



Audience Of One

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GROUP ICE BREAKER

Does standing in front of an audience excite you or terrify you and why?

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will make the decision — “I’m not going to lie anymore.”
- I will endure pain for the sake of telling the truth.
- I will pause throughout the week and say, “Here’s my chance to tell the truth and practice what Jesus taught.”

MESSAGE SUMMARY

In Matthew 6:1, Jesus is warning against a common mistake in the pursuit of the good life. The condition might be called *approval addiction*; to live for what other people think of you rather than who you are before God.”

What is approval addiction? No matter how much approval you get, you can never have enough. You go crazy when approval is withheld. When you’re in the grips of approval addiction, you are what people think of you. You’re always vulnerable to other people's opinions, so your life is like an emotional roller coaster.

You were made to seek approval, so the question isn’t will you seek it, the question is where will you seek it? Jesus said to become a good person and live the good life, live to please God. You can’t live for God’s approval and human approval. You have to choose one or the other.

Jesus says if you do things to be seen, you’ll have a reward, but you won’t get one from God. But if you do things in secret, God will reward you. The writers of Scripture have a lot to say about rewards, and they’re mostly about the person you will become. The idea is when you do good things in secret, you will increasingly be freed from approval addiction.

How do you break free from approval addiction? Jesus gives two great spiritual practices or disciplines to help. The first is the *discipline of secrecy*. As you practice this, you’ll discover you don't need to impress people in order to live a joyful life. You'll actually begin to experience freedom and become the kind of person who can live in love and joy. The other practice is *get into a community where you’re loved*. Join a small group where you will be known and accepted by a group of people.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has been your biggest take away from the sermon on the mount so far?
2. In what area(s) of your life do you struggle with approval addiction? What is one thing you can do to begin finding freedom from it?
3. Have you ever done something “for God”, but with the intent for others to see? What did you learn from that experience?
4. Read Matthew 5:16 and 6:1. Do you see a contradiction in Jesus words? Why or why not?
5. Jesus implies there is a reward for acts of goodness. How would you answer someone who said, “to desire a reward for an act of goodness is a wrong motive”?
6. Read the following verses and discuss what each tells us about God’s rewards.
 - Psalm 19:9-11
 - Proverbs 11:18
 - Matthew 16:24-27
 - Colossians 3:23-24
 - Hebrews 10:32-35, 11:6
7. How should living for an audience of One shape the way you practice the discipline of secrecy? How might it shape the way you live in all areas of life?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will live for an audience of one.
- I will practice the discipline of secrecy.
- I will do something good and not let anyone know about it.
- I will join a small group where I can be known and accepted.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Matthew 6:1
- Galatians 1:10
- 1 Corinthians 4:3

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

- [A Deeper Look At the Sermon on the Mount: Living Out the Way of Jesus](#), John Stott

PRAYER REQUESTS

Take time to share how you can be praying for each other over the next week:

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