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“And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” 1 John 4: 21

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**Sunday – April 10, 2022**

## **The Things Above ...**

*“No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.”* (2 Tim. 2:4) We are all susceptible to looking for approval and acceptance in the wrong places. So often we desire the acceptance of those who could not care less about our Lord. How much of what is done on social media is geared towards impressing others with our lifestyle and perfectly crafted persona? How often do we act deceitfully to protect our “image”? Do we neglect to say and do what we know is right because we care more about being liked by others than pleasing God? Why do we so desperately seek the approval of others when we should be living for the approval of the One who enlisted us?

When Paul shipwrecked on the island of Malta, the natives showed him and his fellow passengers great kindness. When they were all gathered around the fire, a viper struck Paul and latched on to his hand. When the natives saw this, they concluded, *“undoubtedly this man is a murderer.”* (Acts 28:4) However, when Paul did not swell up and die as they expected but instead shook off the snake into the fire and suffered no harm, *“they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.”* (Acts 28:6) In a two-verse span, the natives went from accusing Paul as a murderer to saying he was a god! Could there possibly be a better illustration of just how fickle and volatile the acceptance and approval of man can be? Why would we want to live for something as unpredictable and unstable as that? It is no wonder Paul writes to the Galatians, *“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.”* (Gal. 1:10) Looking to please and find approval from man is not fitting for servants of Christ. Why? Those who serve Christ are found acceptable to God! (Rom. 14:18) Serving and honoring Jesus is what we have been enlisted to do! And unlike the ever-changing and inconsistent approval found in our world, when we have been approved by God through His Son, we can know it is secure and ever reliable. There is only One who truly has the authority to approve or condemn. If you are in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation for you! (Rom. 8:1) If we are in Christ Jesus, you have been approved by God through Him. And If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31) Let us stop looking for approval and acceptance in places where we will never find it. Let us look to the One where it can be truly found.