

Grace Harbor Counseling Ministries
Teaching Series

“Teens and Peer-Pressure Through a Biblical Lens”

~or~

The Fear of Man

Proverbs 29:25

Adapted from the work of Ed Welch and Del Fehsenfeld

The Fear of Man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.

“Possible” synonyms for Fear of Man

People who struggle with over-sensitivity	Shy people
Are reactionary and defensive	Easy Embarrassment
Has to be in control	People pleasing
Avoidance of Others	Needing Approval
Controlled by the opinions of others	Confronting people corporately but not personally
Can't handle rejection well	Self-conscious
Afraid of failure	Insecurity
Competitive with co-workers	

“Possible” symptoms of Fear of man

Biting nails	Can't be transparent with others
Overeating	Are frustrated and discontent
Much talking	Are inflexible
Exaggeration	Hide behind talking and laughter
Name dropping	Must have the last word
Over sleeping	

“A hundred people can tell me they love me and I could only hear the five who criticize.”

The root cause of Fear of Man is Pride

The biblical term for what produces insecurity is called the Fear of Man.

Insecurity is placing your faith, belief, confidence, hope or trust in people or things that can be taken away.

Security is placing your faith, belief, confidence, hope or trust in people or things that cannot be taken away.

Two things that cannot be taken away:

1. The Written Word of God: the Bible
2. The Living Word of God: Jesus Christ

Additional thoughts:

1. Putting what others think of me ahead of what God thinks of me is the sin of idolatry.
2. Whatever or whoever you need, will control you. P. 14, *When People Are Big and God is Small*.
3. Our “approval” drive is put in us by God to drive us to him.
 - a. “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed...” –2 Timothy 2:15b
4. In the beatitudes, the word Blessed can be substituted with the word Approved. (See Matthew 5:1 and following)

Exegetical Note on “Blessed”: It might be helpful to clarify that many times pastors will use the word “happy” for “blessed”. That’s unfortunate. “Blessed” represents a state of being (favored, approved) and a status in relation to God; it is NOT a subjective condition of the heart. “Blessed” is not a psychological description for how we should “feel”. The point of the term is to describe how God views His disciples, NOT how we feel in response. It’s actually a character issue that God approves of.

- a. Approved are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- b. Approved are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- c. Approved are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- d. Approved are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
- e. Approved are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

The general categories for Fear of Man

1. People will see me
2. People will reject me
3. People will physically hurt me

The most radical treatment for fear of man is the fear of the Lord.

Fear is:

Terror, being afraid

1. Adam knew our sinfulness
2. He was aware of God’s moral purity
3. He was convicted of sin

Punishment is shrinking back

1. God is the Judge
2. God demands holiness
3. God is angry

Astonishment, Awe, Reverence, Devotion,
Trust, and Worship

Worship

1. We know God’s forgiveness
2. We know God’s mercy and love
3. We know God’s eternal plan

The fear of the Lord is: the knowledge of our sinfulness and God's justice leading to knowledge of God's love and our salvation. Thus we worship. Therefore we image God, which means to rejoice in God's presence, to love Him above all else, and to live for His glory, not our own.

Practically works out as "needing" other people less, loving other people more. Out of obedience to Christ, and as a response to his love toward you, pursue others in love.

Qualifier on the word "needing" -- In one sense, we do "need" people as a means of grace from God to help us love Him and love our neighbor more effectively. (People are part of God's plan to sanctify us.) Also, because we are image bearers of God, we are social as God is social—Trinitarian. However, we do not "need" people to meet some unmet psychological deficit in our soul. "Needing", in that sense, is turned inward and that is the wrong direction. "Needing" should not be directionally headed toward the individual, but directionally pointed toward God and others. If a person believes they "need" someone to meet perceived unmet psychological needs; it will inevitably lead to selfishness, individualism, and a host of other sins, which diminish the "community" idea that God wants us to model, i.e., Trinity.

The path of freedom is through a robust fear of the Lord, which is synonymous or interchangeable with the term "loving the Lord". As we grow in our understanding of His love for us and practice His presence throughout the day then serving others would be the fruit of fearing the Lord.

Application...

1. We can only love God and love neighbor by effectively embracing a robust fear of God.
2. A robust fear of God is synonymously practicing his presence throughout the day.
3. Practicing his presence is manifested in the fruit of loving him and loving our neighbor. One of the ways we love God is by loving our neighbor.
4. We love others by practically serving others. When we love or serve others, we love God, all of which is motivated by a robust or radical treatment of the fear of God! (See Matthew 25:40)