

People Pleasers

Approval & Junkies

By Mindy Lawhorne



Preface

From an early age, we are often taught that if we do what's right, we will gain the approval of others. We are also taught that if we are helpful, supportive and aid one another, we gain approval. But whose approval are we seeking? And why? That's what we will be covering (and uncovering) throughout this study!

It's an honest admittance that when others are pleased with us, it makes us feel good. We feel appreciated, liked and maybe even loved. Though I do believe we need this in some capacity, we must be mindful of its shortcomings. This disease to please can flow through our friendships, work, volunteering opportunities, children, marriages and other random places. In which case, we can potentially see ourselves being lifted up by others due to our actions.

"For they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God." - John 12:43

For some of us, this "need to please" began early in our childhood; seeking approval from our parents, siblings or peers. However, if we aren't careful, it can manifest itself as a problem in our adulthood. We must uncover the real reason we desire to please and work to get away from the selfish nature of People Pleasing.

Whether or not our help to others comes from a good place, there is a difference between serving and pleasing. The examples below are a short list of People-Pleasing/Approval Junkie behavior. I'm sure some (if not most) will sound familiar to you.

Feeling guilty telling someone "No".

Constantly apologizing.

Feeling like a doormat.

Feeling upset if someone does not like you or approve of your choices.

Fear of letting others down.

Always being counted on for a favor.

Living our lives in the jail of what others think and feel will only lead to further bondage. That deep need will never be met. When we change our decisions or plans based on the ever-changing emotions of others, we are fighting a losing battle. More importantly, how can we ever be all that God has designed us to be, for His glory and our good, if we are constantly bouncing our actions off of the fickle thoughts of others?

“Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.” - Galatians 1:10

In this study, we are going to set out together to break the Approval Junkie chains and change our mentality (and motives) with People-Pleasing. God took me down this road a few years ago when I was blinded to the cycle of living by others' approval. After identifying the reason I did certain things, He made it very clear to that I needed to focus my attention on my Creator, rather than my critics. He has not only given me such freedom from breaking these chains, He has shown me a more joy-filled life! And I want that for you! My relationship with God got deeper the more I rested in His truth and faced the hard questions. Who am I trying to please and WHY? What am I sacrificing when I feel the need to please? We'll be diving into those reality checks, with tactics and reminders, throughout this study.

I am so excited for this, because confidence in who you are and who HE has made you to be is right around the corner.

Imagine a life where you stand firm on your decisions, and know that you are doing right by God. It's far more powerful than anyone's contrary opinion. I pray this study meets you right where you are, and not only ministers to your heart, but walks you through the steps to being a woman of confidence and freedom. A walking light for Christ's Love.



Peeling Back the Layers

Day 1

Today, we will be working to slowly peel back the layers of our “disease to please” to expose the root of why we feel this way. You are here for a reason. You chose to DO this study for a reason! So let’s open our hearts and our minds to the benefits we can encompass. The good news is God will help us when we earnestly seek Him.

“Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me” - Psalm 50:15

Let’s quickly recap from the preface (with additional examples) some of the behaviors we establish as People-Pleasers and Approval Junkies. Circle the ones that apply to you.

You feel guilty telling someone “No”.

You are constantly apologizing.

You feel like a doormat.

You feel upset if someone does not like you or approve of your choices.

You have a fear of letting others down.

You can always be counted on for a favor.

You rarely ask for help as to not inconvenience anyone.

You hesitate to tell others your opinion in the event they don’t agree.

You feel the need to make sure people are having a good time; responsible for their happiness.

You sometimes put your own family aside to aid others.

You feel guilty when you think of yourself or your own needs above others.

You like to avoid confrontation.

It’s hard to admit those truths when they’re written in front of you. Trust me, I know. Whether you circled one or all of them, we are ALL on the same page here. Now that you have opened your mind, admitting to these behaviors, let me ask you something...

What is it you would like to change, and WHY? Please write this below or in your journal.

Day 1 Continued

I know helping people is a good thing, as we are the hands and feet of our God, and serving is what He has called us to do. But when our decisions are based on the approval of others, the mindset of our service gets twisted. Instead of consulting our heavenly Father, we choose what we think is best, as to please our fellow man (Galatians 1:10). In which case, we become chained to their opinions, building an endless amount of internal struggle.

- Low self-esteem
- Resentment
- Loss of identity
- Loss of purpose
- Loss of freedom
- Distorted expectations
- Jealousy
- Lack of self-respect
- Selfishness

Do any of these attributes strike a chord with you? Be honest with yourself. This is a safe space. We must get to the bottom of this before we can begin to heal and redirect our emotions, thoughts and actions.

What the Bible says about People Pleasing:

Please read and write down these verses here or in your journal.

Matthew 6:1-34

Proverbs 29:25

Psalms 118:8

1 Thessalonians 2:4

What is God showing you today? If you are not sure, please simply pray, “Lord please show me what I need to see today through this reading. Show me the truth of my actions, why I find myself repeating the same things and make it ever clear to me that I am doing things for my glory and for the approval of others, rather than Yours.”

I pray God opens your heart to the truth and to the fact that you are fearfully and wonderfully made (see Psalm 139:14) and that we need Him to direct us to the way where we can live a life of freedom through Him.

Peeling Back the Layers

Day 2

Today, let us begin with this prayer: **“God, I love you! I praise you and I need you. Please show me what it is I need to see today and bring me to the truth of where I am. Help me to remember only You can fill that void in my heart and in my life where I try to fill it with others' approval. Amen.”**

It's no secret Cynthia Heald is one of my favorite Christian devotional authors. For some reason, her studies just speak to me and they easily fit in with my life, even though I realize she and I are very different in age and more than likely, lifestyle. However, I believe she reaches so many because she makes everything about God's word and His truth.

I've completed many of her studies, but no study impacted me as much as *Becoming a Woman of Freedom*. In chapter 3, God smacked me on the side of the head with asking about the purpose I was running towards. Let me ask you some of the questions I had to ask myself.

- Could anyone know what my priorities are based on my daily actions?
- Is what I say are the most important things to me evident in my daily actions?
- Do I REALLY care more about what God thinks than others?
- Can I run my race to God without looking around to see if others are approving my run?

Boom! It stopped me in my tracks and I need you to ask yourself these same questions.

Write down your honest answers and give it a minute. Think of instances/situations, and what your choices, actions and efforts prove are your priorities.

Hebrews 12:1 tells us, “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us”

We will never know the race that is marked out for us if we are constantly changing our plans to meet the needs of others. Also, we will never find out what that race looks like if we are always looking around at others and never looking up. It's imperative we come to grips with where we are, what we are really doing and why, in order to move forward.

Please read John 12:42-43 and see this example of falling in line with others and ask yourself the question; why do you think they responded in that manner?

Now, check out Hebrews 12:1 again and look at the words “hinders” and “entangles.” I would even think these descriptive words could cover struggles and burdens, those things that trouble us, and anything that could interfere with our race and relationship with Christ.

Day 2 Continued

Please journal or write below what things hinder or seem to entangle you. Ask God to help you with these and open your heart to honesty.

He already knows but it may be that you need to see these written with your own eyes.

Take a minute to read, write and pray over the following:

- John 8:32
- 1 Corinthians 3:18
- 1 Corinthians 2:11
- Psalm 25:5



Peeling Back the Layers

Day 3

Unnecessary Baggage. Have any??

Cynthia Heald writes about us being free in Christ, for those who have accepted Him, but that we often run our race with “Unnecessary Baggage” which weighs us down. It causes us to sometimes change our route, rest too little, work too much, and often run to the wrong short-term goal, which can leave us with unwanted long-term benefit.

Today, please begin by writing out the definition of the following words:

Hindrance-

Slavery-

Freedom-

In order to run our own race and begin to live a life of freedom - free from the people pleasing needs that can never truly be met - we have to see how TRUE FREEDOM is accomplished.

Please take time to go and read Romans 6:1-14 now.

What do these scriptures say to you?

How is it that our freedom is accomplished?

What are our choices now?

Oh man, I love this stuff!! It's so interesting when I sit and read scripture. I feel calm. I have an odd sense of focus and clarity even when I may not fully understand each and every scripture. Do you feel this way? I know the only way these are accomplished for myself is because God allows them to be. If you are new to doing Bible studies or even if you are a seasoned "devo-aholic" like me, will you please take a minute and pray for these things?

Ask for Him to not only calm you, but to give you focus, extended attention and for Him to speak to you in a way that only His word can. Reading God's Word can be such a breath of fresh air each day. It can set your mind and heart in the proper place daily, and we can read it at any time, carry it with us, and constantly plug into the everlasting source of hope at any moment.

What is the biggest thing that stuck out to you today?

Peeling Back the Layers

Day 4

A People Pleaser's Confession:

"I am most definitely, most unequivocally, most assuredly a people pleaser. Not only do I want people to like me, I want them to see me out as a necessity to a job. The problem? When I don't get done what needs to be done, because of people's requests or if I seek to please others rather than those in my own household, and most importantly...HIM. More unfortunate is when my desire to please others changes my entire day from the ultimate goal of pleasing God and bringing Him glory. Pleasing those who we love is rewarding, and that need overflows to even pleasing those outside of that area. This may not be wrong in itself, but pleasing God is a higher calling and more fulfilling. We are headed for trouble when our desire to please others, and gain approval, becomes more important than God's sense of approval." -Anonymous

Does this resonate with you at all? It certainly does me. Being kind and helpful to others is not the issue, I hope you understand. The issues come when we seek man's approval for our work more than God's. The problems arise when we try to fuel our fire with the approval and acceptance of others based on what we do for them or what they see us do.

Please go and read the following scriptures:

John 12:42-43

Acts 5:29

John 5:44

When we are people pleasers, fear of failure is most often at the root. That fear does not come from God. It (fear) is greatly wrapped around how others see us, which is evident of how our thinking is very self-focused. This may sting a little but what comes along with being an Approval Junkie is great selfishness. Our egos LOVE to be liked and validated. It's very natural to want to fit in and not upset others by being yourself because it is safer.

However, this kind of thinking depletes our energy, our focus, our agenda and we never get FULLY fulfilled. It sets us on a daily cycle of obsession about what others think and completely detours our focus on Christ. In addition, our selfishness with our ability to do or please or get things done can have negative effects. And frankly, it make us easily offended in certain circles.

Please read what Romans 12:3 says about those who are easily offended. Write it below:

Day 4 Continued

Are you starting to get the picture of what being a people pleaser does? What it does to our confidence, our rational thinking, our ability to hear that still soft voice, and not to mention what it can do to our relationship with God and those closest to us.

Please journal below or in your personal journal. Write about what you are thinking, feeling, and/or things you have identified, and where you need clarity. Pray for God to open your eyes and to help you take off all that burdens you so that you can run free, become closer to the person He's designed you to be, and begin to care more about what HE (the Creator of this world) thinks rather than what others think.

I'm praying for you.



Peeling Back the Layers

Day 5

"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ." - Galatians 1:10

This is the end of our first week, and I want to thank you for wanting to dive deeper into this not-so-comfortable topic. I feel like you know by this point, or even from before, that being a people pleaser has detrimental effects on our lives. You've felt the pull and tension from doing things for others when you knew better; that feeling and discomfort knowing you need to say "no" but being too afraid to let others down or have them think less of you. I get it. And I believe the desire to please comes from a great place. But when the accolades and appreciation of others start to drive our reasons for doing it, that's when we have problems.

Take a deep breath today and let's begin with a prayer:

Lord Jesus, Oh, how I praise Your Holy name! You are the beginning and the end and I know You have died for us to live a life through You, for You, and for our good. Lord, please open our eyes to what we have been doing, that we were never meant to do. Show us that the need to please was put in us as a desire to please our heavenly Father first, then to look into the interest of others, for their good and Your glory, not ours. (See Philippians 2:4) Jesus, please speak to us through Your word and this study. Show us a life of freedom through You and Your truth and the things You want us to be concerned with, not the things of this world or the pressure of others. It's in Your name we pray. Amen.

FREEDOM - A life of Freedom is the goal and what a worthy goal it is.

Please read the following verses and answer the following questions below or in your journal.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (How did he explain whose approval we are to seek?)

1 Corinthians 9:19 (What does he say about his freedom?)

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (How was Paul free? In what way(s)?)

How would it feel for you to have this kind of freedom?

Nancy Groom uses the term People-Pleaser and Approval-Junkie as the same term. Constantly having to see acceptance from others leads to only future bondage and deep needs that will never be met.

This week, we've seen that it's difficult to concentrate on running our own race and to glorify God when we are always looking around to see if others are pleased with our performance. To be bound by the feelings of other people is a weight that we must look at head-on and begin to throw off of us. We need one another's encouragement, mentoring and love.

Day 5 Continued

It would be hard to run a race alone and with nobody to care. The healthy sense of mutuality springs from a complete security in Christ. As we begin to relate to others biblically, our race becomes one of great freedom and enjoyment rather than bondage and constant need. (Cynthia Heald).

“Only the Lord can fully satisfy our inner longings. Fixing our eyes on Jesus, and Him alone, allows us to receive His unconditional and unchanging love. His love then enables us to relate freely to others in the right way so that we can have true fellowship.” - Cynthia Heald

Let's bring this week to a close by asking ourselves some reflection questions:

- What have you learned about yourself?
- What things do you do for your glory and ego?
- What parts of God's word have spoken to you this week?
- What things can you start being more aware of that take you down that people pleasing, approval junkie path?
- What things do you do really well that you could refocus back to God's glory and your good rather than just for the approval of others?

Scripture to memorize: *Galatians 1:10: "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ."*



Section 2

People Pleasers

Approval & Junkies

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Facing the Facts

Day 6

Let's begin today with talking about PRIDE.

In section 3, I will share some tactics and helpful methods I've used, and still use, to break the chain of being a people pleaser. But this week we need to go deeper with one of the things Approval Junkies struggle with - PRIDE.

The desire to want to please, seek approval and do well in the eyes of others is in all of us and it comes from a very natural and humble place. However, anything that we let run outside the boundaries of God's plan can take us down paths we do not want to go. Many times we can't find a way off of it.

