

LESSON 4.2 • FEAR OF MAN

OUTLINE

- V. Many people are afraid someone is going to criticize them or reject them, so they are paralyzed and unable to do what God tells them to do.
- A. All of this is a fear of man, which will limit God.

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

PROVERBS 29:25

- B. We need to come to a place where, when God speaks to us, nobody else is going to stop us from doing what He told us to do.
- C. We cannot respect or honor anyone else's opinion as much as we honor God's opinion.
- VI. God wanted the Israelites to enter into the Promised Land, but the Israelites focused their attention on the wrong thing (Num. 13:22-33).
- A. They looked at the size of the inhabitants rather than the land that God told them to possess—they saw the people as giants and themselves as grasshoppers.
- B. It doesn't matter how other people see us; it matters how God sees us.
- C. We need to see ourselves as God sees us!
- D. If the Israelites had analyzed their situation properly, it would have been a cakewalk for them to go into the Promised Land (Josh. 2:9-24).
- E. By focusing their attention on the natural instead of obeying God, they delayed His plan from coming to pass for forty years.
- VII. In 1 Samuel 17, David went out to face Goliath and said, "*Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?*" (1 Sam. 17:26).
- A. Goliath was not an Israelite; he was not one of God's covenant people.
- B. We ought to have this same attitude when unbelievers criticize us.
- C. If they don't know God, then our opinion of God is better than their opinion of God.
- D. If we are born again and have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are the exception today: We have a revelation of God and an access to Him that a lot of Christians don't have.
- E. Why would we elevate someone else's opinion and put that kind of authority upon someone who doesn't even have a relationship with God?

- VIII. When we take a stand for the Lord, the one who criticizes us the most is under the most conviction.
- A. People try to deal with conviction by tearing us down and discrediting us.
 - B. If a witness appears to have a poor character, then their testimony will be dismissed—that’s what persecution is all about!

For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

JOHN 3:20

- C. Immoral people want to dim the light of others so it won’t shine on their sin—that’s the reason criticism comes.

And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

2 TIMOTHY 3:12

- D. If we aren’t suffering persecution, we aren’t living godly.
- E. Jesus said, “*Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also*” (John 15:20).
- F. When people want the praises of man more than the praises of God, they limit God.

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DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

11. *Discussion question:* In what ways have you let fear of criticism or rejection paralyze you and keep you from doing what God tells you to do?

12. You cannot _____ or _____ anyone else's opinion as much as you honor God's opinion.

13. *Discussion question:* How can focusing on the wrong thing affect God's plan for you, like it did the Israelites in the wilderness?

14. What were the Israelites looking at that kept them out of the land God told them to possess?

- A. The size of their weapons
- B. The size of their wallets
- C. The size of the inhabitants
- D. The size of their problems
- E. The size of the land

15. True or false: If the Israelites had analyzed their situation properly, it would have been very difficult for them to go into the Promised Land.

16. *Discussion question:* Why should David's attitude toward Goliath be the same attitude you have toward unbelievers who criticize you?

17. If you are born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit, you have a _____ of God and an _____ to Him that a lot of Christians don't.

18. *Discussion question:* Why do you think some believers elevate the opinion of others and put that kind of authority upon people who don't even have a relationship with God?

19. When you take a stand, the person who criticizes you is what?

- A. The noisiest
- B. Under the most conviction
- C. Running for political office
- D. One of your relatives
- E. Just being mean

20. For what reason does criticism come?

21. *Discussion question:* How can desiring the praises of man limit God?

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 SCRIPTURES

PROVERBS 29:25

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

NUMBERS 13:22-33

And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) [23] And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. [24] The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. [25] And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. [26] And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. [27] And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. [28] Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. [29] The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan. [30] And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. [31] But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. [32] And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. [33] And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

JOSHUA 2:9-24

And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. [10] For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. [11] And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. [12] Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have

shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: [13] And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. [14] And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. [15] Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. [16] And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. [17] And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. [18] Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. [19] And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. [20] And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. [21] And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window. [22] And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not. [23] So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them: [24] And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

1 SAMUEL 17:26

And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

JOHN 3:20

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2 TIMOTHY 3:12

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

JOHN 15:20

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.