

Addicted to Approval?

The only way out of bondage is to begin seeking God's approval instead of man's approval.

An epidemic of insecurity is stealing the joy of life from many people in our society today and causing major problems in their relationships. I know the effect insecurity can have on lives because I experienced it myself. I know what it does to a person. Those who have been hurt badly as a result of abuse or severe rejection, as I have, often seek the approval of others to try to overcome their feelings of rejection and low self-esteem.

They suffer from those feelings and seek the approval of others to try to remove the pain. They are miserable if someone seems not to approve of them in any way or for any reason, and they are anxious about the disapproval until they feel they are once again accepted.

They derive their sense of worth and value from the acceptance of others rather than from who they are. That is why some people become approval addicts, always needing the approval of others to be happy and secure.

They are controlled by their addiction. Approval becomes something they believe they cannot live without. If they have it, they are happy and feel good about themselves and others, but if they don't, they are depressed and critical.

People who are approval addicts have abnormal concerns and continually worry about what others think of them.

Like any addict, insecure people look for a "fix" when they

get shaky. They need someone to reaffirm them and assure them that everything is all right and that they are acceptable.

The outside approval they seek dictates their behavior. They work to get approval or a compliment, and it feels good for a while, but then they find they need another and another. When they finally decide they want to make a change, they discover they are trapped and don't know how to break free from the addiction.

No amount of approval from others will keep a person permanently secure, but no one has to suffer from insecurity. There is a cure for approval addiction, and it comes from receiving a revelation of the truth of God's unconditional love. The Bible tells us, "You will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free" (John 8:32, The Amplified Bible).

Only one thing will set us free, and that is truth. Yet that is the one thing we have a hard time dealing with. We don't mind facing the truth about everyone else, but when it comes to facing the truth about ourselves, it is quite a different matter.

True freedom never comes until we fully realize that we don't need to struggle to get from man what God freely gives us: love, acceptance, approval, security, worth and value.

It was difficult for me to face my insecurity and say, "I am insecure, I don't like myself, and I need God's help and healing in this area of my life." But I went through the pain of facing truth and change, and it brought me freedom.

If I had refused to face the truth, I would still be in

bondage. I would still be trying to please other people.

The only way out of bondage is to begin seeking God's approval instead of man's approval. God wants our security to be in Him, not in things or other people. He is the only One we absolutely cannot do without.

He is our Refuge, our High Tower, our Strength, our Stronghold in times of trouble and our Hiding Place (see Ps. 9:9; 31:4; 32:7; 37:39; 46:11). Our worth, value, acceptance and approval come from Him. As long as we have those, we have the most valuable things in the world.

The Word of God says we can be secure through Jesus Christ (see Eph. 3:17). That means we are free to be ourselves and become all we can be in Him.

I encourage you to look away from all other distractions to Jesus, "the Leader and the Source of [your] faith" (Heb. 12:2). As you do, you will be lifted to new levels of freedom and become the confident, mature person you were created to be—one who can walk in the security of who you are in Christ.

Joyce Meyer is an internationally recognized minister and author of more than 60 books, including the best sellers *Beauty for Ashes* and *Battlefield of the Mind* (Warner Faith), and her most recent, *Approval Addiction* (Warner Faith, 2005). She is the founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. and the host of *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide.