

LESSON 4.1 • FEAR OF MAN

OUTLINE

- I. Fear activates Satan and releases his power the same way that faith activates God and releases His power.
 - A. Fear paralyzes people, yet many people are living their lives in fear.
 - B. One fear that limits what God can do in our lives is the fear of man, also known as persecution.
 - C. Nobody likes to be persecuted.
 - D. God created us for relationship and fellowship.
 - E. It's not normal or natural for us to like people hating or criticizing us.
 - F. But we can cast our cares about it on the Lord (1 Pet. 5:7).

- II. When you start doing what God called you to do, you have a huge target drawn on your back.
 - A. Increased influence comes with increased criticism.
 - B. That's why most people would rather stay in the background.
 - C. They don't want to face the criticism and persecution that go along with stepping out and doing what God called them to do.

- III. The vast majority of Christians are insecure because they are so paranoid about somebody criticizing them.

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

PROVERBS 29:25

- A. If we are so insecure that we can't handle another person criticizing us, we will never see God's fullness in our lives.

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

1 KINGS 17:1

- B. Elijah stood up in front of a king who was killing all of God's prophets, knowing that he himself could be killed.
- C. He was bold enough to speak the truth.
- D. We will limit what God can do through us if we know something is true but won't stand up for the truth because we are afraid of what people will say.

- E. We have become addicted to everyone's acceptance.
 - F. It's not that we should enjoy the rejection of others, but we should get to a place where if God loves us—which He does—then that ought to be sufficient for us.
- IV. It's amazing how insecure we become when we aren't in a vibrant relationship with God—we need to have everyone else's approval.
- A. For us to debate whether we're going to do what God tells us to do because someone might not like it is a fear of man.
 - B. We have no right to reject the truth for other people.
 - C. We need to give people the right to reject His Word on their own.
 - D. When we don't tell people the truth because we're afraid of how they might respond, we reject the truth for them.

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DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. True or false: Fear activates Satan and releases his power the same way that faith activates God and releases His power.

2. What is another name for persecution?

3. *Discussion question:* Why do you think no one likes to be persecuted?

4. Increased _____ comes with increased _____.

5. Why do most people stay in the background?

6. Proverbs 29:25 says, “*The fear of man bringeth a _____: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*”

7. *Discussion question:* What lessons can you learn from Elijah’s boldness?

8. If God loves you—which He does—then that ought to be what?
 - A. A point on your spiritual scorecard
 - B. Sufficient for you
 - C. Good for a free drink at the coffee shop
 - D. All of the above
 - E. None of the above

9. True or false: For you to debate whether you're going to do what God tells you to do because someone might not like it is a fear of failure.

10. *Discussion question:* Discuss why you have no right to reject the truth for other people.

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SCRIPTURES

1 PETER 5:7

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

PROVERBS 29:25

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

1 KINGS 17:1

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

LEVITICUS 19:17

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.