THE APPROVAL OF MEN

Part 3

**DATE: 9/04/16 pm**

**TEXT: Proverbs 11:16; 31:30; 16:7; 10:32; 11:27**

**INTRODUCTION**

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

Last Time we continued to look at *Finding the Approval of Men*

And what the Book of Proverbs said about that subject

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 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 (including Man’s Approval) will be added on

If so, then the book of Proverbs offers us some practical and 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 I think we will see, finding the Approval of Man is a part of that

**~~~Prayer~~~**

How important is it to have the Approval of men**?**

And How can we have it?

**I. A WOMAN THAT FEARETH GOD – 11:16**

***“A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches”***

A woman that Feareth God will find favour, not only with God but with others as well

**A. The Context of the Text**

A woman that is Gracious, Kind, and Generous, gains favour and honor from others

One way to be gracious is to be grateful to God for what He has done for you and grateful to other people for their love and kindness toward you

The second part of the verse talks about Ruthless, Violent men that gain wealth, but no honor

The term ***“strong men,”*** refers to a person who uses violence to overcome someone and strikes terror in the hearts of people

They may obtain ***“riches”*** but never ***“honour”***

**B. The Godly Woman – 31:30**

***“Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised”***

This verse shows that ***“favour”,*** which means *charm* in the Hebrew …

Does not produce Favour as does those qualities …

… that the Fear of the LORD produces

**1.** Charm is deceitful

It can be selfishly used to manipulate people in order to get one’s own way

**Ephesians 4:22 *– “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;”***

**2.** Beauty is Vain

You know the old saying – *Beauty is skin deep*

Having beauty does not mean you have character, or that you are a godly person

**I Peter 3:1-4 …**

Beauty is vain and fleeting like a vapor

It doesn't take long to lose it

Physical appearances will not last

The writer is not saying, however, that those who are charming or beautiful are worthless

He is saying there is something infinitely more valuable,

And that is, a reverence or fear for the Lord

When someone looks for a wife, or a husband for that matter

…don't base your total decision on their appearance or beauty

Yes, you should be attracted to them, but make sure they love the Lord too

If they don't, they can make your life a living nightmare

Solomon says that the woman who fears the Lord shall be praised and rightly so

She will find favour with others and is worthy of the praise that she receives

Truly, her price is far above rubies

Women like Ruth, Deborah, Esther, and Mary were truly great women

3 women have been prominent in the Book of Proverbs

The personification of *Wisdom,* seen as a woman

The immoral woman or *seductress*

The virtuous woman found here

**Ill.** Let me share with you one of the untold stories of history. One of the great women of history that feared the Lord was a lady by the name of Anthusa, who lived from 330 to 374 A.D. in Antioch. Widowed at the age of 20, she is remembered for her influence in the life of her son, John, one of the leaders of the 4th-century church. Her contemporaries tell us that Anthusa was cultured, very beautiful, and from a wealthy family. Yet, she chose to not remarry after her husband's death, deciding instead to devote herself to rearing her two children, John and his sister.

John later wrote that his mother not only taught her children to know and love the teachings of the Bible, but also that her very life was a model of biblical teaching. A student of the Scriptures, John later became the pastor of Constantinople. A zealous missionary himself, he inspired numerous others to serve as missionaries. He always emphasized that a crucial factor to effective evangelism is for Christians to be living examples of Christ-centeredness. Surely he learned something of this from his godly mother, who poured her life into her children.

***“A gracious woman retaineth honour”***

***“a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised”***

**A WOMAN THAT FEARETH GOD**

**II. WHEN A MAN’S WAYS PLEASE THE LORD – 16:7**

***“When a man's ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him”***

We want other people to like us, and sometimes we will do almost anything to win their approval, but God tells us to put our energy into pleasing Him instead

Solomon says - *When our ways please the Lord, it leads to peace with our enemies*

So what does that mean?

Though there are many enemies of the righteous,

When our lives truly please the Lord, in due season …

God will cause them to be at peace with us

The world’s crowd never likes God’s people, but deep down in their heart, they respect those who are truly godly

Though they might persecute and mock the righteous, yet God will cause them at some point, to respect His people

The greater principle is that God blesses the righteous

He takes care of them

Our patience, wisdom, diligence, kindness, and love make a big impression on those who oppose us

When we look at the lives of Joseph in Egypt, David in Gath, or Daniel in Babylon,

We find that these dedicated men reaped peace with their enemies because their ways pleased the Lord

God knew what was in the hearts of these men and He knew they were determined to please Him

**Daniel 1:8 *– “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself”***

**Ill.** During the Civil War, Edwin Stanton (1814-1869) was a lawyer and politician who treated Lincoln with utter contempt. He called him a "low cunning clown" and "the original gorilla." He said there was no need to go to Africa to capture a gorilla when one was available in Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln, however, never retaliated. Instead, when elected to the presidency made Stanton his war minister, believing that he was the best qualified for the office. Years later when Lincoln was killed by an assassin's bullet, …

… Stanton looked down on his rugged face and said tearfully, "There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen."

Even if our life doesn't please our enemies, we haven't lost anything

We are still pleasing God, the only One who truly matters

Let me ask, Is your attitude and lifestyle acceptable to the Lord?

