



Sun 25th April 2021: *Faith Under Pressure: Pleasing God, not people*

People pleasing shows up in lots of different ways in our life, for example;

- listening more to the opinion of others, rather than asking God what He thinks
- playing down our faith in front of others because we're embarrassed
- worrying about praying out loud, or raising our hands in worship as concerned what others think
- not sharing our struggles, as people may think less of us
- saying 'yes' to things because people may be disappointed if we say 'no'

1) Do you recognise any of these things in yourself, or other examples, where people-pleasing may be the root cause? Are you willing to explore this issue further and deal with it?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6

Start with identity:

Paul and his team knew they were approved and entrusted by God. When you see and think about yourself as God does, you don't need to worry about what others may see or think.

2) What lies do you believe about yourself? i.e. negative things you regularly speak or think about yourself. What could you do to start seeing and thinking of yourself as God does?

Focus on your heart: (See also 1 Samuel 16:7)

The great news is we can give up trying to please everyone and simply seek to please God. To do this we need to know what pleases him. v4 tells us that God tests our hearts. In other words, he cares about our inner world, that all we do flows from our love for Him and that we obey quickly.

We were encouraged to make a daily choice, seeking to please God through our love and obedience. Then to regularly review, 'Has my heart pleased God today?'. For example;

- did I prioritise loving God with my time, actions, thoughts and words today?
- did I notice what the Holy Spirit was doing and was I quick to obey?
- when did I prioritise pleasing God and when did I prioritise pleasing people today?

3) Have you started to do this yet and if so what have you discovered so far? If not, are you prepared to give this a go over the next couple of weeks?

Freed to be daring:

Compare Paul's approach with the new believers described in **John 12:42-45**.

4) What differences do you notice? Which of these do you think you are more like and why?

Freed to be authentic:

We were encouraged to have at least 1 or 2 people who we've shared our deepest fears, regrets and struggles with, as well as our most personal hopes, dreams and successes.

5) Do you have anyone who knows these things about you and if so, how did this relationship develop? If not, what could you do to develop these kinds of relationships?