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People-Pleaser or God-Pleaser
Galatians 1:1-11

Most of us have this inner desire to please other people. However, some people's ***perspective*** on what it means to please others can be a ***little off***.....

Parade magazine has printed the following from The Wisconsin State Journal (2010), who recently surveyed vice presidents and personnel directors of the nation's largest corporations for their most unusual experiences interviewing prospective employees. Their stories included:

A job applicant who challenged the interviewer to arm ***wrestle***.

A job candidate who said he had never finished high school because he had been kidnapped and kept in a closet in ***Mexico***.

A ***bald*** candidate who excused himself, then returned wearing a full hairpiece.

A candidate who wore ***earphones*** to the interview and, when asked to remove them, explained that she could listen to the interviewer and the music at the same time.

A candidate who said she didn't have time for ***lunch***, then started to eat a hamburger and fries in the interviewer's office.

An applicant who interrupted the questioning to phone her ***therapist*** for advice.

A candidate who ***dozed*** off during the interview.

A candidate who muttered, "Would it be a problem if I'm ***angry*** most of the time?"

The Wisconsin State Journal, reprinted in Parade 2010

Interesting how people try to make an ***impression***, isn't it?

People pleasing is serious stuff.

Not a day goes by that we don't think about someone else's opinion of what we wear, or say, or act, what changes or commitments we'll make.

For *Christians*, people pleasing is really serious—because we are really supposed to have an audience of ONE.

We are made to be *God-pleasers*, not people-pleasers.

We are made in the image of God.

God is the only one who should really matter to us.

God is the one who truly loves us, accepts us, frees us, & forgives us.

We really don't have to worry about people pleasing.

If only it were that *simple*, right?

Easier said than done....

People-pleasing was an issue in the churches of *Galatia*.

The churches were made up of Jewish Christians, and Gentile Christians, and some of the Jewish Christians were shall we say, fundamentalists, we'll call them Judaizers.

They thought that belief in Jesus was *not enough*, that the grace of the cross was not enough, Paul says yes it is, you don't need to abandon Judaism, but Galatian Christians do not need to adopt Judaism in order to be Christian, and know salvation.

The fundamentalist Judaizers believe that *Paul is a people pleaser*, letting go of the laws that they assume please God. Paul says that the Judaizers are the ones in trouble, because they are so focused on the laws instead of God, that they are missing the true gospel—the fact that we are saved by Jesus Christ, not the laws.

In fact, Paul goes on throughout the *entire book*, To explain to these churches that belief in Jesus Christ, his life and death and resurrection, are enough to be a Christian. Judaism is our heritage, that we never ever forget. But we don't need to adopt hundreds of strict laws of the past When Jesus gave new meaning to the ten commandments, When Jesus boiled the laws down to love God and love your neighbor. We live under *grace*, and the book of Galatians is all about freedom and grace.

When we're **people-pleasers**, we live without grace.
 We're in bondage to the opinion of others, to the fear and the anxiety of trying to make someone else happy.

When we are **God-pleasers**, we live with grace.

But people pleasing is so common, so tempting, we do it **all the time**.
 It can eat you up from the inside out, can't it?
 What's your biggest people-pleasing worry?

We do it as individuals,
 And we do it as **churches**.

We get tempted to please people in the church
 When we **bend the gospel** to make it sound like whatever everyone else is saying and doing.
 When we allow people to think that the gospel of Jesus Christ is just the same as any other religion or belief, or spirituality.

Or if we don't fall into that temptation,
 We might fall into the temptation of thinking that Christianity is just a little bit of religion for Sunday mornings. That's all.
 Go back and re-read Paul's words for today—he's fired up! He's staking his life on this message of the gospel! He's willing to bet his life that what he's preaching is true! And if you read through the New Testament you'll find that he did go that far more than once.

This is a people-pleasing temptation of **apathy**.
 I mean it's not popular to be fired up about religion.
 Most people are at home improvement stores on Sunday mornings.
 So it's tempting to say, It's just faith—Sundays at 10:30, maybe 10 for donuts or 9:30 for some good discussion ...

But where does that leave your **heart**?
 Where does that leave you in times of **need**?
 What about times when you need **forgiveness and grace**?

We can also fall into the people-pleasing temptation of **consumerism**.
 If I don't like it, I'll just go somewhere or do something else.

I'll **shop** for what I want,
 instead of sticking with the body of Christ through the good and the bad,
 the ups and the downs, the things I like and the things I don't like.

We believe this body is a **family**...
 and families do things that not everyone likes.
 They don't go out and shop for a family every time you dislike the
 current TV show or board game, or even if there's some conflict.
 You work it out because you're family.
 You **love** each other, and in this case you love the
 head of the household named Jesus enough to stick it out.

Ever just wanted to go **shopping**?
 What does that do to your heart? And to the church?

These are some of the **mottos** in my household.
 You get what you get and you don't throw a fit. Life is not fair.
 God is good. Clean up, clean up everybody do their share.
 We're doing it because we're a family.

These are not people-pleasing mottos.
 They have a **bigger, broader focus**.

And that's what it all boils down to.
 Where is your **focus**?

Take your biggest people-pleasing **temptation**—
 The one that gets you every time,
 And then ask yourself, **where is your focus**?

On yourself? Or God?
 On your anxiety? Fear? The Goliath that is standing in front of you?
 Or the God that can take that giant down?

In my office is that **plaque** that says
 Don't look at the mountain, talk to the one who can move it.

That's what we're talking about.
 God-pleasers are people who **focus on God** first and foremost,

not at the people all around, not at themselves,
not at the giants they are facing, or the family they can't stand,
or the conflict they are involved in.

They **focus on God**, and his Son our Savior Jesus Christ.

And what can God do?

Well he helped a tiny boy named **David** take down a 9 foot giant named Goliath with a few smooth stones.

He raised **Jesus** from the dead.

He put his **Holy Spirit** inside our hearts.

In a nutshell, God can do **anything** we need.

Now if we want to make an **impression** upon anyone,

If we need to please anyone,

God is really who we want to be talking to,

Praying to, relying upon, and getting to know.

And God is as **close** as your own heart, your own prayers,

Right there in your time of worship,

God is the one to look at...

May we hear the Good News of the Gospel,

And may we be **God-pleasers**, Amen.