger, **bitterness**, or hatred. It may show up in the form of **withdrawing**, sulking, or pouting.

7. He outwardly renders eye service to man rather than inwardly rendering sincere (from the heart) ministry to the Lord.

Regardless of the service or ministry rendered, the people-pleaser struggles to do it with the right **motive**. Pleasing and glorifying God by serving others takes a backseat to serving others to promote and glorify **self**. The person who gives eye service evaluates his success or failure not on the basis of whether God was pleased with his service, but rather on how well he **performed**.

8. He selfishly uses the wisdom, abilities, and gifts that have been given to him for God's glory and the benefit of others for his own glory and personal benefit.

It is not just opportunities to minister that the people-pleaser squanders on his own selfish ends. He tries to use virtually every divine endowment given to him for the benefit of others and the glory of God to make himself **look good**.

For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not **receive**? If then you received it, why do you **boast** as if you did not receive it? **1 Corinthians 4:7**

Examples on Page 34.

It is bad enough for a person to think he is **responsible** for the blessings and achievements in life. It is far worse to use those blessings to **promote** one's own glory and reputation rather than the glory and reputation of the One who is truly responsible for them.

9. He invests more of his personal resources in establishing his own honor than he does in establishing God's honor.

His daily preoccupation with his own honor **drains** his resources, preventing him from fully using them for eternal purposes. His treasure is laid up on **earth** where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. His treasure is invested in **this** life and not the next one, in temporal glory, not in eternal glory.

This principle applies not just to the giving of material gifts but also to the giving of times, service, encouragement, and any other **investment** that the people-pleaser might seem to make in the lives of others.

10. He is discontented with the condition and proportions that God has appointed for him.

A man's condition is the situation or circumstances in which the Lord has chosen to place him. The people-pleaser is discontent with his **status** in life. He longs to have more authority, greater honor, more influence, and more wealth. Rather than being **thankful** for what God has given to him and for God's wise distribution of blessings to all men for his purposes, the approval seeker **covets** the blessings that God has given to others.

Perhaps the saddest thing about such a person is that he will never be satisfied, no matter how much approval he is able to generate.

He who loves money will not be **satisfied** with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income, this also is vanity. ***Ecclesiastes 5:10***

This principle applies to any heart idol. Temporal things do not satisfy; they only tempt us to **further** discontentment.

People-Pleasing Inventory

Rating Scale	Points		
Never (or Hardly Ever)	5	96-100	You are not a People-Pleaser...
Seldom	4	90-95	Probably free from the love of approval...
Sometimes	3	80-89	Probably a bit too concerned the approval of others...
Frequently	2	70-79	You may, in fact, be a bona fide People-Pleaser...
Always (or Almost Always)	1	Below 69	You very well may be an approval addict...

1. I listen with anxious attentiveness when others discuss that which pleases or displeases them. _____
2. I strive to be politically correct more than biblically correct. _____
3. I like to go "fishing" for compliments. _____
4. I gossip about others to people whom I believe will be pleased with me for giving them such luscious tidbits of information. _____
5. My desire for a good reputation is predominantly based on how such a reputation will benefit me rather than how that reputation will serve as a means to a greater end, such as the glory of God, the good of others, or some other unselfish objective. _____
6. I value the approval of certain individuals from whom I expect to receive certain honors more than the approval of those from whom I do not expect to receive such honors. _____
7. I worry about what people think about me. _____
8. I am willing to sin rather than face the rejection of certain individuals. _____
9. I struggle with being a respecter of persons and showing favoritism. _____
10. I believe that being rejected is one of the worst things that a person could possibly experience. _____
11. I avoid conflicts rather than trying to resolve them. _____
12. I take unnecessary precautions to protect my good name. _____
13. I become angry when I am contradicted by others, especially when being publicly contradicted. _____
14. When meeting new people, I spend more time thinking about how to impress them than how to minister to them. _____
15. My fear of being rejected paralyzes me to the extent that it keeps me from getting close to others. _____
16. I forget that being rejected by others is part of the "suffering for righteousness' sake" that is my reasonable service to God and part of my calling as a Christian. _____
17. I long to be noticed more than I long to be godly. _____
18. I give in to peer pressure rather than standing up for what I know is right. _____
19. I do not witness to others as I should because I fear being criticized or rejected. _____
20. I overreact to criticism by dwelling on it too long or unnecessarily allowing it to depress me. _____

Total _____

Pleasing People
Is it Ever Right to Please People

Introduction:

- I want to talk for a few minutes about our motives this morning.
- How would you define a motive?
- A reason for doing something that is not obvious to others...
- Our motives are those ideas that we have or decisions that we make that determine why we do what we do.
- We have pure and God-honoring motives and desires and we have impure motives and desires that dishonor God.
- Some desires are sinful in the fact that there is never an occasion in which they are not sinful.
Coveting another man's wife / Cheating someone out of something that is rightfully theirs
- Other good desires such as desiring your spouse to love you, or your children to honor you, or your boss to treat you with respect can become sinful when long for them too intently.
- How do I know if my desire has shifted from something good to something less than God-honoring?
- Stated another way: When does a desire become sinful?
 1. When I have to **sin** to get what I want.
 2. When I **sin** as a result of not getting what I want.
- Is it a sin for a Christian to use money?
- No, but it is a sin to long for it and worship it; to look to money for provision more than looking to God.
- Is it a sin for a Christian to enjoy pleasure?
- No, but it is a sin to love pleasure more than God.
- Whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man... *Proverbs 21:17*
- ...Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. *2 Timothy 3:4*
- Is it a sin for a Christian to want to manage those under your spiritual care?
- No, but it is a sin to abuse your spiritual authority because you have an ego.
- Is it a sin for a Christian to desire approval?
- No necessarily... But it is wrong to love the approval of men rather than the approval of God. *John 12:43*
- Our desire for praise is a part of our **design**, which allows us to more readily sense the shame and reproach associated with our sin.
- To experience no desire for praise is to experience no sense of **shame** when we sin.
- When is it right to Please People?

1. It is right to please people to the extent that doing so is not the leading principle of conduct or primary motive of your actions, but subordinate to the love of God and the love of neighbor.

The Bible assumes that man, to a certain extent, naturally desires approval from others. It nowhere cautions him against having a **sober-minded** desire for such approval.

Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be **honored** in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." **Luke 14:7-11**

It is interesting to note that Jesus does not **condemn** the man who, after humbling himself, receives honor in the sight of all who dine with him. Contrary to what we might presume, he uses our desire for esteem and approval as a **motivation** to be humble. We step over the line into sin on our hearts when we are **governed** by the desire to please people rather than by the desire to love God and neighbor.

2. It is right to please people to the extent that establishing a good name for the cause of Christ is your motive.

The Scriptures speak of the importance of possessing a good **reputation**. As with much in the Christian's life, that which distinguishes right from wrong is simply our **motives**. When we seek a good reputation in order to use it for our own selfish purposes, our motives are impure and our desire is sinful.

To seek a good reputation for our own selfish purposes is to ask for or desire the wrong thing. You ask and you do not receive because you ask **wrongly**, to spend it on your passions [pleasures]. (**James 4:3**) When we want to establish and maintain a good name for the cause of Christ, our motivation is **biblical** and our efforts are likely to produce good fruit.

Solomon tells us of the importance of a good name: Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give of a **stench**; so a **little** folly outweighs wisdom and honor. **Ecclesiastes 10:1**

Those in church leadership must have a good name / reputation: "Therefore an overseer must be above **reproach**, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, Moreover, he must be well **thought** of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. (**1 Timothy 3:2**) It is clear that pleasing people for the purpose of God's great name is not only lawful, but **commendable**.

3. It is right to please people to the extent that the Bible commands you to please, honor, and obey your parents, your rulers, and your superiors.

God is the one who ordains **all** human authority, both good and bad. Romans 13:1 says, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." Those whom God has been placed in positions of authority are therefore to be **honored** and obeyed [pleased]. This is of course as long as their authority does not **compromise** a biblical standard. Our responsibility to please such people does not **supersede** our responsibility to please God first and foremost. No one, regardless of his position, may lawfully ask another to sin.

"What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to *speak no more to anyone in this name*." So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we **cannot** but speak of what we have seen and heard." **Acts 4:16-20**

Pleasing our Parents:

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which your God gives you. **Exodus 20:12**

The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him. Let your father and mother be **glad**; let her who bore you rejoice. **Proverbs 23:24-25**

Pleasing our Rulers:

And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." Jesus said to them, "**Render** to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him. **Mark 12:14-17**

Pleasing Earthly Masters (Employers):

Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be **well-pleasing**, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. **Titus 2:9-10**

4. It is right to please people to the extent that the Bible allows you to please your spouse.

Pleasing one's spouse comes **second** only to pleasing the Lord. When this important biblical principle is misunderstood, it creates very serious marital problems. The Bible assumes that all married persons will have their interests divided between pleasing **Christ**, which is always top priority, and pleasing their **spouses**.

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to **please** his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to **please** her husband. **1 Corinthians 7:32-34**

5. It is right to please people to the extent that you are to *become all things to all men* whom you are attempting to save for Christ.

It is sometimes necessary to go outside of our comfort zone and even inconvenience ourselves, becoming whatever is biblically legitimate to **accommodate** others for the purpose of winning them to Christ.

“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”
1 Corinthians 9:19-23

To the Jews I **became** a Jew... To those under the law I **became** as one under the law... To those outside the law I **became** as one outside the law... To the weak I **became** weak...

Without compromising the gospel, Paul tried to **please** others in his evangelistic efforts. Without changing his message, he condescended to all sorts of people in order to preach the gospel to them in all sorts of situations. He had biblical **flexibility**. To this extent, it is lawful to be a people-pleaser.

6. It is right to please people by denying yourself the use of your Christian liberty, so as not to put a stumbling block before a weaker brother / sister.

It is one thing if those to whom we proclaim the gospel are offended by our message itself; it is another thing altogether if they are offended by our **conduct** or activities. We need to be willing to limit our freedoms in order not to set a stumbling block before those who are not as free as the gospel of grace makes us. We need to be sensitive to the **convictions** of others.

We who are strong have an **obligation** to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself...

Romans 15:1-3

How do we handle disputable issues? Don't do **anything** that would cause your brother to sin – even if it means that you are inconvenienced.

Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or **hindrance** in the way of a brother. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer **walking** in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do **anything** that causes your brother to stumble. **Romans 14:13-15, 20-21**

Pleasing People
The Dangers of Being a People-Pleaser

Introduction:

1. Inordinate people-pleasing brings you into bondage by enslaving you to everyone whom you desire to please.

The sin of people-pleasing is **addictive**. Those whom are enslaved to it feed off of the approval that they receive from others. This feeling of approval and acceptance causes the people-pleaser to want it more and more. The Bible often speaks in terms of “**slavery**” or “**bondage**” when addressing addictive behaviors. Peter said, “For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is **enslaved**.” **2 Peter 2:19**

We are told in Scripture not to become slaves of man. In **1 Corinthians 7:23** Paul says, “You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.” We make ourselves slaves to everyone that we **wrongly** try to please. The one whom you seek to please has become your master. Think about it this way: You have as many **masters** as you have **observers**. Every person that you try and please above and beyond what is allowed by Scripture has become your captain and your conqueror.

“Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been **set free** from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.” **Romans 6:16-18**

We are either going to be obedient to sin, and as a result become its slave and experience **bondage**, or we are going to be obedient to righteousness, and as a result become its slave and experience **life**.

Being a people-pleaser is like having a little handle on your back that others use to push and pull you in all directions. You yourself who give them this power when you **submit** to longing for their approval. Most of the time they are unaware that they have such control over you. By God’s grace, you can break off that handle and be set free from the control of others.

2. The excessive love of praise takes from you the honor you so eagerly seek.

The very thing you long for (the esteem of others) will be subverted to the degree that you have an inordinate desire for man’s approval. Those from whom you long to receive honor and those whom you desire to impress will eventually be **offended** by the pride that generates your lust for approval.

Remember that **pride** is at the root of all of our ventures to impurely please and impress people. Think for a moment (don’t dwell) about a proud person that you know. Is it easy or difficult to respect that person? Typically proud people are challenging to be around because their pride reveals them as **unauthentic**. If seeing pride in others turns you off, don’t you think that others will be turned off when they perceive your pride? All of us abhor that pride in others, which we **cherish** in ourselves.

Do not put yourself forward in the king’s presence or stand in the place of the great, for it is better to be told, “Come up here,” than to be put **lower** in the presence of a noble. **Proverbs 25:6-7**

3. Immoderate people-pleasing causes you to lose eternal rewards.

Jesus warns us that when we do things for the purpose of being seen in others, we **forfeit** the rewards that we would have otherwise received in heaven had our motives been right.

Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no **reward** from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret

will reward you. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18**

Illustration: Hired to do a days work. At the end of the day, to reward you for your labor, you were taken to a room where 2 Piles of Money (1 with one and five-dollar bills and the other with hundred-dollar bills) were set before you. You were given a basket and an allotment of time in which you could fill the basket from either pile. Which pile would you fill your basket from? From the hundred-dollar pile! We would be a fool to choose the lesser reward.

Whether or not you do so consciously, when your motives are to please man rather than God, you are longing not to be rewarded by your Father in heaven, but to be seen (and rewarded) by men. You are not only playing the **fool**, but being a **hypocrite** as well.

4. The inordinate desire for approval blinds you to your own sin.

Falling in love with the approval of man causes us to lose our ability to **see** correctly. Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees blind five times in Matthew 23:1-6. This is a serious accusation. The approval of man has an intoxicating effect on all who are given to its seductive luring. It **distorts** our view of others sin as well as our own.

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have **neglected** the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.” **Matthew 23:16-23**

Jesus called them “blind **men**,” “blind **guides**,” and “blind **Pharisees**.” He categorizes their blindness in three contexts. First, their blindness causes them to evade responsibility by taking **false** oaths (making promises with little or no intention of keeping them, or writing into the promises deceptive loopholes).

Secondly, Jesus condemns them for straining out gnats and swallowing a camel. That is that they paid tithes on the mint, dill and cumin, but they neglected the **weightier** matters of the law such as justice, mercy and faithfulness. Their pride, hypocrisy, greed, injustice and dishonesty mattered **less** to them than their meticulous tithing.

Thirdly, Jesus took them to task over cleaning the outside of their lives while leaving the inside full of filth and corruption. Outwardly they appeared to be righteous, but inwardly they were self-gratifying **thieves**. In their religious fervor, the Pharisees were not worshiping God, but rather their own desires for **esteem**.

Proud people are often focused on the external sins in others. They spend most of their time trying to put out small **fires** of sin on the surface of their lives while being totally unaware that there are shrewd and significant arsonists in their heart setting new fires faster than the existing ones can be extinguished.

HOW LUST FOR MAN'S APPROVAL BLINDS YOU TO SIN:

1. Pride tempts you to exaggerate your virtues

A proud person is likely to **overvalue** the knowledge, wisdom, gifts, abilities, character and maturity that God has given to him. He often forgets that every good and perfect thing he has was given to him by God (James 1:17) and that apart from God, he can do nothing (John 15:5).

Self-idolizing pride causes men to glory in their supposed greatness, when the greatness of God should show them their contemptible vileness. It causes them to **magnify** themselves when they ought to magnify their maker. It makes the strong man glory in his strength, and the rich man in his wealth, and the conqueror in his victories, and the princes and lords and rulers of earth on their dominions and dignities... **Richard Baxter**

2. Pride tempts you to minimize your flaws.

A proud person minimizes the terribleness of his sin because of an exaggerated view of his own virtues. He is guilty of the sin of "thinking more **highly** of himself than he ought" **Romans 12:3**. He overlooks his sin because he believes that he has **redeeming** qualities. David says, "For he flatters himself in his own eyes that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated." **Psalms 36:2**

The humble Christian is well aware of his weaknesses, sinfulness, lack of faith and need of God's forgiveness and grace, but the proud person **flatters** himself too much to detect and hate his sin.

3. Pride tempts you to distort and magnify the seriousness of your flaws.

Pride can also cause a person to **overreact** to the sins and imperfections in his life. Such a response is not motivated by a genuine concern that one has sinned against God, but rather by a selfish desire to be **perfect**. Perfectionist tendencies tend to flow out of an inordinate desire to win the approval of others or fear of rejection. The conscience of a perfectionist has often been programmed not by the Word of God, but by his desire for **approval**.

4. Pride tempts you to change things in your life according to man's priorities rather than the agenda of the Holy Spirit.

The proud person is concerned about changing things in his or her life that really don't **matter** much to God. Rather than looking at what the Bible has to say about what God wants us to put off and put on, the proud person makes a top priority of correcting things that may displease others. In doing so, he puts more trust in the **reasoning** of his own heart than in Scripture causing his spiritual guidance system to be out of kilter.

Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered. **Proverbs 28:26**

5. Pride focuses your attention on changing the outer man more than the inner man.

The changes made by an approval addict are often external rather than internal (having to do with character). The prod person wants to make sure all of the external "**i's**" are dotted and "**t's**" are crossed. Those things (clothing, personal appearance, athletic ability, intelligence, the type of car, the kind of home, job title, amount of personal wealth), when placed on God's scale and held over and against character, don't really weigh anything.

Paul reminded Timothy, "Train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in **every way**, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." **1 Timothy 4:7-8**

6. An excessive love of praise tempts you to believe man's opinion of yourself over God's opinion.

To the extent that you are seeking to please others more than God, you will value the opinion of **fallible** men more than the opinion of the **infallible** God. If others perceive you to be better than you are, you will trust their judgment over that of your own conscience. If, on the other hand, they perceive you to be inadequate in an area of your life that God says is not a biblical inadequacy (not a sin), you will hasten to change it at any **expense**, though you know the Lord would rather have you invest your times and effort in changing those things that are offensive to him. You will forget that the best way to win the approval of *good* men is to develop, by God's grace, the **character** of Christ.

The more we see how much we have missed the mark, the more we see our need to repent and cling to the cross of Christ!

Pleasing People
More Dangers of Being a People-Pleaser

Review of last weeks dangers of being a People-Pleaser: (Quickly clip through...)

1. Inordinate people-pleasing brings you into bondage by enslaving you to everyone whom you desire to please.
2. The excessive love of praise takes from you the honor you so eagerly seek.
3. Immoderate people-pleasing causes you to lose eternal rewards.
4. The inordinate desire for approval blinds you to your own sin.

HOW LUST FOR MAN'S APPROVAL BLINDS YOU TO SIN:

1. Pride tempts you to exaggerate your virtues.
2. Pride tempts you to minimize your flaws.
3. Pride tempts you to distort and magnify the seriousness of your flaws.
4. Pride tempts you to change things in your life according to man's priorities rather than the agenda of the Holy Spirit.
5. Pride focuses your attention on changing the outer man more than the inner man.
6. An excessive love of praise tempts you to believe man's opinion of yourself over God's opinion.

+++ REMEMBER YOUR POSITION IN CHRIST +++

7. **The inordinate desire for approval makes you susceptible to flattery and renders you more vulnerable to deception and manipulation from others.**

Flattery is trying to influence or gain an advantage over someone by praising (or pleasing) him above and beyond that which his character **merits**. It is a cunning and deceitful kind of praise intended to trap and hurt the unsuspecting and to benefit the one who laid it. Flattery makes the good about you seem better than it is, and the bad about you seem less than it is. To the degree that you inordinately aspire to be approved by others, you are **vulnerable** to being swept off your feet by enticing flattery.

Henry Hurst, a Puritan in the 1600's, identified six types of flattery:

A Devilish Flattery: This type of flattery entices its hearer to **engage** in some sort of sinful activity. In Proverbs 1:10 Solomon gave great instruction saying, "My son, if sinners entice you, do not **consent**." Devilish flattery can even use Scripture and pervert its meaning or context to **elicit** a desired response.

A Revengeful Flattery: This form of flattery is motivated by a desire to get **even**. It is exceptionally manipulative. Proverbs 26:24-25 says, "Whoever hates disguises himself with his lips and harbors deceit in his heart; when he speaks **graciously**, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart." Sometimes one's enemies will cover up their hatred with gracious words. Speaking of this sort of deceit, Proverbs 27:6 says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; **profuse** are the kisses of an enemy."

A Slavish Flattery: This brand of flattery is produced by the lusts to which the *flatterer* is in bondage. In Romans 16:18 Paul said, "For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by **smooth talk** and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive."

A Cowardly Flattery: This type of sweet-talking happens when the flatterer doesn't have the **courage** to confront others with the truth. Make sure that you choose friends who are willing to be **honest** with you. It is a real mess when a people-pleaser is built up with cowardly flattery. The one who offers cowardly flattery is a people-pleaser just as much as the one who loves the flattery. The end is two people-pleasers who love each other's company and just end up licking each other's **wounds**. Proverbs 28:23 offers wise counsel saying, "Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than the who flatters with his tongue."

A Covetous Flattery: A potential increase in personal wealth is the impetus for this form of blandishment. The flatterer desires something that the one who is flattered can provide and so **crafts** words as a way of manipulating the hearer to give them what they want. Again, can you see the devious manipulation in flattery? Paul said, "For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for **greed**—God is witness.

Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ (1 Thess. 2:5-6).

An Emulous Flattery: This form of flattery extols and magnifies the good, virtuous, and praiseworthy qualities of those in our **own** company (or social group) above all measure. This could be described by the old adage, "Birds of a feather flock together..." It is flattery by way of **emulating** those in our own social circles or cliques.

There is a logical sequence, a process, through which those who are given to the love of approval may find themselves going that renders them more and more susceptible to flattery...

Step 1: A desire for man's subjective approval.

The people-pleaser secretly **wishes** that his best be seen as better than it is and his worst be seen as nobler than it is.

Step 2: An eagerness to hear exaggerated accounts of one's character and achievements.

A longing soon develops to hear flatterers give **glowing** accounts of things that never happened, or were done in a manner greatly inferior to the way in which they were reported. The people-pleaser delights to hear others **embellish** his character and minimize his weaknesses. He would have a hard time saying with Paul, "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Step 3: A tendency to believe the interpretation of the flatterer.

Although he knows that the flatterer is being less than **accurate** with his sugar-coated commendations and excessive excuses, the people-pleaser places more credence in these embellishments than he does in the truth. He seeks out these reports rather than looking in the **mirror** of God's Word.

Step 4: A setting of ones heart on that flattering interpretation.

