

## Pleasing God, Not People

Sermon Text: Matthew 6:1-18

Teaching Tool Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6

The Beautiful Life Series

06.06.10



### LEADER NOTE

This is a discussion guide that is based on the same topic of the Sunday night sermon at Joshua House. It has been created to be a *tool* to help you teach and facilitate discussion in your group, not a *rule* to constrict you. So feel free to adapt it to fit your personality and discussion style as you see fit. You may want to add verses or skip questions as you adapt it to fit what your needs are. Make it your own.

### SUNDAY NIGHT SYNOPSIS

*[Leader: this section is here to remind you of the direction of the weekend message.]*

Chris Meekins spoke from Matthew 6:1-18 on Sunday night about our secret life in God that no one else can see. When we cultivate a secret life in God, and care what he thinks more than what others think, then we are freed from being in bondage to the opinions of other people.

### TONIGHT'S BIG IDEA

Jesus didn't care about appearances, he didn't put on a spiritual show for people. Instead he had a private, secret life in God and lived it out publicly through loving and ministering to people. When we have a secret life with God, then we are no longer worried about what other people think about us, because nobody knows about it...and God loves that. He wants to be the reason why we love him.

### GETTING STARTED

1. What's your most embarrassing moment in life? Share with the group.
2. Why are embarrassing moments so traumatic for us?

**POINT:** We like to look good in front of people, and life's embarrassing moments expose our vanity!

### GETTING INTO THE TEXT

Jesus constantly points out the important difference between internal faithfulness and external show. He shows us that there are internal things that really matter and yet no one can see them but God. Look at what Jesus says to the Pharisees in Luke 16:14-15,

#### Luke 16:14-15

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. 15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight."



1. What does it mean to justify ourselves in the eyes of others?
2. What is God really looking at? [Our hearts]
3. Why is important to know whose opinion we should care about, God's or others? [Because what people value and what God values are drastically different]
4. What are some things that are valued highly by people and detestable to God?
5. What are some things that are valued highly by God and detestable to people?

One of the reasons that we focus on our external appearances so much is because we have an underlying need to please people rather than God. The apostle Paul called this problem out, after he had faced opposition to preaching the gospel. Antagonism against him and the gospel, forced him to make a decision whether he was going to live to please God or people.

**Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 (TNIV)**

You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. 2 We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. 3 For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. 4 On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. 5 You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. 6 We were not looking for praise from any human being, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our prerogatives.

6. How was Paul treated in Philippi? [*Outrageously, strong opposition*]
7. Why was Paul opposed? [*Because he was preaching the gospel*]
8. Where does Paul's motivation for sharing the gospel come from? [*God's approval and God's entrusting Paul with the gospel. Not from people.*]
9. Therefore, who is Paul trying to please? [*God not people*]
10. What ways was Paul pressured by people? If he was trying to please people, then how would his life have changed? [*People that disagreed with the gospel were telling him he was wrong and that he should stop preaching. If he were a people pleaser, he would have constantly been changing his message to fit the crowd, instead of looking to God for the message.*]
11. What ways are you pressured by people to please them?
12. What is one way that you have chosen to please God in your life, rather than pleasing people?
13. What does God look at to in order to be pleased with Paul? [*Paul's heart, God's tests the heart*]
14. Why does God test the heart? [*Because we can fake the other stuff, but only God sees the heart*]
15. Can we test the heart of another person? [*Not like God can. We can try to see into someone's heart, but we will only get so far. Only God can truly see another person's heart.*]
16. What does Paul say are common temptations to people please? [*Flattery and putting on masks*]



17. Do you ever feel tempted to flatter someone or to put on a mask? Explain.
18. Why do we do this?
19. What does Paul summarize people-pleasing to be about in verse 6? [*Looking for praise from people*]
20. Where in your life are you looking for praise from people rather than from God?
21. What are some ways that you can be more pleasing to God, that no one else will be able to see and praise you for? [*Secret disciplines of prayer, fasting, giving of money to the needy, etc.*]
22. Have ministry time as you feel led.