

Respectable Sins: People-Pleasing

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[0 : 0 0] So we live in a world where we are constantly watched. People are always around us. People are always aware of what we're doing.

And everything is online now. So even if they're not with us physically, they can still watch what we're doing. And it's crazy the transition that's happened over the past 20 years. We went from having phones at home that could connect us to the world to having internet on a dial-up modem at home to having phones in our pockets that we can connect with the world at any time from anywhere we are to having phones with internet in our pockets that allow us not only to call people from anywhere, anytime, but to get online and send pictures and messages to everyone in the entire world from anywhere we are at any time.

The world has become incredibly connected, and it's just becoming more and more and more connected. and early next year it's going to take one step further when the Apple Watch comes out.

Technology is becoming more and more a part of our everyday lives. Soon it will be to the point where we will have the internet strapped to our wrists 24-7. And with this connectedness, there's this sense of people watching us, this sense of having to put on a performance for everyone in the world to see what we're doing.

You know, Time Magazine, after Apple announced the Apple Watch, they wrote an article about the advance of technology, specifically about the Apple Watch. And they were surprisingly negative on it.

[1 : 3 4] But they had a quote in that article that I thought was great. They said, The reality of living with an iPhone or any smart connected mobile device is that it makes reality feel just a little bit less real.

One gets over-connected to the point where one is apt to pay attention to the thoughts and opinions of distant anonymous strangers over those of loved ones who are in the same room. Ironically enough, experiences don't feel fully real until you've used your phone to make them virtual, and the world has congratulated you for doing so.

So, our lives, we can't just live our lives anymore. We have to live our lives for the likes on Facebook and Instagram. We can't just enjoy being around the people that we love.

We have to tweet about the food that we're eating while we are around the people that we love. Enjoyable experiences in life can't just be enjoyable for themselves. They're enjoyable because people approve of us doing them.

And as he talked about the advance of technology and how soon you'll be able to push a button on your wrist and send your heartbeat to your best friends.

[2 : 4 6] And he said, It's sort of scary, the idea, that teenage girls who are already obsessed with their body image will now be able to compare all their health stats with each other in real time. And the one line I think that stuck out from the Time magazine article more than any other, he said, Lives lived in public become performances.

Lives lived in public become performances. When we're obsessed with everyone else seeing us and thinking, What are they thinking as they see me live my life?

Are they going to give me the likes on Facebook? Or Instagram? Or Twitter? Or Pinterest? Or whatever other social media site you use? You stop living life as yourself.

You stop living life as God would want you to. And your life becomes a performance, seeking the biggest applause from the crowd that's watching you. And I think as humanity, this has always been a struggle, living lives for the approval of others.

But in today's world, that struggle has just been amplified. It's been put on a bigger stage because we are more connected than ever before and have more opportunities to show off our lives to everyone around us than ever before in history.

[4 : 0 6] I think for a lot of us, this whole idea of people-pleasing or living our lives for the approval of others or fear of man, we don't really think of it as a sin because it's just second nature to us.

And how could something so natural be sinful? The Bible says that at the root of all people-pleasing, at the root of all fear of man, is idolatry.

That we've taken God and replaced him with other people. And that it's fundamentally sinful. And so today we're going to look at people-pleasing and the fear of man.

And I want us to see three things about people-pleasing and the fear of man. I'll just use those two terms synonymously so I might jump back and forth between them. But I want us to see three things about it. The first one is that it's universal.

Literally everyone struggles with it at some point, in some way. And I think, you know, that's why we downplay it. Because I struggle with it, you struggle with it, he struggles with it, she struggles with it.

[5 : 0 4] How can I judge anyone else for struggling with it? Or how can I say it's wrong when everyone does it? And you notice we want it to be acceptable. Think about the names we use for it.

People-pleasing. It sounds so pleasant. We don't want to call it sin. So say people-pleasing. It's something that I can change by putting in a little extra effort.

The sin says, I can't change it through my effort. And so we change the terminology we use to refer to it so that we can make it a more acceptable practice.

Not even a sin, just acceptable practice for us to do in our lives. It's so universal. It's everywhere. And we change the label, we make it more respectable, and we make it easier for us to do.

And it's sometimes scary to me how everywhere it is. So the youth staff recently, we were talking with each other, and we were saying, we want to develop more of a culture of prayer among our youth.

