

THE APPEARANCE OF APPROVAL

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS

Scripture: John 7:1-24

- God's timing reflects His will, not ours.
- Seeking the world's approval will cost you God's.
- Keeping up our appearances keeps us from trusting Jesus.

GET TALKING

Summer is a time of community celebrations and outdoor concerts. Share an experience or highlight you'll never forget. What made it so memorable?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read through John 7:1-24

1. In John 7:8-9 we see that Jesus was completely in step with God's timing, and God's will. This is something that we often find difficult to live out. Read Romans 5:6-8. When have you found it difficult to accept God's timing? What truths in this passage can help you in your struggles with embracing God's timing in your life?
2. God doesn't want us just to know what He reveals to us in the Bible, He wants us to live it out. Refer to John 7:14-24, and read 1 John 2:3-6; 5:1-5, and Romans 3:19-24. What contrasts do you see between the Pharisees view of God's law in John 7 and God's Word to us in the 1 John and Romans passages? When do you find it difficult to keep your motivation where it should be? How do you keep a pure heart toward obedience that God desires?
3. Read Philippians 3:7-9. What was the driving force in the Apostle Paul's life? What things in this world are holding you back from completely trusting Jesus and living in His love from the inside out?

PRAYER

Pastor Bob reminded us that "seeking the world's approval will cost you God's." The easiest path for us to take is to focus on how we act and appear to the people around us, and to interact with people based on outward appearances. It's a harder path to come in humility before God with our "real self" and embrace our need for transformation from the inside out by the power of the Holy Spirit. Spend some time quietly in God's presence allowing Him to show you where you are not fully trusting Jesus' love and forgiveness in your life. (1 John 1:9) Then, spend time together praising God for His amazing gift of salvation in Jesus that has set us free from our sin. (1 John 3:1 & 4:10-11)