THE APPROVAL OF GOD

PART 2

**DATE: 8/7/2016 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…

Pastors seek the Approval of their Churches

Church Members seek the Approval of their Pastor

A person’s appetite for Acceptance is very strong

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 by God

Eventually, every person must make a decision whom they will serve and whose 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”***

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

So, let’s continue to see what the Book of Proverbs has to say about God’s Approval

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

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE HUMBLE HEART – Proverbs 3:34**

***“Surely He scorneth the scorners: but He giveth grace unto the lowly”***

Both Pride and Humility are addressed in this verse

But we see that God Honors the Humble Heart

Being Without Arrogance or Having Humility is Approved by God

**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 that place 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

Let me share 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 on 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. The missionaries who met her at the boat, 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. 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”***

**THE HUMBLE HEART**

**II. THE WELL-BALANCED MAN – Proverbs 12:2**

***“A good man obtaineth favour of the Lord: but a man of wicked devices will He condemn”***

The Lord approves the man of character and goodness

The good man is pure in heart

When a person has goodness and character, it demonstrates he has a good balance in his life

He shows stability, sensibility, reliability, responsibility, and respectability

Men do not become good on their own

**A. The Good Man**

There is no such thing as a good man apart from God

**Psalm 14:2, 3 *– “The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God” “They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one”***

Paul quotes **Psalm 14:2, 3** in …

**Romans 3:10-12 *– “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:” “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God”***

***“They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one”***

Paul is substantiating an already verified Truth

Man is born bad and becomes good only as his heart is changed by the saving grace of God

**John 3:7 –** ***“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again”***

Then it says that the Well-Balanced Man …

**B. Obtains Favor**

A man made good seeks God’s Favor and gets it

The one who seeks God’s favor is sure to find it

God is the sole object of his search in Life

A man seeks God for Who He is / his Creator

**Mark 10:18 *– “And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God”***

This is the story of the rich man asking how he could inherit eternal life

**THE HUMBLE HEART**

**THE WELL-BALANCED MAN**

**III. SHOWING MERCY AND TRUTH – Proverbs 3:3, 4**

**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”***

Those who show Mercy and Truth find God’s Approval

Mercy and Truth are so important that the Lord tells us to not Forsake or Let them go!

It says that we are to Bind them around our neck and write them on our heart

Mercy and Truth are to be Inscribed in our hearts

So much a part of us, that everything we do, we do with Mercy and Truth in mind

Like a beautiful necklace that attracts attention, the first thing people should recognize about us are Mercy and Truth

What does Solomon mean by Mercy and Truth?

What is he specifically talking about here?

The word ***“mercy”*** means *loving kindness, goodness, or faithfulness*

***“Truth”*** means *faithfulness, sureness, reliability, stability, and continuance*

When we are kind, faithful, good, truthful, reliable, stable, and steadfast …

We are going to find approval and acceptance from both the Lord and men

Especially today where it is difficult to find people with this kind of character

Many are characterized today by …

-- Fickleness instead of Faithfulness

-- Selfishness instead of Kindness

-- Harshness instead of Love

 -- Instability and Indecisiveness instead of Reliability and Steadiness

Men like Moses, Joshua, Joseph, David, Paul, Enoch, Daniel, and Elijah all found favor with God and men …

Because Mercy and Truth were a part of their character

Mercy and Truth will bring blessings to us

Both of them together provide a *balance* of Strength and Beauty in our character

**Psalm 96:6 –** ***“Honour and majesty are before Him: strength and beauty are in His sanctuary”***

The Gentleness of Mercy and Love needs the Firmness of Truth

Yet, the Strength and Firmness of the Truth needs Love and Kindness as it is proclaimed to others

Mercy, without Truth, can lead to ungodly compromises

Truth without Mercy can lead to unfeeling legalism

When we pursue both, equally and simultaneously,

We reflect the heart of God and bring Him great pleasure

Throughout Scripture, we find these two traits hand-in-hand like two sisters

They teach us a number of lessons

**A. They ‘Preserve’ us**

They Preserve us from the consequences of stupid, sinful decisions

**Psalm 61:7 - *“He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare Mercy and Truth, which may preserve him”***

**Psalm 40:11 – “*Withhold not thou Thy tender Mercies from me, O LORD: let Thy lovingkindness and Thy Truth continually preserve me”***

**B. They are a ‘Pattern’**

They are a Pattern of God's character and nature for us

A pattern is something you follow, something you use as a guide

**Psalm 86:15 –** ***“But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in Mercy and Truth”***

**Psalm 25:10 *– “All the paths of the LORD are Mercy and Truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies”***

**C. They ‘Purge’ away**

They Purge away iniquity and bring about reconciliation

**Proverbs 16:6 *– “By Mercy and Truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil”***

**D. They ‘Protect’**

They Protect those in authority because of the loyalty they produce in other people's lives

**Proverbs 20:28 –** ***“Mercy and Truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by Mercy”***

**E. They are a By ‘Product’**

They are the By Product of doing what is good and right

**Proverbs 14:22 *– “Do they not err that devise evil? but Mercy and Truth shall be to them that devise good”***

**F. They bring ‘Praise’**

Praise will come from our lips for God's Mercy and Truth which guarantee His promises in His Word

**Psalm 138:2 *– “I will worship toward Thy holy temple, and praise Thy name for Thy lovingkindness and for Thy Truth: for Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name”***

**CONCLUSION**

We have examined 6 things so far that lead to God's approval

*Wisdom leads to approval*

*Weights that are Accurate are approved*

*The Way of Integrity and Uprightness Delights the Lord*

*Being Without arrogance or having humility is approved by God*

*A Well-balanced man of Character and Goodness*

*The Warmth of Mercy and Truth is approved by God*

We will continue to look at what the Book of Proverbs has to say about …

**“THE APPROVAL OF GOD”**

**THE “HUMBLE HEART”**

**THE “WELL-BALANCED” MAN**

**SHOWING “MERCY AND TRUTH”**