

# RECEIVING GOD'S APPROVAL

SERMON OUTLINE

## Introduction: Pop quiz

- Question 1: In relation to God's expectations for me...  
My grade: \_\_\_\_\_
- Question 2: Fill in the blanks  
"\_\_\_\_\_, you are my beloved son/daughter; with you I am well pleased."  
My feeling(s): \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. What having God's approval cannot mean

*Luke 7:28 – (Jesus) "...among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."*

*Luke 3:20 – ... (Herod) locked up John in prison.*

*Luke 4:1-2 – Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit ... was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil ...*

*Luke 6:26 – (Jesus) "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets."*

## 2. What happens when we don't receive God's approval

*Matthew 7:2 – (Jesus) "...with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you..."*

## 3. What Jesus did to receive the God's approval

*Luke 2:49, 51 (NLT) – (Jesus) "Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?" ... 51 ... he returned ... and was obedient to them..."*

*John 8:29 (NLT) – ... the one who sent me is with me – he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him."*

*Luke 3:22 – ... Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."*

## 4. How you can receive God's approval

*Matthew 3:14-15 (NLT) – 14 ... John tried to talk (Jesus) out of (being baptized). "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?" 15 But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.*

*Ephesians 2:6 – ... (God) raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus ...*

*2 Cor. 5:17 – ...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

*John 3:18 – Whoever believes in (Jesus) is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*

*Purposeful reflecting...*

- Ask the Lord to speak, then spend five minutes in silence. If you catch your mind wandering, that's okay; gently re-direct your attention to the presence of God. He promises never to leave or forsake us. It may help to repeat a verse of Scripture or Bible truth. Time in silence is about learning the skill of paying attention to God.

*Experience*

- Are you ever aware of an "inner critic" robbing you of peace, joy and assurance? If so, imagine Jesus being with you right now. What might He say to you about your inner conversation?
- Read Ephesians 1:1-14 slowly, out loud. What thoughts or words do you notice? Of all the things Paul says that are true of Christ-followers, which ones do you find most wonderful and amazing? Take a few moments to praise and thank God for those things.

*Transform*

- Reflect on Matthew 7:2. Can you discern any link between how you treat yourself and how you think of or speak about others? What might this suggest about how you view yourself? Is there anything you notice that you should ask God to help you to change? Talk to God about that.
- In what arenas are you most likely to find fault with yourself? Think specifically about what you're telling yourself about those particular things. Is what you're telling yourself true or false? If you discover your self-talk is false, ask God to replace the falsehood with biblical truth. If some of your self-talk is on target (i.e., you are at fault), ask for forgiveness and the grace to change. Tell God, in prayer, you're ready to turn toward Him for that grace.

*Share*

- One way we get free from the burden of self-criticism is through the help of loving friends who can see us more objectively. If you struggle to find inner peace about something, who might be able to see things about you more accurately? Ask that person for his or her take on the issue and for prayer.
- Encouragement is often God's way of helping us through self-criticism. To whom can you offer encouragement? Will you do it? Be specific about where you see God's grace operating in his or her life.