

The Circles

If Jesus is not our everything, something, or someone else will be. That person or thing will eat us alive from the inside out

Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷ Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. ¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." ¹⁹ Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me."²⁰ So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. ²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed."²² So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. ²³ But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. ²⁴ (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.) ²⁵ And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" ²⁶ Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn."²⁷ Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years."²⁸ Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. ²⁹ (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.) ³⁰ So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.

Genesis 29:16-30

Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance.

*A script is a shorthand way of speaking of cultural expectations for behavior and relationships. Cultural expectations inform many of our behaviors, ranging from such quotidian (**occurring every day; daily ordinary or everyday, especially when mundane**) habits as how we greet one another to major behaviors and life decisions. These behaviors and life decisions might include cultural expectations for when single people "should" marry or when married couples "should" start a family. When we discuss a gay script, then, we are discussing cultural expectations for understanding one's same-sex sexuality.*

-Mark Yarhouse. Costly Obedience: What we can learn from the celibate gay Christian community

Sexual Script:

- **Sexual attractions signal** who you are as a person.
- **Sexual attractions reside at the core of your identity**, your sense of self.
- **Sexual behavior no longer resides in a category of behavior that can be evaluated as right or wrong** in and of itself; rather, it is an expression of identity insofar as you express and enjoy who you really are.
- **Sexual fulfillment is essential for life fulfillment**

-Adapted from Mark Yarhouse

The Fear of Man

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

The fear of man is a snare that traps people in a vicious cycle of dethroning God & enthroning people.

³¹ When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

Leah:

Reuben (*See, a son*)- Because the Lord has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me.”

Simeon (*heard*)- “Because the Lord has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also.”

Levi (*attached*)- “Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.”

Judah (*praise*)- “This time I will praise the Lord.”

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die!”² Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”

Genesis 30:1-2

Unserious people not only make excuses for their lack of self-control; they sanitize it

Rachel via surrogacy (Bilhah):

Dan (*judged*)- “God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son.”

Naphtali (*wrestling*)- With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed.”

Leah via surrogacy (Zilpah):

Gad (*Good fortune*)- Good fortune has come!

Asher (*Happy*)- Happy am I! For women have called me happy.”

Leah:

Issachar (*wages or hire*)- “God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband.”

Zebulun (*honor*)- “God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons.”

Rachel:

Joseph (*May he add and sounds like taken away*)- She conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.”²⁴ And she called his name Joseph, saying, “May the Lord add to me another son!”

Ben-oni/Benjamin (*Son of my sorrow or son of my strength. Son of the right hand*)- And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

When the fear of man is at work, we **redefine ourselves based on the thoughts & actions of others**

When the fear of man is at work, we **deify others, giving them the central place in our thoughts and actions.**

When the fear of man is at work, we **demonize others, treating them as threat and obstacle to what we want most**

When the fear of man is at work, we **dehumanize others, treating them as a tool to obtain what we want most**

Then she said, “Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her.”⁴ So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her
Genesis 30:3-4

When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife.
Genesis 30:9

It sucks **being the casualty of someone else’s sin**

The fear of man is **a poison that corrodes all our relationships & our relational capacity**

When the fear of man is at work, we **corrode all our relationships & our relational capacity**

Then Rachel said, “With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed.”
Genesis 30:8

What we’re **wrestling with people to obtain is really an outworking of us **wrestling with God** for blessing**

³⁵ And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “This time I will praise the Lord.” Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing.

Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, *for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.*”
Genesis 32:28

The Fear of God

Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.”
Exodus 20:20

The Fear of God is reverence that leads to a unique honoring & delighting in God

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.
Proverbs 1:7

The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high;
he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness,
⁶and he will be the stability of your times,
abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge;
the fear of the Lord is Zion's treasure.
Isaiah 33:5-6

The greatness of God & His love towards us, is the fuel for the Fear of God in our lives

But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me;
my Lord has forgotten me.”
¹⁵“Can a woman forget her nursing child,
that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?
Even these may forget,
yet I will not forget you.
¹⁶Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;
your walls are continually before me.
¹⁷Your builders make haste;
your destroyers and those who laid you waste go out from you.
¹⁸Lift up your eyes around and see;
they all gather, they come to you.
As I live, declares the Lord,
you shall put them all on as an ornament;
you shall bind them on as a bride does.
Isaiah 49:14-18

Whose voice is the loudest right now?

Where are you living from right now?

Who is Jesus to you?

“This time I will praise the Lord.”

²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. ³⁰ So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.”

So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem),