THE APPROVAL & ACCEPTANCE OF GOD

ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL AND FAVOR – Part 1

**DATE: 7/31/2016 pm**

**TEXT: Proverbs (Various)**

**INTRODUCTION**

One of the driving forces in many lives, is the great need for Acceptance or Approval

Children naturally long for the Approval of their parents

A wife or husband wants the Approval of their spouse

Many young adults crave the Acceptance or Approval of their peers, a boyfriend or girlfriend…

… Even if such Acceptance requires that they do something that is wrong or will harm their life

Pastors, in their quest to be Accepted by their church, can fall into that trap

Trimming their sermons and avoiding messages that preach against sin so they will not offend anyone and be popular

The appetite for Acceptance or Approval is very strong for most individuals

The desire for Acceptance can be *Destructive*

If that desire leads to compromise with sin

On the other hand, the same desire can be *Constructive*

If your passion is to be Accepted and Approved by God

Christians that try to seek the Approval from Both the World and the Lord …

Often find themselves in a dilemma which creates instability and eventually a final choice

They become unstable and off-balance because they are being pulled in two different directions

James addressed this issue in his epistle

**James 1:8 –** ***“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways”***

**James 4:8 –*“Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded”***

Eventually, every person must make a decision whom they will serve and whose Acceptance and Approval they will seek

**Joshua 24:15 –*“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”***

Let me ask, *Whose approval or favor do you seek?*

*Is the approval or favor of God important to you?*

**Matthew 6:24 *– “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”*** (Material Possessions)

If so, then the book of Proverbs offers us some practical, important insights about the Approval of God

Having the Approval & Acceptance of God, brings stability to a person’s life

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. “WISDOM”**

Attaining and Applying Godly Wisdom leads to Approval

**Proverbs 8:35 *– “For whoso findeth Me (Wisdom) findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD”***

The context of **Proverbs 8** is all about Godly Wisdom

This is the ***“Me”*** in this verse

The Personification of Wisdom

This ***“Me”*** is Jesus, for Jesus is the Wisdom of God

**I Corinthians 1:24 –** ***“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God”***

Solomon says if you find Wisdom, you find Life and obtain the Lord's favor

This word ***“favor”*** means *pleasure, delight, or acceptance*

God is pleased when we find and apply His Wisdom in our decisions

He says we will find ***“life”*** (True Life)

*Life* is an interesting word

It means *sustenance, revival, renewal, satisfaction*

That makes a lot of sense

There are 2 types of Wisdom we can get

Worldly or Godly

First, let’s look at …

**A. The World’s Wisdom**

Seeking God's Wisdom leads to Revival and Blessing

It is the Wisdom of this World that robs us of these things

For the World's Wisdom is foolish, because it caters to our selfishness

It ignores God and His commands and promises

The Wisdom of the World *Distorts* Life’s true purpose

It leaves a person *Devoid* of any purpose at all

People with Worldly Wisdom, many times, don’t know why they exist, why they are here, or what they are supposed to do with their lives

This is why the Lord labels Worldly Wisdom as foolish

[**I Corinthians 1:20**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Co+1%3A20) **– “*Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”***

[**I Corinthians 3:19**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Co+3%3A19) **– “*For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness”***

You can do things whatever way you want, but if it is not God’s Way, don’t expect it to turn out!

And that is exactly what is going on in the World today

Things are falling apart, and folks are wondering why

They are doing things that are right in their own eyes

Twice in the Book of Proverbs this statement is made

**Proverbs 14:12; 16:25 *– “There is a way which /that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”***

**B. The Believer’s Wisdom**

The believer on the other hand, knows why he is here and what his purpose in life is all about …

(At least he should know, if not, maybe they need to reexamine their life and see if they are in the Faith)

… And that Purpose is to Glorify God

**Revelation 4:11 *– “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created”***

God has made this clear in His Word

Unfortunately, many Christians do not accept God's purpose for their lives

They reject or disregard God’s Word, which is God’s Wisdom (pick and choose)

How do we know this, they are on and off, no stability

Then they base their decisions on carnal ideas which are contrary to Biblical Truth

[**James 3:14, 15**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jas+3%3A14-15) **–“*But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth” “This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish”***

[**Proverbs 14:35**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Pr+14%3A35) **– “*The king's favor is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame”***

[**Proverbs 13:15**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Pr+13%3A15) **– “*Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of transgressors is hard”***

**C. Godly Wisdom Brings Favor**

**Proverbs 3:3, 4 – *“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:” “So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man”***

Wisdom brings Favor from God, and also with men

Call it what you may …

Good understanding, insight, common sense,

Or what we should call it, Godly Wisdom …

Godly Wisdom Gives Favor, Approval, and Acceptance

It causes us to gain Approval from those in authority

Do you want to please your boss?

