

**“Your True Worth Through God’s Eyes”**  
**Session 3: The Approval Trap**  
**Rev. Rick Dietzman**  
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**I. The Approval Trap**

False Beliefs:

I must be approved by certain others to feel good about myself.

FEAR OF REJECTION:

- Avoiding certain people
- Becoming nervous and anxious at the thought of being rejected
- Uncomfortable around those different than themselves, especially a popular person.
- Particularly bothered by unfriendliness
- Can describe self as shy or can find self trying to impress others
- Critical of others
- Becomes depressed when receiving criticism
- Often tries to determine what people think of them
- Has difficulty walking in another person’s shoes. Low empathy.

Beliefs about God:

- Doesn’t feel close to God
- Feels unworthy of God’s love – perhaps feels they deserve to be rejected.
- Holds back in worship (if not outwardly, then inwardly)
- Stresses holiness of God – His unapproachable nature.
- Considers the fear of God a high value in their spiritual life.

2 Kings 17:20

*Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence.*

Deuteronomy 6:24

*The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today.*

## **Q: What is true and false about these beliefs?**

The only way we can overcome the fear of rejection is to focus on the reality of God's acceptance of us based on our position in Christ. Otherwise we are left to focus on others approval based on our performance.

### **The power of Justification**

Proverbs 25:5

*Remove the wicked from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness.*

1 Thessalonians 3:13

*May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones*

1 John 3:18-20

*Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*

## **II. Why approval of others is not the basis of our self worth**

The only way we can overcome the fear of rejection is to value the constant approval of God over the conditional approval of people.

### **God's Answer - Reconciliation**

Because of reconciliation I am totally accepted by God. I no longer have to fear rejection.

Romans 5:8-11

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

Colossians 1:21-22 (NIV)

*Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.*

### **Controversial context on either side!**

Colossians 1:18-26

*And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself **all things**, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

*Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.*

***If you continue*** in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Clarifying words...

V 1:20 All things

*pás* ("each, every") means "all" in the sense of "each (every) part that applies." The emphasis of the total picture then is on "one piece at a time."

V 1:23 If you continue – literal

If [as] indeed you continue in the faith established and firm and not being moved away from the hope of the Gospel

**Reconciliation:** To restore to friendship or harmony; to settle or resolve something.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*

**Mercy:** God's attitude toward people in distress; compassion for the ills of others.

Romans 12:1

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

### **III. Obstacles to Receiving the Truth**

- Unconditional love, forgiveness, and acceptance is a confusing concept
- Poor parental models
- Unhealthy Relationships

### **IV. Motivations for an identity based on Reconciliation**

#### **A. We can react differently to human rejection**

**“I don't necessarily need this person's acceptance. I can feel good about myself because I am deeply loved, completely forgiven, fully pleasing, and totally accepted by Jesus Christ.”**

#### **B. Think about your understanding of who God is, based on your parent's role modeling.**

#### **C. Develop a life of pursuing peace and reconciliation.**

- Acts of gentle acceptance often mean more than the words “I forgive you”
- Be the first to reach out
- Be aware of your own weaknesses and it's easier to pardon theirs

**Conversation, and understanding is crucial to reconciliation.**

Before one can forgive and forget, both offender and offended must remember together, recall the wrongdoing together, finish the feelings together, and then they may forget together. Forgetting is the result of complete forgiveness. It is never the means. Though the memory remains to teach us, the meaning of the event undergoes change.

Dr. David Augsburger

**D. Pray that God will lead you into relationships that encourage you to be honest, truthful and affirming.**

**For your reflection time on your own**

- A. How does fear of rejection influence your life?
  
- B. What significant truth from God's word helps you with the fear of rejection?
  
- C. What have you learned about acceptance from your parents?
  
- D. Where do you need to grow in your reconciliation with others?

Coming up....

October 7<sup>th</sup> - The Blame Trap

The audio and notes for this and previous sessions of this series are available at [www.sequimcommunitychurch.org](http://www.sequimcommunitychurch.org) in the Sunday Seminar section