FINDING THE APPROVAL OF MEN – Part 1

**DATE: 8/21/2016 pm**

**TEXT: Proverbs 22:1**

**INTRODUCTION**

As we have been studying thru the Book of Proverbs by its different Topics …

We last looked at *Finding the Approval of God*

… And what the Book of Proverbs says about that subject

Tonight we will continue on the thought of *Approval*

But studying this time on what Proverbs has to say about the Approval of Men

While it is best to Find the Approval of God

I also think that the Bible teaches that it isn’t a bad idea to have a good reputation among men

One of the driving forces in many people’s lives, is the great need for Approval

Children naturally long for the Approval of their parents

A husband or wife wants the Approval of their spouse

Many young adults crave the Approval of their peers

Pastors seek the Approval of their Churches

Church Members seek the Approval of their Pastor

A person’s appetite for Acceptance is a very strong one

According to the Bible, if we first seek the Approval of God on our lives

… Then the Approval of Men will follow

Eventually, every person must make a decision whom they will serve and who’s 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”***

If we will seek God’s Approval first, then …

All these things (Man’s Approval) will be added on

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

So, let’s continue to look into the Book of Proverbs and what it has to say about the Approval of Man

I don’t know about you, but I what to be sure I have the Approval of God on my life

And, as we will see, finding the Approval of Man is a part of that

**~~~Prayer~~~**

We will only be looking at one thought tonight

But it has a lot to it

That thought is a Good Name / Look at …

**Proverbs 22:1 *– “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold”***

What do people think, when they hear your name?

Do they think of graciousness, goodness, kindness, and faithfulness?

Is your name sweet to them or sour?

Do they crave your company or do they hope to avoid you?

Is your name a bitter thought?

Do they think of a person who is characterized by harshness, selfishness, stubbornness, moodiness, or a lack of discretion?

Solomon places a priority on the loving favor, acceptance, and approval of men

Such approval comes from having a good name and being a person of integrity and character

Having a good name is to be considered more important than riches

The loving favor of people is more valuable than gold and silver

We need to do our best to have a good name for Christ, the church, and for our family

**Poem:** *You got your name from your Father. It was all he had to give. So it's yours to use and cherish, for as long as you may live. If you lose the watch he gave you, it can always be replaced. But a black mark on your name, son, can never be erased. It was clean the day you took it, and a worthy name to bear, When he got it from his father, there was no dishonor there. So make sure you guard it wisely, after all is said and done. You'll be glad the name is spotless when you give it to your son.*

Folks, our name, our character, our integrity, our testimony, are the traits that give our witness for Jesus Christ credibility or diminish it

If we have a rotten reputation, then our words about how Jesus changed our lives are muffled and muted because there seems to be no evidence of change in us

Our words have little power or impact upon the people we are telling about the Lord because we have hurt our own personal credibility

This is why it is vital that you clear your conscience with God and with men if you have lived an inconsistent, carnal, backslidden life

Clearing your conscience is the beginning phase of restoring your name and testimony for Jesus Christ

**Acts 24:16 *– “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men”***

**Ill.** At the end of World War I, Herbert Hoover, who later became the 31st President of the United States, led the allied relief efforts in Europe. He kept hundreds of thousands from starving, and a new word entered the Finnish language. In Finland, to ***“hoover”*** meant *to be kind, to help*.

If someone coined a word from your name, what would it be?

Would it signify character, helpfulness, and cheerfulness, or would it be some mean and ugly word?

Beloved, God wants us to focus on having a good name more than great wealth

How do we do this?

Let’s look at some things that we can do to establish a Good Name

First, we need to …

**I. CONQUER HYPOCRISY**

… in our lives

Jesus strongly rebuked hypocrisy …

**Matthew 23:27, 28 *– “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones,***

***… and of all uncleanness” “Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity”***

Those without Christ are quickly turned-off by our hypocrisy

How many times have we heard this statement? …

*I'm not going to church! It is full of hypocrites!*

Unfortunately, there are hypocrites in the church

And I’m one of them, but so are you!

When we claim to be something we are not, our lives become a stumbling block to others, especially for weak Christians and people who do not know the Lord

It becomes that much more difficult to reach that unsaved person for Christ

Paul also warned us about this problem

**I Corinthians 8:9 *– “But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak”***

**Romans 14:13 –*“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way”***

A stumbling block is usually something that is low and does nothing but get in the way

Many times it is covered with dirt and can’t easily be seen

We become stumbling blocks too, when we are spiritually low and not growing in the Lord

When we are doing nothing in our spiritual growth and walk with God, we tend to get in the way of the spiritual growth of others

When we are dirty or living in sin, we are a stumbling block

Let me ask, *Are you a stumbling block? Are you a Christian, but because of your hypocritical lifestyle, have you become a stumbling block to others?*

If so, why not get that right now?"

Conquering hypocrisy in our lives will help us to establish a Good Name

For many people, the only thing they know about God is what they see in the lives of Christians

What do they think about your life?