If so, then seek God's wisdom and make wise choices

Both Joseph and Daniel were Promoted by the king because they Applied God's Wisdom in their lives

If you want to be Accepted by others, then let your wisdom not wickedness, be the reason for your Acceptance and Approval

Live your life in a Godly matter, so that you are known for being a wise man or woman, not a fool

**Humor:** Four people were flying in a small passenger plane. Besides the pilot, there was a preacher, and two teenagers, one of whom had just won the "Smartest Teenager in the World" award.

As they were flying along, a warding bell came on, the pilot turned to the three passengers and said, "I've got some bad news, and I've got some worse news. The bad news is, we're out of gas. The plane is going down and we're gonna crash. The worse news is I only have three parachutes on board." This means, of course, that someone would have to go down with the plane. The pilot continued. "I have a wife and three children. I have many responsibilities. I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to take one of the parachutes." With that, he grabbed one of the chutes and jumped. *The Smartest Teenager in the World* spoke up. "I'm the Smartest Teenager in the World," he said. "I might be the one who comes up with a cure for cancer, AIDS, or solve the world's economic problems. Everyone is counting on me!" The Smartest Teenager in the World grabbed the second parachute and jumped. The preacher then spoke up and said, "Son, you take the last parachute. I've made my peace with God, and I'm willing to go down with the plane. Now take the last parachute and go." "Relax, reverend," said the other teenager. "The Smartest Teenager in the World just jumped out of the plane with my backpack."

The Morel of the story is that Life is full of people that think they’re smart, when in reality, they are fools

**“WISDOM” BRINGS APPROVAL, ACCEPTANCE & FAVOR**

**II. “WEIGHTS”**

**Proverbs 11:1 –** ***“A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is His delight”***

Weights that are Accurate bring Approval, Acceptance and Favor

But there is much more to this than having Actuate Weights for measuring

Now I know that we looked at ***“a False Balance”*** being an Abomination to the Lord

But now I want to look at ***“Just Weight”*** for a minute

When the Bible talks about a ***“Just”*** Weight it means *fair and impartial*

It is talking about something accurate and honest

No matter what we do, we should strive to be accurate and honest with people

This is why knowing what the Bible teaches is so important

Make sure that your Life’s messages is accurate, truthful, and biblical

Whether in your business matters or personal affairs …

Truthfulness matters; honesty and integrity are essential

This kind of behavior Delights or is Acceptable with God

**“WISDOM”**

**“WEIGHTS”**

**III. THE “WAY”**

The Way of Integrity Delights the Lord

**Proverbs 11:20 *– “They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are His delight”***

**Story:** Once there was an emperor in the Far East who was growing old and knew it was coming time to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or one of his own children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young people in the kingdom together and said, "It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you." The kids were shocked, but the emperor continued by saying, "I am going to give each one of you a seed today. You will have one seed and it is a very special seed. I want you to go home, plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring to me, and the one I choose will be the next emperor of the kingdom!" There was one boy named Ling who was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. She helped him get a pot and some planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks, some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Ling kept going home and checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by and still nothing. By now all the others were talking about their plants, but Ling didn't have a plant, and he felt like a failure. Six months went by, but there was still nothing in Ling's pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Ling didn't say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow. The year finally went by and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot, but she encouraged him to go, to take his pot, and to be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace. When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by all the other youths. They were beautiful, in all shapes and sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor and many of the other kids laughed at him. A few felt sorry for him and just said, "Hey, nice try." When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. "My, what great plants, trees, and flowers you have grown," said the emperor. "Today, one of you will be appointed the next emperor!" All of a sudden, the Emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified. "The Emperor knows I'm a failure! Maybe he will have me killed," he thought.

When Ling got to the front, the Emperor asked his name. "My name is Ling," he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The Emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling, and then announced to the crowd, "Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!" Ling couldn't believe it. Ling couldn't even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor? Then the Emperor said, "One year ago today, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees, plants, and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!"

