

# Like Me or Not

## 10 DAY DEVOTIONAL



*You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.  
You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

Psalm 139:1–2 (NIV)

So, you think you may be an approval addict? Join the club.

It's rather a great club. You are in good company. We are all very encouraging and supportive because, well, we want you to like us. Club members come from a variety of backgrounds: wealthy and poor, male and female, young and old, dog-lovers and cat-lovers. We are all different shapes, colors, and sizes. But we all have one thing in common: we crave acceptance from others.

We are still learning who we were created to be and have a nagging question inside our heads that begs an answer: Are we as good as, pretty as, smart as, or fun as the next person? And, to make matters worse, we are looking to our acquaintances and social media feeds to find the answers.

To answer that nagging question: No. You are not enough compared to someone else.

You were never meant to be compared to someone else.

God is the only one that deems us to be “enough.” The One who created you, who decided the day of your birth and

gave you life—He set your purpose and calling in motion. He knows absolutely everything about you.

Embracing the reality of those statements helps us to walk in our true identities.

It is exhausting trying to live up to how someone else looks or acts. You can't do that. Neither can I.

And yet we try. So, I am going to ask you to do something today. In fact, I am going to ask you to do it for the next ninety days: Stop, take a deep breath, and ask yourself daily:

1. Do I see myself as God sees me?
2. How does He want me to live?

John 10:27 (NLT) says, *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”*

Write down the words or phrases that come to mind as you pray and listen to the Shepherd speak to your heart.

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How do you feel about what He said about you? .....

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Were His words positive or negative? .....

If they were negative, ask yourself if those were actually words you heard God say or if some other influence was speaking to you. The only way for you to know that is by checking the words or phrases you heard with the Bible.

To do that I want you to take the word or phrase that you heard, and then search for a Scripture verse with those words. For example, if you heard Him say, "I love you," You can search "God loves me" either on Google or in a Bible App. (I use Bible Hub or the YouVersion Bible App.) You might find a verse like John 3:16.

John 3:16 (NIV) *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

Now you try it.

Phrase you heard .....

Relevant Bible Verse(s) .....

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*Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God?*

*Or am I trying to please people?*

Galatians 1:10 (NIV)

I have a “friend” who checks her Facebook page a minimum of ten times a day. She’ll post several times while intermittently checking to see if someone liked, commented, or shared her post so she can compare her online engagement against someone else’s.

She has an approval addiction.

Another friend of mine, says he doesn’t care whether anyone engages with his posts or not, he is going to say what he wants even if it hurts someone’s feelings. People either ignore his posts completely, for fear of reprimand, or they try to coax him not to be so harsh. Either way, his ultimate goal (whether he realizes it or not) is to bring attention to himself, positive or negative.

It would be safe to say he, too, has an approval addiction.

You may be thinking: But, the second person didn’t seem like he cared. If he is an addict, how then can I know whether or not I have a full-blown approval addiction?

In my book, *Like Me...or Not: Overcoming Approval Addiction*, there are questions to help readers determine whether or not they have an approval addiction. To get a clue about your possible addiction, take a moment and answer a few questions.

- Are you preoccupied with what other people think about you?
- Is it difficult for you to know what you want?
- Do you find yourself saying “yes” when you desperately want to say “no”?
- Is it hard for you to express your feelings when they differ from the opinions of people you are close to?
- Does your happiness depend on the approval of others?

- Do you often seek out ways to get people’s attention whether that is positive or negative?
- Do you frequently compare your life to the lives of other people around you?

If you answered yes to more than two of these questions, then you are more than likely a full-blown approval addict. But, hold tight because there is hope.

The first step to overcoming any form of addiction is acceptance. Let’s express this the same way millions of people do daily at a recovery meeting.

Hi, My name is \_\_\_\_\_  
(Insert Name), and I am an approval addict.

Did that feel weird? I’m sure it did. No one wants to admit they are an addict, no matter what that addiction may be. Not me. I guess, not you either.

But what if this realization brought you freedom? What if it put you on a path that helps you know the only approval you need is God’s? Would you be more willing to accept it?

