



Message Series Guide

The Pursuit of Happiness

Part 2 – Approval

I Samuel 13:8-14 + John 12:42-43

When we pursue approval from others as a source of happiness or validation, we give them an authority over our lives that was meant only for the Lord. In essence, we're asking them to tell us who we truly are. Not only does this dishonor God, who alone is our Creator, but gives too much weight to what others think about us. Even the person who knows us best on earth still doesn't know us as well as our Heavenly Father. We cannot put ourselves under Christ if we also put ourselves under the approval of others. That's like serving two masters. We will either love the one and hate the other or be devoted to one and despise the other. It's impossible to please everyone, but it is possible to please God by seeking His approval alone.

READ:

I Samuel 13:8-14 • John 12:42-43 • Galatians 1:10 • Exodus 20:3 • Romans 1:25 • I Thessalonians 2:4

- As Saul and the Israelites were waiting to go into battle, some of the Israelite soldiers were hiding and running away. Why were the soldiers so frightened? Who was Saul waiting on and why?
- How did Saul respond to the fact that the Israelite soldiers were deserting in fear? How do you respond when you feel like you are losing the approval or acceptance of others? Have you ever desired the approval of someone so much that you were willing to do/say something that you normally would not do/say? What was the result?
- How did Saul take matters into his own hands, and what were the consequences? What are some of the possible consequences when we pay more attention to what others think or say rather than what God thinks or has said about us? How have we already gained God's approval through Christ Jesus?
- What does seeking the approval of people reveal about our hearts? What does it communicate about our relationship with God? How is seeking the approval of others a form of idolatry?
- According to John 12:42-43, many of the Jewish authorities believed in Jesus, but were afraid to publicly confess Him. Why were they afraid? Are their people (Christians) today who don't confess Jesus publicly because of fear of what others will think? Describe a time when you confessed Jesus even though it cost you the approval of others?
- What does John say the Jewish authorities loved more than God? Do people (Christians) today struggle with the same problem? Explain.

DISCUSS:

- In what situations or circumstances do you most often find yourself wanting the approval of others? Why is important that we learn to focus on what God thinks about us rather than other people?
- What are some of the things (promises) that God has said about us in His Word? How can we put our confidence in God's promises rather than the approval of others? Why are we *enough* in Christ?

PRAY:

Pray that you will desire the approval of God over the applause of man.

RESPOND:

Find and read the promises of God in His Word regarding His children. Practice memorize and walking in those promises daily as a reminder of who you are in Christ.



Sermon Notes
The Pursuit of Happiness
Part I – Perfectionism
Ecclesiastes 11:1-4 + Luke 10:38-42

Quote:

“If you live for people’s acceptance, you will eventually die from their rejection.” - Grammy award winning artist, Lecrae

The word, *snare* = a noose or a trap for catching animals (Proverbs 29:25)

If we place ourselves under the approval of people, we can't also place ourselves under the approval of God.

Our desire should not be the applause of man, but the approval of God.

Idolatry is anything we pursue more than we pursue God.

Pursuing the approval of man leads to sin. Pursing the approval of God leads to freedom.

It's impossible to please everyone, but it's possible to please God by seeking His approval alone.