Beloved, not only are people delighted by honesty,

But God delights or approves of our integrity as well

He loves those who follow after righteousness

The phrase ***“froward heart”*** means distorted from the right; obstinate in error, twisted in view

Those who behave this way are an abomination to the Lord

They are determined to be depraved, disobedient, and deceitful

It’s one thing to be depraved, disobedient, and deceitful

But someone who is Determined to be that way…well

The upright, however, are Approved or Accepted by the Lord

This is the idea behind the word ***“delight”***

God's blessings and favor are upon those who have integrity and do what is right

**Psalm 119:1 – “*Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD”***

**Proverbs 15:9 – “*The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: but He loveth him that followeth after righteousness”***

Solomon states that the Lord loves the person that follows after righteousness

The word ***“followeth”*** is a strong word

It is derived from a word which not only means *to follow after something*

But also *to run after, to pursue or chase*

The verb here indicates a persistent pursuit

There is no quitting, no giving up

Chasing something indicates eagerness, earnestness, enthusiasm, and effort

This is to be our attitude about righteousness

As a dog will chase a rabbit, we are to enthusiastically and earnestly pursue after righteousness with persistence

When you chase after something, you keep your eye on it so you will know where to run

It is difficult to chase after something you can’t see

Our eyes are to be focused on doing what is right

Our eyes are to be upon the LORD

**Hebrews 12:2 – “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”***

**“WISDOM”**

**“WEIGHTS”**

**THE “WAY”**

**IV. “WITHOUT”**

Being Without Arrogance or Having Humility is Approved by God

**Proverbs 3:34 –** ***“Surely He scorneth the scorners: but He giveth grace unto the lowly”***

Both Pride and Humility are addressed in this verse

**A. The Scorner**

**Scorn –** *is a strong feeling of contempt; powerful feeling of dislike toward somebody or something*

The scorn of the scorner has its root in his pride

Pride causes a person to overvalue himself

Pride causes a person to undervalue others

Especially the Lord and what He has done for all of us

It causes a person to become independent of the Lord and take credit for what God has done in his life

Jesus made it clear that we are nothing without Him, and that an attitude of pride creates resistance from God

**James 4:6 *– “But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble”***

**I Peter 5:5, 6 – *“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble”
“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time:”***

**B. The Grace Given to the Humble**

God gives ***“grace”*** to the ***“lowly”*** or *humble*

This word ***“grace”*** means *favor or acceptance*

Genuine humility is favored or approved by the Lord because it reflects an attitude of gratitude toward the Lord and others that have invested in our lives

If you have accomplished great things, realize a lot of people have helped you to get where you are and the Lord has blessed you every day

Humility helps us to avoid the Twilight Zone where we think we are God's gift to the world

It keeps our head from swelling, but not our heart as it swells in love, adoration, and reverence for the Lord

The humble person realizes and acknowledges his limitations, but also understands he can do all things through Christ

God's favor and approval are upon those with humility because they have a teachable spirit and are willing to follow God's Word, Direction, and Will for their lives

When a person has a spirit of humility, he has learned to be content with God's provisions, patient when he has problems, and enjoy peace when fear shadows him

The Grace of God enables us to have a humble mind, which in turn, helps us to bring honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ

Remember we are talking about things that God Favors

**CONCLUSION**

Let me close with the story of Amy Carmichael

As a young Irishwoman working in England in the late 1800’s, Amy decided to answer God's call to serve in the mission field. Twice rejected for medical reasons, she eventually found a mission agency willing to put her on a ship and send her to India. She arrived with a tropical fever and a temperature of 105. Some missionaries who met her believed she wouldn't last six months, but Amy recovered, and she never went home. The young missionary soon discovered that the way to reach the Indian people was not through preaching but through sacrifice.

She wrote, "If the ultimate, the hardest, cannot be asked of me, if my fellows hesitate to ask it and turn to someone else, then I know nothing of Calvary's love." So she reached out to the poorest, youngest, and most despised among them, especially the babies and children given to the Hindu temples, who were forced to serve as slaves and were tortured if they were caught trying to escape.

Amy not only felt sorrow for the children, but she was spurred to action. She rescued them, built a home, and recruited a staff to care for them. The ministry became known as *Dohnavur Fellowship,* and the children called its headmistress *Amma****,*** the Tamil word for "mother." To those who profited from the enslavement practices, she was known as "the white woman who steals children." Amy Carmichael's mission trip ended 55 years later, when she died at the age of 83. During that time she rescued over 1,000 abused, abandoned, and enslaved children. Though her stories, prayers, and devotions filled 35 books back in Britain, not once did she return to hear the praises of her friends and supporters. To Amy anything that called attention to herself stole attention from the God she served. In fact, in 1919, her name was published in a British honor's list. When she found out about it, she wrote back to England asking to have her name removed. It troubled her to "have an experience so different from the Lord who was despised, rejected, and not kindly honored."

Ironically, the woman who wanted no honor other than that of being Christ's servant, became famous nonetheless, as tens of thousands of readers in Britain and America were moved by her writings. Her example of humility, service, and sacrificial love has encouraged countless numbers of Christians to follow her into the mission field or to treat others with the same attitude.

[**Matthew 23:12**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+23%3A12) **– “*And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted”***

**“WISDOM”**

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