The value we place on something is inseparable from the love we bestow on it. To the extent that the people-pleaser loves the approval of men more than the approval of God, he values their **opinion** more than God's. Consequently, when a flatterer tells us of our own virtues, making them appear to be the product of our own innate **goodness**, we love and prize his opinion so much that we set our proud heart upon it, convinced that these things must be so.

Step 5: A seeking of opportunities for others to flatter.

People-pleasers often go looking for people that are willing to say good things about them. We call this **fishing** for compliments. But it also goes much beyond fishing when he tries to **create** opportunities to have his person, actions, or qualifications showcased before others. He misunderstands the reality of Proverbs 25:27 when it says, "It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it **glorious** to seek one's own glory."

Step 6: A choosing of friends who are willing to lie about the people-pleaser to others.

The choice of friends is no little **consideration** in the heart of the people-pleaser. Richard Baxter once said, "Many thousands among great ones and rich ones cannot live without extravagant applauders of their persons and conduct; and we justly wonder how they bear with patience the extravagant, notorious, and incredible falsities of these parasites." The act of flattery is a lie that many are willing to believe because they excessively long for the approval of others. Once they believe the first lie, they find it hard not to believe **subsequent** ones. They do not see the flatterer as a liar whose company should not be tolerated.

8. The inordinate desire for approval makes the people-pleaser susceptible to many other sinful temptations.

Like a largemouth bass that is lured away from the safety of its covering into captivity by a **flashy** new artificial bait, our inordinate desires can draw us away from the obedience of Christ into many different **captivating** sins. James said, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is **lured** and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers" (James 1:13-16).

The more frequently that we cross the line of longing for man's approval more than God's approval, the greater the likelihood that one day we will step into a myriad of other sinful snares. A few worth mentioning are:

A. The love of approval tempts the people-pleaser to say "yes" when he ought to say "no."

We fall into this snare when our **priorities** get out of whack. It is very possible to allow saying "yes" to good things keep us from saying "yes" to better things – things more biblically necessary. This was the case with Martha and Mary. Martha was concerned about good things. We must understand that good things are the enemies of the **best** things in life such as sitting at Jesus' feet.

Here are a few questions for consideration: How often does saying "yes" to someone keep you from your daily time in the **Word** and Prayer? How often does saying "yes" to someone keep you from being a **faithful** housekeeper, employee, or student? How often does saying "yes" to someone keep you from fulfilling your other domestic responsibilities?

The person who loves the approval of God more than he does the approval of man knows what God expects of him. He knows that God will be displeased with a decision based on **misplaced** priorities. So with all sincerity and a clear conscience, he says to those who ask for lower priority commitments, "I would really love to be able to do that, but I have another more **pressing** commitment to keep."

B. The love of approval tempts the people-pleaser to be a respecter of persons (to show partiality).

We are tempted to show favoritism to the rich, famous, beautiful, the one in a position of authority, and even the **godly**. If our idol of choice is wealth, we will be tempted to show favoritism to those whom we believe will give us wealth. But when the idol of our heart is the love of approval, we might well be tempted to show more respect to the one who will somehow give us a greater **reputation**.

C. The love of approval tempts the people-pleaser to give into peer pressure.

Peer-pressure is the constraint one feels to **conform** to the conduct of his peers. Believe me, you didn't leave this behind when you left high school either. We all are tempted to **modify** our behavior to the likes of others. To not conform to the crowd is to risk rejection. Paul urged believers, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2). The only thing more powerful than external peer pressure is the internal **pleasure** that comes from pleasing God!

D. The love of approval tempts the people-pleaser to be indecisive.

The people-pleaser struggles to bring a decision to a conclusion for two reasons. First, because his conscience has been programmed more by what will please others than by what will please God, so that God's **principles** are not in the forefront of his mind when he makes decisions. Secondly, he is typically so concerned about how the decision will be seen by others that he spends inordinate amounts of time trying to **look** at the decision from every conceivable point of view. We call this the paralysis of analysis...

E. The love of approval tempts the people-pleaser to choose the wrong kinds of friends for the wrong reasons.

The bible repeatedly warns about the dangers of having wrong friends (Prov. 13:20, 1 Cor. 15:33). Many choose their friends carefully but for the **wrong** reasons. The people-pleaser is tempted to select friends that he feels are the least likely to confront him. He desires those friends whom he believes will **enhance** his reputation, will be easy to please, and those whose admiration he is **certain** to receive. One of the most subtly blinding effects of being a people-pleaser is that it diminishes our ability to discern potentially dangerous character **flaws** in our admirers.

F. The love of approval tempts the people-pleaser to discontentment and greed.

The temporal focus of the people-pleaser makes it all but impossible for him to lay up treasure in heaven (Matt. 6:19-20). He spends his time collecting **cheap**, unstable earthly rewards, thus forfeiting eternal treasures and the security that comes with them. He is left always **wanting** and never satisfied.

G. The love of approval tempts the people-pleaser to be timid about sharing his faith.

People-pleasers have a greater inclination to be **ashamed** of the gospel. They fear being “too pushy” or “over zealous” or “fanatical.” They fear being stuck with some unflattering **label** or religious nickname, so they keep the good news about Jesus Christ to themselves.

H. The love of approval tempts the people-pleaser to hypocrisy.

The people-pleaser professes or pretends to be or do one thing when in all reality they are and have done something else.

I. The love of approval tempts the people-pleaser to respond defensively when reproved by others.

People-pleasers cannot see the love in others' careful attempts to correct them. They often times argue their case and rely on the word “**but...**” to maintain conversation.

J. The love of approval tempts the people-pleaser to loquaciousness (talking too much).

Be it boasting, or flattering, or fishing for compliments, the inordinate desire for approval tempts the idolater to open his mouth before **engaging** his brain. We call this fire, ready, aim! Solomon rightly says, “When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent” (Prov. 10:19), and “A fool's voice is known by his many words” (Eccl. 5:3b NKJV).

9. Immoderate people-pleasing robs the approval-seeker of his peace and joy.

By seeking to please man rather than God, you set yourself up to be plagued by anxiety. This anxiety and worry will steal the peace and joy that are the **birthright** of the Christian. When you are overly concerned about displeasing others, you are worrying about what they will think of you or how they might reject you or how they might cause you grief in some other way. Worry is a sin. You would be better off not wasting the vast quantities of time that worrying consumes and, rather, spending your time **thinking** about and **doing** those things which are eternally profitable!

Pleasing People
You Can't Please All of the People Even Some of the Time

Introduction:

- Some people think, "I can please some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but I can't please all of the people all of the time!"
- Here is the reality, "You can please some of the people some of the time, and all of the people **none** of the time, but you can please God *most* of the time!"
- In other words, it is more likely, from a biblical perspective, that you will be able to please God most of the time than you will be able to please all men some of the time.
- **Illustration:** Suppose you have five one-dollar bills in your pocket – nothing else. Twelve homeless children walk up to you begging for money. Can you please them all? If your motive is to please men, you will be **disappointed**. You will end up displeasing more people than you are able to please. On the other hand, if your desire is to please God, you will not be disappointed regardless of the way in which you choose to distribute the money.
- let's look at 6 reasons why effectively pleasing men is so inane and virtually impossible...

1. It is fruitless to try to please men because each person is different and therefore, by pleasing some, you will inevitably displease others.

Paul asks the question in 1 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV), "Who makes you differ from one another?" The obvious answer is, God does." These inherent differences include such things as tastes, **interests**, intellect, gifts, and abilities. Since each of us likes and dislikes different a number of different things based on our unique personality, pleasing all people –even a small cross section of them – is an **impossible** thing to do in most cases. When you add man's sinful heart into the equations, the statistical probability of pleasing even some men all of the time is infinitesimally **small**.

A few practical examples from Lou (Page 85 in the book)

No activity, no behavior, no attitude will please all men at **all** times! The only thing that seems to please most of the people most of the time and command enduring and consistent praise is true Christian **character**. But even genuine Christlike character can be misunderstood and will inevitably displease **someone**.

2. It is unrealistic to try to please people because selfishness distorts their thinking and raises their expectations above that which you can reasonably fulfill.

Every part of man's heart and mind has been negatively affected by Sin. We call this total depravity. This doesn't mean that we are as sinful as we could be, but rather that sin has reached and distorts every human **faculty**. Everything from his conscience, sense of humor, perceptions and judgments are, in varying degrees, **marred** by the fall. Among the other parts of human nature that are infected with sin, our ability to **think** correctly has also been distorted. We call this the **noetic** effect of sin. Paul describes this in Ephesians 4:

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the **futility** of their minds. They are darkened in their **understanding**, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. **Ephesians 4:17-18**

Since sin has affected man's entire thought process – his perceptions, reasoning ability, judgments, motives, appetites, desires and his **expectations**, why would you trust his ability to discern your character and determine the basis on which he approves or disapproves of you? Why would you trust him to determine the standard by which he accepts or rejects you? God, speaking through the Prophet Isaiah said, "Stop **regarding** man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; For why should he be esteemed?" **Isaiah 2:22**

Now... we must be careful here! What we are not saying is that you should shrug off any feedback that you are given from anyone and chalk it up to the fact that his or her expectations have been marred by the fall. Make no mistake; God will often use another man or woman to reveal error in us or to teach us something about ourselves that, without them, would remain lodged in our **blind** spot. What we are saying is that we need to be discerning when we are approved by others and we also need to be discerning when we are disapproved by others.

Richard Baxter said, "Remember that men are so **selfish** that their expectations will be greater than you will be able to satisfy. They will not consider those things that might prevent you from giving them what they desire, such as your ministry to others, or your job, or your necessary diversionary activities. They want you all to themselves as though you had no one else to care for but them. Frequently, when I was under tremendous time pressure, a multitude of people each thought that I should have spent all of my times with them. When I visited with one, there were ten offended that I was not visiting them at that very moment. When I was speaking with one, many were offended that I was not rather talking with them. If those with whom I am speaking consider me to be courteous and attentive, those with whom I could not converse – except maybe for a brief moment or two – consider me to be discourteous and inattentive. How many have been upset with me because God and conscience command me to spend my time on greater and more **important** things."

3. It is futile to try and please people because most of them are unregenerate and believe you to be "foolish" and "strange."

You will be profoundly disappointed if you, as a Christian, try to please unregenerate men, expecting them to approve of those things in your life that **convict** them of their sin. The Scriptures are filled with examples of unregenerate men and women who were furious at God's servants because their **obedience** was such a rebuke to them. Take the apostles for example. After being miraculously released from prison by an angel, they were dragged before the Sanhedrin to stand trial.

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." When they heard this, they were **enraged** and wanted to kill them.
Acts 5:29-33

How about Stephen after he rebuked the counsel of the high priest:

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they **ground** their **teeth** at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and **stopped** their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. **Acts 7:54-58**

If the lives of these men brought such conviction on (and elicited such wrath from) the lost, how wise an **investment** is it for you to spend your time, effort, and thoughts on selfishly seeking their approval? And consider the matter of expecting unregenerate men and women to understand your spirituality. Not only can we not expect unregenerate men to approve of those things in our lives that convict them of their sin, but we can also not expect them to understand the things in our lives that they do not have the **capacity** (without the Holy Spirit) to understand. Remember Ephesians 4:17-18... They are darkened in their understanding. The Bible has much to say about this:

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are **folly** to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. **1 Corinthians 2:14**

For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are **surprised** when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you. **1 Peter 4:3-4**

4. It is unreasonable to try to please people because even among Christians, judgmental attitudes and critical spirits are all too prevalent.