This can be so many things; in giving, working, seeing joy, pleasure, helping, providing, winning, being healthy, losing weight, saving money, doing well with those things we have been blessed to do well. These can all be taken to the extreme to where we are eventually obsessed with them and they start to consume us.

One thing we all should take seriously is pride. We need to take pride in certain things, be a good steward of all things we have and oversee and have a responsibility for. But take caution because pride can get out of hand very quickly.

In her book PRAYER WARRIOR, Stormie Omartian says, "Pride is the main characteristic of the enemy." She then writes, "We are not to think of ourselves less than God thinks of us, but we are also not to think of ourselves more than God thinks of us. Pride causes us to compare ourselves to other people when we should only compare ourselves to God's standards." Both can be a form of pride.

Once we do things for our ego and for what others will think when we do it, we need to FIRST bounce that off God's plan and truth.

Please read and write down what these scriptures say about pride:

- Romans 12:3
- Galatians 6:3
- James 4:6
- Ephesians 4:1

Now, what in these scriptures speaks to you about the potential pride you might have in things, rather than in Jesus? I dealt with this much in my 30s. Please know there is no judgment here, nor does anyone need to see what you write down. But please, sister, take a minute and be honest.

Day 6 Continued

—What are the areas of pride in your life?

— What things do you hold on to that gives you great and selfish pride?

— What things have you removed God from and given yourself too much credit for? (your intelligence, athleticism, creativity, etc.) You know who gave you those abilities, right?

Please take a minute and pray that HE will reveal the areas in your life that need less of you and more of HIM. This is not to take anything away from your efforts, hard work and discipline. It's quite the contrary. It will not only allow God to give you MORE, but it will place the credit back in its proper place. In the hand of your Creator.

He made you so uniquely amazing and with such great abilities but you are that good because HE made it that way. When we give all the glory to HIM (where it all came from in the beginning), we start to take the relentless need, self-induced pressure and constant desire for approval off our shoulders and see this small glimmer of light. Do you know what that glimmer of light is? It's the beginning of the good "F" word in your life. The "F" word is FREEDOM.



Facing the Facts

Day 7

The desire to please comes from a beautiful place. I believe that the desire to praise is naturally in us. Do you know how it feels when you give praise to others? I love it. But what I love more, and what feels even more natural, is praising my Father in heaven. Whether it be by myself, in prayer or in journaling, with others (my favorite), in a room full of other believers, singing songs to Him with laughter, tears and joy. My complete hope is found in the refuge of His wings. Psalm 91:4

Please pray today for God to show you what He wants you to see, learn and KNOW through this study and through His word.

Let's talk about PRAISE. Depending on how you grew up and what kind of church you went to (or even if you have never gone to church), PRAISE is innate. It's in all of us and can be done in any way that feels right to you. In another study, we could walk through the different ways we praise (even comedians emphasize the different ways people do this making it quite comical), but the bottom line is that we were designed to praise HIM and any way we choose to do it is GOOD with Him.

Please read these verses and write down what you read about PRAISE:
Luke 2:13-19

Psalm 145

Psalm 96

Psalm 150:6

Psalm 100:4

Psalm 7:17

Psalm 8:1-9



Day 7 Continued

There is so much on praise. And while there is more in the Bible, Psalms has such a great wealth of examples of praise. Those of you who have done praise and worship, who've just sat and thought/mediated on how great He is, or spoke/wrote about it, you know how it feels to praise. It's just a part of us, whether we think we are good at it or not. There are no rules when it comes to praising Him.

Now, how this relates to our study is that we have a natural desire to give, help, praise and be involved. There is a God-given joy that follows giving. However, that natural desire can get twisted and the praise direction sometimes gets moved off of our Creator (the One that makes it all happen in the first place) and onto ourselves... and we keep it all. It's perfectly fine to feel appreciated and for others to show us their appreciation, but when we keep that praise all to ourselves and continually seek to get more praise, we neglect to send it right back to where it belongs - UP. And it is here where we begin to see the issues bubble up: selfishness, pride, ego, over-inflated self-image, a sense of being used, resentment, self-neglect and even neglect of what you say. Unfortunately, these become your most important priorities.

Where are you with this? Knowing that praising, wanting to help, wanting to give and do well, is a natural desire, how have you taken it in an improper direction?

Please use this time to ask God to reveal your areas that need attention. Maybe it's feeling used or not truly valuing/putting aside things that are most important to you? Maybe it's a source of pride and ego? Regardless of what it is, this study is designed to help you through this, to live a life of Freedom through HIM and live the life He has for you.

Please write down your thoughts for today.



Facing the Facts

Day 8

Today, let us begin with a prayer:

“Lord, how I love You and I praise You for what simply reading Your word does to my spirit. Reading Your truth gives me joy and a form of peace that is hard to describe. I know that You can give us the peace that surpasses all understanding and I pray that You give that to me now as I go deeper into Your truth about being an approval junkie and a people pleaser. Lord, I want to live a life of freedom while I live out my purpose and feel fulfilled and joyful while being a better Wife / Mom / Friend / Sister etc. But Lord, if I am carrying around the burdens and those things You say that hinder us, how can I be all You've designed me to be? Please let me begin to see more clearly what my people pleasing ways have resulted in and what they can manifest themselves into. I want to give You the glory, God, which will fill that void and give me so much more than if I try and keep all the praise for myself eventually feeling empty. Please show me what I need to see. Allow me to be honest with myself and please open my heart to Your Word and give me understanding. I pray all this in Your name. Amen”.

Today we are talking about the other “F” word. FEAR. In other Hope in Struggle Bible studies, we've talked extensively about fear and the things it causes us to do and not do. Fear is another big part of our need for approval and the disease to please.

Fear of what others think.
Fear of others not being pleased with us.
Fear that someone doesn't like us.
Fear of not being good enough.
Fear of others thinking we are not good enough.
Fear that others think we are wimping out.
Fear of doing too little.
Fear of missing out.
Fear of others believing lies about us.
Fear of disappointing people.
Fear of your kids not liking you (Ha! Wouldn't this be a great study for another time?!).
Fear of not meeting the standards of others.

In order for us to move out and away from fear, we need to get down to the bottom of it.

Take a deep breath for me. Roll your shoulders back and know that I am here with you. I have already gone before you reading these truths, and while they can feel uncomfortable, they are a part of the chain breaking process.

Please read Isaiah 44:8 - Write it below or in your journal.

- "Once you are rooted in reality, nothing can shake you. If your faith is in experiences, anything that happens is likely to upset that faith; but nothing can ever upset God or the almighty Reality

Day 8 Continued

of Redemption; base your faith on that, and you are as eternally secure as God".

- Oswald Chambers.

So - how do we become free from fear? What do these scriptures say about that?

Romans 8:14-17

Hebrews 2:14-15

1 John 4:15-19

Now, the concept of placing our faith fully in God, trusting Him to move away from fear and actually making this happen in our minds/hearts/actions can be difficult and frankly a bit scary. What do the following scriptures say about our source of faith?

Ephesians 2:8-9

Hebrews 12:2

Matthew 8:23-27

After reading and writing down the parts you took from each scripture today, answer these questions:

How are we to fight fear and put it in its place?

What does perfect love do to fear? (also see 1 John 4:18)

If we are seeking God and His approval, knowing that He calls us to speak not to please men, but to please Him (1 Thessalonians 2:4), it is our job - with His help - to begin slowly turning the wheel away from fear of what others think or what we think they think. Instead, the bigger and much better question will be, "what does God think?" It is then that we can truly begin the healing process.

Finish today with a small prayer about what is stirring in your heart. Take a few minutes to sit in silence, allowing some time to think and for God to work in your heart.

Facing the Facts

Day 9

So far in this section of the study, we have talked about Pride, Praise and Fear. Wow. Though heavy, they are so needed and all very worthy topics. The next best topic that will help us become recovered Approval Junkies is beginning to identify things in our lives that are simply not for God's glory or for your good but merely for the approval of others. (See Colossians 3:23)

If you just got really sad, please know this is not a section that will tell you to not have fun anymore, that you can't have a glass of wine or to stop all online shopping (ha!). It's so different than just rules being thrown at you.

This is a section for us to take an honest look at the things in our lives that might draw us into sin and repeated regret. It's time to identify the things that, if we don't get ahold of them, will draw us back into our old People Pleasing / Approval Junkie / Self-Seeking ways.

God wants us to separate ourselves from anything that separates us from Him and His best for our lives. This includes bad influences, unhealthy habits, stubbornness, bondage, going to food for comfort (rather than to God) or anything that separates us from His will and the fellowship/closeness/communion/communication with Christ.

What do the following scriptures tell us:

Matthew 5:30

Hebrews 12:1

Ephesians 4:22

I know this is hard to see. I do not want any of us to live a life of legalistic left turns and right turns. But I believe there is an easy way to explain it. The closer we get to God, the more we walk in step with Him (we do this through prayer, reading His word and understanding His character), we become more and more aware of what grieves Him. Please read 1 John 3:4-6. For an easier interpretation, check out "The Message" version of this scripture. It's so good and much easier to process!

****Please take a minute and ask God to show you things in your life that grieve Him. Ask Him to bring to your mind any unhealthy practices, bad habits, hurtful and destructive thought patterns and/or negative cycles you find yourself in. Ask Him for you to not only be able to identify them but for Him to show you ways to remove them from your life and for the desire to WANT them to be removed from your life.**

Sin is a big word used in the Bible. For many of us growing up in church, "sin" might be a word we heard constantly! I prayed about "sin" and asked God to reveal it to me in my terms, and explain it to me in a simple way, not just the way I heard it by other sources: church, loud Preachers, my Grandmother, my Mom or even from Saturday Night Live. I asked for an easy-to-understand way to look at what sin is and what it isn't. It was then that He spoke to me through a man named Brother Charles at Tate Springs Baptist Church. He literally asked, "Do you know what a sin is? Want me to make this simple for you?" He then answered, "A sin is doing what you know you shouldn't do and neglecting to do what you know you should".

Day 9 Continued

BOOM! How clear and easy is that?

Using these terms, I can easily decipher what is right and what is wrong. The only one who wants you to sin and tries to help you sin is the evil one. But if we resist him, he will flee from us.

Please read the following scripture and the excerpt below. Then, write down what each one is telling you.

James 4:7 “Resist the devil and he will flee from you. This is the promise and God will keep it. If we resist our adversary, God will compel him to flee and will give us victory. At the same time, we are not to stand on the adversary’s ground anywhere by any attitude, or disobedience, or give him a terrible power over us, which, while God will restrain in great mercy and kindness, He will not fully remove until we get fully on holy ground. Therefore, we must be armed with the breastplate of righteousness, as well as the shield of faith, if we would successfully resist the prince of darkness and the principalities in heavenly places”. A. B Simpson

Please finish today by reading the following scriptures:

1 John 4:4

Ephesians 6:10-17

This is how we break those cycles, bad habits, strongholds and start to live in FREEDOM.



Facing the Facts

Day 10

Let's begin today with a prayer-

"Lord, precious Father, thank You for Your truth and that we have Your living and breathing Word to go back to, rely on and constantly be a source of hope, help and love for us. Thank You that You are the same yesterday, today and forever. You are The ROCK we can always count on, believe, set our trust in and stand firm on no matter our history, sin, age, regrets, thoughts and past actions. Thank You for this section of our study and I pray in Your name that You speak to my sisters in this study and bring the truths they need to hear and start implementing in their lives. Please prepare our hearts and minds for today and please show us what it is that we need to see and take to heart. I love you, Lord"!

The truth about approval seeking and people pleasing is that it brings us short-term benefits with long-term costs. As we have already gone over, trying to please others will leave us empty, needing more and feeling resentful. Trying to make things happen by our own hands is simply a losing battle and it's nothing that He has called us to do. It is self-imposed, full of pride and selfish needs going unmet. These drive our constant desire to perform for our worth which involves too much of us and too little of Christ.

Please read the following scriptures and write what you find below or in your journal.

Romans 12:2-8

Matthew 6:1-8

These verses blow me away every time and His word cuts right down to the bottom of our actions. I had a conversation once with a beautiful woman who told me, "Our job as mothers is to make our kids happy and to stay busy". What!?! Does she really believe this? I did not want to seem disrespectful but how was I to respond? I was much younger than her and even I knew better.

It is NOT our job to stay busy and make our kids happy although the world seems to be saying that. We must ALWAYS reference what GOD says is right, rather than commercials, sitcoms, what the neighbors are doing or even what magazines, movies and books show us. EVERYTHING must be checked by His word or we too can fall into these ways and these notions we see. Even what our mothers did or didn't do while raising us can be what has caused us to cultivate this insatiable desire to please and be praised.

Please see these scriptures about God's word:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

Hebrews 4:12

Luke 11:28

We must test everything against His word...even those things we've done for years or even most of our life. These could be things we "think" we should be doing but they could be contributing to our cycle in the approval junkie mentality and we must break these chains in order live that live of Freedom!! "The only thing wrong with trying to please everyone is that there's always at least one person who will remain unhappy. You". – Elizabeth Parker

Section 3

People Pleasers

Approval & Junkies

By Mindy Lawhorne



Them vs. Him

Day II

What is your definition of “HAPPINESS”?

What is your definition of “JOY”?

Today, we will be taking a look at Happiness vs. Joy. Though they seem similar, by definition, they are quite different. And we will look even deeper as how they are described by the world vs. the Word.

List all the things the WORLD says = Happiness:

-
-
-
-
-

List all the things the WORD says = Joy:

-
-
-
-
-

When described, Happiness is listed as a feeling, or showing pleasure or contentment; fortunate and convenient, characterized by good luck.

When described, Joy is listed as delight; rejoice; a state of mind and an orientation of the heart; a settled state of contentment, confidence and hope.

As we can clearly see, there is a vast difference between HAPPINESS and JOY. And the easiest way I've learned the difference in my own life, is recognizing that one is fleeting and the other is constant.

Can you guess which is which? True joy is about knowing who you are and whose you are, rather than what you have or what's currently happening around you. Joy is constant, no matter the circumstances in your life. It is accompanied by hope and an unmistakable calming that comes from the knowledge that your joy won't go away just because your circumstances change.

