A. **We are social creatures** by God’s design.

1. We have a need to fit in, to feel accepted.

2. But something’s wrong when we want human acceptance over God’s.

3. John called it, “*loving the praise of men more than the praise of God*” *(John 12:43)*.

B. **Last week we learned** about the danger of seeking to please people:

1. We demonstrated that it can be joy thief. Pleasing people can…

2. So we can only know lasting joy by having the Lord’s acceptance – then we can “*rejoice in the Lord always*” *(Phil 4:4)*.

3. The praise & acceptance of others may promise happiness, but it can only deliver disappointment in the end.

4. Pleasing people CAN BE an idol, & idols steal glory from God – we don’t want to be responsible for that!
[So we pledged to “Make it our aim, to be well pleasing to Him” (2 Cor 5:9).

Ask, “Is what I’m doing pleasing God? Am I following His word or my ambitions & desires?”

Today, we want to look at the cure for the disease to please people.

God doesn’t want us enslaved by the opinions of people who are often self-serving, unwise, & even unforgiving.

He wants us to know the joy that comes from pleasing Him; He is never self-serving, He is all-wise & all-forgiving – His affections for us are always steady, constant & true.

What a friend we [can] have in Jesus!

This morning we want to look at FIVE cures for the disease to please people so that we may find lasting joy by pleasing the Lord.]

I. BE A FOOL FOR CHRIST’S SAKE

A. 1 Corinthians 4:10 (consider 6-17). We must be willing to be thought of as fools for Christ.

1. The church at Corinth thought they could make their new status “in Christ” acceptable to their culture & society.

   a. They boasted of their spiritual gifts.
   b. They were proud of their internal sins.
   c. They took each other to court.
   d. They built religious parties around their favorite preachers.

2. But Paul knew that to be a Christian one will ultimately be a fool in the eyes of the world (Phil 3:7-8).
a. Only a fool would discard his education & employment to advance a cause that few people would accept.

b. Only a fool would give up everything as if to throw it away as garbage just to satisfy the memory of a dead man.

c. Only a fool would say, “For to me, to live is Christ & to die is gain” (Phil 1:21).

d. But Paul was not concerned with how the world viewed him; he was cured of the disease to please people (2 Cor 5:13).

- The intellectuals in Athens made fun of him; they called him a seed picker.

- The Roman Governor Festus accused him of being mad.

e. The church at Corinth belittled him as being a weak man, & his preaching was contemptible or worthless.

e. But this did not matter to Paul; his only concern was the evaluation of his Lord. Was he pleasing his Lord Jesus Christ!

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B. Many Christians seem to dread the thought of being considered fanatical or foolish.

1. They want to be mainstream, or middle of the road.

2. They want friends on all sides of every issue; they want to be accepted by all.

3. When faced with the decision to displease people or God; they’ll displease God.
4. Paul said the “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor 1:18, 26).

a. And so if the message is considered foolish, then so are we considered foolish for accepting it.

b. The restoration preachers of the 19th century faced it.

c. And it appears that we will too as more Christians leave the New Test. as their rule of faith & practice.

II. HIDE GOOD WORKS FROM PRIDE

A. Matthew 6:2-3. Of course your left hand is going to know what your right hand is doing. Is Jesus commanding the impossible?

1. This command regarding alms giving was given along with two other commands: the command to pray & fast in secret – Jesus even gave the reason (explain).

2. But His command on alms giving goes a step further. He said, don’t just keep it a secret from others; keep it a secret FROM YOURSELF!

a. What? How? Jesus is commanding us to keep our good works hidden from a certain PART of ourselves.

[We can go a long way toward curing the disease to please people if we don’t mind being called fools for Christ’s sake.

The second cure for the disease to please people...]
b. If we give to needs of others to feed our Pride – desire for praise & recognition – then our giving is for some other reason than pleasing God (1 John 2:15-17).

c. And that principle applies to all aspects of our lawful service to Christ.

[If we’re going to cure this disease to please, we must keep our good works a secret from our pride.]

The third cure for the disease to please people…]

III. SEEK THE FATHER’S APPROVAL

A. Matthew 6:4, 6, 17-18. Those who quietly glorify God in this life will be publicly glorified by Him in the next (Heb 6:10; Rom 2:7; Col 3:23-24).

b. But, that’s not what motivates Christians. They work for others just like they were working for the Lord – because they are.

1. There is a saying among preachers, “You’re only one sermon away from being the worst preacher they’ve ever heard.”

   a. Because one bad lesson can wipe out a lifetime of good work. People have poor memories.

2. But God doesn’t forget, He remembers; & His rewards & approval last forever.

   a. The workplace is infested with people pleasers; people who will do anything to get noticed & to be advanced; people who thirst for attention & praise.
[God will reward those seek His approval with something more valuable that money & position.

The fourth cure for the disease to please people presents a twist on things. It gets down to the root of who we are really trying to please when we seek to please others, i.e. OURSELVES.

So to find lasting joy in the Lord we're going to have to overcome the disease to please ourselves; and we can do that by…]

IV. SERVE THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF OTHERS

A. Romans 15:1-3a (1 Cor 10:32-33).

1. Being truly interested in someone’s spiritual welfare will cause us to yield our rights, & to forgo our desires, so that a fellow Christian may have time to grow in faith.

[Finally, if we are going to find lasting joy in the Lord by overcoming the desire to please everyone including ourselves, then we must…]

V. RELISH ACCEPTANCE IN CHRIST

A. Romans 8:28-39.

1. To be free from the desire to please people, we must relish how much we mean to God.

2. If we have His approval, what else do we need from anyone? He has already freely given all things (through Christ).

3. Knowing that we are loved & accepted by God is our armor of protection against the pressure to please the world.
4. And until we fully accept this fact, we will live with a feeling of rejection, & waste our days trying to please man instead of God.

5. Perhaps you’re facing a situation where you feel defeated by criticism, disapproval, humiliation, & the exposure of your weaknesses.

   a. If you’re a Christian you have wonderful advantage, a winning solution to your problem (1 Peter 5:7).

   b. Once that is done, then your situation will not seem bleak at all, for you have a loving Father who can lift you above all of that & set you in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (cf. Eph 2:6).

CLOSING

A. To overcome the disease to please people, we’re going to have to be more conscious of the One who lives in us (Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 3:18).

1. He is the One we must please, & not the people who watch us from the outside.

2. And the more we are drawn by the desire to please people, the further away from Christ we will be drawn.

Psalms 17:13-15 – Arise, O Lord, confront him, cast him down; deliver my life from the wicked with Your sword, 14 With Your hand from men, O Lord, from men of the world who have their portion in this life, & whose belly You fill with Your hidden treasure. They are satisfied with children, & leave the rest of their possession for their babes.15 As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

- Would you be satisfied to die & wake up in His likeness? Do you have that hope?