Even though we ourselves know that it is wrong, and even though we do not want others to do it to us, most of us regularly make unloving **judgments** about others. Often times these judgments gush out of our mouths without being stopped by any sort of biblical filter.

Richard Baxter says, "Few people know the circumstances and reasons for what you do. They will presume to criticize you before they hear what you have to say. Had they done so (heard you), they would have absolved you of all charges in their mind. It is rare to meet, even among professing believers who are sincerely committed to Christ, those who are fearful and sensitive about **sinning** in the area of rash, ungrounded judging."

On a scale of 1-10 (1 being "I regularly make very unloving critical comments about others," and 10 being "I hardly ever make uncharitable judgments in my heart about others") how critical are you of others? Let's consider what God's Word has to say about this:

Do not take to heart all the things that people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. Your heart knows that many times you yourself have **cursed** others. **Ecclesiastes 7:21-22**

But no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we **curse** people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. **James 3:8-10**

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth **good**, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth **evil**. **Matthew 12:34b-35**

Now, if we as Christians struggle to one degree or another with being too critical, why would you waste your resources by trying so hard to please such critical creatures as we are? God is the only one who evaluates us **righteously**. We find great wisdom in **Proverbs 29:26**, "Many seek the rulers favor, but justice for man comes from the Lord."

5. It is futile to try to please people because even Jesus Christ, the Perfect Man, did not please everyone.

You and I are light-years from being perfect. But even if we were perfect, we still wouldn't be able to please everyone. Jesus, the Perfect man, had more **critics** than he did fans.

The Pharisees, scribes, tax collectors and Lawyers criticized Jesus:

The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, '**Look** at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' **Luke 7:34**

And the Pharisees and the scribes **grumbled**, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." **Luke 15:2**

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all **grumbled**, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." **Luke 19:5-7**

But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a **demon**?" **John 8:45-48**

Even with all of his virtues – his blamelessness, his ability to heal, his love, his goodness, his wisdom, his lack of partiality, his compassion, his sincerity, and all the rest of his **perfections** – he did not prevent anyone from speaking evil against him and rejecting him. It is interesting to note that he didn't even try to prevent them from doing so. Why, then, should you? If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his **household**. **Matthew 10:25**

6. It is useless to try to please people because they are fundamentally incapable of being pleased by anyone or anything other than Christ.

To be sure, man can look to virtually anything for pleasure and satisfaction. But in the final analysis, nothing pleases and satisfies man the way **God** does. Proverbs 27:20 says, "Sheol [hell] and Abaddon [destruction] are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man." There are many other texts that communicate this truth as well:

The eye is not **satisfied** with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. **Ecclesiastes 1:8b**

And my people shall be satisfied with **my** goodness, declares the LORD. **Jeremiah 31:14b**

The only hope you and I have of pleasing people is by **introducing** them to the only One who can truly please and satisfy them – The Lord Jesus Christ. Yet even that has one difficulty... If you are a people-pleaser, you face a great likelihood of **rejection** by introducing them to the Savior. Can you say with Paul, "I am not **ashamed** of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. **Romans 1:16**

NEXT WEEK WE WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FACT THAT "YOU CAN PLEASE GOD *MOST* OF THE TIME!"

*Pleasing People
But You Can Please God*

Introduction:

This is the most important chapter in the book! Learning to please God instead of man is the single greatest **remedy** to the problem of pleasing man. We must “put off” our inordinate desire for man’s approval and begin to daily “put on” a new pattern of thinking. Paul tells us to, “Put off your old self, which belongs to your **former** manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” **Ephesians 4:2-24**.

The fear of man (and the seeking to please that is driven from that fear) must be replaced by a proper fear of **God**. Then and only then will we, by God’s grace, begin to break this vicious cycle of loving man’s approval more than the approval of God. Remember the Pharisees, “Loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God” **John 12:43**. The best way to **dethrone** this approval idol is to prayerfully develop a desire (cultivate an appetite) for the approval of the One who righteously judges not only your words, actions, and attitudes, but also the thoughts and intentions of your heart **Genesis 6:5**.

Imagine what it would be like to long for God’s approval more than the approval of men. Think of the day when you long to please God so much that you no longer **worry** about what others think about you. There is such freedom in desiring to please God above any other man. He says of himself, “My yoke is easy and his burden is **light**” **Matthew 11:30**. The burden of trying to please man is immense and wearisome, but the gospel frees us from living under this weight.

BENEFITS OF PLEASING GOD RATHER THAN PEOPLE

1. You only have one Master rather than many.

Only having **one** boss to please is much easier than having many. Richard Baxter said, “If you seek first to please God and are satisfied with that, you have but one to please instead of multitudes; and a multitude of masters are **harder** to please than one.” If you have ever been in a situation where you are responsible to report to more than one authority you know the challenges associated with trying to figure out who you must please. One boss may ask you to do one thing while another asks you to do the complete opposite. Inevitably by pleasing some, you will displease others. How many bosses are you seeking to please? If you are seeking to please man, you have many **masters** to serve.

2. The One you please is wiser than man and will neither misunderstand you nor treat you unreasonably.

How many times have you been **misunderstood** by others? How often have your words, actions, attitudes, thoughts and motives been misjudged by those closest to you? Yet how many times has the Lord misunderstood you? He has never misread, misjudged, misunderstood or misconstrued anything about you.

How many times have others been **unreasonable** with you? How often have they taken advantage of you and mistreated you (this is not an invitation to a victim mentality). How frequently has man criticized and falsely accused you? Can you say such things about God? He is a good **master**! He knows when you sit down and when you rise. He understands your thoughts afar off. He comprehends your going out and your lying down. He is **acquainted** with all of your ways! And knowing all that he knows, he deals with you righteously.

Why, then, would you choose to **court** the favor of your fickle fellows over that of your wise and merciful heavenly Father? Why would you stoop to serve such an unjust master as a multitude of unreasonable men when you could serve the most understanding as reasonable Master, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe – Jesus Christ?

3. The One you please will judge you not on outward appearance, but on that which is in your heart.

Unlike your fellow man, God sees not only your words, actions, and attitudes, but also your thoughts and **motives**. In **1 Samuel 16:7** God sent Samuel to choose a new King from the sons of Jesse. When Samuel saw Eliab (Jesse's first son) he thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his **appearance** or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." Saul was only able to see what was on the **exterior**. God is able to look beyond what is on the surface and sees right into our hearts. He sees our **hidden** attitudes, thoughts, and motives.

Not only do we have a limited view of our own hearts, but we also have a limited view of the hearts of others. Since we often cannot clearly evaluate our own attitudes, thoughts, and motives, we cannot **accurately** judge the thoughts and motives of others. In **1 Corinthians 4:5** we are actually forbidden to be critical by Paul, who says, "Therefore do not go on passing **judgment** before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both 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." Consequently, not only are our words, actions, and attitudes subject to the uncharitable scrutiny of man, but our thoughts and motives come under fire as well. God's ability to judge these areas is at once more **severe** and more **merciful** than our own sin-tainted capacity to discern ourselves.

Hugh Blair excellently summarizes this reality saying, "God is the only unerring judge of what is excellent. His approval alone is the substance of **honor**; all other praise is but the shadow of honor. But the Sovereign of the world sees you in every light in which you can be seen... From him you may receive the praise of good actions that you had no opportunity of performing. For he sees them through your motives; he judges you by your intentions; he knows what you would have done if you but had the opportunity. You may be in his eyes a hero or a martyr, without undergoing the labors of one or the sufferings of the other. His **inspection**, therefore, opens a much wider field for praise than what the world can offer you."

Is it not an exercise in futility to seek to please man more than the living God, who is able to see your true heart? He will not make **hasty** judgments of you based on what he observes from the outside looking in. Rather all his judgments are righteous as he sees what no other man can – your **heart**.

4. The One you please is not a respecter of persons.

To be as respecter of persons means that we favor a person based on their intellect, wealth, physical abilities, popularity, etc... While we are often enamored by what we see (that we desire) in others, God does not show partiality or favoritism based on any human **achievement** or accomplishment.



John MacArthur describes the kind of partiality that God is incapable of showing saying, "That same idea (lack of partiality) is seen in the popular symbolic statue of justice as a woman blindfolded, signifying that she is unable to see who is before her to be judged and therefore is not tempted to be partial either for or against the accused. Sometimes she is also pictures with her hands tied, suggesting she cannot receive a bribe. Unfortunately, there is partiality even in the best of human courts, but there will be none in God's day of judgment. Because of his perfect knowledge of every detail and because of his perfect righteousness, it is not possible for his justice to be anything but perfectly impartial. Such things as position, education, influence, popularity, or physical appearance will have absolutely no **bearing** on God's decision concerning a person's eternal destiny"

Let's look at some New Testament passages that confirm this truth:

Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality... **Acts 10:34**

For there is no partiality with God. **Romans 2:11**

But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)--well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. **Galatians 2:6**

And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. **Ephesians 6:9**

For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. Colossians 3:25

If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth. **1 Peter 1:17**

God is the only kind of judge whose opinion cannot be bought, prejudiced, or unduly influenced. Seek to please him!

5. The One you please is immutable.

Unlike man, whose mind is often changed with the minutest bit of “new information,” God’s mind doesn’t **change**. This is a great truth for us! The writer of Hebrews said, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (**Hebrews 13:8**). God speaking through the prophet Malachi said, “For I am the Lord, I do not change (**Malachi 3:6**).

Here are a handful of great questions to ponder: How often has God told you to do something and then **reversed** his decision, requiring you to do another? When was the last time you read something in the Bible, only to discover the next time you read it that it had been revised? How many times has pleasing God one day involved something that would **displease** him the next? Sound familiar to anyone? This is the way of the world and God is eternally different from (other than) the whimsical, fickleness of man. Things that please man today may displease him tomorrow. Diet Pepsi / Tab Illustration Pg. 103! Man changes his mind **regularly**, but God doesn’t change his mind – thankfully!

The God of the Bible is stable, unwavering, **consistent**, and unchangeable!

6. The One you please does not require you to harm yourself in order to please him, but is pleased only with those things that will ultimately lead to your own happiness.

How do you regard all of the commands that God has placed on us in his Word? Do you see them as burdensome or as a **blessing**? A proper view of God sees his commands not as toilsome, pleasure-stealing burdens to be lugged around, but rather as divine invitations to health, happiness, and (to some degree) prosperity. Jesus, not endorsing the prosperity gospel, said, “Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and **observe** it” **Luke 11:28**.

God does not delight in taking away from his servants everything that brings them happiness, satisfaction, or pleasure. He is not an uncharitable, callous, cosmic-killjoy, or a **harsh** taskmaster. Rather, God is pleased to call us to those things that bring him pleasure, but ultimately also lead to our **happiness**. It is true that God often expects us to forfeit short-term happiness for the sake of long-term happiness, but he never asks of us that which is not in our own best interest and for our own ultimate happiness. Simply stated – God does everything that he does primarily for his own **glory** and secondarily for the **good** of those who love him (**Romans 8:28**).

Man’s expectations are quite different. Often times we are called upon or expected to do immoral things (that are not pleasing to God) by those we are trying to please. Take these for example:

“If you really want to please me...” Go into debt to buy me what I want, go to bed with me, get drunk with me, **lie** for me, break the law for me, look the other way when I break the law, let me cheat off of you.”

In the final analysis, God is much more **merciful** with what it takes to please him than man could ever be. For even when man is merciful, his shortsightedness rarely takes into account either the blessedness of having Godly character or the bliss of eternal rewards.

7. The One you please will not be influenced by talebearers, gossips, or false accusers. Neither will he be misled by misinformation.

We live among talebearing, troublemaking tattlers whose natural bent it is to exalt themselves by criticizing others. Most tales about you will be told behind your back when you are unable to face your accusers face to face. Most men will believe the bad they hear about you secondhand and allow it to influence their opinion of you more readily than they will believe and be influenced by the good they hear about you (this is not an attempt at negativism, but rather, most times, the sad reality). Sadly, this happens all too often among Christians, even among Christians who claim to be friends.

Richard Baxter correctly says, "And if the men who hear, think well of the one who accuses or backbites you, they think it lawful to believe him. And if they are friends or associates of the talebearer, his honesty (and accuracy) will be assumed and his credibility will not be questioned. It is not unusual for even a learned, ingenious or even Godly man to be too forward in uttering, from the mouth of others, an evil report. In such cases, the hearer thinks himself fully justified for believing it and reporting it to others."

MISLED BY MISINFORMATION

When it comes to misinformation, people are gullible. We need to be very careful that we (especially believers) are dealing with information that is correct. And even if it is correct, is it profitable for you to know? Here is a great principle: If you are uncertain in the slightest about the validity of a piece of information passed along to you...DON'T REPEAT IT. Here is another freebie: When someone is passing along information to you about another person that doesn't have anything to do with you...STOP THEM IMMEDIATELY AND LET THEM KNOW THAT THE INFORMATION IS NOT EDDIFYING TO YOU OR THE PERSON WHO IS BEING TALKED ABOUT! In other words, don't be a conduit for perpetuated chatter about others.

Only God knows who is telling the truth and who is lying. He cannot be misled by any variety of falsehood, no matter how cleverly disguised. His opinion of you is totally unaffected by misinformation that others are prone to believe about you. Speaking of Christ, Isaiah prophesied, "He will not judge by what his eyes see, nor make a decision by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth" (*Isaiah 11:3b-4a*). Unlike man, God is impervious to the influence of erroneous reports (and therefore is much easier to please)!

Your primary calling in life is to please and glorify God in all that you do. The knowledge that you are walking worthy of the Lord, pleasing him in all respects, should be a source of peace, security, joy, and contentment that will prevail over any fear of man's disapproval. If God is pleased with your life, what does it matter if man is displeased? God's approval and favor is a sufficient reward!

Introduction:

Pride is an ugly opponent. It is like an infectious disease. It is multi-layered and multi-faceted showing itself in many different varieties and forms. Jonathan Edwards said, "Pride takes many **forms** and many shapes. It encompasses the heart like the layers of an onion. When you pull a layer off... there is yet another layer underneath." Pride is no new fad; rather, it is the oldest sin in the world. In fact, pride was before the world. Satan and his angels fell by pride. They were not **satisfied** with their first situation and status, and thus pride stocked hell with its first inhabitants.

Pride is the sin of "**meism**". It says, "I think I need something other than or outside of what God has already provided and I will try and secure it on my own." Simply stated, pride is an attitude of the heart that wars to **exalt** self and in doing so, indicates a declining view of the character of God. It is the opposite of **John 3:30** where John the Baptist says, "He [God] must become greater [Increase], I must become **less** [Decrease]."

William Law once said, "There is no greater sign of confirmed pride than when we think we are humble enough." Now, let's zoom out and look at the implications of pride in our lives.

1. Pride is the delusion that our achievements are primarily the result of our own doing.

What is a delusion? It is a belief or impression that is firmly maintained despite being contradicted by what is generally accepted as reality. In other words, it means to be out of our minds. We are out of our **minds** to think that anything we do is of ourselves or by our own power. Remember **1 Corinthians 4:7**, "For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not **receive**? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"

2. Pride is esteeming ourselves above and beyond the condition and proportion that God has appointed for us.

If you will remember back a few chapters, **condition** is our state of being (health, IQ, social status, etc...) or the circumstances in which the Lord has chosen to place us. Our **proportion**, on the other hand, is the relative magnitude, quantity, or degree of those circumstances chosen for us by God. The Bible is littered with people who esteem themselves above and beyond the condition and proportion appointed to them by God. So is this room this morning! Let's look at one well-known person in Scripture that thought more **highly** of himself than he ought (**Romans 12:3**).

During that night the king could not sleep so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king. It was found written what Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who were doorkeepers, that they had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. The king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" Then the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him." So the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows which he had prepared for him. The king's servants said to him, "Behold, Haman is standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in." So Haman came in and the king said to him, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" *And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than **me**?"* **Esther 6:1-6**

Haman is a prime example of a deceived man. In **Galatians 6:3** Paul writes, "For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he **deceives** himself." Haman's pride deceived him into thinking that he was the man most worthy of honor in the king's court. His lofty view of himself and subsequent expectations set him up for a major **disappointment**.

Then Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king desires to honor, let them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown has been placed; and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes and let them array the man whom the king desires to honor and lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.'" *Then the king said to Haman, "Take quickly the robes and the horse as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king's gate; do not fall short in anything of all that you have said."* So Haman took the robe and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor." Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried home, mourning, with his head covered. **Esther 6:7-12**

3. Pride is the desire to be *esteemed by others* above and beyond the condition and proportion that God has appointed for us.

It is bad enough to esteem yourself above and beyond the condition and proportion appointed to you by God. It is even worse to want *others* to also do so. Remember Ananias and Sapphira? What was it that got them in trouble? They lied right? Yes, but what prompted their lie? It was that they wanted others to *elevate* them.

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. **Acts 5:1-5**

Ananias and Sapphira tried to convince the church that they had given the entire portion of the proceeds from the sale of their property to the church. Make so mistake, they were free to give only a portion of the sale to the church – it was under their control. But they lied about the amount given because they wanted the church to *esteem* them above and beyond the honor that they were due.

4. Pride is the desire to *exalt ourselves* above and beyond the condition and proportion that God has appointed for us.

This is the pinnacle of pride: to exalt yourself to a higher position than you deserve. This is what got Satan thrown out of heaven. It is what Adam and Eve did to get them thrown out of the garden. Ananias and Sapphira got thrown out of this life. It is bad enough when you esteem yourself above and beyond the conditions and proportions appointed to you by God. It is even worse when you want others to do the same for you. And it is worse yet to *exalt* yourself above and beyond the condition and proportion that God has appointed for us.

Do not claim *honor* in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of great men; For it is better that it be said to you, "Come up here," Than for you to be placed lower in the presence of the prince, Whom your eyes have seen. **Proverbs 25:6-7**

Pride is an insidious thing. Just when you are convinced that you have one of its tentacles under *control*, another snakes out to grab you. It has probably been there all along, but you had never previously known that it was there.

EVEDENCES OF PRIDE IN OUR LIVES

Let's deviate from the book momentarily. I would love to give you some of the sinful manifestations of pride (some of which Lou also mentions in the book). Aside from breaking *fellowship* with God which is the most damaging result of pride, pride makes us:

1. Rest *content* with ourselves... Sees no need for continued growth...
2. Conceited of our own wisdom... Violently opposed to asking for or receiving help...
3. Vainly aware of our own abilities, strength, knowledge, *cleverness* and appearance...

4. Refuse the grace that is so plain in the gospel... Want to fix ourselves...
5. Long for sweet sips of acknowledgement, accolades, **recognition**, and attaboy's...
6. Hungry for status and promotion...
7. Credit ourselves with our successes and **blame** others for our failures...
8. Deceived that we know the right way when scripture says that we have all gone our own way...
9. Deny wrongdoing and always **insist** on our innocence...
10. Self-centered and unable to see the needs of others...
11. Aware of everyone else's **shortcomings** but disillusioned or even blinded to our own...
12. Do what Paul said to refrain from in 2 Corinthians 10:12, "When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise." Result: Self-righteous about any level of morality that we think we have achieved...
13. Ungrateful - Unwilling to **thank** anyone but ourselves...
14. Above or at least not under the rules... And resentful of ever being challenged...
15. Refuse areas to serve and instead look for areas to **perform**...
That is people-pleasers not God pleasers...
16. Unwilling to apologize and ask for forgiveness from those we have wronged...
17. Say things like, "I want it, I **deserve** it, I will have it, and I don't care what it costs or who it hurts."
18. Anger – when we want something that we cannot have.
19. **Jealousy** – when we want something that someone else does have.
20. Deceitfulness – willing to say anything, even if it is not true, to build ourselves up.
21. Adultery – The root of adultery is the seeking of my **pleasure**.
I don't particularly love what I have... I would be happier with another...
22. Betrayal – When loyalty costs me too much... I will sell out for my own benefit...

- **Boasting about and taking credit for your own wisdom, abilities, and gifts as though they were acquired primarily by self-effort.**

For every good and perfect **gift** is from above... *James 1:17*

What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? *1 Corinthians 4:7*

- **Selfishly using for your own glory and benefit the wisdom, abilities, and gifts that God has given you for His glory and the benefit of others.**

I am the Lord, that is my name; and my **glory** I will not give to another, not my praise to carved images. *Isaiah 42:8*

- **Viewing God in such a way as to think He was made for your pleasure rather than vice versa (making God a means to an end rather than worshiping Him as the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the universe).**

For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the **Lord**, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. *Romans 14:7-8*

- **Having a greater desire to be loved by others than for others to love God (wanting others to love you more than they love God).**

Pride makes men more desirous to be over loved themselves, than that God be loved by themselves or others. They would gladly have the eyes and **hearts** of all men turned on them, as if they were the sun, to be admired and loved by all who see them. *Richard Baxter*

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall **love** the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. *Deuteronomy 6:4-5*

- **Having a greater dependence on self than on God's grace and provision.**

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and **knows** me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD." *Jeremiah 9:23-24*

- **Resorting to defensiveness, blame-shifting, justification, or anger when lawfully reproved by another.**

Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who **rejects** reproof leads others astray. *Proverbs 10:17*

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is **stupid**. *Proverbs 12:1*

- **Having a censorious, critical, condemning, accusing, judgmental attitude towards others, especially those in positions of authority.**

Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. *James 4:11*

- **Being more prone to **command** than to obey, to teach than to be taught, to speak than to listen.**
- **Having little or no respect for **authority** in general.**
- **Becoming **impatient** or upset when contradicted in speech, especially publicly.**

Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover to a **listening** ear. *Proverbs 25:12*

A scoffer does not love one who reproves him, he will not go to the wise. *Proverbs 15:12*

- **When wronged, being unwilling to **forgive** an offender who has not demonstrated extreme submission or repentance.**
- **Investing more resources to establish your own honor than to establish God's honor.**

It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it good to search out one's own **glory**. *Proverbs 25:27*

- **Being unwilling to **admit** when you are wrong.**

By pride comes nothing but strife. *Proverbs 10:13a NKJV*

- **Being inordinately curious about those things that you do not have a biblical need to know.**

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not **occupy** myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. *Psalms 131:1*

- **Being discontented with your position in life.**

And Haman recounted to them the splendor of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the servants of the king. Then Haman said, "Even Queen Esther let no one but me come with the king to the feast she prepared. And tomorrow also I am invited by her together with the king. *Yet all this is worth **nothing** to me, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.*" *Esther 5:11-13*

- **Being ungrateful for God's mercies.**

Pride causes men to return the thanks to **themselves**, which is due to God for the mercies they have received. They thank God only as a courtesy; but they seriously ascribe it to their own care, or will, or industry, or power. *Richard Baxter*

- **Failing to **pray**.**

The wicked, in the **haughtiness** of his countenance, does not seek him. All his thoughts are, "There is no God." *Psalm 10:4*

- **Being insensible to the dangers of temptation (being self-confident about handling temptation).**

The prudent sees danger and **hides** himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it. *Proverbs 22:3*

Therefore let anyone who thinks that he **stands** take heed lest he fall. *1 Corinthians 10:12*

- **Being oversensitive to **correction**.**

- **Having difficulty in being pleased (because of excessively high expectations).**

As Godly, humble men rightly amplify their sins in light of the greatness and excellency of God whom they offend; so the proud man foolishly amplifies every little **wrong** that is done to him, and every word that is said against him, and every supposed omission or neglect of him, because of the high estimation he has of himself. *Richard Baxter*

Pleasing People
Characteristics of a God-Pleaser

Introduction:

The single most important thing that you and I can do to stop being people-pleasers is to become a God-pleaser. We must **replace** our fear of man and the consequences associated with displeasing him with a healthy, biblical fear of God and the consequences associated with displeasing him. A couple of weeks ago we learned that if our aim is to please man, we have as many **masters** as we have observers. If, on the other hand, we are seeking to please God, we only have one master. An audience of **one** is much easier to please!