Theopedia says - “JOY appears 88 times in the Old Testament in 22 books; 57 times in the New Testament in 18 books. Joy isn't just a smile or a laugh. Joy is something that is deep within and doesn't leave quickly. When we have the joy of the Lord, we'll know it and so will others. Since joy is given by God and something that He wants us to have, we need to be joyful! In addition to being joyful, we should let others have their joy and not bring them down when they are excited about good things.” I love it!

Day II Continued

What do these scriptures say about JOY and where it comes from?

- Romans 15:13
- Galatians 5:22
- Psalm 35:9
- Psalm 51:12
- Romans 14:17
- Romans 15:13
- James 1:2-4
- Colossians 1:10-11

I know that was a lot, but did you notice not one of these scriptures said, “Produces happiness” or “The fruit of the Spirit is happiness”? It is JOY they speak of. A much better, longer lasting, sustainable state of mind. And something that is highly worthy of seeking.

Happiness is based on circumstances.

Joy is based on faith.

Please finish today by writing John 15:11 below:



Them vs. Him

Day 12

Let's begin with a prayer today: *Lord, what good comes of us if we gain all things in this world, yet lose the one thing that is most important? Thank You, Lord, for this study, for Your living and breathing Word, thank You for this time together, but most of all thank You for Your ever present love. You are Creator, the Beginning and the End, our great Counselor and true hope and You are beautiful. Please guide us today as we speak about our hearts and the desires we have allowed the world, or others, to place there to cover up our true desires and purposes You've placed in us. Please allow for Your voice to be the loudest and for all other things to take a place far behind Yours, where it should go. I love You and I thank You so much for today and for what You have to show us. In Your precious name.*

So, what if we gain the whole world yet lose our soul? - Matthew 16:26

Today, we are talking about changing our perspective of what we can gain from this world in comparison to what we can gain from God. It's rich in scripture and truth, so buckle down, and let's walk through this together.

Please look up Matthew 16:26 (on your phone or computer) and read as many versions as you can; NLT, NIV, KJV, etc. If you haven't already, please read "The Message" (MSG) version of this scripture. I'll share it below:

"Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for"? (Matthew 16:26 - MSG)

WOW! I love "The Message", if I have not told you already. I believe it's so much easier to digest, and it's fantastic for children, new Christians and YOU!

Now, please look up the following scriptures and write down what you read:

- 1 John 2:15-17
- James 4:4
- Matthew 6:24
- Romans 8:13
- 1 Timothy 6:10

I remember when these scriptures would make me sad because (if I'm being honest) there are many things about this world that I love; things that are fun and enjoyable. But as I grew older, understanding what these scriptures truly meant, it all began to make perfect sense. The things of this world that are not of God we should stay away from and not love:

Evil - anything associated with evil (1 Thess 5:22)
Hurting others to get ahead.
Making money in any way or fashion.

Day 12 Continued

Gaining acclaim and approval for your own glory and ego.

Getting what we want by lying, cheating or double-crossing. We must remember the truth God has left us in scripture: This world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. - 1 John 2:17



Them vs. Him

Day 13

“Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world”. - 1 John 4:4

Though I know God is more powerful than the evil one, we still find ourselves sensing him more than God. That’s because, where Jesus is KING, he (the evil one) is known as “the Prince” of this world; not a positive title.

Today is very scripture-heavy. So before we begin, please take a deep breath, roll your shoulders back and open your palms to the sky. Ask God to calm your heart, open your mind and to draw you close to Him through His word. Allow His truth to provide the ways we can stand against the Prince of this world and stand firm on the Rock.

Please open your bible to the following scriptures. What do they say about this very topic?

- Ephesians 6:10-11
- James 4:7-8
- 1 John 2:14
- 1 John 5:4-5

Now, I would like you to reflect on a few things:

- What are some areas you have trouble in, where you become intertwined with the attitudes, ways and values of our culture? Be honest. This is for you and your growth.
- What ways have you found powerful or successful to put aside the ways/values of the world? How has it helped you to live and act in God’s truth?

God’s promise, in **James 4:7** says, **“Resist the Devil and he will flee from you”**.

Also - In 2 Timothy 1:7, it tells us we are not given a spirit of fear. Fear is not from God.

In pursuing Godliness, what do these scriptures tell us?

- 1 Timothy 6:6-11
- Titus 2:11-14

Mindset is everything. It can help us prepare for all things that we will encounter.

Read again Romans 12:2. And write it down. May I also encourage you to post it somewhere you can see it DAILY.

- Colossians 3:1-4

“Romans 7:23 and 8:5-7 show that the center of all spiritual bondage is the mind. That’s where the battle must be fought and won if we are to experience the freedom in Christ which is your inheritance... Patterns of negative thinking and behavior are **LEARNED**, and they can be **UNLEARNED** through disciplined Bible study and counseling”. - Neil T. Anderson.

Day 13 Continued

The evil one desires to keep us negative, confused, and sad. He wants us to feel unworthy and empty, whereas God wants the exact opposite for us. By following Christ, there are benefits incomparable to those of this world, even when it seems impossible. See these examples in the following scriptures:

- John 14:27
- John 15:18-19

Jesus not only lived a life of no sin, but He chose to NOT conform to this world, even though it hated him. That is my encouragement for you today. We are not expected to live a life of no sin (only Jesus is capable of such miracles) but when we choose Christ, we have the ability to NOT conform to the world as He did.

Finish today with a prayer. Reflect on the things you find most difficult about today's word and ask God to help you see a way through it.



Them vs. Him

Day 14

I have great news today! We are not designed to be perfect! Woohoo!

Perfection is not our calling nor is it a worthy goal. It's an ideal no one (can or) has ever achieved other than Christ.

While we continue to try and understand our relationship to the world, HIS word is very clear how to connect and associate with this time we live in.

Let's review the following verses and see what they say about how we are to live and act in the world. You may even recognize two scriptures we previously covered on Day 2 (a little refresher).

- 1 John 2:15-17
- James 4:4
- Romans 12:1-2
- Luke 9:23-25

From the book, "BECOMING A WOMAN OF FREEDOM":

"Worldliness is not a matter of engaging in those practices that some question. It is unthinkingly adopting the perspectives, values, and attitudes of our culture, without bringing them under the judgement of God's word. It is carrying on in our lives as if we do not know Jesus." - Lawrence O. Richards

And, there you go. This world has a way to slowly change our thoughts, to changing our principals, to shifting our beliefs until they show no evidence of Christ.

Whether it's from watching shows, witnessing others' behaviors around us or supporting good (yet unGodly) causes. We may even find ourselves bending our own beliefs just to have compassion for others and their issues, or completely changing our values because something "feels" better, even though we know what is right.

We live in a hard time, sisters. Where everything is accepted and nothing (or little) is confronted or opposed.

Truth is, God loved us first and we are to love others at all times. But we are not to agree with others at all times. There is a difference.

We must clearly define what we know to be TRUTH versus the evil one's truth. What God says is bad, the evil one says "it's not so bad".

What God disapproves, the evil ones says "there are worse things".

Day 14 Continued

In order to firmly distinguish the difference, we must take a sober look into God's truth, DAILY. By studying His word, we learn more about His character. That way, we can live a life with less confusion by what is right/wrong by God.

I know this is difficult with the world we live in today but it is possible. We can live a life of FREEDOM, seeking worthy goals, that leads to easier decisions and fewer regrets.

Today's lesson is tough but a good reality check. Let's finish with these scriptures and a prayer:

- Ephesians 6:12
- 1 Peter 5:8
- 1 John 5:19

"Oh Lord how we love that we can come to You as a fellowship of believers. Thank You for being such a good Father. One who wants to guide us far away from the evil one and Who loves first no matter what we have done in the past. God, it's hard to know what is right and what is wrong in this day in time where everything is accepted and everything has a cause. It's not that those things are bad, but if they are not Godly and not of You, they are unworthy goals. No matter what this world says is truth, only one truth will remain. Yours! Lord help us to see Your truth, to know (beyond a shadow of a doubt) the truth, so we do not trip up as we navigate through this life. We all want to end up at Your feet, seeing You with our own eyes and I pray we can live a life to glorify You, to one day hear from You, "Well done good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21). In Jesus' name. Amen!



Them vs. Him

Day 15

“God gave us a Bible not to just inform our minds, but to transform our hearts.” John Piper

It's imperative we allow God to work within our minds and hearts and strive to be transformed from the inside out. We have been blessed and left with one of the greatest tools ever, God's living and breathing Word. It's a light unto our path and a lamp unto our feet (see Psalm 119:105) that we can hold in our hands and refer back to at any time in our lives. His WORD will never get old. It will never be irrelevant, outdated or insignificant. It can and always will be able to speak to exactly where you need it to.

Please read John 1:1-14 and share what this scripture is talking about to you.

When I first read this set of scripture verses years ago, I was excited and amazed. At first, while reading, it may feel a little hard to grasp. But I encourage you to read it again. Only this time, ask God to show you what He is trying to explain. Ask Him to show you the truth of HIS word and WHO was with Him in the beginning.

For those of you who have read this many times before, you know what is being said. But think for a minute of our sisters who may be reading this for the first time. It's thick stuff! It's long and rich with the terms and history of Christ. The bible calls Him, THE WORD (this is just to draw similarities between Jesus and The Bible, yet it is HIS living and breathing word). The WORD is living, eternal and He gave Himself for us. HE is accessible anytime we want and HE is alive in His word. The WORD is alive. I know that's deep and a lot to take in but look at it this way:

The connection between the Bible and Jesus (other than the fact that it is from God, and God breathed the connections) is this:

- They both have power
- They both bring LIGHT into darkness
- They should both be obeyed out of love

Now, to be clear, the Bible itself is not God (some get this confused). The bible is something we can hold and read daily, to teach us about God's character, love and ways. It's a book of truths that guide us to transform to be more like Him. Not only can we have a relationship with Jesus, we can call to Him at any point, reading and relying on HIS living, breathing and totally relevant word any time we want!

Praise God we can do that!

What do these scriptures say about God's word and how it can be used in our lives?

Hebrews 4:12

Matthew 4:4

Colossians 3:16

2 Timothy 3:16

Psalm 12:6

Luke 11:28

Day 15 Continued

It is our responsibility (not just an opportunity) to seek His word daily and to allow it to infuse and infiltrate our thoughts, choices, decisions and our hearts. It can change our lives to stand firm on THE ROCK (see Matthew 7:24-27) forevermore, without fear.

Opportunity - Reactive and Optional

vs.

Responsibility - Proactive and Required (Perspective comparison, by Michelle Myers)



Section 4

People Pleasers

Approval & Junkies

By Mindy Lawhorne



Making the Change

Day 16

Get ready to work!

Today may require a little bit more focus as it will be a bit longer. We will be breaking it up into TWO days to allow the information to absorb. Please know that this action step is **HUGELY IMPORTANT**.

In this section, we are going to put what we've learned to the test and take things one step further. It's not just knowing what the truth is but to start digging deep into what we do and why we do it. Today, we will begin to explain one of the most beneficial exercises I've ever completed.

It's called A **PRIORITY CLARITY STATEMENT**.

Please begin by reading the following and make notes:

- Ephesians 1:17-18
- 1 Timothy 3:2
- Matthew 6:33

I begin here because now it's time to seek God for wisdom and it's time to use that wisdom for His glory and our good without excuses, giving up or giving in easily and without falling back into our own ways.

A few years back, I was told to create a Priority Clarity Statement at a live Chalene Johnson event. This is a policy for which we create that we can use to bounce off all invitations, opportunities, the needs of others, favors that are asked of us and decisions needing to be made. Now, please see below as to how she explained it to me. Read and write down each section and answer the questions. Then, I will be sharing my Priority Clarity Statement with you in tomorrow's study.

***PLEASE DO NOT** overlook or choose not to do this section.

***THIS IS A KEY PART** of your chain breaking process.

***THIS TOOL** helped change my view of who I was, who I am now, along with **WHO** and what matters most in my life. In addition, it has given me something concrete to hold on to, to bounce everything off of as the questions, needs and life started piling up again.

Let's state some of our goals as we get into this:

- To live a life of **FREEDOM**.
- To live a life with fewer regrets.
- To be completely confident in our decisions.
- To find a way of fulfilling our purpose and God's glory while saying **NO** to others and saying **YES** to our priorities...without feeling guilty.

Day 16 Continued

Here we go!

From Chalene Johnson: This assignment has changed lives, career paths and fitness journeys of thousands. If you're currently unable to giving this assignment undistracted time, come back when you are able to do so. That means no television, no phone calls, no social media, no computer...no distractions. This information will eventually be transferred to your smartphone, but for the time being, grab a pencil and pad of paper and get ready to write.

Start by brainstorming your priorities. I want you to list any and all areas of importance in your life today. Priorities are those things that are so important that if they were stripped from your life, you would be devastated, unfulfilled and living without a purpose. Here are some questions to consider. What do YOU want to accomplish? What makes you happy? What do you think is your purpose in life? What gives you pride? What do you wish to be remembered for at the end of your life? What areas of your life are of great importance yet you believe you must keep yourself accountable to honor them? ...Write.

Now, place a star next to the *five areas* that are most important to you.

Now, list the *three priorities* (in no particular order) that you have identified as most important to you.

Use just a few words to identify each category, such as "faith", "family", "career", "my charity", "my health" and so on.

Rewrite the list in order of importance to you:

My number one priority is...

My second priority is...

My third priority is...

Take the priority you've listed as number one and complete the following statements.

The reason(s) I have placed the greatest importance on this area of my life is because...

1. I will honor my number one priority by doing my best to...
1. The following action(s) would be inconsistent with my commitment to my top priority...
1. To honor my number one priority, I will limit the following...
1. To honor my number one priority, I need to make the following changes...

Now I want you to create your top priority statement. Here's mine:

My number one priority is to be present and actively involved in the lives of my husband and children; to demonstrate through my actions that my children are more important than any personal pursuit; to work to strengthen my loving, respectful and supportive relationship with my husband as a means to provide the best possible environment for my family; to raise self-sufficient, confident children who believe they can do anything; to limit any activities, pursuits or relationships that might take me away from my family; and to weigh all decisions against what would be helpful, harmful or indifferent to my family's emotional well-being.

Day 16 Continued

Now write yours and take all the time you need.

Lastly, type out your priority statement and post it on your computer, near your desk, in your kitchen, on the inside of your medicine cabinet, and hey, why not make it the lock screen on your smartphone? Memorize it. With this statement front and center, it's miraculous how clear even the toughest decisions become.

If you feel inclined to share your priority statement, post it in our study group. ~ Chalene

*This all can be found at ChaleneJohnson.com – Priorities:Defining What Matters Most.



Making the Change

Day 17

Did you get a chance to write your priority clarity statement? If the answer is yes, GREAT JOB! I am so proud of you! If the answer is no, it's OK! I understand this is a lot to absorb and apply.

I remember sitting in an auditorium with about 200 others people writing this and thinking to myself – “How can I possibly write this now? How can I focus on something so important?” But, the funny thing was, it turned out to be the perfect time to create my statement. Everyone was quiet, we had 30 uninterrupted minutes with no TV, no phone (we had to put them in our bags or purses), my children were well taken care of somewhere else and I knew the key to time management in a situation like this was ... “DO IT NOW!”

Again, I understand it seems overwhelming but I encourage you to COMPLETE THIS FIRST before moving on. It's too important... and frankly, so are you.

Today, I will be sharing my priority clarity statement and I pray it helps lead you:

My number-one priority is to walk with Christ so much that it overflows into every part of my life and day, to be present and actively involved in the lives of my husband and children; to demonstrate through my actions that my faith, Lee and children are more important than our fitness business, Hope in Struggle, my followers on Social Media, than my weight, our money or anything else that might seem more pressing; to work at everything like I am for Christ, but bouncing every question, need, favor or opportunity off my “main things” to strengthen my marriage at all turns, even when it means doing something that I don't necessarily want to do, to show Lee that he is loved, admired and that he gets first place in my heart just under Christ.

I will provide the best attitude each day, as well as reactions, choices and environment and to do all that I can to raise self-sufficient, confident children who believe in Christ, have amazing perspectives on life and know they can do anything they are willing to work for; to limit any activities, pursuits or relationships that might take me away from Lee and the boys or anything that my absence would have a negative effect on our short time together; to weigh all decisions against what would be helpful, harmful or indifferent to my family's emotional well-being. Lastly, for all needs/wants being asked of me by others, these are to be bounced off of the ramifications they would have if I chose to do them and the questions must be asked. “Will this be helpful to our family one way or another if I go”? If I say yes, “What will this take away from and what will it contribute to”? and “Does this glorify God and the most obvious priorities to my stewardship”?

See how I used some of Chalene's words?

If you are still having trouble, here is what helped me write my statement. Don't start from scratch. Use her words (or mine) as a guide to begin, and then add your most important things; place your priorities and the hurdles you seem to continually face. When this is complete, it can help you make decisions without regret or guilt.

Making the Change

Day 17

A good friend of mine once told me, “Each time we say yes to someone or to something else, we say “NO” to our family”. - Michelle Myers

Of course, I am not speaking about turning down opportunities that arise while our children are in school or while our husbands are away at work. I simply mean, we should not choose activities that leave us distracted, or distant, if we have the opportunity to be in their presence. Remove the temptations of distractions that pull you away mentally and emotionally.

I realize these two days have been pretty heavy and I feel it, too. However, we have to slow down in order to speed up and we must set new ground rules, have things in place when our old ways rise up and we feel that tension and simply don't know what we should do. This statement is part of your arsenal to keep you on the right path and to help you when you feel weak and unsure what should be done.

Please read and write down how these may help us understand the importance of clearly defining our priorities and making our actions prove our priorities:

- Luke 12:22-34
- Luke 1:38-42
- Mark 8:36-37
- Philippians 4:6-8

Let's pray:

***“Oh, sweet Jesus, you are such a good Father, giving us your word and things we can use to help us stay on track and out of temptations. Please help us move far away from our old ways with conviction and with the desire to follow YOU and do what's right rather than obsess about what others think or how they may not like our new choices. Please guide our statements to glorify you, help us live out our purpose(s) and give us that life of freedom under You that You promise (see Matthew 11:28-30). Please give us the courage based on the truths we've read and now know to move in your direction, rather than everyone else's want for us. Please give us strength and a steadfast will to break free from this place you don't want us to dwell and in the perfect and steadfast peace in whose minds that trust You. (Isaiah 26:3) Thank you, Lord!*”**

Making the Change

Day 18

“You wouldn’t worry so much about what others think of you if you realized how seldom they do”.
Eleanor Roosevelt

How are you feeling? You should be feeling a little lighter, but there may still be some tension since you (more than likely) have not actually put your statement into use.

Let’s go over some of that today.

First, I want you to write down your goals for the rest of this study. So far, we’ve learned about approval junkies, the people pleaser mentality, negative/unfulfilling cycles and how pride and selfishness can bring you away from the purpose that God has created you for. We’ve also learned how setting your feet firmly in God’s truths, with praise and creating a priority statement, will be pivotal in planting yourself firmly in an unshakeable foundation. We can now explore the next step(s) in becoming free and feeling confident in our decisions.

Please read these and write them down:

Philippians 4:13

2 Timothy 1:7

Hebrews 13:6

Psalm 27:3

1 John 4:18

Philippians 4:4-7

What do these say about our confidence? Where does it come from?
What do they say about fear? Anxiety? Love? And who is by your side?

You have everything you need to begin to step out in confidence. It just needs to become a practice and the outcomes become less and less uncomfortable until you have it mastered.

If God is for us, who can be against us? (see Romans 8:31)

If the Creator of this earth is by your side, and we are seeking Him and acting in accordance with His will, we have everything we need to move forward! How powerful is that?!

Day 18 Continued

So, let's do a little practice.

See the questions below. We are going to practice politely declining these needs and requests based on them interfering with your priorities and personal statement. (This is just an exercise and I know saying "NO" to some people is easier than others but let's give it a try!)

You can either answer here or in your journal.

Question 1:

"Hi, I am running really late and I know you always get there early, can you please set up my table for me so everything is ready on time"?

Question 2:

"Can you please speak on my team call tomorrow night? My speaker just cancelled and I need someone ASAP"!

Question 3:

"Hey, can you bake an extra 4 dozen cookies for the PTA meeting"?

Questions 4:

"Listen, I hear you said no to being a part of the _____(fill in the blank). Why"?

Feel free to list some of your own questions you often get and let's see how we can politely decline.

The following are some responses I've gathered as examples:

Answer 1:

"Hey! I'm sorry, I am not going to be able to help this time. But thanks for thinking of me".

Answer 2:

"Thanks for reaching out! My schedule is full for this week. Sorry, I can't help and I hope you find someone soon".

Answer 3:

"Hey, it's so good to hear from you! Anytime I can, when it doesn't interfere with my schedule, I am happy to help! However this time, I won't be able to be a part. Thank you".

Answer 4:

"It's just not a good time as we have a full schedule. But thanks again for thinking of me"!

And many times I send this:

"Thanks for thinking of me – I need to decline. Thank you".

Day 18 Continued

What guiltless freedom this can bring, once you realize everyone else's lack of preparations does not need to be your emergency.

Your priorities get first PLACE and everyone else's needs take a place somewhere after that. It's not rude. It's not wrong. It's placing the proper importance on the most important things in your life. Exactly where it should be. You are not selfish for doing this. You are being the best steward of your responsibilities and all things God has placed in your lap for you to oversee.

