

Approved of God

No Need For Shame

"Be diligent to show yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2Tim. 2:15

As leaders we are to be faithful to God. In this Scripture passage we have studied what Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, advised Timothy. Faithfulness includes diligence, and a recognition that we must serve God before ourselves or others. Scripture sees God's approval as the goal of our ministry. Men may criticise or reject our ministry, but if we have faithfully honoured and obeyed God, then we will have His approval. Yet, in the midst of serving God we are surrounded by brothers and sisters in Christ who can keep us in check.

1. Note Romans 14:18. When our ministry is acceptable to God, how do our spiritual peers respond toward us?

2. Although we are called to serve God, who are we accountable to? (2Cor. 8:21)

God has placed us in the midst of brethren who can point out to us our weaknesses and bring correction. While none of us likes correction, we all need it. The text says *"does not need to be ashamed..."*. Let's reflect on its choice of words for a moment.

3. What is the difference between "shame" and "guilt"?

A man with no friends who lives an isolated life in a wilderness can feel guilty, but never feel shame. Shame comes from the disapproval of others. God's servant is subject firstly to the approval of God, but then to the approval of their brethren.

4. Note what Scripture says about the "approval" of brethren-

a) Prov. 12:1 _____

b) Prov. 12:16 _____

c) Prov. 13:18 _____

d) Prov. 15:5 _____

e) Prov. 19:27 _____

f) Prov. 28:23 _____

While we need the correction of our spiritual peers, we also need their support and encouragement. If all we ever did was to act as spiritual police toward our brothers and sisters, we would all most probably lose heart. This goes doubly for those in leadership. Because of their general prominence, they are more susceptible to criticism and especially discouragement from others.

5. What role does the Scripture say that other brethren play in observing the ministry of another? (1Cor. 14:29)

6. But was the purpose of such observation and ministry? (1Cor. 14:31)

7. What are we all told to do, and why? (Heb. 3:13)

Leaders need both encouraging and correcting. They need to be reminded that while they are shepherds of God's flock, like Christ who is the Great Shepherd, they are also sheep, like Christ is also the Lamb of God.

Amen.