

“The Approval Addiction”

John 5:44

Tuesday Bible Lunch

January 9, 2024

Introduction: Dr. R.T. Kendall called me a few months ago and asked me if I would read a copy of his manuscript of a new book he has written and be willing to write an endorsement to be included in the book. I said yes and thanked him for letting me be part.

- Writing the endorsement would be easy. I would write an endorsement to any book Dr. Kendall writes.
- Reading the manuscript would be the harder part of his request because it is long and theologically deep.
- When I received the manuscript, over a period of several weeks I made time to read it.

The title to his new book is “Your Finest Hour.” What Dr. Kendall did was select 30 Bible characters and give what in his view was their finest hour. Each Bible character is a chapter in the book. The interesting part of each chapter is that what most people consider the finest hour in each character in Dr. Kendall’s view was not their finest hour.

Dr. Kendall defined “your finest hour” to what God sees as their finest hour rather than what man sees as their finest hour.

When I finished reading the manuscript, I thought of the words of Jesus in John 5:44 that teach what Dr. Kendall illustrates in the thirty Bible characters in his book.

Text: John 5:44

- No one knew the Old Testament better than the Pharisees, but these pious Jews were unwilling to come to Jesus for eternal life (John 5:39-40).
- Like the Pharisees, none of us will ever out-grow enjoying the praise of people.
- But some people have what I call an approval addiction.

The issue is whose approval: Man’s approval or God’s approval. The Pharisees cared more about what people thought about them than what God thought about them (John 5:44).

Application: If you have an addiction about pleasing people, you will live with disappointment and discouragement.

- Why? Because everybody will not be pleased with you.
- You will not please everybody!

Illustration: I care about pleasing people, but I will not please everybody and neither will you. I am responsible for my honesty, my integrity, my purity, my truthfulness, etc., but I will not please everybody and neither will you. I care about pleasing people, but I do not have an addiction to please people. Instead, I need an addiction to please God and so do you.

Application: Pleasing people is difficult because people are different. Pleasing God is less difficult because God is always the same (Hebrew 11:8).

Application: Without faith in God, it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6).

- “Without faith it is impossible to please God...” (Hebrews 11:6).
- Faith is not just a passive belief that God exist (although that is essential); it also believes in His sovereignty (Psalm 115:3).
- “Our God is in heaven, and He does whatever He pleases” (Psalm 115:3).

Conclusion: God is sovereign and controls our circumstances.

1. No complaining on our part.
2. No explanation on God’s part.

Not easy to do, but a sure way to please God and a good way to live life.