[6 : 1 1] We want our youth to pray more. And so we as a youth staff decided, if we want the youth to pray more, we should be praying more. So we made an agreement with each other as the youth staff that when we get into the office in the morning, whenever we see each other, the first thing we do when we see each other is we pray together.

And we decided this a couple weeks ago, and we were all excited about it. And we're like, let's do this. And so the next day, I go into the office, and I see one of the other youth staff in there, and I'm like, oh no, I have to ask her to pray with me.

This is going to be awkward. I did it, but I paused. And thought, this is awkward. I'm afraid. What's she going to think of me when I say, let's pray together?

Because that's not something we're used to doing all the time. And think about how messed up this is. We both are Christians. We both work in a church. We both agreed already that we're going to pray together when we see each other, and I still find it awkward to go say, hey, let's pray together, because I'm afraid of what she's going to think of me.

It's so second nature to who we are. Even the apostles, Jesus' original followers, struggled with this issue.

[7 : 27] In today's passage, we see Cephas is another name for Peter. So Peter is acting and living out of the fear of man in today's passage.

Now, if you don't know much about Peter, he was one of Jesus' original followers. He was set up by Jesus as one of the original leaders of the church. And back then, the Jews and the Gentiles, the non-Jews, didn't really have any interaction.

And Peter was a Jew, and so he followed the Jewish laws and stuck with the commandments that had come in the Old Testament, and he was a good Jew.

Till one day, he received this message from God, directly from God, saying, Peter, I want you to go share the message of Jesus with the Gentiles.

And so Peter went and he obeyed. He shared the message of Jesus with the Gentiles. And he realized God has saved the Gentiles just like he has saved the Jews.

[8 : 34] There's no distinction or differentiation between the Jews and the Gentiles. And then he went on a journey to the city called Antioch, and when he was there, there were Jewish Christians and there were Gentile Christians, and he would eat with the Gentiles and the Jews and Gentiles would all eat together because in Jesus, they're not separated anymore.

They're brought together. And then the men from James came. Now James was the half-brother of Jesus. James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

James had some power. And when it says this group came from James, we don't know exactly what that means. It could have been that he directly sent them as a delegation to represent him.

It could be that they had sort of been a part of his church and they came. Like if someone here moved and went to like one of our sister churches in Taipei, and then they could say like, oh, these people came from Tobin.

Or it could be that these people came, said they were from James, and actually had no connection with him whatsoever, and they were just lying about it. Regardless of the situation, when they came, Peter changed his behavior in response to them being there.

[9 : 47] Now the scary thing is, if these people came and were lying about their connection with James, which in the book of Acts, James talks about people who went out from him saying they were from him but actually spread a totally different message than he was spreading.

That means Peter changed his behavior to try and accommodate what he thought James wanted him to do, but what he thought James wanted him to do and what James actually wanted him to do were totally different things.

So he was changing his behavior to please someone who actually didn't want him to do the thing that he was doing, potentially. And so these people came, and when Peter saw them, he became afraid and started changing his behavior.

He started eating only with the Jews, not with the Gentiles anymore. The text doesn't even specifically tell us that these people started teaching that he had to eat with the Jews.

It could have just been that they didn't eat with the Gentiles and he got afraid, what are they going to think with me if I keep eating with the Gentiles? Am I going to lose my status and position in the church?

[11 : 00] Am I going to lose my ability to influence the Jews and draw people towards Jesus? Is James going to get upset with me if he hears that I've been eating with the Gentiles?

These thoughts went around and around in his head and he realized, I need to change what I am doing so that I can fit in so that I can be accepted. And when Paul saw what was going on, he said, that is absolutely not okay.

He used a word to describe James' behavior, a word that Jesus reserved for the people he didn't like, a word called hypocrisy. Originally, this word comes from a Greek word that refers to wearing a mask in a play or pretending to be someone that you're not.

Paul's basically saying Peter was pretending to be something other than what he was so that he could fit in and be accepted. Peter, this pillar of the church, Peter, this original disciple of Jesus was afraid of what people would think about him and changed his behavior to be accepted by them.

Everyone is susceptible to people pleasing and the fear of man. Everyone is susceptible to changing how we act and what we do so that other people will think better of us.

[12 : 24] And it's not just something that was there 2,000 years ago. It's so common even in the world today. How many of us want to impress our bosses? We'll show up in the morning before the boss gets there so that he can see we're a good worker.

We'll skip lunch, work very hard so the boss can see us. And then we'll stay in the office till just after the boss leaves so that he knows we care about our job, we care about the company, we're there for him.

But really we just want him to think good things about us so we can get raises and promotions. Or we'll go to school and we'll pretend to be smarter than we are or cooler than we are because we know that the kids at school would never accept us if they knew who we really were.

we change our behavior to be accepted. It's a universal issue. This issue of people pleasing, this sin issue of people pleasing is one that is universally applicable.

The second thing I want us to see about people pleasing and the fear of man is that it is fundamentally opposed to the gospel. You notice Peter or yeah, Peter's eating with only the Jews not the Gentiles.

[13 : 43] Paul comes, he opposes Peter to his face. Paul sees that Peter is acting out of fear of other people not out of a love for God or out of an understanding of the gospel.

The gospel says our acceptance before Jesus is unconditional. It's not based on the nationality that we're born into. It's not based on our ability to keep the law.

It's based on what Christ has done for us on the cross and what Christ has done for us on the cross alone. And Peter by eating with only Jews was basically saying there's a hierarchy in salvation.

Yeah, you Gentiles, you can be Christians but the Jews are the real Christians. The Jews are the ones that God loves more. The ones who follow the law have a special standing with God that you don't get unless you're born into this people group or this nation.

And Paul says, Peter, your behavior is not in line with the truth of the gospel. The truth that the gospel preaches and teaches is fundamentally opposed to the behavior that you're living out and saying is in line with it.

[15 : 00] And so Paul opposes Peter. There's this smackdown between these greats of the faith. But you notice the way that Paul approaches the problem. He doesn't say, hey Peter, I wish you wouldn't act like that.

I'm upset with the way you're acting. Because what would that do? That would say, Paul wants me to act this way, James' people want me to act this way, who do I want happier with me? And it brings it back to an issue of fear of man and people pleasing again.

Really, even if Paul had said, Peter, I don't like that you're acting this way and Peter had chosen to do the right thing, he still would have done it out of a fear of other people, out of a desire to impress people.

But when Paul comes, he says, Peter, you are acting out of line with the truth of the gospel. What you are doing, it's not that I don't like it, it's that God disapproves of it.

What you are doing, it's not that it's uncomfortable for me, it's that it's sinful, it's that it's teaching false truths through your actions and leading other people into that false truth as well.

[16 : 11] Peter was, yeah, his actions were saying, God shows, God plays favorites, so I'm going to play favorites too. And the thing is, Peter knew and understood the gospel.

His issue wasn't, I don't understand who Jesus is or what Jesus has done. Paul doesn't come to him and say, Peter, let's get your theology straight. He comes to him and says, Peter, here's what you believe, here's what that should look like in your life and they don't line up.

Peter's actions were not in line with Peter's beliefs. And because of that, he was acting in sin, he was play acting. And Paul calls him back to the truth of the gospel.

And again, I think this is so universal. You believe one thing, you live another. I believe one thing, I live another. Right?

Think about it. Like, it can be so easy to sit here in church and listen to a sermon on how God loves everyone, rich and poor. How everyone is brothers and sisters in Christ regardless of how much money we have in the bank.

[17 : 24] And then we go out after church and throughout the week, the only people we eat with are the rich ones. Because that's who our rich friends want us to eat with. We don't want our millionaire friends to see that we're eating with people in poverty.

Or if we do, we're doing it out of charity and a desire to help them. Not out of an understanding that they're our brothers and sisters in Christ. Not out of an understanding that we are fundamentally equals in God.

We let what other people think about us control our behavior. fear. And it's fundamentally opposed to the truth of the gospel. So we've seen fear of man and people pleasing is universal.

It's fundamentally opposed to the gospel. But what's the solution? The solution for fear of man, the solution for people pleasing, is a bigger understanding of who God is.

the only solution for the fear of man is a bigger view of God in our lives. See, Peter's fundamental problem in his behavior here in this passage is not belief.

[18 : 41] We already covered that. He believed the right things about God. His problem is a problem of fear. He feared what these people thought about him more than he feared what God thought about him.

Peter sort of has a recurring issue with this throughout his life. On the night that Jesus was betrayed, they were at dinner, like Tobin was talking about earlier. They're at dinner.

Jesus says, you're all gonna turn away from me. And Peter says, no way. Even if I have to die, I will never turn away from you. A couple hours later, he's out there and this little servant girl comes up to him.

She's like, didn't I see you as Jesus? And he's like, no! Three times. A couple hours after saying, Jesus, I would never deny you, he does it three times out of fear of a little servant girl.

