

WHAT IS YOUR STANDING WITH GOD?

Note to the speaker:

Help audience to appreciate importance of obtaining Jehovah's approval and not succumbing to fear of man. In a warm and encouraging manner, show how we can acquire and maintain a good standing with God

WHY OUR STANDING WITH GOD IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE (4 min.)

Each of us should be concerned about our standing with God

We all are accountable to him (Ro 14:10b, 12)

Parents are accountable for the way they raise their children

Youths will render an account for their actions (Ec 11:9)

We must answer for the way we use time, energy, resources

To acquire and maintain a good standing with God, each person must work to gain and retain God's approval

We must learn to trust in Jehovah, whose approval will bring lasting benefits (Pr 3:5, 6; 29:25)

Although we are not insensitive to standards and customs of society that govern such things as proper dress and good manners, we do not succumb to fear of man and compromise where human customs conflict with God's will or standards (*w05* 1/1 30)

IMITATE THOSE WHO ENJOYED AN APPROVED STANDING WITH GOD (21 min.)

In Bible times, a 'great cloud of witnesses,' men and women, sought the approval of God rather than that of men (Heb 12:1)

They maintained a good standing with him by demonstrating faith (Heb 11:1, 2)

There are also many modern-day examples of Christian men and women who have done the same

Consider some examples past and present

Abel sought to worship God acceptably and gain Jehovah's approval even though his parents had rebelled against God (Ge 4:3, 4; Heb 11:4; *it-1* 15)

So today, many in unbelieving families gain Jehovah's approval by their steadfastness in true worship (*w03* 12/1 25; *w99* 2/1 8; *yb04* 50; *yb98* 99-100)

If you are facing family opposition because of pursuing true worship, rest assured that your faithful endurance does not go unnoticed by God (Mt 10:34-39)

Enoch 'walked with God' and, in the face of persecution, set example of courageously declaring Jehovah's judgments against ungodly men (Ge 5:22, 24; Heb 11:5; Jude 14, 15; *it-1* 729)

Modern-day servants of Jehovah have fearlessly proclaimed his judgments despite threats and violence (*w01* 9/1 26; *yb01* 115-117; *yb94* 194)

In many areas where persecution was once severe, there are now flourishing congregations (*ju* 666-668, 700-701)

Clearly, Jehovah approves of those who continue to preach the "good news of the kingdom" despite being "objects of hatred by all the nations" (Mt 24:9, 14)

Abraham and *Sarah* demonstrated their faith by leaving their home city of Ur, even though this evidently involved significant material sacrifices for them (Ge 12:1-3; Heb 11:8-10; *it-2* 1141-1142)

Many present-day Witnesses have displayed similar faith by making material sacrifices in order to be more useful in Jehovah's service (*w97* 9/15 7; *w92* 9/15 27; *yb03* 252; *ju* 284-286)

God is well-pleased with such sacrifices (Mr 10:29, 30)

Moses was well-educated, "powerful in his words and deeds"; yet, he rejected worldly prominence and treasures, seeking God's approval rather than that of men (Ac 7:20-22; Heb 11:23-26; *it-2* 434)

This would have been viewed as a poor career choice from a worldly standpoint, but Jehovah rewarded Moses by entrusting him with the leadership of the nation of Israel (Heb 11:6)

Among Jehovah's people today are many who have rejected worldly prestige and have chosen not to pursue a materialistic lifestyle (*w05* 10/1 28-31; *w92* 11/1 18-20)

Jehovah blesses those who put Kingdom interests first in their lives (Mt 6:33; *w94* 1/15 23)

Rahab risked her life in order to protect Jehovah's servants because she wanted Jehovah's approval for herself and her family (Jos 2:9-13; Heb 11:31; *it-2* 727-728)

Courageous Christian women in modern times have likewise risked their lives to promote Kingdom interests (*yb94* 232, 235)

We may not all be called upon to risk our lives for our brothers, but we must show self-sacrificing love in order to maintain a fine standing with God (Joh 13:34, 35; 1Jo 4:20, 21)

ACT NOW TO GAIN APPROVED STANDING WITH GOD (5 min.)

Because of sin, humans are alienated from God from birth (Ps 51:5; Eph 4:18; Col 1:21)

On the basis of Christ's sacrifice, it is possible to be reconciled to Jehovah and enjoy an approved standing (Joh 3:36; 14:6)

A “great crowd” benefit from the ransom and are depicted as “dressed in white robes,” picturing an approved position before God (Re 7:9, 10)

Like faithful men of old, these will have demonstrated their faith by zealously proclaiming the Kingdom message

Will you be among them?

Examine your spiritual condition, and make necessary adjustments

If newly interested, learn what you must do in order to be saved—before it is too late (Zep 2:2, 3; Ro 10:13)

Now is the favorable time to show concern for your standing with God

To delay taking action may cost you dearly (2Co 6:1, 2)

Act now to gain an approved standing with God!

(Not all cited texts need to be read)

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TO BE COVERED IN 30 MINUTES

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