What is the chief end of man? To **glorify** God and enjoy him forever! Here is the reality... When you are glorifying and pleasing God, you have everything you need (security, happiness, peace, comfort, contentment, freedom, etc) and therefore have no need to seek those things from man. Well, what does a God-pleaser look like?

1. He realizes that he cannot please God apart from being a Christian.

The bible makes it empathically clear that no man is, in and of himself, capable of pleasing God. Paul's speaking to the Romans said, "Those who are in the flesh **cannot** please God. However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him" **Romans 8:8-9**. Those who are in the flesh and have not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit cannot do anything to bring pleasure to God. The writer of Hebrews says it this way, "And without faith it is **impossible** to please him [God]" **Hebrews 11:6**. The unregenerate man has faith, he has just misplaced it in himself and in others. God, who himself is perfect, can only be pleased with perfection. Apart from Christ we are not just imperfect, but totally depraved. In order for God to be pleased with us, we must be given the **imputed** righteousness of Christ by faith. Then and only then can God be pleased. There are at least three more reasons that the unregenerate man cannot please God:

A. The unregenerate man cannot please God because he lacks understanding.

But a natural (unregenerate) man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are **foolishness** to him; and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned. **1 Corinthians 2:14**

B. The unregenerate man cannot please God because he lacks ability.

Are you so **foolish**? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? **Galatians 3:3**

C. The unregenerate man cannot please God because he lacks proper motives.

You shall love the **Lord** your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. **Matthew 22:37**

2. He studies the Scriptures to understand exactly what it takes to please God.

Those that desire to please God above all else spend time studying the Word and getting the Word into their **heart**. Pleasing God requires doing his will, but you can't do God's will if you don't know it. Paul encouraged the Ephesians saying, "Therefore do not be foolish, but **understand** what the will of the Lord is" **Ephesians 5:17**. The person who desires to please God spends time reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on God's Word. He runs to God's Word when he has a question to answer, a decision to make, a passion to quell, a crisis to face, or a conflict to resolve. Psalm 119 is a great place chapter to study to grow in a passion for knowing and living out God's Word. David said, "I shall delight in your commandments, which I love. And I shall lift up my hands to your commandments, which I love; and I will **meditate** on your statutes. Joshua gives us great counsel saying, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to **do** according to all that is written in it" **Joshua 1:8**.

3. In everything he does, he is conscious of pleasing God.

The mind of the God-pleaser is set “on things **above**, not on things that are on earth” **Colossians 3:2**. He doesn’t care much about what men think or say about him because he is much more cognizant of heaven’s evaluation and approbation. In every decision he makes, he knows that he is choosing either to **please** or displease God. This applies to the large decisions in life all the way down to the simple matters of eating and drinking **1 Corinthians 10:31**. The questions he asks himself before committing to a particular course of activity are drastically different than those of a people-pleaser.

People-Pleaser: What will **others** think if I do this / Will I fail / Will I **embarrass** myself

God-pleaser: What will God think if I do this / How will God be **glorified** if I fail / Will I **sin** against God

4. When he pleases people, he does so out of loving motives, not selfish ones.

The God-pleaser is well aware not only of the first Great Commandment, but also that “the second is like it, ‘You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself’” **Matthew 22:39**. Paul speaking about Christ’s lack of selfishness said, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who **loved** me and **gave** himself for me” **Galatians 2:20**. The God-pleaser realizes that unless his motives are right, he can give away all he has and is, but he still won’t exemplify biblical love. Let’s look at the people-pleaser and God-pleasers possible motives for giving.

People-pleaser: To be commended / To avoid **rejection** / To receive honor / To receive **praise** / To edify himself

God-Pleaser: To glorify God / To show **love** to others / To worship God / To express **gratitude** to God / To edify another

5. He knows that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Because the one who loves to please God is not consumed by selfishness or fear, he focuses on what he can **give** rather than on what he can **get**. People who are selfish tend to be fearful. Selfishness and fear are corollaries. Consider the following definitions:

Love is being more concerned with what I can give than what I can get.

Selfishness is being more concerned with what I can **get** than what I can **give**.

Fear is being more concerned with what I might **lose** than with what I can give.

The people-pleaser’s self-focus predisposes him to be fearful. That fear affects the way he **relates** to others. The God-pleaser on the other hand, because he is motivated by love, is free to focus on meeting his neighbor’s **needs**. He is more concerned about fulfilling his God-given responsibilities and meeting the needs of others than about the potential consequences of a particular action. Let’s again contrast the thinking between the two again:

People-pleaser: I wonder what he’ll **think** of me / I’ve got to keep him from finding out about my **problems**

God-pleaser: I wonder what his **needs** are / I wonder if he has any problems that I can help him **solve** God’s way

6. He considers amending not only his actions, but also his thoughts and motives.

Unlike the people-pleaser who is primarily concerned with external appearances, the God-pleaser is more concerned about what’s on the **inside** - “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” **1 Samuel 16:7b**. He understands what Jesus means when he says, “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for out of the abundance of the **heart** his mouth speaks” **Luke 6:45**. Sanctifying the inner man, whom no one but the Lord sees, is the ambition of this God-fearing Christian.

People-pleaser: What can I wear to the party to make me look good / I’ve got to read my Bible in case I’m **asked** if I did

God-pleaser: To whom can I **minister** at the party / I’m going to try and read my Bible every day for my spiritual **growth**

7. He is concerned about fulfilling not only his public duties but also his private ones.

The God-pleaser not only handles his public duties (teaching Sunday school, Bible studies, sharing his faith), but he budgets his time so as to discharge his private obligations as well. Behind closed doors he **worships** God, thanks God for who he is and all he has done, and confesses his sin to God. He prepares his heart for worship **before** he goes to church. He reads and studies the Bible regularly. He cares for his soul and the souls of those for whom he is responsible. He behaves in an upright way when he is in his own home. His attitude is, "I will walk within my house in the **integrity** of my heart" *Psalm 101:2b*.

8. He is more concerned with what God sees in his heart than what man sees in his appearance.

The God-pleaser is keenly aware that God sees and judges not only what he does and says, but also what he thinks and **wants**. He knows that from God's point of view, thoughts and motives are (mental) actions. He spends less time trying to tidy up the externals and is concerned with generously **sowing** God's Word to his sinful heart. He knows that his heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick, thus, he is dependent on God's grace for forgiveness. He is also dependent on God's grace to **mortify** his sinful flesh and its desires. He knows that this beast will never be tamed this side of glory, but he **struggles** to subdue it because he wants to please the One who called him.

9. He programs his conscience by the Bible rather than by the culture.

Our consciences can be programmed with either correct or incorrect data. The Bible speaks of a weak conscience (1 Cor. 8:7, 10, 12), a **seared** conscience (1 Tim. 4:2), a defiled conscience (Titus 1:15), and an **evil** conscience (Heb. 10:22). We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit (the Master Programmer) by placing into our hearts the knowledge of God's Word that he will use to write the program. The culture that we live in is pumping out non-stop garbage. We are influenced by TV, radio, movies, magazines, and billboards that have an affect on our conscience over time. Therefore, we need a relentless **resolve** to pump our hearts and minds full of the gems found in God's Word that keep our consciences sensitive to sin and help us navigate in a Godly way through a sin riddled world. Sin will keep you far from this Book and this Book will keep you far from sin.

10. He does not shy away from necessary conflict or confrontation.

A God-pleaser is a true peacemaker. He is willing to confront sin when it is biblically necessary – even if it results in conflict, **rejection**, the loss of a friendship, or even persecution. He knows when to confront because he knows what the Bible says about sin. He knows that if he does not confront when God says he must confront, he will be sinning. His love for the Lord drives him and his sensitive conscience sustains him in the face of rejection. He believes Proverbs 28:23, "He who rebukes a man will afterward find more **favor** than the one who flatters with the tongue. This doesn't mean that he looks for conflict. Rather, when conflict arises or is a possibility, he is not **paralyzed** by it. He is able to take God's Word, with loving conviction, and seek to help another please God with his actions.

11. He does not worry or fret when he displeases people if, by so doing, he pleases God.

Unlike the people-pleaser, who worries himself sick when he senses that he may have displeased someone by his words or actions, the person who pleases God knows how to **dismiss** such anxiety with the assurance that he has, in fact, said or done what which pleases God. Jesus gave us instruction not to worry.

"Therefore I tell you, do not be **anxious** about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his **righteousness**, and all these things will be added to you. *Matthew 6:25-33*

The God-pleaser rather than fretting over the consequences of his actions **trusts** God to use what he has said and done for his glory.

“Have you ever wondered what it really takes to please God? If you want to stop inordinately pleasing man, you will have to know how to answer this question.” (p. 147)

Who is not a people pleaser? “Doing the will of God from the heart” (Ephesians 6:6)

What exactly and specifically does the Bible say it takes to please the Lord?

You’re required to know this answer. “Walk as children of Light...trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:8-10)

1) Pleasing God Requires Faith

“By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:5-6)

Operating

How can I please God with my faith?

2) Pleasing God Requires Walking with Him

“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Colossians 1:9-10)

*What does it mean to walk with God? How is that pleasing to Him?
p. 150

How can I please God in my walk with Christ?

3) Pleasing God Requires Sanctification (Holiness)

“Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality.” (I Thessalonians 4:1-3)

*Just because we do Christian things, doesn’t mean we’re pleasing God
p. 153 – “And don’t think”

In what areas of my life would God be pleased to have me be more sanctified (holy)?

4) Pleasing God Requires Your Cooperation

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:12-13)

*Don't wait for the Spirit to just “Move”
p. 154, “At the risk...”

In what ways can I please God by cooperating with the Spirit's sanctification process?

5) Pleasing God requires doing good works

“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”
Colossians 1:9-10

*But what makes my works good?
p. 156 – “Works are “good” ...

