

## WEEK 7

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with a group or Bible class.

Applause is captivating ... meaning it can take you captive. When you live for the acceptance of the crowd you wind up in a very crowded prison. The truth is you cannot live free as long as you let others decide who you will be.

- 1 Proverbs 29:25 warns against being afraid of what others think. Why is it a trap to live for the approval of others?
- **2 EVERYBODY STRUGGLES** *with approval addiction.* Why is "approval addiction" so common, and why is it such a difficult addiction to defeat?
- 3 NOBODY WINS *the people-pleasing race*. Read Galatians 1:10. You will never find happiness trying to keep everybody happy. Why is it impossible to win the people-pleasing race? How can trying to please the crowd be displeasing to God? (Give some examples from the Bible.)
- 4 You will always be in bondage if you live your life for a blessing. What did Rick mean by "live your life **from** a blessing instead of **for** a blessing"? How would it free us if we did that? How easy or difficult is that for you to consistently do?

- SOMEBODY PROVED how much you are worth. "Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love" (Ephesians 1:4, MSG) What has God done to prove our worth (see Romans 5:8)? How should what He thinks of us shape how we deal with what others think of us?
- 6 ANYBODY FREED by love can love anybody. You cannot be a lover and a pleaser because applause is always conditional; but when you leave the prison of people-pleasing you are free to give unearned, undeserved, unconditional love. How does being free from people-pleasing actually empower us to love them better?

ACTION STEP Approval addiction comes at a high price (pressure to conform our values, unwillingness to risk intimacy, eroding self-esteem, and waning willpower to stand with the few against the many). Which of these do you struggle with the most? Ask for God's help to fully receive His love. When you become convinced that you matter to God it will not matter what others think. This week immerse yourself in reminders of God's love for you and listen for the applause of heaven (Ephesians 1:4; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:19; John 3:16 — What other verses come to mind?). Receive the love of God; believe that you are valued. It will set you free!