Peter is operating out of fear, not out of the truth that he knows and believes. And I think with us, it's the same thing. Our problems with obedience a lot of times don't come out of wrong beliefs.

[19 : 50] They come out of fear. You know, when I was in high school, I would sit at lunch with my friends and we'd be talking and hanging out and every day I saw this one kid across the cafeteria sitting by himself at this table.

And I was in a big school so sitting by yourself at a table in the cafeteria was kind of an accomplishment because it was squished. And I would look over there every day and I would think, this kid's probably pretty lonely.

This kid probably needs a friend. But then, the other kids at my table would also notice this kid. And they'd say things like, you know, he's probably sitting over there alone because he's a serial killer.

And now, obviously, I didn't believe that this kid was a serial killer. I also didn't want people saying that Eric is probably a serial killer. And so, I learned out of fear of other people to stay away from that kid.

Even though I knew this kid's probably lonely, this kid probably needs friends, I let the fear of what other people would say control me and I stayed away from him. Or how about when we have friends who aren't Christians and we say, they need to know about Jesus.

[21 : 02] It's the loving thing to do to tell them about Jesus. If what we believe about Jesus is true, the loving thing to do for our friends is to tell them about him. But what are they going to think about me if they find out that I actually believe that?

How are they going to respond? Is that going to make them mad at me? We get afraid and we don't say anything. Or, we know that it's wrong to oppress the poor.

But our boss wants us to make a deal at work that will make our company millions of dollars by exploiting the vulnerabilities of the poor. We fundamentally know the truth that it's wrong to oppress the poor, but we're afraid that if we oppose our boss, he could let us go.

He'll go out and find someone else who will make that deal and make the money for the company. And how do we act? How often do we go along with that deal even when we know that it's wrong out of a fear of what our boss desires of us?

Our issue is an issue of fear. We fear other people too much. We fear God too little. And the solution is to get a bigger vision and picture of who God is.

[22 : 25] And when we get that, it'll free us from being afraid of what other people think of us. There's a counselor, a Christian counselor in the States named Ed Welch. And he says, anything that erodes the fear of God will intensify the fear of man in our lives.

Anything that erodes the fear of God will intensify the fear of man in our lives. we need to be intentional about building up our understanding of who God is, building up a healthy and proper fear of God in our lives.

Now this idea of the fear of the Lord is not very popular today. We want God to be friendly and cuddly and cute and we do not want God to be terrifying.

And so we sort of try to avoid this issue, avoid talking about the fear of the Lord. We try and redefine it and say, fear of the Lord means reverent awe and obedience.

And while yes, those are important parts of the fear of the Lord, if you look biblically at the concept of the fear of the Lord and what happens when people in the Bible interact with God, reverent awe barely scratches the surface of what's actually going on there.

[23 : 49] So I want to go through a couple passages in the Bible where people have encounters with God to show us what type of reactions they have, what the fear of the Lord looks like in a concrete manner in their life.

so that hopefully we can work on developing the fear of God in our lives. The first passage I want us to look at is in Isaiah 6. So the prophet Isaiah, it's the year that King Uzziah dies, and the prophet Isaiah is in the temple, and he has this vision, and he sees the Lord seated on the throne.

And there are angels around God. Now in other passages in the Bible, we see that when men come into contact with angels, they're so terrified that they want to fall down and worship the angels themselves.

But the angels here are in God's presence. And every angel has six wings, and God's presence is so overwhelming that the angels need to use two wings to cover their faces to protect them from how amazing God is.

And then they need to use two wings to cover their feet because God's presence is so overwhelming and amazing. And Isaiah sees this vision, and he says, when God speaks, his voice shakes the foundation of the building that he is in.

[25 : 10] And Isaiah doesn't go, whoa, cool, I have seen God. I should write a best-selling book about this. He doesn't say, hey, God, I have a question for you.

You know, my retirement account isn't doing too well. Explain that to me. No, Isaiah looks and he sees God and his response is, oh, crap, I'm going to die. His exact words are, woe is me, for I'm a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips and my eyes have seen the king.

When Isaiah comes face to face with God, he fears for his life. He is terrified. He is shaking. He thinks he is never going to wake up again tomorrow because God's presence is so amazing and overwhelming.

That's just one example. Maybe he overreacted. Let's go to Job. For those of you who know nothing about Job, Job was a man in the Old Testament and at the start of the story of Job, God says, Job is the most righteous man in the entire world.

