

## What if I think or feel, "I must have God's approval"?

People sometimes try to get everybody else's complete approval. They beat themselves up emotionally and punish themselves if they fail. They end up trying to pretend they are different from what they are all the time. They have to for they know they have no hope of pleasing everybody if they stay the same. They cannot enjoy any approval they get when they get it by refusing to be their true selves. Christians never mention that if God exists, he only wants to see people being as perfect as they can be under the circumstances. He wants to see all achieve their full potential whatever that is. That is the kind of perfection he wants. For example, if you have the potential to get a grade B in your physics exam, he is offended if you don't get it. And as God alone is the source of all it follows that failing to please him is catastrophe. We conclude that belief in God is dangerous when the believer is consistent. Most however prove that their faith is not as deep as they let on when they are happy though they believe and claim to have committed themselves to God. To argue that we should look for God's approval and not that of other people's is extremely odd. God is more demanding than people for he is perfect. And it is exchanging slavery to human approval from slavery to divine approval.

Though people know they cannot please everybody, they still keep trying. Because they keep wasting energy trying too hard, they end up addicted to seeking approval. And naturally they won't admit it for that is admitting that they seek approval not out of freedom but out of impulse. When people get approval, their enjoyment is short-lived and they have to try harder to get high again. Addiction to approval is like addiction to any street drug. Resentment and bitterness are the only ultimate rewards if you take such a path.

Perhaps people who give up marriage and happiness and comfort to follow God are suffering from an addiction to his approval? Their actions speak for them.

The answer to approval addiction is to list your priorities in order of importance and follow the main ones. Forget about the rest. Having the perfect garden is not a priority. Getting a good friend is. It is important to choose the priorities carefully. God will not be top of your list. Drop God.

Another answer to the problems is to stop thinking, "I have to---" and start thinking, "I choose to---" You do not have to do anything except accept responsibility for what you do. That prevents you feeling like an angry bitter victim controlled by "I-have-to" mentality. You feel free and feeling free feels good. This kind of thinking is condemned by the commandment of Jesus to love your neighbour as yourself. The commandment commands you to love your neighbour as if he were you but gives no hint that loving yourself is actually acceptable.