It’s interesting to note that when you turn your back on the Lord and disobey His Word, your life does not go well

Selfishness and sinfulness create strife

Guilt and conviction from sinful living create stress within our lives

**A WOMAN THAT FEARETH GOD**

**WHEN A MAN’S WAYS PLEASE THE LORD**

*Even his enemies are at peace with him*

**III. THE WORDS OF THE RIGHTEOUS**

[**Proverbs 10:32**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Pr+10%3A32) **– *“The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh forwardness”***

[**Proverbs 14:9**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Pr+14%3A9) **– “*Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour”***

[**Proverbs 16:13**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Pr+16%3A13) **– *“Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right”***

A godly person speaks words that are Helpful, Encouraging, Favorable, Pleasant, Acceptable, Honest, and Appropriate

In fact, such words bring delight to those in authority

A person in authority seeking counsel needs people who will be truthful and offer wise counsel

Such encouragement and integrity summon the love and respect of those that hear such wisdom and honesty

Let me ask - *Do your words cause you to be respected?*

*Do you use your words to instill the truths of the Word of God into the lives of other people?*

**A. Virtuous Words – 10:13, 31, 32**

***“In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found …” “The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom …” “the lips of the righteous know what is acceptable”***

**1.** Prudence

Twice our texts say the good mouth speaks the right words

It uses **“*wisdom”***

Its words are valuable

Virtue is valuable, though many seem to reject this truth

**2.** Perception

***“Knows what is acceptable”***

This statement can be viewed 2 ways

Good words teach us what is acceptable

A virtuous person speaks virtuous words because they know what words are acceptable to speak

They do not advocate evil

**B. Favorable Words - 14:9**

***“Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour”***

To this day, fools snicker and joke about sin

The popular culture is full of it

The entertainment world routinely laughs at sin

Make lite of it

They build their corrupt entertainment around it

TV and its sitcom’s and all the innuendos

As-a-matter-of-fact, if you watch that stuff and laugh

You ain’t right!

In contrast, the righteous do not

Rather, the righteous develop a solid reputation

Fools never do

**C. Honest Words – 16:13**

***“Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right”***

Not too much honesty going on today, especially in gov’t

But there was a day when men in Leadership were looking for honest people to help them rule

Tuff to trust anyone today

Speaking the right things finds favour

(Not only in what is said but how it is said)

Those in leadership have to make decisions and they appreciate those who are just (fair & equable)

Moreover, those who are honest in their comments

Can help a leader make right decisions

**A WOMAN THAT FEARETH GOD**

**WHEN A MAN’S WAYS PLEASE THE LORD**

**THE WORDS OF THE RIGHTEOUS**

**IV. THE SEARCH FOR GOODNESS – 11:27**

***“He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him”***

The Bible teaches that we reap what we sow

The one who diligently seeks for that which is good and acceptable will find favor and acceptance

Maybe not always with man, but certainly with God

The word ***“seeketh”*** reveals an important truth

It means to *look early or eagerly for*

The idea is that searching involves patience and anticipation

If you eagerly, enthusiastically seek for good early in your life, you will find favor and acceptance

Searching for that which is good early in your life is a wonderful goal

If you seek for goodness early in your day, you will find it too

The early quest for that which is good and acceptable is important because the focus of your day or your life is being set by your search

When you look for something, it is with the intention of finding it / If you want to find it

If you diligently seek for that which is good and acceptable, you will find it because you want to find it and have it

I think of the lost sheep and the lost coin, and the energy that went into finding them

Let me say at this point that many folks are enjoying the goodness of the Lord and don't even realize or recognize it

Because …

-- They are not looking for it, or

-- They are distracted by the problems in their lives

The problems blind them to what God has done for them

[**Lamentations 3:22, 23**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=La+3%3A22-23) **-** **“*It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not” “They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness”***

On the other hand there are those who Don’t want to see the Goodness of God

Some folks don't see the goodness of God because they are looking for trouble or mischief instead

If you are looking for trouble, it will find you

It won't take very long either

Some people, just love to stir it up all the time

Let me ask you - *What are you really looking for in your life? What do you really want?*

The Target of your quest will reveal what Treasure you really want

Your Target reveals a lot about you and what you value

Let me close with another little known story, I think you’ll like

Ill. Duncan Campbell examined his life and asked these same probing questions. You ask, who is Duncan Campbell? Well let me tell you. Duncan Campbell was taught from a young age to play the bagpipes, and he eventually became a sought-after entertainer in his Scottish village. One night during a concert, he suddenly asked himself, "Is this all life offers a young man like me?" Excusing himself, he hurried home where his mother led him to the Lord Jesus Christ. He served the Lord in churches in his native highlands until the age of 50 when he left as a missionary to the Outer Hebrides Islands. A mission church had already been established on Lewis Island, and several of its members had been pleading for revival. One night in a prayer meeting, a young man rose and read **Psalm 24:3, 4a – *“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?” “He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart...”* “**Brethren, the man said, it seems just so much humbug to be waiting and praying as we are, if we ourselves are not rightly related to God.” Instantly the Christians began confessing their sins to God and to one another. When Duncan Campbell arrived soon afterward, he went straight to the church and preached, then dismissed the service. The crowd filed from the building, but instead of going home, they stood under the stars, weeping, praying and confessing their sins. The number soon swelled to 600, and all night the Holy Spirit moved through the village. Hundreds trusted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. The revival spread to nearby villages, and Duncan traveled for three years, strengthening the converts. Night after night, churches were filled with worshipers, often until five o'clock the following morning. Duncan later said that during those days he could stop any passerby on the island and find him thinking about his soul.

Duncan Campbell lived until 1971, and he preached until the last week of his life, but the Lewis Revival (as it became known) proved the most fruitful period of his ministry. He sought for that which was good and found God's blessings, favor, and acceptance.

**CONCLUSION**