

September 22:

Series: Why Do You Buy That?

Message: #3: Laughed At

Text: Galatians 1:10 “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 6:16-24 (CEB)

Blurb: “Come on, try it!” “Everyone’s doing it!” “Are you scared?” Our desire to fit in—and above all else not to be laughed at—is one of our most powerful motivators. Commercials know this and really leverage this cultural power against us. But Jesus says we need to be ready to be considered fools if we want to have true joy. Come this Sunday to gain resolve to stay on the path of life, no matter the hecklers!

Kids: “Why Did You Buy That?” Bidding Game with contestants, including kids -Andrew

Memory Verse: “We are fools for Christ, but you are wise through Christ!” -1 Corinthians 4:10a

Opening Song: *A Mighty Fortress* - Sanctify

Welcome: -Pastor David

Memory Verse: “We are fools for Christ, but you are wise through Christ!” -1 Corinthians 4:10a

Greeting Time:

Worship Music Set: *Rejoice*

More Like Jesus

No Longer Slaves

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Offering: *Treasure*

Grow Groups: Grow Groups & Walk to Emmaus promos.

Prayers: David

“Why Did You Buy That?” Bidding Game with contestants, including kids -Andrew

Message: Why Do You Buy That? 3: Laughed At

Bumper Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U91Zp9wWS30> (60 seconds) (2016 Germany)
Volkswagen commercial about trailer back up assist feature.

PP#1: *Image of horses with open mouths laughing hysterically from above commercial.*

This is a powerful commercial! It's a German commercial from a couple of years ago. But we get it, right? That awkward feeling when people are watching us, when we have to do something we're not good at, like backing up a trailer? For us here in Forest Lake, it's trying to get the boat in and out of the boat launch! It's always right when everyone is there, watching.

The poor driver, all frustrated and humiliated. Even the horses are laughing at him! He finally gives up and drives away in humiliation. But then there's the suave guy, with the Volkswagen trailer back up assist camera feature. He backs straight in the first time, and all the horses look on in respect. He gets out, smiles confidently, and flashes the "smok'n" look: "that's right!" So cool. So impressive! You can be like that guy if you buy this product. Don't be the laughed at guy.

PP#2: Why Do We Buy That?

Laughed at.

"For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ." - Galatians 1:10

"Why Do We Buy That?" "Laughed at." Galatians 1:10 "For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ."

This fall in our message series we are using commercials to better understand our culture and to help identify our values and the motivations. Commercials really nail it when describing the feelings we all have. Like this commercial that taps into our fear of humiliation when we do something poorly and we just know others are ridiculing us! We will do almost anything not to be laughed at. Even buy a whole new vehicle!

Commercials also can be a good faith conversation starter for us to use with others. When others talk about something in their lives, there may be a commercial that really hits those issues. "Yeah, it's just like that Snickers commercial!" Then, we can then use that as a launch pad to talk about how our faith in Jesus really helps us. "I'm often not 'me' at home with my family, either! I've realized that just like I need a Snickers when I'm hangry, I also need to go to my small group at church to help me be a better dad at home."

PP#3: Why Do We Buy That?:

1. Jumping in Scum: You are unhappy without "it." Remember, you are God's child!
2. Who Are You?: We are hangry. Remember: Jesus is the Bread of Life!
3. Laughed at: We want to fit in. Remember: Keep a singular heart!

In these first three messages, I'm unpacking the core reasons for why we are so susceptible to marketing. In the weeks ahead we'll look at specific issues and life realities. But before we do, we need to understand *why* we "buy that."

Advertising works when it identifies a *lack* in our lives. It pivots on our inner need to not miss out, but to have more, to being good and successful and well liked. When we have more, then we feel happy, and content, and satisfied. And thousands of times a day we are told that we are lacking. But, if we buy a certain product or service, then we will be happy.

So, the reality is that advertising is biased. It has an agenda. It doesn't have our best interest in mind. In stead, it's using us. It's getting us to believe something so that we will buy whatever they are selling. It claims to be helping us, but in reality it is using us to help them get our money.

Here at church we seek a different reality. We pursue a different culture. We've grown weary of the empty promises, the failed attempts for satisfaction, and the never-ending pursuit of more. We turn our attention to Jesus, and ask Him if His alternative is life-giving.

So, the first week, we uncovered that we "buy that" because deep down we want happiness. We are seeing value through stuff. But Jesus tells us that our value comes in our identity as God's children. When we turn to God and give Him our lives, His image in us is made whole, and rather than happiness, we have joy: true, deep, abiding joy.

Last week, we saw how we continue to hunger after anything that promises to bring satisfaction. Yet Jesus says that He is the Bread of Life. When we choose to make Him our personal Lord and Savior, we have our inner hungering finally satisfied, and our life of blessing comes as we seek God more deeply in our lives.

Today, the commercials show us that one of the strongest human forces is the feelings of comparison. We have a palpable terror about what other people think of us, about being judged. The world over—here, Germany, anywhere—we are willing to do almost anything to fit in and be accepted.

