

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides
May 12th

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. Mother's Day was on Sunday. One is one lesson that you learned from your mother that impacts you today?

Bible Study Questions

1. Pastor Michael talked about our culture being one that produces people pleasers. What do you see in our culture today that prompts us to receive our self worth from the praises of others?
2. What examples have you seen of people leveraging people pleasing for power?
3. Read Galatians 1:10
 - What are some ways in which people pleasing can be put us in opposition to God?
 - How can people pleasing turn people into idols?
4. King Saul's pursuit of praise led him to sacrifice people who loved him most (David and Jonathon are examples). How does people pleasing cause us to do things that actually hurt those around us?
5. John 3:16 is one example of God's unconditional love for us. How does finding our value as people loved by God free us from the need to seek other's approval?
 - Why is this so hard for many of us to internalize?
6. Read Romans 6:19-23
 - We often read this passage talking about life after death, but Paul is really talking about the presence. How does the sin of idolizing the praise of others lead to death?

- How does serving God bring us to a point of real freedom?
7. Are there any examples in your life in which you are choosing people pleasing over God? How do you move past that?
 8. How does developing a rich prayer life help us become free of the need to seek other's approval?

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Freedom: From the Need for other's approval

People pleasing has always existed. It took on a new emphasis early in the 20th century with the Dale Carnegie's best selling book, "*How to Make friends and Influence People.*" That time period saw a shift in values such as duty and honor being replaced with charisma and performance. It prompted the idea that we are each performers on the grand stage of life, creating a generation of people pleasers.

I. The Promise of seeking approval

- **Your personal value is affirmed by others:** People pleasing tells you that if you can make everyone around you happy, then you have value. You are worthy of their praise.
- **If leveraged well, it can be the gateway to power:** Politicians excel at this. If you can make people happy, then you can cash it in for influence and power. In the family, a people pleaser can be very manipulative of the family's choices.

II. Why it fails?

- **Pleasing people puts you in opposition to serving Christ:** King Saul is an example of a people pleaser in the Bible. Early in his reign, he successfully wins the hearts of the people. But soon he disobeys by offering a sacrifice in order to please his soldiers (1 Sam 13). Then he disobeys God's order to destroy the Amelakites. When confronted, he says that he disobeyed out of fear of the people (1 Sam 15:24). Saul routinely chose pleasing his people over obedience to God. The trend continues today. The claims of sinful people on us will often be in opposition to the commands of God.
- **Serving other people turns them into idols:** When we turn to people for fulfillment instead of God, we set them up as

idols in our life. We choose them as our master instead of God.

- **People pleasing creates barriers to developing deep relationships:** As Saul's story continues, his people pleasing begins to impact his relationship with those closest to him. When David begins to get the praise that Saul craves, he tries to kill him (1 Sam 17). This vendetta leads to an attempted murder of his own son (1 Sam 20:33) and the massacre of an innocent village (1 Sam 22:19). This is an extreme example, but we do it small ways. Think of the people pleaser who manipulates those closest to them in order to keep them dependent. Or the people pleaser who refuses to speak difficult truths that may help those they are caring for.

The Gospel?

- **The unconditional love of God is the antidote to needing other's approval:** The starting point to find freedom is in God's unconditional love. John 3:16 reminds us that God loved us so much that he sent his only son so that we may have eternal life. God doesn't approve of our choices, but he approves of us as his beloved creation.
- **It is the pleasing of God that produces true freedom:** The Apostle Paul was the one that got this right. He often described his ministry as one of pleasing God instead of people (Galatians 1:10 and 1 Thessalonians 2:4). In Romans 6, Paul contrasts a sinful life (one that seeks fulfillment apart from God) from one devoted to God. In 6:23 he reminds us that sin always leads to death. But a serving of God leads to eternal life, not referencing life after death, but heaven living right here and now. Ultimately, it is through serving Jesus that one finds true freedom to be the people that God intended them to be.