



Sunday May 02, 2021
Approved By God

2 Corinthians 10:18

For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

Today, being our Graduation Service I would like to speak specially to our Bible College students, but also to all the rest of us. What is specific to them, also applies to all of us, because all of us are in some way serving God.

The title of my sermon is “Approved by God”.

Am sure, that almost all of us, desire one thing, that is God’s approval on our lives.

It is true that in Christ we are already qualified, approved and accepted by God and are God’s beloved. This is positional truth. But on the other hand, in the practice of life, in how we live life, we seek to receive God’s approval on the life we live, once all is said and done.

Think of a parent-child relationship. On the one hand, the child is dearly loved by the parent. There is nothing that can change that. There is nothing the child can do to earn it. And yet, as the child grows there are things the child does that may or may not receive the parent’s approval. The child will eventually become an adult, and hopefully become someone and do things that have the parent’s approval.

Or, think about Jesus. During His earthly life, there were at least two times, when the Father spoke out of heaven declaring His approval “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17, Matthew 17:5). We see that even before Jesus began His ministry, He had the Father’s approval (“well pleased”). And yet the Lord Jesus, walked in obedience to the Father. Jesus said “...I always do those things that please Him.” (John 8:29). Notice this – although the Father was already “well pleased”...the Lord Jesus was careful to live in a manner that was always pleasing (approved) by the Father.

It is this latter aspect we are addressing today. The question we wish to address is: HOW DO WE LIVE IN A MANNER THAT WE ARE “APPROVED BY GOD”?

Let’s begin by dealing with a few negatives and stating three things to avoid:

#1, AVOID THE DELUSION OF SELF-APPROVAL

2 Corinthians 10:18 (GNB)



For it is when the Lord thinks well of us that we are really approved, and not when we think well of ourselves.

While we must learn to accept ourselves, appreciate all the good things God has placed in us, etc., we must also learn to be strict with ourselves. Be honest with ourselves.

Pursue authenticity. Authenticity begins in your own heart. Be true to yourself.

#2, AVOID THE DELUSION OF COMPARISON

2 Corinthians 10:12

For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

2 Corinthians 10:12 (TPT)

Of course, we wouldn't dare to put ourselves in the same class or compare ourselves with those who rate themselves so highly. They compare themselves to one another and make up their own standards to measure themselves by, and then they judge themselves by their own standards. What self-delusion!

Another big delusion in Christian ministry is that of comparison.

There is the temptation to compare with others, and feel good about yourself, if you are in some measure doing even slightly better than another minister – maybe in terms of numbers, fame, travels, money, influence, etc.

You will not be able to stop people from comparing you with others and expressing their views. But you can always avoid listening to such comparisons.

#3, AVOID THE DELUSION OF MAN'S APPROVAL

While we must welcome honest feedback, correction, and counsel of those who sincerely care about us, we must avoid feeding on the praises of men.

We live for the approval of heaven, not the applause of men.

If you live for the applause and approval of men, what you do will be governed by what pleases men, rather than what pleases God.



John 12:42-43

42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;
43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

PROVE YOURSELF AN AUTHENTIC MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST

2 Corinthians 6:3-10

3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.

4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,

5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;

9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed;

10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

2 Corinthians 6:3-10 (TPT)

3 We will not place obstacles in anyone's way that hinder them from coming to salvation so that our ministry will not be discredited.

4 Yet, as God's servants, we prove ourselves authentic in every way. For example: We have great endurance in hardships and in persecutions. We don't lose courage in a time of stress and calamity.

5 We've been beaten many times, imprisoned, and found ourselves in the midst of riots. We've endured many troubles, had sleepless nights, and gone hungry.

6 We have proved ourselves **by** our lifestyles of purity, by our spiritual insights, by our patience, and by showing kindness, by the Spirit of holiness and by our uncritical love for you.

7 We commend ourselves to you by our truthful teachings, by the power of God working through us, and with the mighty weapons of righteousness—a sword in one hand and a shield in the other.



8 **Amid** honor or dishonor, slander or praise—even when we are treated as deceivers and imposters—we remain steadfast and true.

9 We are unknown nobodies whom everyone knows. We are frequently at death's door, yet here we are, still alive! We have been severely punished yet not executed.

10 We may suffer, yet in every season we are always found rejoicing. We may be poor, yet we bestow great riches on many. We seem to have nothing, yet in reality we possess all things.

We must prove ourselves authentic in every way:

IN (SITUATIONS) What we go through

BY (LIFESTYLE) Who we really are

IN SPITE OF (REPUTATION) What people say or think about us

IN (SITUATIONS) What we go through: *hardships, persecutions, stress, calamity, beatings, imprisonment, riots, troubles, sleepless nights, hunger.*

BY (LIFESTYLE) Who we really are: *purity, spiritual insight, patience, kindness, Holy Spirit (holiness), sincere love, truthful teachings, power of God, weapons of righteousness.*

IN SPITE OF (REPUTATION) What people say or think about us: *honor or dishonor, slander or praise, deceivers and imposters—we remain steadfast and true, unknown nobodies whom everyone knows, dying and yet alive, punished yet not killed, suffering yet rejoicing, poor yet making others rich, having nothing yet possessing all things.*

WIN GOD'S APPROVAL

2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 (TPT)

Always be eager to present yourself before God as a perfect and mature minister, without shame, as one who correctly explains the Word of Truth.

