

Living From God's Approval

The People Pleasing Trap - Part 2

January 11, 2026

Discussion Questions:

1. What is something small you've overthought recently that ended up taking way more headspace than it should have? Was it related to your behavior, someone else's behavior, a situation's prospective outcome, or something else?
2. Pastor Sean described the urge to defend, explain, or correct people's perceptions in his story about the anonymous Facebook post. Have you felt that same urge in a situation in your own life? Did you act on it or remain silent, and what was the outcome?
3. Read John 8:1-11 aloud. The Pharisees (religious leaders) put pressure on Jesus, but it did not quite go the way they planned. What stands out to you about the way Jesus responded?
4. Which of the below signs of people-pleasing that Pastor Sean mentioned resonate most with you? How does it affect your peace or joy?
 - Counting views and likes on social media posts
 - Over-explaining
 - Replaying conversations
 - Overly crushed by criticism or overly inflated by praise
 - Saying yes when you should say no
 - Not speaking up when you should
 - Staying silent when God prompts you
5. When we live to please people, their opinions are elevated above God's in our minds. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. What does having a new life and identity in Christ mean to you and your life?
6. Read Hebrews 12:1-3 out loud. What is one specific step of obedience God may be asking you to take and trust His approval instead of people's? What would you be doing if you weren't worried about what people thought?

21 Days of Prayer Challenge: Read the Scripture and prayer below aloud in your group, and have each member consider the prompt at the end. Check in later this week to see how each person has done with the prompt!

Scripture:

O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for You. My soul thirsts for You; my whole body longs for You in this parched and weary land where there is no water. I have seen You in Your sanctuary and gazed upon Your power and glory. Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise You!

- Psalm 63:1-3

Prayer:

God, You are my God, and today I come to You aware of my emptiness apart from You. I acknowledge the places in my soul that feel dry, tired, and worn from trying to be filled by lesser things. Please help me name what I've been thirsting for. Whether it's approval, control, comfort, distraction, or something else, redirect my desire back to You. Remind me of the moments I've already seen the glory of Your power at work in my life. Fill me with Your unfailing love, the love that surpasses understanding. Let Your presence satisfy what nothing else can. As You fill me, shape my praise, renew my strength, and teach me to seek You first in every season and situation.

Prompt:

This week, when you face something difficult or uncomfortable make note of what your go-to response is. Do you turn to the Lord in prayer, or do you look for a distraction? Are there recurring situations that make you feel something is missing in your life? Turn these feelings over to God and ask Him to fill you in the ways only His presence can.

Later this week, let your group know what you learned about yourself and a way that you aim to seek God before a distraction.