**CONQUERING HYPOCRISY**

If we are going to have a Good Name, we need to …

**II. BE CONSISTENT**

Being Consistent in our Conduct

**Consistent** – *Living in conformity with one's profession*

**Titus 2:7 – *“In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,”***

**Matthew 5:16 –*“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”***

When we Live for God one day, but then are acting like the Devil the next …

We create confusion in the minds and hearts of those without Christ

Our inconsistency turns people off toward the Lord and hurts our reputation

You will find that the world has a higher standard for Christians than they do for themselves

The unsaved may not know Christ, but they do expect us to act like Him consistently

The reason we are inconsistent is because we are trying to serve two masters

We try to serve the Lord and ourselves at the same time

We haven’t made up our mind to just serve Christ and this makes us inconsistent and unstable

[**Matthew 6:24**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+6%3A24) **– “*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”***

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

God wants us to finish our course for Jesus Christ

When we get mad, backslide, quit going to church or stop living for God …

We are saying to the world that the Lord is not worth living for and thus, we damage our name

We are saying that there are other things more important than the Son of God

This is what Demas did when he quit serving Christ

**II Timothy 4:10 – “*For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica …”***

I have heard Christian people call other Christians who have given up on the Lord – A ***Demas***

You will have a Good Name …

**WHEN YOU CONQUER HYPOCRISY**

**WHEN YOU ARE CONSISTENT**

You will have a Good Name when you are …

**III. COMPASSIONATE AND CARING**

People tend to respond to our love more than anything else we do or say

In fact, they don't care how much we know until they know how much we care

This is what the Lord was trying to get across in …

**John 13:35** when He said – **“*By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another”***

**Galatians 5:13 – “*For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another”***

You and I become an example of love by loving people

People learn to love others by the way they are loved or see our love

Our kindness, patience with the faults of others,

Our sacrifice, forgiveness, and not complaining when we are hurt demonstrate our love

One of the best ways we can establish a good name is by our compassion and love for other people

It is pretty hard to offend people when you are showing them love

It is easy to offend them when you show hate and indifference toward them

**CONQUERING HYPOCRISY**

**BEING CONSISTENT**

**COMPASSIONATE AND CARING**

**IV. HAVING CHRIST-LIKE COMMUNICATIONS**

**Proverbs 18:21 – *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof”***

Our tongues have a habit of getting in the way

We often use them to offend, instead of encourage

It is for this reason we are to be careful in what we say

More people have ruined their reputation and their name by what they have said

God vehemently warns us of the power of the tongue

**James 3:2 –** ***“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body”***

**Titus 2:7, 8 – *“In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,” “Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you”***

**Colossians 4:6 –*“Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man”***

**CONQUERING HYPOCRISY**

**BEING CONSISTENT**

**COMPASSIONATE AND CARING   
  
CHRIST-LIKE COMMUNICATIONS**

**V**. **A CLEARED CONSCIENCE**

**Acts 24:16 – *“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men”***

We touched on this earlier

There are going to be times when you do fail or offend others by our actions, attitudes, or words

If this happens, then we are obligated to clear our conscience with God and men

We protect God's reputation of justice by judging ourselves and making our *wrongs* right

Paul stressed this truth repeatedly

**I Timothy 1:19 – “*Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:”***

**I Timothy 1:5 – “*Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:”***

Having a clear conscience means you have a conscience which is not troubled or distressed by the guilt of your offenses

It means that you have made right, made restitution, or sought forgiveness for your offenses

No one can point a finger at you and say - *You wronged me and have not made it right* (Or at least tried)

You Find the Approval of Men by Having a Good Name

You’ll have a Good Name by …

**CONQUERING HYPOCRISY**

**BEING CONSISTENT**

**COMPASSIONATE AND CARING   
  
CHRIST-LIKE COMMUNICATIONS**

**A CLEARED CONSCIENCE**

Another thing that brings a Good Name is …

**VI. CONSECRATION**

Our attitude about sin, and our actions concerning temptation, heavily influence others

A crowd can influence someone to do that which is wrong,

But also that which is right

God wants us to be holy people

He wants us to be pure in heart, character, actions and attitude

When we live holy lives, we properly represent the Lord who is holy

The world expects us to live holy lives even though they may tempt us to sin and compromise

When we are consecrated to Christ, we are behaving in a way that will help us to establish a Good Name

**I Timothy 5:22 - “*... keep thyself pure”***

**I Peter 1:15, 16 – “*But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;” “Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”***

**Ill.** Years ago the communist government in China commissioned an author to write a biography of Hudson Taylor with the purpose of distorting the facts and presenting him in a bad light. They wanted to discredit the name of this consecrated missionary of the gospel. As the author was doing his research, he was increasingly impressed by Taylor's saintly character and godly life, and he found it extremely difficult to carry out his assigned task with a clear conscience. Eventually, at the risk of losing his life, he laid aside his pen, renounced his atheism, and received Jesus as his personal Saviour.

Whether we realize it or not, our example of consecration and godliness leave an impression on others

Hudson Taylor established a good name by a godly life

His life pointed an unsaved man to Christ

And the Last thing in having a Good Name is …

**VII. BEING CONFIDENT**

When we have Faith and Confidence in the Lord,

Then we bring honor and glory to Him

**II Timothy 1:12 *– “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day”***

This attitudes helps to give us a Good Name

Our Confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ pleases Him

**Hebrews 11:6 – “*But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”***

If we do not demonstrate a trust for / in Him,

How do we expect an unsaved person to have Confidence in Him?

Our praise for God demonstrates our confidence in Him

**Psalm 107:2 – “*Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy”***

**Psalm 18:49 – “*Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name”***

**CONCLUSION**

You Find the Approval of Men by Having a Good Name

You’ll have a Good Name by …

**CONQUERING HYPOCRISY**

**BEING CONSISTENT**

**BEING COMPASSIONATE AND CARING   
  
HAVING CHRIST-LIKE COMMUNICATIONS**

**ALWAYS HAVING A CLEARED CONSCIENCE**

**LIVING CONSECRATED**

**HAVING CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD**