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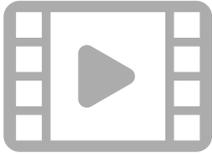


## MODULE 5: FREEDOM IN YOUR FUTURE WHEN PLEASING OTHERS HURTS YOU

Today we're going to talk about crushing the disease to please, when pleasing him is hurting you. We're going to start out with some common misconceptions about the Philippians 2:3 mandate that tells us to value others above ourselves. And then we'll talk about how to maintain your self-respect in the face of opposition. And then finally, how to remove the guilt factor. Oh my gosh, the desire to please others isn't always a bad thing. Even the apostle Paul said, "I try to be all things to all people in order that I might win some." But it was his motivation. His motivation wasn't for a selfish ambition. It was for a kingdom objective. So when our motive is for selfish ambition, to gain approval or validation for ourselves, then that, disease to please is a bad thing, right?

When our desire is to extract applause or win favor for that personal agenda, because we're afraid of rejection or don't like conflict, this causes us also to relinquish our self-respect and then often we just stay stuck because we're afraid of making the wrong choice. So we freeze or we make no choice at all because we don't want to go against God's will, right? But sometimes our mindset thinks there's only one way to do something and it has to be perfect. But perfection is not achievable. But excellence is you know. The deal is...the fear of man is a snare. When we're worried about what other people think about us, it keeps us stuck in a people pleasing mode. And then we don't want anyone to be mad at us. We don't want to disappoint anyone. We don't want to hurt anyone. Right? And so often we end up being mad at ourselves. We ended up being hurt, discouraged, frustrated, resentful, like somehow we've made a big mistake. Somehow we thought it was easier for us to carry this discomfort, then then it was to make somebody else uncomfortable. And then we lose our self-respect in the process.

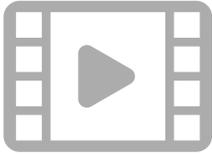
How many of you have been mad at yourself or disappointed at yourself when you've over-functioned to please others? When we please others at our own expense, what happens? We lose our self-respect. We've bought into this false narrative that we should value others above ourselves. Okay, okay. I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, oh my gosh, well, that's what Philippians tells us to do—do nothing out of selfish ambition, but in humility, count others as more significant than yourself. But you know, I gotta ask this. Does this scripture really mean what we think it means? Or have we misinterpreted the instruction to count others as more significant than ourselves? Meaning that we are less than? I think we need to take a closer look at this scripture because that doesn't sit well with me. Does it sit well with you?



First, let's talk about selfish ambition. Selfish ambition can be aggressive, or it can be passive. It's easy to see that manipulation and control, that verbal abuse, spiritual abuse, gaslighting, love bombing, stonewalling, all of those things, it's easy to say that those are forms of aggressive, selfish ambition, agree? But there are also forms of passive selfish ambition and these are subtle and hard to detect, but it's all about our motive. So what about avoiding conflicts because we want to preserve the peace? Being a peacekeeper, to avoid conflict only creates a synthetic temporary peace. And it's a selfish ambition because in the end, we are the ones that most benefit from this lack of confrontation. Or what about keeping quiet because we're fearing rejection? Is that a selfish ambition? It is if our motivation is to gain approval. What about seeking approval? Because we don't want to endure criticism. Is that a selfish ambition? I mean, I hope that this has given you some thought to think about ways that we can actually use selfish ambition too, but because it's not aggressive, we may not notice it. But when our motive is to preserve our own comfort, avoiding confrontation, keeping quiet and seeking approval are passive forms of selfish ambition. It's because ultimately, we value ourselves and our comfort as more important. Our comfort is a primal importance.

Now none of us like facing criticism, but would it surprise you to know that even when the disciples struggled with that, in Galatians 2:11, Paul said that he had to confront Peter to his face in front of everyone. Exact words. Sounds really harsh, right? But here's what the passage says. "When Peter came to Antioch I had to oppose him to his face for what he did was very wrong. Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore because he was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. As a result other Christian other Jewish Christians followed Peters hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was let us was led astray. When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message I confronted Peter in front of all the others."

Yes, even Peter, one of the disciples was afraid of criticism. But what if Paul kept quiet because he didn't want to face rejection, Peter would have continued to lead others astray. So I want you I want you to just think about your own life for a minute. What poor behaviors are you allowing to continue by your lack of confrontation? Who is being led astray by your continued lack of confrontation? When... let's say when your husband verbally abuses you and you stay quiet because you want to avoid confrontation? What message does that send to your daughter? Are you not training her by example, that it's a woman's role to tolerate abuse? Or What message are you sending to your son's? That he has the right to demand his own way? That abuse is acceptable that that maybe he is superior?

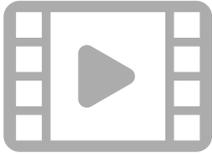


Confrontation isn't comfortable, but it's a provocation to change. And I'd like to say that confrontation is our Godly responsibility. Keeping quiet and allowing your partner to continue to mistreat you is not good for him. It may seem easier for you to accept the burden of discomfort but if you truly consider your husband or partner more important than yourself and your discomfort, you would address the situation, either with a verbal confrontation or by a change of your behavior if a verbal exchange is not safe. Because we know if you confront a fool you invite abuse. So sometimes, a confrontation comes from changing our own behavior and the way we respond to a situation. But avoiding conflict becomes a form of selfish ambition when our motive is to preserve our own comfort.

You know, I wonder if we've misunderstood what Paul said when he told us to do nothing out of selfish ambition, but in humility, count others as more significant than ourselves. And the next verse is interesting as well. It says don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others too. Here's the deal: What is best for others isn't always pleasant. If your ambition is people pleasing, you are preserving your own comfort in order to win approval. And that is a selfish ambition.

Romans 12:3 has similar instruction advising us not to think of ourselves more highly than we are. And I think this passage often encourages Christians to take on a form of twisted humility. So what does it mean that we shouldn't think of ourselves more highly? That we shouldn't think well of ourselves? Is that what it means? That we are less than? Absolutely not! The phrase "think more highly of oneself" comes from a Greek word that means to esteem oneself overmuch. You know, I didn't even know that was a word, but I'm just saying it's from the, from the Greek translation. To esteem oneself overmuch, to be vain or arrogant. But we can take pride in ourselves without being prideful. In fact, Paul said in Romans 11:3 that he took pride in his ministry, and then Galatians 6:4 tells us that each should test their own actions and then we can take pride in ourselves without comparing ourselves to someone else.

So let me ask you this. I bet there's some things that you take pride in. Do you take pride maybe in the way you keep your home? Or in how well you manage your money? Or maybe you take pride in your accomplishments at work? It doesn't mean that you're arrogant, unless you boast about it right? If you do it doesn't mean you're arrogant, but if you misunderstood the scriptures you may be tempted to think that seeing yourself as less as less than is somehow like a form of godliness. Then when others that you perceive are powerful, when they start demanding, you cower to that slightest opposition.



But I have some good news. The reality is that we can take pride in ourselves and our accomplishments without being vain or arrogant. I don't think that these passages mean that we are less than, I think, in fact, in order to maintain our self-respect we have to maintain some measure of pride.