

People Pleasing

What it is? “Seeking to benefit oneself by ‘pleasing’ others.”

A few things that may contribute to it.

- Feeling insecure with little worth or value, unless we are meeting the expectations of others.
- Fear of rejection and personal conflict.
- Feelings of pride and the notion that others could not get along without us.

Some important points about people pleasing:

- Seeking to please other people is different from seeking the best interest of others.
- People pleasing is not about pleasing others, but rather benefiting ourselves!
- Trying to please others, and not God, is a form of idolatry.
- People pleasing leads to dishonesty because it is often “risky” to speak the truth.
- People pleasing blocks relational intimacy with others (deeper friendships).
- It is rooted in insecurity and is an unhealthy way to feel more valuable and accepted.
- It is a form of manipulation to get a desired result by placing value of others over God.
- We are actually stealing the praise and glory of others that belong to God alone.
- It often compromises what is really best for the person we are attempting to impress.
- These behaviors often lead to stress, burn-out, depression and anxiety in the people pleaser.
- This may lead to seek self-medication with alcohol and other substances. Some may join gangs or engage in harmful or illegal activities to gain the acceptance of others.

What God's Word has to say about it

Warnings against it:

- Galatians 1:10 (key verse)
- 1 Thessalonians 2:4-6

- Matthew 23:5-6,28
- 1 Samuel 15:24

What to do to avoid it:

- Ephesians 4:15
- Ephesians 5:11-13

- 2 Corinthians 10:5
- Colossians 3:23-24

What I should do about it (to help myself and others).

- First, we need to recognize it and confess it. (1 John 1:9)
- Ask God to reveal what drives us to be people pleasers and He will reveal it. (Matthew 7:7-8)
- Acknowledge you are fearfully and wonderfully made, by God, and for God. (Psalm 139:13-16)
- Practice loving others with God's love (agape) and encourage others to do the same. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 2 John 1:6)
- The more we love God and experience His love for us, the less we will be tempted to seek our value, identity, and worth in anyone or anything outside of our relationship with Him. (Galatians 2:20)

Questions to consider

- 1) What are some tempting situations for you to receive praise and glory that belong to God?
- 2) Can you identify some of the reasons why you struggle, or have struggled, with pleasing others when it involves not speaking the truth in love?
- 3) How might your childhood upbringing have affected your need to be a people pleaser?
- 4) Are you willing to forgive your parents or others who have contributed to you feeling valued by **what you do** for others and not because of **who you are**? (Ephesians 4:32)