I realize that there are some who do not like the thought of 'winning God's approval'. They like to only discuss positional truth – that we are already approved, in Christ. This is true. However, as we stated at the very beginning, in everyday life, we must present ourselves approved to God.

There are things we need to do to present ourselves approved to God.

We must be workers who need not be ashamed of how we have lived, worked and served.



While part of this has to do with how we handle the Word of Truth, the other aspect has to do with how we live (see the rest of 2 Timothy 2).

USE GOD'S PLUMBLINE

A plumb line is a weight suspended from a string used as a vertical reference line to ensure a structure is centered. It gives you a reference line to determine if something is straight, aligned, centered, etc.

What does Jesus say about me? (Revelation 3:1)

Revelation 3:1

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

God holds me to a higher standard (James 3:1)

James 3:1

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

The safest thing to do is to judge myself – strictly (1 Corinthians 11:31)

1 Corinthians 11:31

For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

Will what I do stand the test of God's fire? (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

Here are some things we know of God's standards, God's way of looking at things, things that will stand the test of God's fire and receive God's approval:

#1, Am I rightly motivated?

Is my primary motivation to please God (John 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10), glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31), edify people (2 Corinthians 10:8). Not motivated by the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21)

#2, Am I faithful to what God has assigned to me?

Faithfulness (Matthew 25:21)

#3, Am I being fruitful in what God has assigned to me?



(John 15:8)

Stewardship is demonstrated by faithfulness and fruitfulness.

#4, Am I operating by faith?

Faith receives God's approval (Hebrews 11:2,6)

Hebrews 11:2 (BBE)

For by it our fathers had God's approval.

#5, Am I living for the eternal, for the unseen?

God is not ashamed to be called your God (Hebrews 11:16)

Heb 11:16

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

FOUR SIGNS OF GOD'S APPROVAL

How can we know we are approved by God?

What would be the signs of God's approval on a minister's life?

How do we distinguish what is man-made and what is God-given?

The Old Testament fire that fell from heaven, was a sign of God's approval. Fire fell on sacrifice to indicate that God accepted the sacrifice.

In the life of Jesus, there were at least two times, when the Father spoke out of heaven declaring His approval "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17, Matthew 17:5).

Here are four signs of God's approval for New Testament Ministers?

These are not the only signs, but these are important signs to consider:

#1, GRACE, GIFTS AND ANOINTING THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES (Ephesians 3:7, Acts 2:22)

#2, HONOR THAT COMES FROM GOD (John 5:44, John 8:54)

#3, INCREASE THAT COMES FROM GOD (1 Corinthians 3:6-7, John 15:5)

#4, INFLUENCE THAT IS APPOINTED AND EXTENDED BY GOD (2 Corinthians 10:13; Matthew 6:4,6)



2 John 1:8

Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

SUMMARY

#1, AVOID THE DELUSION OF SELF-APPROVAL
#2, AVOID THE DELUSION OF COMPARISION
#3, AVOID THE DELUSION OF MAN'S APPROVAL
PROVE YOURSELF AN AUTHENTIC MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST
WIN GOD'S APPROVAL
USE GOD'S PLUMBLINE
FOUR SIGNS OF GOD'S APPROVAL

PRAYER

SALVATION CALL

The GOSPEL (Good News) in brief.

Here is how we RECEIVE the Good News for our personal lives.

We make it a simple A,B,C,D. We must:

ACKNOWLEDGE: our sin, the consequences of our sin, and our need for a Savior

BELIEVE: in Jesus Christ, in who He is and what He has done on the Cross, personally

CONFESS: Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of our lives

DECIDE: to follow Jesus Christ as His disciple for the rest of our lives



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday May 02, 2021
Approved By God

The following is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full-length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons . Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship, and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: 2 Corinthians 6:3-10

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1) Discuss the difference between positional truth of already being loved, accepted and approved by God in Christ and practical truth of living in a manner that is approved by God?

2) In seeking God's approval over our lives, why should we avoid these three?

#1, AVOID THE DELUSION OF SELF-APPROVAL (2 Corinthians 10:18)

#2, AVOID THE DELUSION OF COMPARISON (2 Corinthians 10:12)

#3, AVOID THE DELUSION OF MAN'S APPROVAL (1 Thessalonians 2:4)



3) *In encouraging us to use God's plumbline to assess ourselves, we presented the following. Discuss any one or more of these, and see how these can help guide the decisions we make as we seek to live lives that are approved by God.*

#1, Am I rightly motivated?

#2, Am I faithful to what God has assigned to me?

#3, Am I being fruitful in what God has assigned to me?

#4, Am I operating by faith?

#5, Am I living for the eternal, for the unseen?

4) *We presented Four Signs of God's Approval over our lives and ministries? Consider one or more of these and think through on how we would distinguish what is God-given and what is man-made?*

#1, GRACE, GIFTS AND ANOINTING THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES (Ephesians 3:7)

#2, HONOR THAT COMES FROM GOD (John 5:44, John 8:54)

#3, INCREASE THAT COMES FROM GOD (1 Corinthians 3:6-7, John 15:5)

#4, INFLUENCE THAT IS APPOINTED AND EXTENDED BY GOD (2 Corinthians 10:13; Matthew 6:4,6)

If time permits, each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey.

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another.

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened.

2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.

Close by thanking God together.



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>