



Living for Other's Approval: Audience of One Pey Chu

The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe. — Proverbs 29:25

My family loves to watch the Olympics. Watching the world's best athletes compete against one another is exciting. I was struck by something this summer as I watched a few of the events. The commentators would talk about this or that athlete representing this or that small country of however many people for the first time ever or for the first time since so many years ago. My heart would sink a little for these athletes, and I would find myself rooting for them. I just couldn't imagine competing with the weight of my entire country on my shoulders. Can you imagine the pressure these athletes must have felt as they positioned themselves at the starting blocks not just to compete for their own glory but for the glory of their country as well?

Most of us don't compete with that kind of whole-scale pressure to make our nation proud. But if we're honest, many of us functionally live our lives as if we were on the world stage. We feel anxiety and pressure to impress or please the world around us. The Bible calls this the fear of man. We care too much about what people think of us. Maybe we spend an inordinate amount of time and money on our outer appearance. We may obsess and replay conversations we've had. We may be afraid to step out and connect with new people. Maybe we don't rest because we are too busy trying to achieve something. Too often, we are held hostage by our desire to seek the approval and adoration of those around us, and we are blinded to the fact that we already have the approval and pleasure of the only one who matters. Proverbs 29:25 says this, "The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe."

We are safe not because of anything we have done or can do. We are safe because Jesus Christ bought our security with his death on the cross for our sins. When we live out of that reality, we can rest knowing that God is pleased with us because he is pleased with his Son. Matthew 3:17 says, "And behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Our faith in Christ means that God's pleasure with his Son is God's pleasure with us through Christ. If God is pleased with us, we do not need to toil and labor to please the world around us. Instead, we respond by living for God's pleasure and his glory.

Let's Chat!

- What is one area in your life that you know you care too much about what people think?
- How do you live for the approval of others?
- What would it look like for you to live knowing that God is pleased with you because he is pleased with what Christ did for you? In other words, how should the reality of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ comfort you and cause you to live differently?
- What is one way that your interactions with others would look different if you rested on God's pleasure in you because of Christ?

Take-Away Truth

In the movie *Chariots of Fire*, the Olympian Eric Liddell is quoted as saying, "When I run, I feel His pleasure." Let us live life only to feel God's pleasure.

Find more conversation starters: <https://women.pcacdm.org/made-for-more>