Literally the best person alive. He is the most righteous man by God's standard. And Satan comes in and tests Job and tries to get him to turn away from God.

[26 : 32] He takes away all of his wealth, kills all of his children, and gives him a painful disease that he can't cure. And Job's friends come and they spend most of the book of Job just talking about why would this happen to Job.

His friends are all sure that it's karma, that he's done something terrible to deserve this. And Job the entire time is like, let me make my case to God. Let me tell God why I don't deserve this.

Because God knows. And then at the end of the book, in chapter 38, God steps in. And he gives Job the response that Job has been waiting for the entire time.

God's response lasts for four chapters. And he starts out with a question for Job. Hey Job, where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?

It's gotta be an awkward moment. I think if I was Job, I'd just feel like, I'm done. I'm out. Job lasts two chapters of questions before he says anything and God doesn't let him off the hook there.

[27 : 38] He goes on for another two chapters just explaining how big and powerful and amazing he is. I'll give you a summary of the first chapter, some of the highlights, and then you can read the other three chapters for yourself.

In the first chapter, God tells us that he sets where the shores would be for the ocean. He says, hey waves, you stop here and they listen. He then tells us that he commands the sun to rise and it obeys him.

Hey son, get up. Okay. I don't have that power and none of you have that power. God has that power. It says that he prepares storehouses of snow and hail to send to the earth.

He just has it ready to go. Sends it when he wants to. He sends rain on the desert. If any of us had that power we would be billionaires. God has that power.

He controls the paths of the stars. He says, Orion, you go here and he does. And he gives food to the animals. He provides prey for the lions and the ravens.

[28 : 44] That's one chapter out of four of God explaining to Job how amazing he is. And when we reach the end of the four chapters of explanation we get Job's response.

This is the response from the best man alive when he has encountered God. I had heard of you by the hearing of my ear but now my eyes sees you therefore I despise myself and I repent in dust and ashes.

When the most righteous man alive sees how big and powerful God is he says I hate myself because I am so much worse than you. I am so much smaller than you are.

I can't I can't bear myself. But that's the Old Testament. What about Jesus? Isn't he cuddly and cute and friendly and walking around with a sheep in his arms all the time?

Let's look at the New Testament. Luke chapter 5. Jesus is teaching and the crowds are pushing around him and he's backing up and he gets to the edge of the lake and he can't go any further back.

[29 : 53] So he climbs into a boat and he has them push out a little bit and he keeps teaching and at one point during his teaching he turns to the fisherman and he says hey stick your net down over the side of the boat to try and catch some fish and the fishermen are like you know Jesus we've been out here all night long and haven't really caught anything but whatever we'll do it and they start pulling up the net and it's so full of fish that the net is breaking and their friends have to come help them get all the fish and one of the fishermen a guy named Peter turns to Jesus and falls down on his knees and says get away from me Lord for I am a sinful man.

He sees that Jesus has power over the ability to catch fish and he's so terrified that he no longer wants to be in his presence because he recognizes how big and powerful Jesus is.

Or how about Mark chapter 4 Jesus and the disciples many of the disciples by the way were fishermen so they had plenty of experience in boats they're on a boat and there's a big storm and the boat is filling with water and the disciples are terrified this boat is going to sink and Jesus is napping and so the disciples go wake up Jesus and they're like Jesus don't you care that we're going to drown?

So Jesus gets up he goes and rebukes the wind and the waves he says peace be still and they do the wind stops the sea becomes smooth as glass and something that I love the disciples it says before when the storm was happening they were afraid because they thought they were going to die and then Jesus stops the storm and they're safe and then they become greatly afraid the storm is gone and they are more afraid because they look at this guy on the boat with them and they say who is this guy?

the wind and the ocean listen to him the wind and the ocean obey his commandments everywhere in the Bible that people have encounters with God they are terrified because of how big God is everywhere in the Bible that people have encounters with God their lives are transformed because they recognize God is bigger than I ever imagined before and the Bible tells us that one day every single one of us is going to stand before God one day every one of us is going to see him just like Isaiah did and Job did and Jesus' disciples had glimpses of but I think most of us don't live our lives with that fact in mind most of us are more concerned about what our boss or our spouse or our children or our friends think about us today than we are about what God is going to think about us on that day we shrink down God but God is not going to be shrunk

