



## Fear of Man

I have chosen this significant hindrance to hearing God's voice because it has been one of my biggest problems - worrying about what people are going to think, what they will say, how they will respond, and what they will say after I leave.

We are vulnerable to what we perceive other people think about us. Our minds and emotions are affected by other people's responses and reactions. The fear of man often takes the form of peer pressure - wanting to have friends, wanting to be accepted. Peer pressure is not only an issue for youth.

Fear of man opens the door for the enemy to come in. Fear of man can lead us to lie, e.g. Abraham lied about Sarah being his sister. Some people lie because of fear of punishment, which is the fear of man.

The Lord has helped me walk through this in one lesson after another. I have determined in my heart to be a *God-seeker* and not a *man-pleaser*.

### Some Symptoms of the Fear of Man

#### 1. Fear of fellowship, and of being real

Fear of man can make you try to be someone, or act in a way that is not you. E.g. You are afraid to share your heart when in a home group. Or we pretend to be someone else, believing that others would only accept us if we behaved in a certain way.

Being known for who you really are is humility. Walking in the light with each other is humility (1 John 1:7).

## **2. Fear of taking a stand on an issue**

Often people do not want to risk rejection, so they go along with the crowd (peer pressure) instead of speaking truth from God's Word. God's truths about marriage, creation, gender identity, or when life begins and ends in His eyes, have become distorted truths because many do not believe in the absolute authority of the Bible (1 Sam 15:24; Isaiah 51:7,12-13; Psalm 139:13-17).

## **3. Fear of acting on what God asks you to do, such as...**

- Praying out loud.
- Using the gifts God has given you, e.g. prophecy, dance, singing.
- Showing your love and appreciation to someone.
- You felt you were to do something, or give to someone, but were afraid to do it. For example, God asks you to bring soup to someone. But you don't do it because you are afraid of what that person may think or say. Or you are afraid that you didn't really hear God.

Often doubt and unbelief come in when there's fear.

## **4. Fear of Authority**

In Genesis 20:1, Abraham spoke a half-truth by saying that Sarah is his sister for fear that King Abimelek would take his life. A half-truth is a lie.

I had tremendous fear of spiritual authority, as well as, other authorities.

YWAM was pioneering the Crossroads Discipleship Training School at the University of the Nations. While Peter was away, I sensed the Lord say: "You and Peter will be on staff for the first Crossroads with Loren and Darlene Cunningham." Right away, I told God: "You tell Darlene, I don't want to."

But because I wanted to be obedient to God, I went to Darlene's room to tell her. She wasn't there. So, I figured I would leave a note on the door for her.

However, my friend, from whom I borrowed note paper, informed me that Darlene was down in her office. After much persuasion, I went downstairs.

Darlene said: "Hi Donna, what's on your heart?"

I stuttered: "I think God wants Peter and me to be on staff in the first Crossroads."

Then Darlene answered: "God already told Loren that last night. Why are you so red and sweaty? Do you have fear of spiritual authority?"

I broke down and cried. I was terrified. The Lord gave me a picture of my heart – it was full of flowers, and in the middle was a big weed that was choking the flowers. Then Jesus, the great Gardener, came and pulled out the weed, which was the fear of man, and replaced it with truth.

## **5. Fear of making a mistake**

- The fear of making a mistake when communicating with others. For example, speaking another language that is not your mother tongue. English might be your second language and you are afraid to share in 'broken English'.
- The fear of making a mistake when hearing from God. It is OK to make a mistake if your heart is right.

## **6. Avoiding confrontation**

You know something is wrong, but you won't say anything because you are afraid of how others will react.

## **7. Saying what people want to hear, the way they want to hear it.**

Instead of seeking God on what He wants people to hear, some pastors will speak what the congregation wants to hear, or sermons they know will please.

*Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in Him.  
But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for  
fear they would be put out of the synagogue;  
for they loved praise from men more than praise from God. John 12:42-43*

Read also 1 Thessalonians 2:4 and 2 Timothy 4:3.

## **8. Peace at any cost**

Sometimes you have to risk peace in order to speak God's truth with love.

*Then they called them in again  
and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.  
But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.  
For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard". Acts 4:18-20*

## **9. Indecisiveness**

The inability to make a decision effectively may be a result of always needing reinforcement from others.

## **10. Difficulty in humbling ourselves before man**

It is easier to humble ourselves before God than man because we have more fear of man than the fear of God.

## **Overcoming the Fear of Man**

### **1. Face the fear, and name it for what it is.**

- Expose it - repent & renounce it.
- What controls our thoughts controls us (Phil 2:5; Phil 4:8; Col 3:1-2).
- Fear comes from the enemy (2 Tim 1:7; 1 John 4:18).

### **2. Trust God, and what His Word says.**

Fear of man is a snare (Prov 29:25), but, if we keep our eyes on God, He will release our feet from that snare (Psalm 25:15).

Fear is basically misplaced faith. You allow fear to come in when you believe the devil's lies instead of God's promises. (Heb 13:5-6).

*The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.  
What can man do to me?  
The Lord is with me; He is my helper.  
I will look in triumph on my enemies.  
It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man.  
It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. Psalm 118:6-9*

### **3. Relying on God's love takes away all fear**

*There is no fear in love.  
But perfect love drives out fear,  
because fear has to do with punishment.  
The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18*

God's love is unconditional. It never changes. No one, and nothing, can separate us from God's love (Rom 8:37-39).

#### 4. Having the fear of God

Having the fear of God is having a reverence for God. It is not being afraid of God. It is ...

- a hatred for evil (Prov 8:13)
- having God's attitude towards sin
- the beginning of knowledge (Prov 1:7)
- the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10)

Friendship with Jesus is more important than satisfying the lust of the flesh, i.e. doing anything you want (John 15:15; 1 Cor 6:19).

*The Lord confides in those who fear Him,  
He makes His covenant known to them.* Psalm 25:14

- Choose the fear of God (Prov 1:29).
- Pray for the fear of God.
- Ask **God** what He thinks about the decision you are making. Include Him in your choices. Instead of asking man, ask God how **He** feels.

Living in the fear of the Lord brings peace and strength (Acts 9:31).

*The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life,  
Turning a man from the snares of death.* Prov 14:27

*Who, then, is the man that fears the Lord?  
He will instruct him in the way chosen for him.  
He will spend his days in prosperity,  
and his descendants will inherit the land.  
The Lord confides in those who fear Him;  
He makes His covenant known to them.  
My eyes are ever on the Lord,  
for only He will release my feet from the snare.* Psalm 25:12-15

Do you live by the Word of God, or the voice and pressures of the world?

*Do not let your heart envy sinners  
but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord.* Prov 23:17

*Since we have these promises dear friends,  
let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit,  
perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.* 2 Cor 7:1

#### 5. Tell yourself the truth . . . a few examples:

I am adopted as God's child (Eph 1:5).  
I am a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).  
I am a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; 1 Cor 6:19).  
I am a saint (Rom 1:7).  
I am holy and blameless in His sight (Eph 1:4).  
I am victorious through my Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:57).  
I am free from condemnation (Rom 8:1).  
I have access to the Father (Eph 2:18).  
I am Christ's friend (John 15:15).  
I am God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works (Eph 2:10).  
I am the apple of my Father's eye (Psalm 17:8; Deut 32:10-11).  
I have overcome the world (1 John 5:4-5).  
I have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16).  
He will keep me strong to the end so that I will be blameless (1 Cor 1:8).

## 6. Practice His presence

- Activate your prayer life.
- Meditate on His Word.
- Trust God and what His Word says (not the voice of others).
- Enter into His rest (Ex 33:14).
- Worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).
- Have fellowship with those who are being led by the Spirit, and listen to Him.

Scriptures to read and hang on to:

Deuteronomy 31:6

Psalm 27:13-14

Psalm 46: 10-11

Psalm 49:5-20

Psalm 56:2-4

Psalm 62:5-8

Psalm 112

Isaiah 51:12-13

Luke 12:4-12

Philippians 2:5

Colossians 3:1-2

2 Timothy 1:7

Hebrews 13:5-6

1 John 4:4,18

## APPLICATION

If you struggle with the 'fear of man,' ask God's forgiveness and tell Him how you feel.

Renounce the 'fear of man' and ask for the 'fear of God,' which is to hate evil.

Ask Jesus how He sees you. Then receive and declare the truth of who you are through Jesus' eyes. You are His heir - prince or princess (Rom 8:17). He is the King of kings.