Who do you tend to do good works for? Who is your audience generally?

Ephesians 2:10

What good works can I do to please God?
Doing good is closely tied to sharing...

6) Pleasing God requires knowledge and wisdom

“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”
Colossians 1:9-10

*Wisdom isn't just gathering facts
p. 157, “For the Christian” ...

*Why did Paul pray for this?
p. 158, “Because he” ...

How can I please God by growing in my knowledge of Him?

Not being puffed up

Application

7) Pleasing God requires gratitude (worship)

“Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.” Hebrews 13:15

What is worship? A response to all that is true about God.

Psalm 145

How can I offer up to God sacrifices of Thanksgiving?

Recall what God has done

Respond with thanksgiving (gratitude)

In regards to pleasing people, do you regard men more highly than the Lord?

8) Pleasing God requires godly ambition

“So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.” II Corinthians 5:9-10

*What is this Godly ambition?

p. 161, “So what...”

*Aiming like a soldier

p. 161, “I would like to briefly” ...

How can I make it my ambition to please God in all things?

A missing point. Confession

Feedback

Vulnerability

What Are You Wearing?

Clothe Yourself in Humility

“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’” (I Peter 5:5)

Humility Comes Before Honor

“The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.” (Proverbs 15:33)

He explains his thought process of why it’s better to humble himself and reveal his weaknesses rather than trying to hide them.

*p. 167, “Here is how...”

God’s Word is a Tiger

“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:8-11)

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.” (James 4:10)

“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.” (I Peter 5:5-6)

A Few Ways to Humble Yourself...and Keep You There

1) Confess Sin

Quick to acknowledge sin

*p. 171, “To begin...”

Fear God, Not Man

*p. 171, “If you want to...”

2) Ask for Forgiveness

What is forgiveness? A promise that God will not hold our sins against us anymore.

*p. 172, “So forgiveness is fundamentally...”

Five Steps to Asking Forgiveness

1. Acknowledge That You Have Sinned
2. Identify Your Sin By It's Specific Biblical Name
3. Acknowledge The Harm Your Offense Caused
 - a. Optional, may not always be appropriate
4. Demonstrate Repentance By Identifying An Alternative Biblical Behavior
5. Ask for Forgiveness

3) Esteem Others

“Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” (Philippians 2:3-7)

Specific ways to esteem others

*p. 175, 1-9

4) Put on the Mind of Christ

Quotes on Meditation

“Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes of God.” J.I. Packer

*p. 176, “Meditation fastens...”

*p. 177, “Merely reading...”

*p. 177, “Christian meditation...”

Hand Illustration

p. 179, Richard Baxter Quotes

5) Give Your Reputation to God

*p. 180, “A proud person...”

6) Redirect Your Praise Back to God and to Those Individuals Whom God has Used to Help You Accomplish Your Achievements

7) Associate with the Humble

*p. 183, "Set before your eyes..."

*Pleasing People
Whose Serve Is It?*

Introduction:

- Last week Matt taught us about humility.
- He used 1 Peter 5:5 "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
- Can anyone remember any of the ways to humble yourself that Matt taught us?
 1. Confess sin
 2. Ask forgiveness
 3. Esteem others
 4. Put on the mind of Christ
 5. Give your reputation to God
 6. Redirect your praise back to God and those individuals that helped you accomplish your achievements.
 7. Associate with the humble.
- This morning we are going to springboard from our conversation about humility and talk about servanthood.
- Remember back to last week...speaking about humility, our chapter title was what are you wearing?
- Well, servanthood is one of the most important articles of clothing in your entire wardrobe.
- A heart of humility produces true servanthood.
- Part of the humility that Christ clothed himself with was *taking upon himself the form of a servant*.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:5-7

- Before we get into the practical application of developing a servant's heart, let look at a poor example of humility and a lack of a servant's heart.
- Turn over to Matthew 20:20-28

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

Matthew 20:20-23

- Now what is going on here?
- James and John are interested in the preeminent position of honor in the kingdom at Jesus right and left side.
- It is interesting to note that in Mark 10:35-37, the parallel account, mom isn't even mentioned...James and John make the request directly.
- Jesus, knowing their intentions, circumvents their mother and responds directly to James and John.
- He says, "You do not know what you asking for."
- He then challenges them asking, "Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?"
- To which they responded, "We are able..."
- Who does this arrogance sound like to you?
- Peter... Remember he was always touting his ability to stand for Christ...
- **Here is the driving principle: It is hard to have the mind of a servant when your eyes are always on yourself.
- That is what set Jesus apart as being such a humble servant in Philippians 2:5-7...
- He didn't consider equality with God something to be grasped.
- In other words, he wasn't focused on his own desires.
- We see that again as we read on here in Matthew 20:24-28.

And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:24-28

- It is interesting that the other disciples were indignant when they heard James and John's request...
- It is obvious that this position was one that was desired.
- And so Jesus uses this, as he did so often, as an opportunity for a teachable moment.
- He says, "The ruler of the Gentiles Lord it over them."
- They are oppressive in the leadership...
- The word Lord over literally means to "rule down on / to exercise dominion over."
- They lacked the mind and heart of a servant leader.
- These greatness or great men were men of distinction (wealthy, educated, from a particular lineage)
- They were held in high esteem by society and used their greatness to influence and control others.
- Jesus says, "It shall not be so among you..."
- You are to be different.
- You are to clothe yourselves in humility.
- You are to look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.
- Jesus turns their thinking upside down and says, "If you want to be great, here is how you do it... be a servant."
- "And if you want to be first... be a slave."
- Now, to be a servant was one thing...a servant is a hired hand that has the freedom to come and go as he pleases.
- To be a slave, was to be owned with no rights that were not given to you by your master.
- The Greek word slave means:
 1. One who gives himself up to another's will.
 2. One who is devoted to another to the disregard of his own interests.
 3. One who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will being altogether consumed in the will of another.
- Here is what Jesus is saying... "You will all drink of my cup... following me means a life of sacrifice and suffering."
- But will you become a servant and a slave?
- Will you take the undignified role of a servant and a slave for the advancement of the Kingdom?
- If so, you must get you eyes off of your self and onto the needs of others...
- And to give them vivid expression of what he meant, he said, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus... was speaking of an entirely different kind of greatness that the sort James and John were seeking and the world promotes. This kind of greatness is pleasing to God, because it is humble and self-giving rather than proud and self-serving. The way to the world's greatness is through pleasing and being served by men; the way to God's greatness is through pleasing him and serving others in his name. In God's eyes, the one who is great is the one who is a willing servant.

- John MacArthur

- Jesus was saying, "Follow my example..."
- Jesus did not come seeking a position. He did not come so that others could meet his needs.
- Rather he came to meet others needs.
- If anyone had the right to demand the service of others it was Jesus.
- But instead of insisting on his right to be served, he gave his life in service to others.
- **Here is the driving principle: Unselfish giving is the essence of love.
- Do you think Jesus disciples got this lesson quickly?
- I think not...
- The night that Jesus washed his disciples feet, he spoke some familiar words to them...listen carefully!
- Look at John 13:4-5, 12-7...

[Jesus] rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

John 13:4-5

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a *servant* is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

John 13:12-17

- So, if you want to overcome the love of approval you must make it your ambition to become a servant first of all to Christ, and from that to serve others as well.
- If you are an analytical thinker you might be thinking, "But I thought a part of people-pleasing was serving others."
- Will my feed my desire to people-please by serving others?
- **Here is the diving principle: It has everything to do with your motives!
- A servant's heart is an attitude that seeks to serve others not for selfish reasons, but for others good and God's glory.
- It is serving knowing that your reward for such service will not be given to you by man, but by God.
- Now, lets narrow it down to the practical as we bring it to a close this morning.
- Here are a few ways that you can put on the garments of a servant:

1. Make a list of the closest people in your life.

- This is just as simple as pulling out a pen and paper and thinking though people you could serve in some way.
- Parents, children, neighbor, co-worker, fellow student, a person whom you know that has a bed you could meet.

2. Learn how to talk in terms of what is of interest to them.

- This is a great opportunity for you to live our Philippians 2:3-4 "Looking to the interest of others."
- Think about how you feel when someone spends time with you and loves what you love.
- When they take interest in your hobbies, children, job...

A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing *his own opinions*.

Proverbs 18:2

3. Learn how to ask them questions with the attitude of a learner and a servant.

- The servant asks questions because he loves people and wants to meet their needs if he can!
- He wants to pray for them, minister to them, share the gospel with them, help them grow Spiritually.

The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.

Proverbs 20:5

4. Regularly pray for them and for your attitude toward them.

- Part of asking questions is to learn how you can specifically pray for others.
- Praying specifically for others draws you heart toward them.
- If you don't know what to pray, you can pray Scripture for them... Colossians 1:9-12 excellent!

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Colossians 1:9-12

5. Make it your goal to help them achieve their God-honoring goals.

- It has been said that the essence of being a servant is to become excited about helping others succeed.
- The greatest area that we are to succeed is in our walk with Christ.
- Paul had this motive for those whom he served.

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Colossians 1:28-29

6. Look for opportunities to minister to them.

- So often we miss opportunities to serve, because we are not looking for them.
- We need to be attentive.
- Have you serving radar up and running.
- Good question: God, what resources have you given me to be able to minister to others?

Do you not say, "There are yet four months, then comes the harvest"? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.

John 4:35

7. Ask their forgiveness.

- Do you need to ask forgiveness from anyone for not having a servant's heart?
- For looking to your own interest, looking out for number 1?
- Humble yourself, ask god to grant you the grace to serve better!

Conclusion:

Question: What are you wearing today? When you woke up this morning, did you make a conscious effort to put on the attire of a servant? Or did you reach for that uniform with all those shiny medals – the one that will cause everyone who sees it to recognize how honorable and distinguished you are? That is the uniform of a people-pleaser. If you want to be a God-pleaser, do what Christ did: put on the garments of a servant and learn to serve others with a pure heart.

Pleasing People
Additional Remedies

Introduction:

- Last week we learned about the humility of a servant.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:5-7

- Can you remember what we said was at the root of our inordinate desire to please people?
- It is pride...
- When we seek to please people out of selfish motive, we are in effect saying, "God, you have not given me everything I need – there is something lacking that I must make up for myself."
- We don't believe the truths that the gospel proclaims about us in Christ and in so doing, we (Romans 1:25) exchange the truth of God for a lie and worship and serve created things rather than their creator... Namely ourselves.
- And not only that, but all of the time and energy that we expend trying to please man, is time and energy that we are consequently not spending on trying to please Christ, which according to 2 Corinthians 5:9 is the goal or aim of the Christian life.
- To tell you or me to stop loving the pleasure of man more than the pleasure of God is like cutting a branch off of an apple tree and hoping that it won't grow apples anymore...
- What we need is to get to the root of the tree (sin) and uproot the entire tree and fill in the hole with the soil of the truths of the gospel.
- We have already looked at two chapters dealing with the realities of the pride that causes us to love the pleasure of man. This morning we are going to look at some "Additional remedies."

1. Make it your goal to have others formulate their opinion of you based on your Christian character.

- Here is the question: On what are you striving to have others formulate their opinions of you?
- Or to ask it another way, what do you want to be the basis of your value in the eyes of others?
- Is it your accomplishments, status, finances, intellect, perfect family, job title, possessions (materialistic things)?
- If that is the case we are desirous that other people value in us the complete opposite of that which we are called to set our hearts and minds on...

