



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of
the Southern United States

The Monthly Message
to the Priests' Wives
July 2015

Addiction of the Word "YES" (1)

While a lot of people suffer from different types of addiction, most of the priests' wives suffer from addicting the word "YES". The simple definition of this type of addiction is the inability of the person to deny any request from others and the continuous pursuit to gain their approval and satisfaction. In contrary to what the addict to the word "YES" expects, all his compulsive trials to satisfy all people all the time increase the requests required from him by others. This in turn puts a growing burden on him that he fails to carry. It ends up with him to gain others' anger instead of their approval. They consider him not giving them their acquired right to obtain from him whatever, whenever and however they want.

As the ceiling of expectations put on the priest and his wife is high they become more at risk to suffer from *The Disease to Please*. Sufferers from this disease think that through offering a lot of renunciations they will

get love and avoid rejection, criticism and personal sensitivities in return.

In her famous book "The Disease to Please" Dr. Harriet Braiker presents a quiz that helps readers to determine the severity of the disease in them. The reader is asked to answer each of the following sentences by True or False:

1. it is extremely important to me to be liked by nearly everyone in my life.
2. I believe that nothing good can come from conflict.
3. My needs should always take a backseat to the needs of the people I love.
4. I expect myself to rise above conflict and confrontation.
5. I often do too much for other people or even let myself be used so that I won't be rejected for other reasons.
6. I have always needed the approval of other people.
7. It is much easier for me to acknowledge negative feelings about myself than to express negative feelings toward others.
8. I believe that if I make other people need me because of all the things I do for them, I won't be left alone.
9. I am hooked in doing things for others and pleasing them.
10. I go to great lengths to avoid conflict or confrontation with my family, friends, or coworkers.
11. I am likely to do all the things I do to make others happy before I do anything just for myself.
12. I almost never stand up to others in order to protect myself because I am too afraid of getting an angry response or provoking a confrontation.
13. If I stopped putting others' needs ahead of my own, I would become a selfish person and people would no longer like me.

14. Having to face a confrontation or conflict with anybody makes me feel so anxious that I almost get physically sick.
15. It is very difficult for me to express criticism even if it is constructive because I don't want to make anyone angry with me.
16. I must always please others even at the expense of my own feelings.
17. I have to give myself all the time in order to be worthy of love.
18. I believe that nice people get the approval, affection, and friendship of others.
19. I must never let other people down by failing to do everything they expect of me even when I know that the demands are excessive or unreasonable.
20. Sometimes I feel like I am trying to "buy" the love and friendship of others by doing so many nice things to please them.
21. It makes me very anxious and uncomfortable to say or do anything that might make another person angry with me.
22. I rarely delegate tasks to others.
23. I feel guilty when I say "no" to requests or needs of others.
24. I would think that I am a bad person if I didn't give of myself all the time to those around me.

The reader is then asked to total the numbers of his "true" responses. To interpret the meaning of his overall score, he has then to refer to the range of his score below:

- Overall score between 16 - 24: Your people-pleasing syndrome is deeply ingrained and serious.
- Overall score between 10 - 15: Your Disease to please symptoms are already moderately severe.
- Overall score between 5-9: You have a moderate Disease to please problem.
- Overall score 4 or less: You may have only mild people-pleasing tendencies or even none at all at present.

In Fact, if we think deeply about the previous items in the quiz we will find that the field of service is a very nourishing field for the development of these erroneous concepts within servants in general and priests' wives in particular. The wrong interpretation and practice of some verses of the Holy Bible and the stories of saints help these wrong concepts to flourish.

Jesus Christ and the word "NO"

Jesus Christ offered to us a lot of practical examples in his earthly life in order to teach us how to get rid of the disease to please. If pleasing others in an absolute way is the ultimate goal then certainly Jesus Christ would be the first to seek it. But the Holy Bible offers to us many situations where Jesus Christ neither satisfied nor got the approval of people:

- 1) When His mother reproached Him for not coming back from Jerusalem with her and St. Joseph, and His stay in the temple saying, *"Son, why have You done this to us? Look Your father and I have sought you anxiously"* He said to her, *"Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"* (Luke 2: 48-49).
- 2) When *"the crowd sought Him and came to Him and tried to keep Him from leaving them"* He refused to answer their request saying, *"I must preach the kingdom*

of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent" (Luke 4: 42-43).

3) He was not shy to rebuke Peter when He found him trying to hinder Him from fulfilling His redemptive mission saying to him, *"Get behind Me Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men"* (Matthew 16: 23).

4) When the demon-possessed man of the country of Gadarenes asked to be with Jesus *"He did not permit him, but said to him, Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and how He has had compassion on you"* (Mark 5:19).

5) Jesus Christ was not preoccupied with gaining the approval of scribes, Pharisees and the chief priests. He rather confronted them with their hypocrisy with courage and frankness.

6) When Jesus Christ talked about giving His flesh as food indeed and His blood as drink indeed His disciples complained about this and many of them went back and walked with Him no more. Yet Jesus Christ did not renounce what He said in order to keep their approval and satisfaction. He rather *"said to the twelve, Do you also want to go away?"* (John 6:67).

7) When one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hands *"Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well why do you strike me?"* (John 18:23).

8) When Pilate sent Jesus Christ to Herod, Jesus was not preoccupied with gaining his approval although He knew well *"he hoped to see some miracle done by Him"* (Luke 23: 8-9).

9) When Peter turned around and saw John following he said to Jesus, *"But Lord, what about this man?"* Jesus was not preoccupied to satisfy him and said to him, *"If I will that he remains till I come what is that to you? You follow me"* (John 21: 20-21).

The Holy apostles and the word "NO"

1) When the priests laid hands on Peter and John and put them in custody they proclaimed their faith boldly and were never preoccupied with gaining their approval. When the same situation was repeated after a while they said to them, *"We ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29).

2) Peter was not reluctant to rebuke Simon the sorcerer who wanted to purchase the gift of God with money saying to him, *"Your money perish with you because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money."*

You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8: 20-21).

3) Paul was not shy to proclaim to Barnabas that he had a different point of view. He insisted that they should not take Mark with them as he departed from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. We also conclude from the same story that Mark himself was not ashamed to excuse himself from continuing the journey with Paul and Barnabas and he departed from them in Pamphylia for a reason or another that the Holy Bible did not mention (Acts 15: 36-40).

4) when the chief priest commanded those who stood by him to strike Paul on his mouth, Paul reproached him courageously saying, *"You sit to judge me according to the law and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"* (Acts 23: 3).

5) when the magistrates of Philippi have sent to let Paul and Silas go out of the prison, *"Paul said to them, They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out"* (Acts 16: 37).

6) Paul was not reluctant to rebuke Peter when he found him withdrew and separated himself from

eating with the Gentiles when certain men came from James. He said, *"I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed"* (Galatians 2:11).

7) Paul said NO to Festus refusing to be judged in Jerusalem saying, *"I appeal to Caesar"* (Acts 25:11).

8) St. Paul proclaimed clearly, *"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ"* (Galatians 1:10).

(to be continued)