

The Wednesday Word, February 24, 2016: Acceptance and Approval

Paul asks a piercing and heart searching question when he writes, “-- *do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*” (Galatians 1:10).

For some of us, the praise of men is louder than the applause of heaven. Many of us discover that there's an enormous pressure on us to please others. If we please them, we will be accepted and that's what we want....acceptance. Let's face it, none of us want to be a reject. I know people who adopt a false personality just so that others will accept them. They act like the life and soul of the party but it's all a cover-up. They don't want us to see what they are really like; they don't want us to see that they actually feel like rejects. I don't blame them, but there's a better way.

What about you? Have you, through the gospel, learned to find your acceptance in Jesus? Just think of it, He was wounded and died for you. He rose again for you, He's praying right this moment for you and He's coming back for you. Is this love enough for you? You are now accepted in Heaven because of Him (Ephesians 1:6). Is that acceptance enough for you?

Jesus did not go around trying to impress people, but He was very impressive. In fact, He was the most extraordinary man who ever lived. Consider this, the most remarkable person who ever lived, loves you and has loved you since before you ever were born. You have been His since before time existed. Is this love enough for you to rest in? Until He becomes enough for you, you will yearn and strive for the acceptance of fellow sinners. You will develop an acceptance addiction. That's just another form of bondage and is a sub-standard way for a Child of the King to live. Let Jesus be enough!

Another similar trap we often fall into is that of continually seeking appreciation and approval from others. As John says,

“They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” John 12:43.

Our lives are filled with all these “important others.” Throughout life, many of us even accumulate an invisible jury whose approval we are desperate to obtain. This gets scary. One man I know earned his Ph.D. because his Father had always told him he would amount to nothing. The tragedy of this story is, however, that his Father was long dead before my friend graduated. Yet he completed his studies still yearning to gain the approval of his dead father, still trying to show his father that he was not worthless.

Self-worth and approval must be found in Jesus. If we are to make it through this life, He must become enough. When you are feeling fractured, tell yourself what the Word says. Tell yourself that you have been redeemed by blood, precious blood, the blood of the Lamb. Tell yourself that Jesus loves you. Does this sound strange? Let me willingly admit something. Often when I feel fragile and unaccepted, I have a talk with myself and confess those three words, JESUS LOVES ME! I confess them 'till I possess them and they possess me. His love and approval are enough because He is enough.

And that's the Gospel Truth