



# THE EXHORTER

---

*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

July 18, 2021

## Jump Start #2860

---

*Hebrews 11:39 "And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised."*

Approval—that’s something that’s built in our inner workings. Approval is important. Little children need approval. They need to hear it. Our job performance meetings are about the approval of the company we work for. We need to hear it. We need approval in our marriages. We express it by saying, “I love you.”

The actor or the singer on stage, often advanced in age, no longer needing the money they will be paid, continues to perform because of the love of the audience. It’s an approval thing. And, when approval is missing, some will seek it in unhealthy places.

For the young person, it might be in a gang that engages in illegal activities. The gang will accept him and make him feel wanted, something that is missing at home. For others, it’s through immoral sexual encounters. They want to be wanted, even if it means being used and taken advantage of. For others, it’s bending the rules to make sales so the company bosses will believe that he is an asset and rising rock star in the corporation. And, for the preacher, it may be using the pulpit to be a stand up comic or tickling the ears of the audience, as the apostle said, to become the brotherhood’s favorite.

Wanting approval and wanting to be loved can cause a person to cross some lines that should not be crossed. One of the first things to go as one pays the price to be loved by all, is convictions. Anytime one draws a line in the sand, someone will not like that. In our times, no lines are what people want. They want a church that has no lines. They want a Bible that draws no lines. They want a God that has no lines. Case in point, a major church in our area is having a celebration of homosexuality. They are excited. Everyone who leans that direction is invited to come. Accepted. Approved. Welcomed. Come as you are and stay as you are.

**(OVER)**

I've known churches that had "bring your pet" day and the clergy would bless your dog or cat. I'd sure hate to be the janitor after that event. Approved. Accepted. Welcomed. That's what folks are after

Our passage is about the greatest approval, that from God. The men and women of faith, that are highlighted in chapter 11, often struggled, suffered and had to make some hard choices. Moses turned his back on Egypt to be approved by God. Abraham left his homeland to be approved by God. For Noah, it was being inside that ark.

Here are some things we must remember:

First, if you seek the approval of God, you will be doing right. God must be first. If the world loves you, if you have the world by the tail and you are not approved by God, none of that matters. In a pointed question Jesus asked, 'What does it profit if you gain the whole world and lose you own soul?' Putting God before others will adjust our attitudes, motives and honesty. If you have God, you have the best.

Second, if you seek the approval of God, you will lose the approval of others. Some don't like God. Some don't like the direction God takes us. And, it is at intersection, between God and family, or God and friends, that our faith or lack of it comes out. If we are more interested in family, we'll do what they say. If we are more interested in what our friends are doing, we will leave God behind. But if our faith is strong, we will stand with the Lord.

Third, our approval by God is not intended to make us arrogant, boastful or proud. We are not the superstars, God is. We are not so great that God can't get along without us. It's just the opposite. We need God. We are all saved by the precious grace of the Lord. We all come to the Lord the same way, broken and in need of the blood of Jesus. We are all equals in the kingdom of God. Sometimes we preachers get more attention that we ought to and sometimes it may seem like the kingdom revolves around us preachers, but that's not the way it is to be. Every saint, every soul in that kingdom is vital. We all add our own touches and talents to help the kingdom grow. If not careful, we preachers can act like we can walk on water. Be careful...you'll soon find out that you'll be all wet. The attention needs to be pointed to the Lord.

Fourth, approved by God helps us get through long days and dark valleys. We are a people that are Heaven Bound. Some days we wonder. Some days we feel defeated. Some days are tough. People can be toxic. The devil won't leave us alone. Problems can mount. Pressure can be intense. Rung out and weary is how we can feel. But knowing the God of Heaven recognizes what you are doing, He hears your prayers and He approves of what you are doing sure brightens the darkest days. We are headed to Heaven. Someday we will see the face of God. It doesn't matter what they say about me at work. God doesn't feel that way. I belong to Him. It doesn't matter what my family thinks, I belong to God.

Approval—it's important. Make sure you are approved by God.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)

