



The Longing for Approval

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Q—Are you a “people pleaser?”

Several signs you are a people pleaser

- ✓ You are often overly sensitive.
- ✓ You get hurt easily.
- ✓ You hate confrontation.
- ✓ You crave compliments.
- ✓ You self-promote.
- ✓ You have difficulty making decisions on your own.
- ✓ You always fall for flattery.
- ✓ You have a hard time saying “No.”
- ✓ You compromise your values.

Sermon in a Sentence: Our longing for approval is only ultimately fulfilled when we know our true identity is found in Christ.

Matthew 9:9 (NIV)

⇒ **Recognize the fear of man can _____ us into not trusting God.**

Proverbs 29:25 (NIV)

⇒ **Who we really serve _____ who we would rather please.**

Galatians 1:10 (NLT)

⇒ **Realize we already have _____.**

1 Thessalonians 2:4 (NIV)

Matthew 3:17 (NIV)

⇒ **We can experience the _____ of who we are meant to be.**

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Matthew 9:10–13 (NIV)

ANSWER KEY: trap, reveals, approval, freedom



Study & Discussion for Your Next Small Group

Theme: *Friend of Sinners like Me*

Warm Up: When have you been invited to a special event (wedding, benefit dinner, party) that you felt so extremely humbled and honored to attend? How did you feel?

Sermon Response: What impacted you most from Sunday's message? How do you struggle when it comes to "people pleasing" based on the check list shared?

Read: Matthew 9:9-13

Discuss:

- Though it may be subtle, why is it significant that Jesus saw Matthew as a man first, not a low-life tax collector?
- How significant is it to you that Jesus sees you for who you are, not what you have done?
- Matthew wrote about this encounter with Jesus, and it was about himself. What do you think he felt at the moment when Jesus invited him to come follow him? Would you spontaneously do the same? Why or why not?
- Why do you think it bothered the Pharisees so much that Jesus ate with "sinners"? Why would this still bother churched or religious people today?
- What is involved in our role as a "friend of sinners" and what is our risk in doing so?
- What excites you about joining Jesus' mission of not reaching the healthy but the sick, and how do we do this? Where does this bring tension in caring for those that are already reached in the church?
- What do you think Jesus means when he quotes the prophet Hosea, "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice'"? How does this relate to the motive of why we follow Jesus and fulfill His mission?

Prayer: Share needs and also ways God has answered prayer in your group.