

Help for a People Pleaser

I. Introduction.

A. This is a common problem.

1. The world identifies this problem as co-dependency. Isaiah 2:22
2. It affects us personally and affects others. Proverbs 29:25
3. The desire to keep people happy can be a kind of bondage.
4. It is a frequent issue in counseling.

B. Good books have been written on this subject.

1. Authors have been addressing this issue.
2. It is not a new problem. It is in the Bible.

II. Biblical Examples of People Pleasers.

A. Bad examples.

1. Gideon. Judges 6:27
2. Eli. 1 Samuel 2:29-30
3. Saul. 1 Samuel 15:24
4. Jonah. Jonah 4:1-4
5. Ananias and Sapphira. Acts 5:1-11
6. Some authorities feared the Pharisees. John 12:42-43
7. Elijah. 1 Kings 19:1-3

B. Good examples.

1. Moses. Hebrews 11:24-28
2. Ezekiel. Ezekiel 2:6
Other prophets boldly proclaimed God's truth. Hebrews 11:32-38
3. The man born blind. John 9 John 9:18-23, esp. v. 22
4. Paul. 1 Thessalonians 2:3-6

III. The Dangers of Living for the Approval of Others.

A. It hurts us.

1. It makes us think more about protecting ourselves than caring for others.
2. We behave like hypocrites. Romans 12:9 1 Corinthians 15:33 Proverbs 13:20
Colossians 3:22-24 Ephesians 6:5-7
3. It can be extremely difficult to love those who do not love us back.
4. The Bible tells that we are unwise when we are influenced by others.
2 Corinthians 10:12 1 Corinthians 15:33
5. We will not be able to achieve our goal of having everyone like us, anyway.
Matthew 10:34-36 Matthew 10:22 1 Peter 4:3-4
6. People-pleasing can affect counseling.

B. It hurts others.

1. It is loving to recognize and address sin. Romans 12:9b Romans 1:18
2. Flattery is an outgrowth of people-pleasing and is harmful. Proverbs 29:5
1 Thessalonians 2:3-6

IV. Pleasing God is Primary.

- A. The Scripture says we cannot have it both ways, living to please others and living to please God. Galatians 1:10 Matthew 10:37-39
- B. We are called to fear the Lord instead of people.
 1. People have no power that isn't given by God. Matthew 10:26-28
 2. He is worthy. Isaiah 8:13
 3. The wise live only to please God. Psalm 111:10 Proverbs 3: 7a, 9:9
 4. The wise person values God's opinion more than a good reputation. Philippians 2:7 Luke 6:22
- C. The example of Jesus.
 1. He was not affected by the opinions of others. John 2:23-25
 2. He pleased the Father. John 6:38 Matt. 26:39 Mark 14:36 Luke 22:42 Phil. 2:8

V. Conclusion. 1 John 1:9 Psalm 27:1 Psalm 118:6-9 Hebrews 13:6 2 Corinthians 5:9

Resources:

Letting Go: Rugged Love for Wayward Souls by Dave Harvey and Paul Gilbert

Picture Perfect: When Life Doesn't Line Up by Amy Baker

Pleasing People: How Not to Be an "Approval Junkie" by Lou Priolo

When People are Big and God is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man by Ed Welch

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-sin-of-insecurity/> Blog by Jeremy Pierre