[33 : 24] God is big God is powerful God is in charge and again I think this idea can be scary for us of the fear of God but really it's not because if you look back at the story in Luke chapter 5 when Peter falls down before Jesus and he says get away from me because I'm a sinful man Jesus' response to him I think is the same as Jesus' response to us he says fear not now that you've seen how big and powerful I am I want you to know something about me I love you I'm for you not against you and I've proven that by giving my life for you I'm not looking for you to slip up so I can catch you and get you no I love you I want what's best for you you don't need to tremble in fear because I'm your father

I'm your friend but before he says that to us we have to come to a point where we recognize how big and powerful he is and when we come to that point where we realize how big and powerful God is it frees us from fearing anything else when I recognize that the God who rules the universe who sends the sun to get up in the morning and it listens to him is for me not against me that nothing can separate me from his love not my boss not my spouse not my parents not my children not my teachers at school not the friends that I eat lunch with nothing can separate me from his love I'm free from living for their approval I'm free to live in obedience to him and obedience to him alone and yet so often we shrink him down we avoid seeing how big he is and we become obsessed with what other people think about us because we've forgotten how big our God is there's a pastor in the states named Francis Chan and he says if we don't stare at God we spend our time staring at lesser things namely ourselves we need to be intentional about looking at who God is looking at how big

God is developing a fear of God in our lives because if we don't our lives become focused on ourselves we are the biggest thing that we can see and when we are the biggest thing that we can see the people around us have disproportionate power over our ability to live our lives for God I know some of you may be thinking Eric you've lost it like these accounts in the Bible they're obviously blown out of proportion God's not really that big God's not really that powerful but here's the thing this is the picture the Bible consistently draws of who God is and if the Bible is lying to us about how big God its main character is and we can't trust it on that point what can we trust it for?

if we don't believe what the Bible says about who God is then why are we here? why are we singing songs about a powerless and weak God?

why are we identifying ourselves with a God who's weak at best fake at worst but if the Bible is true if what the Bible says about God is true then we're wasting our lives by ignoring the truth that it contains we're wasting our lives by believing in our minds that God is big but living with our lives as if he's small and pathetic we need to cultivate a fear of God in our lives we need to have a bigger more accurate picture of who God is and that's the only thing that will free us from fear of man and people pleasing so I have a few takeaway points and questions that we can think about this week as we go throughout our weeks the first when you're at work or school or with friends ask yourself who do I fear more this person or God do I believe that this person has more control over my future than God does do I believe that my overall well-being is more dependent on this person than on God and when you find yourself in a situation where you are acting out of fear of man where you are acting to try and please the people around you ask yourself what am I believing wrongly about God that's leading me to act this way what am I believing wrongly about God that's leading me to act this way another huge thing that we can do is spend time this week in our Bibles just learning about how big God is it's written throughout the

[38 : 58] Bible that God is huge the Bible starts with the story of him creating the world and it culminates with him with the story of him renewing the world and in between there's story after story of him being in control of him working in situations and through situations that you look at at first and you're like that's hopeless and then you remember oh wait God is big God is in control and as you come to parts in the Bible where people have these interactions with God ask yourselves some questions how many of these people when they have these interactions with God approach it casually nonchalantly no big deal how many of these people when they have these interactions with God are terrified for their lives I'll give you a hint the second one is way bigger than the first group how many of the people that have these interactions and encounters with God remain unchanged after their encounter and what about God and his bigness makes them react the way that they do until we fear God properly we will always be controlled by what other people think of us by what other people want from us the fact that all of us have this natural tendency towards people pleasing is a sign that we don't properly understand who

God is that it's not impacting our lives like it should be but once we fear God properly we'll be free from caring about what others think and needing to impress them at the expense of obeying God. God, there's this great saint back in the day named Saint Augustine. He has a quote that I think sort of summarizes this issue very well. He says, "God, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless, trying to please people, trying to keep people satisfied, serving a million different bosses who have control over us. Our hearts are restless until they rest in you." Let's pray, Father, we thank you for your love. We thank you that you are big and that you love us and offer us an opportunity to know you. We thank you that you are powerful and in control and that when we fear you, we don't need to fear anything else and that when we fear you, we get to know that you love us and you are for us and you're not out to get us.

God, I pray this week that we would develop a bigger view of you that we would fall in love with a proper understanding of who you are that we would be free from living to please others because we know that you are for us and that nothing can separate us from your love. God, we love you in Jesus' name. Amen. Yin