



# The Struggle Is Real

## Week 2 – The Approval Battle

### Discussion Guide

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All of us want and need approval. We strive for perfection or we overspend to “keep up with the Jones,” all in order to impress others. Some of us are “lone wolves” or rebels, claiming we don’t care what our peers think. Some of us boast and brag, hoping to convince our family or coworkers of our worth.

It should be a relief to know that God has already given us His complete approval and love. He has chosen us to be on His team! Let’s focus on helping each other understand that approval and learn how to apply it directly to our lives and our approval struggles.

#### Jump Start

1. Share your typical M.O. for dealing with the need for approval. Do you think this is based on a lack or a surplus of unconditional love and approval in your past?
2. *We can’t earn God’s approval.* Read Ephesians 2:8-9. What are some things that you do in an effort to earn God’s approval? What does this verse say about those efforts? What does make us right with God?
3. *We can’t escape God’s approval.* Read Romans 5:6-8. Describe a season of your life when you felt you had gone too far, or felt that you could never be God’s friend or in His family. Discuss the promise of these verses.
4. *We can experience God’s approval.* What practical ways can you share for resting in God’s acceptance and approval, knowing His approval is enough? How might it help you resist your existing approval strategy (shopping, preening, boasting, rebelling, overdoing)? How can we reframe our perspective to focus on our worth in Jesus Christ when we feel as though we lack the approval of others?
5. **This Week:** Read Matthew 3:16-17. Some of us need to consider baptism as our next step. It’s a fresh start, and one of the first examples Jesus gave us. If you have a story about your baptism, share it with the group. If you are considering taking this next step, ask the group for support and prayer.

## **Keep Going**

### **Read Galatians 1:10.**

- Who matters most? Who, personally, do you feel pressured to impress?
- How can you apply the concept of “an audience of One” to your life this week?

### **Read Romans 8:31.**

- In your life, is someone else’s voice louder than God’s?
- How would knowing God is “for you” help you when someone is “against” you?