

The Fear of Man: Part 2 of 2

Overcoming Fear of Others

The Fear of man is when people control how we think, feel, and act; it comes up when we view people as bigger and more significant than God in our lives. This is a pervasive problem for all of us.

How are we to overcome the fear of man?

I. Understand and grow in the fear of the Lord.

1. What is the fear of the Lord?

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Proverbs 9:10)

[23] The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm. (Proverbs 19:23)

The fear of the Lord for the believer is a reverence and submission to God. It is when we know how holy, awesome, good, big, powerful, loving, etc. God is and we respond in worship, reliance, hope, and trust in God.

2. How can we grow in the fear of the Lord?

*... 'Gather the people to me, that I may **let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me** all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.' (Deuteronomy 4:10)*

*[9] Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, **for those who fear him have no lack!** [10] The young lions suffer want and hunger; **but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.** [11] Come, O children, listen to me; **I will teach you the fear of the LORD.** (Psalm 34:9-11)*

We grow in the fear of the Lord when we study the Bible and meditate on who God is. The Bible is God's revelation of himself to us. We must know who the God of the Bible is and not be swayed by our worldly thoughts.

II. We must recognize and eliminate our self-serving desires and neediness.

1. We must recognize that the fear of man in us is not primarily a psychological problem, but first, it is a problem that stems from sin.

“When psychological needs, rather than sin, are seen as our primary problem, not only is our self-understanding affected, but the gospel itself is changed.” - Ed Welch

2. We were created primarily to glorify God and enjoy him forever (Westminster Catechism), not glorify ourselves and have all our needs and desires met.

Because of our sinful nature we often take good things (love, sex, money, etc.) and corrupt it. Our desire for love and significance can easily turn into a selfish desire of “I need ... in order to be happy.” In the instance of the fear of man, we elevate people to fill our self-serving needs. We replace the fear of God with the fear of man.

4. Know that God's love is not just for you as an individual but for all of us as the church.

3. Is your psychological need for love and significance too big? Be honest in examining where your needs and desires are too big.

III. How does the gospel liberate us?

1. Know that as God's children we are loved more than we can imagine. We find our joy, fullness, and significance in God.

*but **God shows his love for us** in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)*

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

*May the God of hope **fill you with all joy and peace in believing**, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may **abound in hope**. (Romans 15:13)*

2. Know that God is faithful and will never forsake you.

*[5] Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**" [6] So we can confidently say, "**The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?**" (Hebrews 13:5-6)*

3. Know that the gospel is not just about you as an individual.

4. Letting these gospel truths sink deep will help us to stop being so needy and start loving and serving God and others.

IV. Need others less. Love others more.

1. To think of ourselves less (not think less of ourselves) and love others more is what we are called to do as believers. This is the most tangible form of overcoming the fear of man.

*[3] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, **but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.** [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, **but also to the interests of others.** (Philippians 2:3-4)*

*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
(1 John 4:11)*

*... But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [44] and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. [45] **For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**" (Mark 10:43-45)*