



The Good News

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Should I care what others think of me?

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As human beings, it's in our nature to want to fit in with others around us. Not only does it satisfy a human desire to be accepted by our peers, but we also observe that it is often not pleasant when one stands out from the crowd or is rejected by peers. They are sometimes ridiculed and mocked, sometimes even shunned and hated. So, it makes sense that, generally, humans want to be accepted by those around them. However, what happens when those around us try to pressure us to do or say things that we know we should not do? As people who seek to serve God, we know we are in the world, but we are not to be of the world. This means that our values, our thoughts, our words, and our actions are not to mirror those who are of the world who care only for their own desires. Often, however, seeking to serve God faithfully will conflict and stand out with the pursuits and ways of our society and our peer group. This leads to the question, Should I care what others think about me?

If I desire to serve God, I must face the reality that the things I do and say (and don't do and say) will not be conducive to being friends with those in the world. If I live as God commands, practicing self-control in my deeds and words, others are going to notice, and they may not like me anymore. This is the reality of being a Christian in this world. Not only should we not allow what others think about us to change us, we shouldn't apologize for living as God wants us to live. We shouldn't apologize if others consider us "radical", "extreme", or "old-fashioned". Paul says in **II Tim. 1:12**, "*For this reason [teaching the Gospel] I also suffer these things [persecution]; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.*" It didn't bother Paul personally when people didn't like what he said and how he lived. He recognized that people of the world will often feel threatened when they see and

hear the servant of the Lord living faithfully. Paul says that he is not ashamed...why? Because the only One whose thoughts I must care about are the Lord's.

So, should I not care at all about what others think of me? The only consideration I should give for what others think about me is whether I am setting a loving, humble, and godly example and living a faithful life. If I am fulfilling those, and my peer group does not like me as a result, then so be it. I know that God is with me. And as Paul says in **Rom. 8:31**, "*If God is for us, who can be against us?*". Perhaps the question in the title of this article is the wrong question. Perhaps the question we should be asking is, Is my self-worth and self-confidence based upon what others think of me? Or is my self-worth and self-confidence directly tied into what God thinks of me? In the Last Day, my friends, my peer group, and my society will be forced to bow the knee to Jesus and answer for their words, deeds, and thoughts. So whose thoughts are the only One's that matter?

We consider these things for this purpose: there are so many young people in our society who are obviously being taught, either explicitly or implicitly, that what others think and say about you are all that matter. Young people are suffering extreme depression and some even commit suicide, all because of what others think. We should NEVER allow ANYONE in this world to have that much influence on us! Not our teachers, not our classmates, not our co-workers, not our friends, and not even our family. We are here to serve God FIRST. We care what He thinks FIRST. If others don't like it, if others are so threatened by it that they taunt us and shun us, that's fine...that's all the more focused we will be on being the example and servant God wants us to be. For as Paul says in **Rom. 8:37** "*Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*"