


You *Can't* Please Everyone

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

2020.11.12&15



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- What plans do you have for Thanksgiving and Christmas? Do you look forward to the holidays or dread them?

Mark the following scale with an "M" for what **you** anticipate and a "S" for what you think your **spouse** anticipates.



How do you think **you** could help your spouse move a few clicks to the right?
What do you think would most help you move a few clicks to the right?

- Read Proverbs 29:25. What mental images do you get when you think of "the fear of man"?

Which of the following fears do you have regarding holiday time together with your extended family?
Mark all of the possibilities with a "✓".

- They may expose or humiliate me.
- They may reject, ridicule, or despise me.
- They may attack, oppress, or threaten me.

Who would be willing to tell us a bit about that?

- Read Colossians 3:12-17. What does v. 13 **assume** happens between people? Is that your experience?

What three descriptions does v. 12a use to identify Christians? What is the significance of each?

Think of **the most difficult** person you'll encounter during holiday gatherings.
From v. 12b, what is **one specific, concrete action** you could do to show them...

compassion? _____

kindness? _____

humility? _____

gentleness? _____

patience? _____

How could the peace of Christ (v. 15) help you?

How could the Word of Christ (v. 16) help you?

How could giving thanks to God (v. 15) help you?

Application-Challenge

- **Memorize** 2 Corinthians 5:9 ("We make it our goal to please Christ"). When tempted to please others, review your memory verse.
- Determine to actively engage in the "take off-put on" process described in Colossians 3. We must "discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness".



Sermon Summary

As we enter the holiday season, I know we are all looking forward to smiling faces around the table, children politely waiting their turn for food and carrying on polite conversations with the adults. Or, like me, you live in the real world. Don't get me wrong—we all love our families—but we don't have to pretend that family is always easy. It's not what it was intended to be because generation after generation has been weighed down and crushed by sin.

Need help navigating "family feuds"?

Write to:

BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com

As kids, family dynamics were more simple: you're a son or daughter, you might be a brother or a sister... and that's about it. Then you get married... and you're a wife and a daughter and a sister and a daughter-in-law and a sister-in-law. Then you have kids of your own and you're a father and a husband and a son and a brother and a son-in-law and a brother-in-law and so on and so forth. The dynamics get more complicated and there's often some difficulty in navigating the balance between the many roles we find ourselves in. Genesis 2:24 makes it sound so simple. And yet for many of us the leaving and cleaving process is a source of tension whether we are in our first, fifth, or 25th year of marriage. The path to healthy family relationships isn't found prioritizing one relationship over another, it's found in placing one relationship above all else. Before all else, we are followers of Christ. This truth liberates us and makes us a better son, daughter, brother, sister, spouse and parent. Colossians 3:1-4 tells us that our former identities have died, and our new identity is secure for eternity with Christ. The passage continues with more details on what this new identity looks like (v. 5-10).

Imagine how different your family dynamics could be if you were free from greed, anger, malice, and lies. Imagine instead if we were clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness. We aren't just stifling our anger and holding our tongues until we can get in the car and let it all out. We are replacing anger with kindness, greed with humility, and malice with compassion. The miraculous redemption we have in Christ doesn't simply strip us of our sinful attitudes and responses, it creates in us new attitudes and new responses. Our heart is to free us from our desire to meet the worldly expectations placed on us by our family members. Colossians 3:23-24 expresses our new goal: to please Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:9).

Aiming to please others places unbearable pressure not only on ourselves, but on those whose approval we are seeking. If you're desperate for others to approve of you, you're going to dissect every comment they make and you'll perceive slights where they didn't even exist. Colossians 3:3 teaches our identity is eternally secure in Christ—and that takes the pressure off. The alternative is called "the fear of man", and Proverbs 29:25 calls it a trap that's waiting to catch us. That perfectly describes how the fear of man affects us when our primary concern is keeping everyone happy. It's a zero-sum game: in order to keep this family member happy, you're making someone else unhappy. It's a vicious cycle that only breaks when you stop fearing man and begin fearing God alone. You can't be caught in the middle when you're not interested in playing either side. The fear of man really is a trap, but Proverbs 29:25 says that trusting the Lord keeps us safe—just as Colossians 3:3 said! It's impossible to be certain that you are going to please man. It's quite possible to be certain that you are going to please God (and Ephesians 4:29-32 tells us how).

Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asks you, "*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page to the left) is a simple way to study any passage. We can use it to learn about the horrible cost of fearing man rather than God...

