

Life of Joseph

Lessons in Humility, Leadership and Forgiveness

Approval

- In our study of the Life of Joseph we have seen Jacob give a prophetic message to his sons as he was about to die [Gen 49:1-27].
- Note that Jacob does not give a warm and fuzzy message of approval to his sons.
- The message was brutally honest, but his sons were blessed by it [Gen 49:28].
- In the world today, emphasis is put on the importance of parents making sure their children have their approval so they will have a sense of self-worth.
- In this study we will look at what the Bible has to say about approval and its proper place in the life of the believer.
- We must be careful about what we approve.
 - We should not approve the words of foolish men [Psalm 49:12-13].
 - We should not approve evil or look on wickedness with favor [Hab 1:13].
 - We should not approve the deeds of our ancestors who committed evil [Luke 11:48-50].
 - We should approve wise decisions made by the leadership of our church [Acts 6:1-5].
 - We should not stand by and approve the persecution of the brethren [Acts 22:19-20].
 - We should not give approval to those who do what is not proper [Rom 1:28-32].
 - We should know God's will and approve the things that are essential [Rom 2:18].
 - We should use discernment to approve the things that are excellent [Phil 1:9-10].
 - If we approve something in faith, we should not condemn ourselves [Rom 14:22].
- We must be careful about where and how we seek approval.
 - We should focus on receiving the approval of God, not the approval of men [John 12:41-43].
 - We do not receive God's approval by commending ourselves [2 Cor 10:17-18].
 - We do not receive God's approval by withholding justice or defrauding someone [Lam 3:34-36].
 - We must be diligent students of the word of God to present ourselves approved [2 Tim 2:15].
 - Though diligence is required, it is by our faith that we gain the approval of God [Heb 11:1-2, 39].
 - When we serve Christ in the Spirit, we have the approval of God and believers [Rom 14:17-18].
 - We should prayerfully consider whether or not what we are doing is approved by God [Judges 18:5-6; Isa 36:10].
 - If we know that God approves of us, we should have a cheerful heart [Ecc 9:7] and act boldly knowing that He sees our heart [1 Thess 2:3-4].

- When we are faced with trials and utilize our faith to receive God's approval, we will also receive an eternal reward [James 1:12].
- We should be able to recognize those approved by God [Rom 16:10; 1 Cor 11:19], we should be more concerned about what is right than appearing approved [2 Cor 13:7].
- Conclusions
 - The approval that matters for believers comes from God, not from men.
 - God approves of us when we diligently seek to know Him and rely upon Him in faith.
 - When we are approved by God we might also find ourselves approved by men, but man's approval is not a good measure of our walk.
 - Even if we think we are walking in a manner approved by God, we should always ask God to give us the assurance that we are doing His will.
 - If we are confident that our heart is right and we are doing what is approved by God, we should move forward with boldness and not allow anyone to condemn us, including ourselves.
 - When we endure trials in the strength and wisdom of God, we will receive God's approval and a specific eternal reward – the crown of life.
 - When we walk in a manner approved by God, we will approve of the things that please Him.