Let’s agree that today will be our fresh start. Let’s believe 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) which says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

If you are ready to admit you might be an approval addict and start understanding how God already approves of you, then sign your name and record the date below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Colossians 3:17 (NIV)

One of the more challenging concepts for an approval addict to understand is how much they are fully, completely, and utterly loved by God regardless of how they perform.

I know this because I live it. There is not a day that goes by that I do not struggle with remembering my identity does not lie in what someone thinks of me, how well

I did on a project I was involved in, or whether I have two or two thousand followers on social media.

Today, I want us to consider how frequently we seek the approval of others in the everyday things that we do.

Take a moment and write down five tasks that you complete on a regular basis.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

Now, I want you to look at each of those tasks and ask yourself, why do you do them? And respond below in correlation to each of the tasks as you have written them above.

Why I do Task 1: .....

Why I do Task 2: .....

Why I do Task 3: .....

Why I do Task 4: .....

Why I do Task 5: .....



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*I will not be afraid of thousands of people who have taken their stand against me on every side.*

Psalm 3:6 (NIV)

Fear can be a destroyer of dreams. It steals away relationships and it attacks our faith in God. Fear can determine whether we accomplish the calling God has on our lives or keeps us from it.

David had a proper understanding of fear. He placed His fear in the Lord but not in man. We read his words in the above Psalm and they serve as a reminder that we do not have to be afraid of those who stand against us because we know God is for us. In the verse before it he says, “I lie down and sleep; I wake again because the Lord sustains me” (v.5).

David knows where his strength to survive comes from—it is from the One who sustains Him.

The word “sustain” in the Hebrew means to uphold, lay, rest, to lean or lay hands upon. The Lord sustains us by upholding us, even, or especially, when we don’t feel like we can stand on our own. When our legs are wobbly, when our mouth goes dry, and when we feel like we may be sick, He upholds us. I picture a person barely able to stand on her own out of fear, with God standing behind her with a hand under each arm holding her up.

That is what the Lord does for you when you come up against opposition. He upholds you, lifting you up, giving you the strength you need to sustain the fight.

Take a moment and consider current situations where you feel fear rising up in you, and write about them below.

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*“Who is the Lord that I should obey him by letting Israel go?  
I don’t know the Lord and besides, I will not let Israel go.”*

Exodus 5:2 (NIV)

Moses had a problem. He felt ill equipped for the job that God had called him to do. He mentioned on several occasions to the Lord that he was not a good speaker. Some commentators theorize that he had a lisp. Whether he did or not, he was insecure and unsure of himself.

By the time God was done with him at the burning bush, after displaying his glory, Moses realized he wasn’t getting out of God’s will and submitted to the Lord’s request.

The request was not an easy one and there was much at stake, including his life. Moses had run from the law after killing an Egyptian soldier when he saw the soldier beating an Israelite. He called it justice; the Egyptians called it murder. He was a fugitive and going back to his homeland could cause him great harm or land him in a prison for life.

But he went anyway, meeting up with his brother who God had promised as a helper. He had seen what God had done with the burning bush, the staff that became a snake, and the hand with leprosy. He knew God was real, was

true, and He went with a clear understanding of who was in charge—God, not Moses.

In Exodus 5 we witness Moses going before Pharaoh for the first time. I am sure he was thinking something like, *God told me to do this so He’ll take care of making it happen.* That is what I would have been thinking. “You called me to do this God. You’ll need to get me through it.”

Well that didn’t quite happen for Moses. In fact, this was the first of many times that Pharaoh told him no.

You will have naysayers when God calls you to do something for Him. You can count on it.

It may even be that, just like God did with Pharaoh by hardening his heart (Exodus 4:21), he may harden the heart of your adversaries just so you have the opportunity to grow your faith.

Is there a dream or a vision you feel God calling you to? If so, write about it below. Ask God to reveal your fears about that calling and write those down as well.