Now, I think this goes without saying but let me touch on it. Family scenarios can be tough. In the circumstances where you are caring for an elderly family member (mom, dad, etc.), I know it's a little different and quite sensitive. However, you can still exercise your right to have a healthy relationship with this by setting proper boundaries (cue your priority statement). You can - and should - set those up if they have not been set up already. I know there are cases where parents may put pressure on their children - I took care of you, now you take care of me - and this is a chain we MUST break. But the real truth is this... nobody can make us feel anything unless we let them.

Setting healthy boundaries takes time. But we can get there and regain some of our self-worth. We must strive to do what we are supposed to do - with God's help - through prayer and courage. And I say all of this with love!

What thoughts and feelings has this session brought up today?

Please write them down and ask Jesus to help you work through these. Tackle them with truth and hope. Ask Him to take any twisted thinking (or manipulated thoughts) and make them straight again.

I'm praying for you.



Making the Change

Day 19

In our business, I share daily ways to think outside the world's thought process and ways to answer other people; many times, just enough words to get them going. It's always easier to edit something that's been created than to start from scratch. Many times our coaches and team just need a jump start in order to get the ball rolling to talk with others.

I hope you know the examples I gave in yesterday's study are only a jumping point to begin that uncomfortable shift. It is something we all must do if we are to live that life of freedom we not only desire but so desperately need.

As we head into our last two days of the study, I want us to reflect on what we've covered so far. Eighteen days of encouragement and reminders filled with TRUTH that we can carry on into the process of changing our People-Pleaser mentality. Because, believe me, this is a process. As you grow, there will be people who will either criticize or support you. No matter what, you must stand firmly on the truth we've continuously uncovered.

You are on this earth to please God, not others.
We are called to love, not to agree.
Our loyalty is to God, first.

Write down what these scriptures say about our lives here on Earth and purpose.

One of my most favorite scriptures answered a deep prayer in my life. Have you ever felt like the underdog? Not great at many things? Awkward at times? Someone who seems to have trouble with what it seems others get so easily? I think we have all felt like this at some point in our lives with some subject or even many.



Making the Change

Day 20

“When Jesus enables me, I am omnipotently strong all the time”. - Oswald Chambers

Omnipotent - having unlimited power; an ability to do anything. This power, of course, only God possesses. Yet through Him and with Him, we can do vastly more than anything we ever try on our own; as we are encouraged in Philippians 4:13... “I can do all things through CHRIST...”. Note the word “ALL”.

As we wrap up our study, we will be diving into one of the most profound chapters in the Bible, Proverbs 31. As Proverbs is known as “the wisdom book”, it seems only fitting we focus on its guidance to keep us aligned with God’s purpose as we work to break the chains of people-pleasing.

In the second half of Proverbs 31, we read a story about A Wife of Noble Character. Whether you are married, single, have children or no children, this section applies to ALL women. It focuses on the specific characteristics we, as women, can achieve should we put God FIRST; fearing Him over the fear of pleasing others.

Might I suggest, when you have quality quiet time, read the whole passage of Proverbs 31:10-31. It’s rich in truth and empowering to know that with God we can be so much more than we feel capable of.

Today, I simply want to read and re-read Proverbs 31:10-31 and keep our focus on these verses:

- Proverbs 31:17-18
- Proverbs 31:25-26
- Proverbs 31:30

I want you to close your eyes and picture this woman in your mind - how she looks and how she speaks. How hard she works, diligently and selflessly. Better yet, if you are an artist or simply like to doodle (as I do from time-to-time), draw her! You can even share it! I would love to see it.

If you read the passage in its entirety, I know it’s a lot to digest. The Proverbs 31 woman is seemingly an image of “perfection”. But I assure you, that’s NOT the message in the script. The reason I chose to focus on verse 30 was to highlight what essentially made her this woman of such grandeur. She feared God more than anyone else. The fear was not of fright or danger but that she was more concerned to please God, first. And in turn, God equipped her with these attributes to serve as well as she did with such poise and honor.

I share this with you, as it’s encouragement of what life can be like when we choose to serve our God, before submitting ourselves to the sacrificial service of people-pleasing; putting others before God, ourselves or our family. The Proverbs 31 woman teaches us how to serve healthily in spirit and in the flesh. She is confident and unconcerned as to what others think because she knows God is on her side.

Day 20 Continued

We have been given this scripture of the Proverbs 31 woman to remind us that we have the ability to do all things when we trust God. To fear God, not man. When we are confident in what our God can provide, we think less of the opinions of others. When we stand firm on the promises of our Savior, we think less of the praise we could receive from man.

“She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future”. - Proverbs 31:25

I always feel sad when a study ends. As soon as I get into a flow and rhythm, it ends. Am I the only one like that? We covered some deep stuff, and I pray it was helpful. If there was any part you did not grasp, or struggled to uncover, might I suggest you go back through it? But this time, ask God to reveal the truth to you. Ask Him to help open your heart and mind to the truth you need to see and hear. Ask Him for His help to be a willing participant in this study.

When we go into a study with open hearts and minds, we grow so much more in depth.

We now know more.

We see more.

We see our intentions.

We see where things came from or how they may have developed.

We see how it can be detrimental to our freedom and purpose.

We see the truth between seeking approval from the world vs. the One who created it.

We gain resources of TRUTH to keep us standing firm.

We have a written “priority statement” to keep us focused on where God needs us.

We have Hope In Struggle.

We have prayer.

And most importantly, we have JESUS.

If at any moment you feel yourself slipping back into old habits, I pray this study is a helpful guide to get you back on track. Remember Ephesians 4:26-27 is important. Do not let the evil one have any ground upon which he can access you. Do not give him a foothold back into your life [Ephesians 4:27]. Pray daily for God to check your heart and motives so that you are consistently working towards the things we learned in this study.

“Lord, I love You so very much. I am amazed at Your ability to draw together those needing You, and showing us more through this fellowship and through Your precious teachings. We’ve gone over so many things in this study and I pray they are an impact in the way You want them for each precious lady in this study. She is so very special. You have created each of them for Your glory and the good of others. I pray You allow this study to set deep within each of them, so that when those old ways try to sneak back in, they are reminded of the TRUTH. Your TRUTH. I pray they take up the shield of faith so they can withstand those fiery darts of the evil one (Ephesians 6:10-20). Lord, let this be an impactful study to each woman involved. May it be an empowering journey to the freedom they seek; the kind we can experience with the one and only true God. Lastly, precious Jesus, I pray for each sister to dive into a deeper relationship with You now, and forevermore. You will never leave us, forsake us, or guide us in the wrong direction. Nothing can ever snatch us out of your hand (John 10:28). In your precious name I pray. AMEN”.

Day 20 Continued

Ladies, I love you. Thank you for walking with me on this journey. My prayers will be with you and for you. Please know you are never alone with Jesus. He is the same yesterday and today. He does not move. He's waiting on you.

In HIS name.



Blessings

Babe, I am so honored that you have completed The People Pleaser Devotional with me. If you are looking for a non-judgmental place to share fitness, fashion, and glam tips, PLUS go deeper with God, look no more.

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In His, Love,
Mindy

