

# Fear of Man - *Humiliation & Failure*

To Fear or Not to Fear: Session 1

Fear of man is actually a confusing term.

## Ways that fear of man can show up.

- Shyness
- Perfectionist
- People-pleaser
- Over-committed
- Indecisive
- Self-esteem
- Embarrassed
- Needy
- Quiet
- Codependent
- Health Nut
- Loner
- Isolation
- Introspection
- Escapism

All these things may have their roots in fear of man, and not necessarily a personality trait.

“If we knew how dangerous the fear of man really is, we might fear men less and fear our fears more. Other sins have beset me in my walk with Christ over the years, but few have so consistently eluded my radar like this one.” – **Marshall Segal**

## WHY WE FEAR OTHERS

Ed Welch observes that the Bible gives 3 basic reasons why we fear others.

1. We fear people because they can expose and humiliate us.
2. We fear people because they can reject, ridicule, and despise us.
3. We fear people because they can attack, oppress, and threaten us.

*(From: When People are Big and God is Small by Ed Welch)*

The problem with each of these is that there is a misplaced fear, a misplaced trust, or misplaced worship.

“Sinful fears are inverted cravings.” – **David Powlison**

## WHERE DOES THE FEAR OF MAN COME FROM?

*Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the Lord of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. – Isaiah 8:12-13*

*And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. – Matthew 10:28*

*In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? – Psalm 56:4*

*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*

*The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe. – Proverbs 29:25*

## **SAUL**

*“I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.” – 1 Samuel 15:24*

**1 Samuel 18:12**, *Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him, but had departed from Saul.*

**Verse 15**, *And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in fearful awe of him.*

**Verse 28 & 29**, *But when Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul’s daughter, loved him, Saul was even more afraid of David. So Saul was David’s enemy continually.*

## **FEAR OF MAN IS NOT LOVING**

*If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else’s conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. – 1 Corinthians 10:27-33*

## **FEAR OF FAILURE**

But why do we fear failure?

## **REDEFINING FAILURE**

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, – Romans 3:23*

This is true failure, sin.

1. Realize you’re going to fail.
2. Repent when needed.

## **FEAR OF HUMILIATION**

“Humiliation and shame is the deep sense that you are unacceptable because of something you did, something done to you, or something associated with you. You feel exposed.” — **Ed Welch**

*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”* — **Genesis 3:8-10**

## **SELF ESTEEM**

Self-esteem is no answer to fear of man. It feeds fear of man. It still has “self” at the center of all our motivation.

“Once self is made an idol, I will either view myself as awesome or as a failure. If my standards for myself are low, I live life surpassing my expectations and I feel awesome. I am confident, self-assured, boastful, and look down on those who fail. If, on the other hand, my standards are high and I do not meet them, I feel like a failure. I am insecure; I feel worthless, unpresentable, and self-destructive. Apart from Christ, and with self as our god, the only options are self-esteem (“I’m awesome”) or self hatred (“I’m worthless”). The idol of self has failed us and cannot be the answer to our problems.”  
— **Jared Mellinger**

*For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment.* — **Romans 12:3a**

## **GOSPEL ANSWERS**

Let self-absorption be replaced by Christ-absorption!

*I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.* — **Psalm 121:1-2**

“Woe to us if we tremble before criticism and yawn before the cross.” — **Marshall Segal**