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*For you do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price.*

1 Corinthians 6:20 (NLT)

This past week I needed to do a little shopping to purchase an outfit for an event I was attending. I don't love shopping for special events because I feel so much pressure to find the right and appropriate thing to wear while simultaneously hoping I will feel amazing about the purchase. More often than not the outfit I purchase will give me a sense of buyer's remorse—either immediately after I bring it home or right before the event. It is inevitable for me, and I have yet figured out how to avoid it.

The price of my new threads rarely seems worth the money I paid once I have completed the purchase. I waver. I review over and over in my mind the value of that outfit in comparison to the value of the event, or the amount of time I wore it. That value can shift and change depending on my feelings at any given moment. Often, though, I regret I spent the money on that purchase.

But, here is an incredible truth that we can hold fast to: God never regrets His purchases. He is not going to the store and grabbing the latest trend to get decked out

for an evening, rather He gave His Son as currency for the sins of humanity.

Every lie you ever told. Every time you gossiped. Your unrighteous anger. That time when you slandered your neighbor or hated your enemy. If you have ever stolen anything from anyone. There was an exchange that needed to happen on your behalf to outweigh the sins you committed.

To atone for that sin, Jesus, God's son, paid the price by His death on the cross. In doing so, we were given a new identity. Not one that labels us as sinner, but rather one that bestows upon us the name saint.

Your identity no longer rests in what you have done, who people say you are, or the sum of your choices.

Rather, you are who God says you are because you were purchased by Him. Your value and your worth in Him never changes. Ever.

In the space below, consider what it means for you personally to accept that God gave His only Son to pay the price for your life.

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How can you remind yourself that your value does not change according to the words of others or depend on what you have produced with your hands?

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*So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

Genesis 1:27 (NIV)

We are each created uniquely. We have our own DNA markers that define everything from our eye color to the size of our nose, from the pigment of our skin to our metabolism. How I wish I could have self-selected that last one.

In our creation there was a design. That design was decided upon by our Creator, the Almighty God, King of the

Universe. He planned and then fashioned man, and then later woman was made from man, to reflect His image.

Everything about us mirrors the image of our God. We are therefore image-bearers.

Consider that for a moment, the idea that we are created in the image of our Creator and jot down some thoughts on what that means to you.

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Now, apply that concept to our need for approval. When God created us, He created us with this desire for approval because He wants us to come to Him for approval, for acceptance, and to focus on Him instead of others.

If you read through the book of Exodus, God is constantly crying out to His people stating over and over again, “I am doing this miracle because then they will know that I AM who I AM and then they will know me.”

The God of the Universe has the desire to be known. In our knowing Him, we learn all the attributes of Him that we then can apply to our humanity. Our application implies acceptance and in turn reflects the very nature of our Creator.

So what does that mean for us? It means freedom.

We have freedom in knowing that we are known by God, that He desires us, that He pursues us, and approves of us—because we are His. Those of us who call ourselves followers of Christ, we have moved from not just image-bearers but also children and heirs.

And what loving Daddy isn't proud of His children.

Friend, you already have His approval. He created you in His image. You reflect Him. Submit to that idea and you will experience more freedom, than you ever thought possible.

Name some of the characteristics of God that you want to reflect as an image-bearer knowing that He approves of you.

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*Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Romans 8:17 (NIV)

Yesterday I mentioned that you are a child of God and an heir to His throne. Today's Scripture verse verifies that concept with the truth of Scripture. But it also explains what being a child of God means.

I want you to think for a moment about the privileges or conditions you received being born or adopted into the family you have today. I recognize not everyone has a

good story to share in that arena so if you are one of those people, try and consider what it would feel like if you had a family that was healthy and loving.

Take a moment and write down a list of good things you have received (or want to receive) from being part of your family.

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On my list I had things like acceptance, love, legacy, tradition, and cooking skills. Ha! It's true, mom had a knack for cooking and my sister and I learned from her. My childhood was full of great memories. Being a child of my parents afforded me a beautiful home, nice cars to ride in, the opportunity to participate in sports, and sleepover nights with friends. We went on family vacations and celebrated birthdays with big gestures. I had those privileges because I was the child of Marilyn and Marty.

