



Approval Addiction | Shawn Johnson | 1.28.18

LG Weekly

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

If you could be featured in the movie of your choice, what movie and what character would you play?

SHARE

As we set sail into the new year, we all have hopes and dreams for how this year is going to be different than the last. Some of us start this year apprehensive of what is to come since last year was full of difficulty and trouble, while others are optimistic and driven to make the most of what's next. What do you think God thinks of your plans, aspirations and resolutions? What do you think His hopes and plans are for your life?

At Red Rocks Church, each year we seriously pray that God would give us a very specific verse which would encourage every person towards living a more full, rich and surrendered life to God; a timely word that would spark a fire and ignite the body of Christ to live to its fullest potential.

The apostle Paul challenged and encouraged the church in Galatia with this, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1

Red Rocks Church, we need to stand firm and not allow ourselves to go back to what once enslaved us. Jesus set us free to live in freedom with him. The boundaries God has put in our lives through God's word is for the sake of our freedom. Though it seems counter-intuitive, God puts boundaries in our lives to keep us free. He is not trying to hold something back from us, but wants to give us abundant life here in the present!

We all desire freedom and we all need it. God promises freedom and wants all of us to experience it in and through Him. Freedom from addiction. Freedom from selfishness. Freedom from fear. Freedom from anxiety. Freedom from comparison. But it will take courage to trust God at his word and in the leading of our lives. It will take self-discipline and accountability to take on that which wants to enslave us. It will take a willingness to trust God who perfectly provides all we need to live a holy life through him.

We can live free through Christ who set us free!

Approval. It's not a bad thing, depending on whose approval you are looking for?

Is it God's approval that matters in your life or others opinions? This week, Shawn tackled the topic of 'approval' that hits close to home for him and for most of us if we are honest. What people think about us matters, but how much do you allow it space in your life to matter? God's word tells us that He chose us and appointed us; we are His treasured possession and we are loved. What God thinks of us should matter most because if we know him, we already have his approval through his son Jesus.

Let's Read:

- **Psalm 139:13-14**
- **1 John 3:1**
- **Deuteronomy 14:2**
- **John 15:16**

Do you think most people struggle with believing that they have been "wonderfully made" by God? If so, what are some reasons?

What do you think is the biggest reason that people become addicted to needing approval?

God's word tells us that he "chose" us and didn't just end up with us. How does it make you feel to be chosen? Is it easy to accept based on your life experiences or difficult?

G R O W

Let's read Galatians 2:11-21

Peter, one of the most fearless leaders of the early church succumbed to intimidation and changed how he did ministry to try and gain the approval of others. Peter got distracted from what God called him to do, he gave into fear. Proverbs tells us "Fear of man will prove to be a snare." In this case, that is exactly what happened and Paul took action to confront him because Peter wasn't designed to live a compromised life, but to live free in Christ.

In Galatians 1:10, Paul writes, "Am I now trying to win the approval of men or of God? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (NIV). Paul says his goal in life is to please God, not men. Paul is confident that he is already approved by God, the one he lives his life for. Author Joseph Scheumann writes, "When we've stared the question in the face — whose approval do you crave? — and done the serious heart work of renouncing self and exalting Christ, we are free. Free from condemnation (Romans 8:1), free to be fully satisfied in Christ (Psalm 16:11), and free to wield whatever influence we have, however big or small, for the good of our neighbor and the glory of God."

From the very beginning, we were designed to live free for the glory of God. This is why we see the Apostle Paul become perplexed as he heard of what was happening in the church of Galatia. The church had become so easily derailed from their calling as Christ followers, from their original design. Paul says that there are two ways we go to seek our approval...through others or in Christ (Galatians 1:10). One will put us in a trap of bondage. The other will release us into freedom. It is not a both and... When we tirelessly run after the approval of others, we become bound to what their perception may be of us, which can lead to a slow death of the soul. But then freedom! When we choose Christ, we choose freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17). We run this race with perseverance as a servant of Christ, with Christ and for Christ (Hebrews 12:1). Nothing else and no one else will bring us into this freedom. So, let us stand firm, for Christ has set us free (Galatians 5:1).

Think of a time when you have been succumbed to intimidation and missed an opportunity that God may have had for you? Maybe a calling, a relationship, or possibly a conversation.

Think of a moment in your life that you were living in the most freedom from other people's perception of you...How did this affect the way you loved others?

M O V E

Do you ever find yourself pondering some of the deeper, perhaps even perplexing questions in life? Questions like; do I have what it takes? Am I good enough? Pretty enough? Smart enough? These questions have haunted humanity since the fall of Adam and Eve. Before the deception from Satan, Adam and Eve were whole and complete. They were both provided for perfectly by their creator. There was no need to question their worth and identity. No need to seek approval. Seeking approval creates havoc relationally, spiritually, and socially. It is placing ourselves in bondage and giving into fear. It is trying to fit into culture at all costs. So, compromise seems a fitting response in order to avoid rejection at whatever cost. What makes approval so dangerous is that we will fall victim to whomever approves or disapproves of us. God did not intend for us to live that way. We must be careful to what we give our attention to.

As followers of Christ, we are sons and daughters of the most high God. The God whose love is strong and ferocious. A love that is never ending and never giving up. We have nothing to fear. We have no one to fear. God says, "we are redeemed" and He has called us by name. We are His (Isaiah 43:1). Let us put our entire attention on what God is doing right now, right in front of us. There is no need to seek out any other voices. May His voice triumph over all other chatter we may hear. But first, we must know His voice and replace those lies with truth. Allow His word to penetrate your heart remembering, you are His and that is enough.

What in your life are you giving the most attention?

Do you find that you genuinely carry the weight of others perception of you? Why?

This week, what is one step you can take towards putting your focus back on what God says about you? (i.e. less social media, memorizing scripture, accountability etc.)

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

T O G O

“And so, we rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.” **1 John 4:9-16 (NIV)**