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:1-3

- Are we striving to have others build their opinions of us based on things that are temporary or things that are eternal?
- All of the above will be worthless to us the moment that we step into eternity.
- What is the biblical answer then? On what basis should we desire others to formulate their opinions of us?
- It should be on the basis of Godliness.
- Godliness has value not only in the life, but also in the next...

Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

1 Timothy 4:7b-8

- True Christian character is the one thing which most rational people (even non-believers) find it difficult to be displeased.

2. Don't go fishing for **complements**.

- Fishing for complements is manipulating someone else to say something good about you. Complement you...
- It's attempting to evoke an admiring comment from another without having to embarrass yourself by directly asking for it.
- Often times, we have become so proficient at angling for complements, that over time we become unaware that we are even doing it.
- Here are a few of the forms that fishing for complements can take:
 - A. Intentionally putting yourself down in the presence of others in the hopes that they will disagree with your assessment.
 - B. By asking people to assess your performance in one area in the hopes that they will praise you in another area.
 - C. By continually bringing up as a topic for discussion the activity or achievement for which you want to be praised in the hopes that sooner or later you will be commended for your accomplishment.
 - d. By praising others who have similarly achieved success in the arena in which you excel.

It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glory to search out one's own glory.
Proverbs 25:27

- I don't need the renown, I don't need the glory...

Your name and your renown are the desire of our hearts.
Isaiah 26:8

3. Avoid developing friendships with those who are prone to **flattery**.

- What is flattery?
- Flattery is lavish, insincere complements that are paid in the sole interest of the offerer.
- Telling someone what they want to hear to get what you want.
- Not only is flattery insincere, but it is often over exaggerated or even completely untrue.

A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth works ruin.
Proverbs 26:28

A man who flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his steps.
Proverbs 29:5

- How do you respond when people flatter you?
- When they exaggerate your virtues and minimize your flaws?
- It takes humility to have a right perception of yourself and to not be puffed up when others say good things about us.
- For the people-pleaser, surrounding himself / herself with flatterers is dangerous because you can be so blinded or intoxicated with the complements that you don't even see the net that Proverbs 29:5 speaks of.
- Now, we have to be careful that we don't try and judge others' motives when they offer complements to us.
- If these exaggerated complements seem to be continuous we can ask others to evaluate their own motives.
- Does this mean that all complements are malicious and deceitful... Absolutely not!
- There is a pure complement, and when you receive it you should direct thanks to God who graciously endowed you with your particular gifting giving him the glory that is due his name!

4. Learn to be **content** with the condition and proportion that God has given you.

- If the essence of people-pleasing pride is covetous lust for others to esteem of us, then the essence of God-pleasing humility is contentment with the condition and proportion (circumstances) that God has appointed for us.
- Let me say it another way: To the degree that we are satisfied with the circumstances that God has dealt us, we will have no need to seek the satisfaction of man's esteem.

- Paul learned this important lesson of contentment.
- Remember... He wrote this from jail...

Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

Philippians 4:11-12

- Here is a good definition of what it means to be content:
 Having no **regret** of the past... (The gospel has set me free from all condemnation - *Romans 8:1*)
 Being **satisfied** with my current circumstances... (God has provided for all of my needs in Christ - *Philippians 4:19*)
 Having no **fear** of the future... (God is working all things out for his glory and my good - *Romans 8:28*)
- We have to be very careful, that whatever the circumstances are in our lives, we don't ever interpret God's providence in our lives harshly.
- That we don't ever accuse or blame God of not working all things all thing for our good...
- Jeremiah Burroughs: Pg. 211

5. Don't overvalue friendships.

- The fear of losing friends is one of the most powerful driving forces in the heart of the people-pleaser.
- Don't hear me wrong here...
- We all need friends.
- As a matter of fact, most of us need deeper friendships.
- Here is what we have to make sure of here... That we Value God and his truth more than other people.
- Friendships are a great gift of a merciful God, but those friendships cannot be out God.
- Reality of relationships: You become like those you spend time with!
- If we value people more than we value God and his truth, it is probable that we will give into sin if asked...

6. Learn how to **glory in your weaknesses and **glorify** God in your strengths.**

- Rather than trying to camouflage your weaknesses... How about glorying in them.
- Paul boasted about his weaknesses...

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am *content* with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

- You ask, "How can I glory in weakness?"
- You can glory in weakness because when God shows himself magnificent through broken people he gets all the glory!
- We hear this same theme from Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:1-5 when he talks about proclaiming the gospel...
- I want you to hear his weakness and then what he does with that weakness.

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in *demonstration* of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God [in that I glory].

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

- Now...the other side of this coin is not only glorying in your weaknesses, but also learning to glorify God in your strengths.
- How do we do that? How do we glorify God in our strengths when our natural propensity is to use our strengths as a means to depending on our own flesh?
- Thankfulness!

- Thankfulness is the key to keeping our strengths in proper Biblical perspective.
- Thanking God regularly for the gifts and abilities he has given you will help to safeguard your heart from proudly misusing them.
- We have to remember that we are jars of clay!

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

2 Corinthians 4:7

7. Learn to bring every people-pleasing thought **captive to the obedience of Christ.**

- Pop quiz! How do we do right things? By thinking right thoughts!
- Pleasing Christ starts in our minds.
- We must replace the lie that we need the approval of men more than the approval of Christ and destroy it.

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

2 Corinthians 10:5

- This literally means to *arrest* wrong thinking...
- That is any thinking that does not conform with the truth of Scripture.
- We are to make those thoughts obedient to Christ.
- Do you know what you need to take thoughts captive and to make them obedient to Christ?
- God's Word hidden in your heart.

I have hidden your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Psalms 119:11

8. Look to your **responsibilities and leave your reputation to God.**

- One of the best antidotes to the love of approval is to change the focus of your thoughts from your reputation to your responsibilities.
- If you are working harder at establishing and maintaining your reputation than at maintaining Christ's honor, by being a faithful servant, you are working against yourself.
- More importantly, you are working against God.
- He is the only one that can give us the good reputation that we so desire...
- I need to be enamored by God's name and his renown – Isaiah 26:8.
- And I need to be obedient to his Word.
- Seeking first his Kingdom and righteousness...
- Longing for the day that we will hear, "Well done thy good and faithful servant!"

Pleasing People
Where Is Your Treasure

Introduction:

- This morning we will conclude our study on *Pleasing People* by talking about the need for believers to be heavenly minded.
- Let me ask you this question...Why do you think it is important to talk about heaven during a study on pleasing people?
- #1 Because being a people pleaser is one of the strongest indicators that an individual has a **temporal** value system.
- It reveals that we are more interested in storing up treasures on earth rather than in heaven.
- #2 Because the ability to overcome our strong desire to please people depends largely on our cultivating an **eternal** value system.
- If we want to learn to dethrone the idol of approval, we must learn to value eternal heavenly rewards more than temporal earthly rewards.
- Before we look at practical outworking of developing heavenly thinking, let's look at a few passages that encourage us to be heaven-minded:

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but *lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-21

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Philippians 3:20-21

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, *set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

1 Peter 1:13

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek [keep seeking] the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.* For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:1-4

The greatest weakness of the western church today is arguably our failure to think about the long tomorrow – to take seriously the reality that heaven is our home. Out of this springs our love affair with this world and our failure to live now in light of eternity.

Randy Alcorn (*In Light of Eternity*)

- Let me ask a question here: Is purposing our actions around a desire for heavenly reward selfish?
- No, not only does God want us to anticipate heavenly rewards, but he takes pleasure in our seeking them!
- Does anyone have Hebrews 11:6 memorized???

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he *rewards those who seek him.*

Hebrews 11:6

It is not wrong for us to be motivated by the prospect of reward. Indeed something is wrong if we are not motivated by reward. To resist wanting rewards is pseudospiritual. It goes against the grain of the way God created us and the way he tries to motivate us.

Randy Alcorn

1. We are to think of heaven when facing **trials**.

- What do trials prepare us for?
- They prepare us for glory!
- If we keep heaven in mind when we are facing trials, it will not only make them easier to endure, but also enable us to rejoice through them.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, *as though something strange were happening to you*. But *rejoice* insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, *that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed*.

1 Peter 4:12-13

2. We are to think of heaven when facing suffering and **affliction**.

- When Paul faced suffering and affliction he looked to the future.
- He was totally convinced that in spite of his affliction that God was powerful enough to enable him to faithfully fulfill his ministry until the day when he would be called upon to give an account for the gospel that had been entrusted to him.

For this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and *I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me*.

2 Timothy 1:12

3. We are to think of heaven when facing **persecution**.

- The persecution that we face pales in comparison to the persecution that our brothers and sisters in Christ as enduring in other parts of the world.
- Our lack of persecution probably contributes to our lack of meditating on heaven as we should.

"Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, *your reward is great in heaven*; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

Luke 6:22-23

The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

2 Timothy 4:18

4. We are to think of heaven when facing **death**.

- In 2 Timothy 4:6, Paul referred to his death as a departure.
- He looked forward to the day in which he would reside not in this tent, but in his heavenly home, a house not made with hands (2 Corinthians 5).
- Speaking of whether he would rather stay or go, Paul said:

I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

Philippians 1:23

5. We are to think of heaven when facing the **death** of a loved one.

- Opportunity to encourage and give hope to believers.
- Opportunity to share Christ with the Lost.

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, *and the living will lay it to heart*.

Ecclesiastes 7:2

6. We are to think of heaven when facing **temptation**.

- Temptations to love pleasure rather than to love God are all around us.
- Moses was able to relinquish both his affluence and his reputation by fleeing strong temptation...

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, *for he was looking to the reward.*

Hebrews 11:24-26

- He had an eternal value system!

7. We are to think of heaven when facing **disappointments** about life on earth.

- Life is full of disappointments... That is life in a fallen world.
- Solomon tells us over and over that life under the sun is at best *vanity*.
- There is pain, toiling, sweating, little or no justice, etc...
- There are temporal rewards here on earth, a good marriage, a good meal, satisfaction that comes from our labor, etc...
- But the best rewards are not here... they are in heaven...

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is *preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison*, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

8. We are to think of heaven when facing opportunities to **love** others.

- Love is, "Doing what is best for another in light of eternity."
- We are to obey the second greatest commandment with heaven in mind.

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, *and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.*

Philippians 1:9-10

9. We are to think of heaven when facing opportunities for **ministry**.

Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; *if we endure, we will also reign with him.*

2 Timothy 2:10-12a

10. We are to think of heaven when facing **discouragement** in our Christian walk.

- One of the best cures for discouragement is a heavenly focus.
- Paul encouraged the Corinthians not to toss the towel in by reminding them of Christ's desire to see them in glory blameless and above reproach.
- In other words, to keep on keepin' on!

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, *in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him*, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, *not shifting from the hope of the gospel* that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Colossians 1:21-23

11. We are to think of heaven when facing spiritual **apathy**.

- One of the best antidotes for apathy is diligence!

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, *what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God*, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, *be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.*

2 Peter 3:10–14

12. We are to think of heaven when facing arrogant thoughts about our past **accomplishments**.

- Listen to Paul's attitude towards his past accomplishments:

But whatever gain I had, *I counted as loss* for the sake of Christ. Indeed, *I count everything as loss* because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. *But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

Philippians 3:7–15