Monday— Read 1 Samuel 15:24-29

Tuesday— Read 1 Samuel 15:1-3, 7-9

Wednesday— Read 1 Samuel 15:10-16

Thursday— Read 1 Samuel 15:17-23

Friday— Read 1 Samuel 16:14-17 & 23

Saturday— ***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord with your church family,***
study **James 3:17-18.**

Need blank copies for doing more

"Five Question Bible Study"?

e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]


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Leaders' Guide

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- 3 What do you think would most help you move a few clicks to the right?
- 4 Read Proverbs 29:25. What mental images do you get when you think of "the fear of man"?
- 5 Which of the following fears do you have regarding holiday time together with your extended family? Mark all of the possibilities with a "✓".
 - They may expose or humiliate me.
 - They may reject, ridicule, or despise me.
 - They may attack, oppress, or threaten me.
- 6 Who would be willing to tell us a bit about that?
- 7 Read Colossians 3:12-17. What does v. 13 **assume** happens between people? Is that your experience?
- 8 What three descriptions does v. 12a use to identify Christians? What is the significance of each?
- 9 Think of **the most difficult** person you'll encounter during holiday gatherings. From v. 12b, what is **one specific, concrete action** you could do to show them:

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- 10 How could the peace of Christ (v. 15) help you?
- How could the Word of Christ (v. 16) help you?
- How could giving thanks to God (v. 15) help you?

Application-Challenge

- 11 **Memorize** 2 Corinthians 5:9 ("We make it our goal to please Christ"). When tempted to please others, review your memory verse.
- 12 Determine to actively engage in the "take off-put on" process described in Colossians 3. We must "discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness".



- 1 These three items (two questions & one scale to mark) form a unit, so ask them together. This just gets Group members thinking. They will respond to all of these with the next question.
- 2 This question is easier than the next one (since what gets under our spouse's skin often **doesn't** rile us)—but try not to let this question degenerate into *"I don't know why his sister's laugh gets under his skin?!"* Try to keep this question focused on **genuine** help (*"I'll be praying for him."* or *"I'll suggest he head outside with the other men before his sister gets rolling on all her stories."*, etc.)
- 3 Now the shoe's on the other foot. Again, try to help folks treat this question seriously. It's easy to see the speck in one's spouse's eye, but not the log in our own. We're looking for **genuine help** here. The aim is to try and help couples work as a team to help each other treat difficult relatives kindly.
- 4 You're seeking group members' **current impression** of what is "the fear of man"—not the "right, biblical" one! (You'll get to that in the next question. FYI—those three items in **red** are the three broad manifestations of what we fear from others.). Right now you're trying to get a fix on current understanding.
- 5 **Be careful on this question—there's a lot of genuine pain (and legitimate fear) out there!** Let group members know that this question is "for their eyes only" (unless they choose to share). Add this caution: "If this question is too painful for you, you don't even need to make a physical mark—but please do make a mental note." Note too that group members may actually be choosing not to gather with family because of past and on-going evils. The point of this question is for folks to identify what it is they fear if they were to gather with those relatives.
- 6 Gently seek a volunteer for this question. If none are willing, be ready to share your own (but don't rush to fill the silence). If you must share your own story, keep it brief, and then ask, "Is anyone else willing to give us their thoughts? (Your sharing may have "primed the pump" or assuaged their fears.)
- 7 v. 13 assumes that we will offend each other. Focus on the "bearing with" element (since group members may not have actually forgiven those who've offended them!).
- 8 The answer is simple—[1] chosen of God, [2] holy and [3] beloved—but the implications are profound! Dig into each of those answers a bit. What is the significance of the fact that God chose us? Chosen for what? (see John 15:16) Chosen from what? What does it mean that we **are** holy? Beloved—**by whom?** These descriptions all hold profound implications for how we treat difficult family members (as well as the spiritual resources we have in order to love the unlovely).
- 9 Lead group members in actually writing down specific, concrete actions. Urge them to aim for small, do-able actions. Say, "Let me pray for God to give us wisdom, and then let's take 3-5 minutes to jot down some ideas." Suggest some small things such as complimenting someone on their cooking, listening patiently to oft-retold stories, doing the dishes after the family meal, taking out the garbage...
- 10 Take time to consider how each of these three resources/actions can equip folks to love the unlovely. A note about the "peace of Christ": We usually think of "peace" as a subjective feeling, but this is not what the Bible has in mind here. We were God's enemies—but now, through Christ, we have been reconciled. We **have** peace with God—regardless of what we're experiencing. So, how does this objective reality that God's anger and opposition toward us is resolved, how does this help us love the unlovely? (eg. **we** once were unlovely!) An answer to how the Word of Christ can help us is found in today's "Application-Challenge"—don't overlook it. Finally, explore the power of thankfulness. Notice how offensive ingratitude is to God.
- 11 Pair-up and memorize this brief verse. Discuss what other desires vie for our attention (eg. being liked by my difficult relatives; being appreciated for my contribution to the meal; not being criticized for my weight or housekeeping, etc.)
- 12 Suggest (for example) that group members pair-up and commit to pray for the other person over the holidays. Choose some concrete action that can help folks actually succeed in "disciplining themselves for godliness" when together with difficult relatives (or even just tiresome kids!).