

Shortly after I got offered my very first full-time job (Program Director at Camp Onomia Outdoor Ministries), I contacted a person I highly respected. She was a long-time program director I had worked for the summer before. I told her the news of my new job and then asked them for some advice. She then told me something that shocked me. I was not prepared for what I heard and did not quite know what to do with it at first:

“Eric, not everyone is going to like you.”

“Excuse me?!? I’m a fun person” is what I thought. She went on to say that with all those different personalities, you are not going to make everyone happy. That did make some sense to me, but I still did not like it. I wanted to be liked. I wanted everyone to be happy. But the ultimate danger of that attitude, though, is that you will drive yourself crazy trying to please everyone. And in the attempt to please everyone you will lose your true sense of purpose and thus become unfaithful to your calling. In a ministry setting, instead of serving and glorifying God, your focus will be on how people are feeling about you. Soon, “getting everyone to like you” will become your new god.

Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. [Galatians 1:10]

As a follower of Jesus, there is only one person you ought to be trying to please. That’s right, it is Jesus. But sadly, many in the church are only interested in how they look to others. They are afraid to take a particular stand on social issues because it might not be popular with people close to them. Some are afraid to call out sin because it makes them sound judgmental. Some are afraid to hold fellow brothers and sisters in Christ accountable because of friction it may cause. But all of these things are necessary for the Christian in order to build up the church and strengthen the faith of others. But more importantly, these are done in obedience to God.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus sinners are saved from eternal condemnation. He is Lord and now his followers live in joyful obedience to him. Pleasing people for the sake of pleasing people will ultimately get you nowhere. But pleasing Jesus is an act of worship for the one who saves you from death. Making people happy now is a fleeting endeavor and something that will not last. Being obedient to Jesus so others may know the joy and peace that is him,

well, that is forever. So, if my faith offends you, all praise and glory to God because it is an indication I am doing something right. Amen.