I'm going to use a beer commercial here, because Budweiser in particular is a commercial heavyweight. You know the Clydesdales, of course, and the frogs, "Bud-wei-ser," or the "tastes great - less filling" commercials. But a couple of years ago they went after the young adult market and the fist-bump culture. Fist bumps are all about interacting, and being validated by others. Of course they went weird and comedy. What if our sign of validation, used to be a sign of rejection? Take a look.

Video 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUUIBJme-bg> (30 seconds)

Budweiser, the fist bump is "out," the slap is "in."

That's just so offensive; it's cringy! That final scene where he slaps his boss, who obviously doesn't get the trend. This commercial "works" because it makes Budweiser unforgettable. But I think this commercial captures our willingness to accept nearly anything, even a slap across the face, *just to fit in*. The guy, in the beginning with the fist bump, doesn't want to be "out." "I'll accept whatever is told to me. So, tell me, what's in? A stinging slap across the face? Well, if it's 'in,' then I'll go along with it. After all, I'd never, ever, want to be 'out!' Go ahead, hit me."

Doesn't that just capture our willingness to accept *anything*—even what's unpleasant and hurtful—just because we want to be accepted?

I can't resist using a Progressive Insurance commercial. Their character, Flo, became an icon, and she appeared in all kinds of commercials. Here's a commercial for Progressive's Snapshot. Notice how she uses the stereotypical peer pressure lines of a drug dealer in a dark alley.

Video3: <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/7w9v/progressive-snapshot-peer-pressure> (30 seconds)

So, why do we buy that? Because we are willing to endure a slap in order to fit in. Think about that. What slaps are you enduring just to look good to others?

PP#4: Why Do We Buy That? Laughed at.

1. There is wisdom in community

Proverbs 19:20-21 "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future. Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand."

You know, there is some value in wanting to fit in, wanting to be accepted. We have a desire for community and to be connected. And there is also cultural wisdom, the learned wisdom of others, particularly of our elders. They have lived life and have found better paths, more helpful ways. There is good peer pressure in brushing your teeth, eating a healthy diet, exercising more, wearing your seatbelt, not texting while driving, reducing your use of disposable packaging, not talking too much in a crowd, doing what's good for the team, and so forth. Peer pressure helps us exist together in community, and offers us wisdom. "You don't leave your garage door open at night, do you?"

In fact, the Bible talks about this conventional wisdom all the time. Proverbs 19:20-21, for example, says, "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future. Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand."

So, there can be a very healthy voice in others, helping direct us in the discerned better paths. This may be why our instinct is to loath being laughed at. The *other* cultural value—to stick out, be different, be your own person, do things your own way—isn't always a good thing. After all, in the natural world, it's the outlier that is picked off! There is a balance, isn't there, between listening to the wisdom of others, while still pursuing your uniqueness.

It's all the more difficult when the community voice, the peer pressure, is so often based on wrong values or is biased. Wrinkles are ugly. Having a year-old I-phone is obsolete. Using a knife on a bagel is bad. Not knowing how to do a skill perfectly every time is laugh-worthy.

And so, as we try to navigate through culture and its often competing values, we can be confused and overwhelmed. We become victim of the loudest voice, or to following our immediate feelings. We drift, often stumbling between hearing wisdom and manipulation.

Jesus offers a clarity through the mess. He teaches us the path of life. We hear His story, how rather than *using* us, He *gave* Himself for us. To Him we are not a consumer to be exploited, but an object of love. He died on the cross to save us, to restore us, to make us whole. We can trust Him!

PP#5: Matthew 6:16-24 (CEB)

16 "And when you fast, don't put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They distort their faces so people will know they are fasting. I assure you that they have their reward. 17 When you fast, brush your hair and wash your face. 18 Then you won't look like you are fasting to people, but only to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

So, what does He say about the pressure to fit in? Let's turn to what we call His Sermon on the Mount. He first targets those who try to exert *unfair* peer pressure, trying to make themselves look good and to get false acceptance from others, even using religious practices!

Matthew 6:16, "And when you fast, don't put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They distort their faces so people will know they are fasting. I assure you that they have their reward. [He means that other people will be impressed with them, rather than the spiritual benefit of fasting.] When you fast, brush your hair and wash your face. Then you won't look like you are fasting to people, but only to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

So, first of all, stop trying to make yourself look good, and worrying about what everyone else thinks of you. Yes, there is value in what others think, but it's dangerous to take it too far! You can miss the wisdom of fasting and instead be sucked into using it to try to impress others.

PP#6: Matthew 6:16-24 (CEB)

19 "Stop collecting treasures for your own benefit on earth, where moth and rust eat them

and where thieves break in and steal them. 20 Instead, collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don't eat them and where thieves don't break in and steal them. 21 Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

He keeps going, bringing up our desire to have more, have better, have newer. Verse 19, "Stop collecting treasures for your own benefit on earth, where moth and rust eat them and where thieves break in and steal them. Instead, collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don't eat them and where thieves don't break in and steal them. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Jesus goes right to the, *ahem*, heart of the matter! Why do you value the stuff you accumulate? If it is to make your life better, well, there's no harm in that. If your vacuum is broken, get a new one. But if it is to impress others, then it's the wrong reason. "Look at me, I've got a brand new, fancier, top-of-the-line vacuum that I *deserve!*" Beware of this manipulative trap. It uses the lie of making your life better to make you a slave to buying more.

PP#7: Why Do We Buy That? Laughed at.

1. There is wisdom in community
 2. Seek a singular heart
- Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters...."

Perhaps you need to take advantage of the spiritual practice our church is offering this week: the rummage sale! And I mean to bring stuff *in*, not take more stuff home! It is a spiritual ministry to help you have a better relationship with your stuff. I read in a joke that having more than three of something is a collection, but having more than three collections is a museum. My wife took a hard look at some of my stuff and asked me what more than three *museums* is called!

Jesus is talking about what we treasure in our hearts. Here's the word of life for us trying to make headway in the swirling of our culture: *it's the singularity of our heart's desire.*

You see, where our heart is, says Jesus: that is what we make our treasure. And Jesus is pointing us to *take God as our heart's singular desire.* Then, and only then, is our relationship with our stuff healthy. Then, and only then, is our relationship with others healthy. Only then can we hear the wisdom of our peers, while resisting the pressure to do what is not in our best interest.

What makes us so susceptible to fitting in, and peer pressure, and avoiding being laughed at at all costs, *is a divided heart.*

You see, we are plagued with divided hearts! We try to accept what culture is selling us, and also try to follow Jesus. We try to fit in in the world, and *also* be pleasing to God. We worry about what others think, *and* we worry about what God thinks. And in the end, we end up in a mess!

PP#8: Matthew 6:16-24 (CEB)

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. Therefore, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how terrible that darkness will be! 24 No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be loyal to the one and have contempt for the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Jesus uses the image of a focused eye to describe this singularity of heart. Verse 22, "The eye is the lamp of the body. [Focus on seeing God's light.] Therefore, if your eye is healthy [focusing

on God], your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad [looking at so many different things], your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how terrible that darkness will be [you will be divided and miserable]! No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be loyal to the one and have contempt for the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” When you try to serve both, you give one allegiance and to the other you give your leftovers, your “seconds.”

Church, why do we buy that? Why do we care too much about what others think about us? It makes us confused. It makes us dark. It makes us fickle. It makes us empty. It makes us used. Don't forget, you are a child of the one true God! Your value comes in what *He* thinks about you, not what everyone else thinks about you. And He has your picture on His fridge! Your happiness doesn't come from more. It comes from God. I want you to have that happiness that you have even when you have no thing!

PP#9: Galatians 1:10 “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

And to make God your singular heart's focus, it means demoting your value of everything, and everyone, else. Paul puts it this way in Galatians 1:10, “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

In fact—now watch this—to make God your singular heart's desire makes you reject much of our culture, and—stay with me—actually makes you *become the one who is laughed at!* When you don't step in conformity to everyone else because of your choice to be a disciple of Jesus, you become the target of ridicule, the object of hate, and the focus of the pressure. All of that peer pressure is avalanched toward you! *A faithful disciple of Jesus will be laughed at!* Jesus says in Matthew 5:11, “You are blessed when others mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers.”

PP#10: Why Do We Buy That? Laughed at.

1. There is wisdom in community
2. Seek a singular heart
3. Be a fool in the eyes of culture

1 Corinthians 4:10a “We are fools for Christ, but you are wise through Christ!”

But here is the hope that is in Jesus: when you put Jesus in your heart, you now have the singularity of heart to be able to faithfully withstand all that pressure. You can look at it directly in the eye and say, “You are wrong! You offer a lie! You do not help me.” You are no longer fickle and drift along the currents of culture. You set your feet to a specific path—the path of life, the narrow path—and you determine to stay on it. The Holy Spirit will anchor you amid the avalanche.

Paul talked about this to the Christians in Corinth. He said that although he and Apollos were prisoners and rejected by the community, they were still focused on Christ. And the Christians there needed to stay focused on Jesus, too. He said, “We have become a spectacle in the world...We are fools for Christ, and you are wise through Christ!” (1 Corinthians 4:10).

Church, we choose to become fools for Jesus! We choose His alternate path. We make God the singular treasure of our hearts. That means the world will laugh at us. It will be hard, and it will be intimidating. We must band together to encourage each other, affirm each other, lift each other

up. Come and eat together and learn together this Wednesday. Return to worship next week. Sign up for a small group. Go to Walk to Emmaus. We have to resolve to stay on God's path. It is hard, but it is the only path to abundant life! And it is far easier to do together, than alone.

I want to close with one more cute commercial, a phone commercial. This one is a role reversal of a girl trying to talk to her parents about not caving into peer pressure. She uses all the lines parents use on kids. But pay attention to how she ends. She counters peer pressure by pointing to her singular heart and telling them that they shouldn't care about fitting in to others. Take a look.

Video 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xGbsro7Yd0> (32 seconds)

Closing Song: *When We All Get to Heaven*

Memory Verse:

"We are fools for Christ, but you are wise through Christ!" -1 Corinthians 4:10a

Announcements: -Pastor David
Grow Groups sign-ups

Benediction: -Pastor David