

# Be a Slave to the World's Applause No Longer

by John Piper

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of finding serious joy in Christ, which sets believers free from cultural control and conformity. When joy comes from God through Christ, it remains unshaken despite grief, affliction, persecution, or loss, making individuals truly free and secure. In a world where joy is often tied to worldly benefits and approval, Christians are called to derive their joy from heaven, enabling them to be subversive and uncontrolled by cultural pressures.*

**Scripture:** Philippians 4:4, John 8:36, Romans 14:17, Galatians 5:1, 1 Peter 4:13

**Topics:** "Joy in Christ", "Freedom from Cultural Conformity"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Serious joy, like we've just seen in the New Testament, sets the soul free from dependence upon cultural kudos and cultural conformity. Sets you free. In other words, when when your joy comes from God through Christ and is absolutely unshakable through grief, affliction, weakness, poverty, shame, dishonor, persecution, loss, the culture loses its power to control you.

You are a free person. If you take a stand that the culture hates or speak a word that the culture condemns and they shame you, they persecute you, they plunder you, they cancel you, your joy remains unshaken and you're free. You're not controlled.

You're not controlled. Free! When your citizenship is in heaven and all your inheritance is in heaven and all your joy is coming from Christ in heaven, you're a free person on planet earth and very subversive. I want free people.

If your joy comes from the world with its benefits, its comforts, its praises, you're like a leaf in the wind. Yours is not a serious joy, it's a secondhand joy. You're not free.

You're jerked around by the newscast every day, by a phone call, by a critical email, by a word from a friend. You're just, your emotions are jerked every which way because you're just a leaf in the wind. All

your joy attached to that person, that person, their approval, that money, that house, that comfort, that car, those jewels, that inheritance, that wife, that three-month-old child, your joy is all bound right here and anything that happens here you're done for.

You're not a free person at all. That's just not the way Christianity is. Serious joy sets people free and makes them the most secure and subversive people when it comes to cultural control.

It's always been true. It's been true for 2,000 years. There's nothing new about this at all.

Serious joy in Christ through pain has always been radically liberating from cultural control. So in getting joy from heaven, Christians become free on earth. It's always been true.

The new thing today is that social media has created an intensification of the old-fashioned cultural control tactics. The tactics aren't new. The emotional dynamics of control and shaming aren't new.

The media are new and ubiquitous and powerful. You can be ganged up on by 10,000 people overnight. So it's called in our culture, you all know this I suppose, it's called call-out culture, outrage culture, cancel culture, coddled culture.

That last phrase comes from a book called *The Coddling of the American Mind* by Jonathan Haidt. And here's a sentence that I found very illuminating. He said, this culture today that young people have been growing up in for maybe 20 years teaches people to see words as violence and to interpret ideas and speakers, like me, as safe versus dangerous, safe or dangerous, rather than true versus false.

So if you take your stand and you speak your truth, you may be subject to call-out, or outrage, or being canceled, or accusation that you've not sufficiently coddled the people that need to be coddled. Serious joy is a great liberator from this culture, as it has been for every culture.

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