I also inherited creativity as both of my parents were artists. My sister inherited Mom's ability to cut and style hair. I inherited Dad's drive and ambition. We also inherited some things like stubbornness, quick tempers, and free-spending that I had to learn to release to Christ.

As children of God, we too have privileges and an inheritance. Though it may look a bit different we still have the ability to approach our Father, to enjoy His company, to seek Him for our needs.

However, just like being a part of an earthly family, you have to take the good and the, well, not so good. We get to have all the spiritual goods that come with being a child of God, but they come with a price. That price is suffering. As we suffer, we can endure knowing this is just a part of being a child of the Most High God.

And what kind of suffering am I referring to? Rejection, persecution, hatred, deception, betrayal, and lies...just to name a few. All of these are things Jesus endured and we will too as we seek to share Him with a world that is lost.



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*We speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. We are not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles we could have asserted our authority.*

1 Thessalonians 2:4-6 (NIV)

There are so many times during a span of one day that we will be tempted to seek the approval of man.

Even as we get out of bed in the morning, will be confronted with the choice: take the time to spend in worship, study, and prayer with God or begin get online and compare our lives to those around us. Will we get caught up in the number of likes a post generated or get irritated when someone responded in a way we didn't agree with? Or will we use the first few moments of the day to focus on God and His will for our life?

Day by day, moment by moment we have choices to make on how we are going to respond to our need to please, and who we invest that time with—people or God.

Which one are you going to choose?

- \_\_\_ I still struggle with wanting to please man.
- \_\_\_ I realize now that I need to choose God.

Seriously, it's easy to say, "I choose God." But if you don't know how you are going to do that you will quickly become defeated and give up.

In 1 Thessalonians Paul tells the people of Thessalonica his view on this choice. He had already settled into the idea that God's approval of his work and all the authority given to him on earth was a gift from God. He also knew that ultimately God is the one who tests our hearts. So, in the end, Paul wanted to be right with Him more than he wanted to be right with man. At the same time, he knew the authority he possessed, because he understood who he was and whose he was.

What can you do to make sure you operate out of the authority that God has given to you?

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Rewrite the first part of the above Scripture on the lines below to help you commit it to memory.

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*Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power,  
and that he had come from God and was returning to God.*

John 13: 3 (NIV)

Over the past nine days we have been talking about all the different ways that being addicted to approval can affect our relationships with God and with others. If you have participated in exercises and prayer, you have come a long way. Even though this is still just the beginning of walking in recovery, hopefully you now have some more scriptural tools to use against the enemy when he tries to tempt you into believing his lies over God's truth.

You have been a good and faithful servant in taking an account of the way you think, the things you do, and the words you speak to identify areas of your life that may need to change.

I am so proud (even to the point of enabling you just a bit) that you have made it this far. Trust me, obedience and persistence in seeking the Father always yields blessing. If I have learned nothing else on my journey to recovery, I have certainly learned that.

But this is just a beginning. Whether you have read all of *Like Me or Not: Overcoming Approval Addiction* or you are taking your first steps to recovery through this devotional, there is still more that you can learn. I have set up a resource page on my website at [dawnmowens.com](http://dawnmowens.com). Go

there to check out the other ways you can challenge yourself to grow in this area. Even after seven years of learning these concepts, writing the book, and now speaking and promoting the topic, I still face challenges regularly.

The difference is that I now have an arsenal of battle-ready tools I can pull from when insecurity creeps in, or when I am fearing rejection of a peer or loved one. I will never stop on this journey, I hope I never believe the lie that I have arrived, because when I do I'll become complacent. You may too.

So let's take this last day to analyze where we are now. In our passage today we can see that Jesus knew who He was. Do you fully know that God has put all things under your power and that you came from Him and will return to Him? Or are we still questioning who He has created us to be?

In the opening Scripture, change the word "Jesus" to your name and read it out loud.

Write down any thoughts you have on applying this Scripture verse to your life.

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