

Lesson 5, Part 2: The Upward Path

Case Study - "I worry too much"

Mary tells you that she is worried and that this has led to difficulty in sleeping for the past 6 months. She is afraid that her marriage is falling apart. George and Mary are Christians in their late 20s. George, a lawyer, has had to work quite a bit lately and admitted in the 2nd session that he hasn't been able to spend much time with Mary.

"This however is a situation that will soon end," would be his explanation. "Mary has been a faithful and conscientious helper during this time of excessive work. I love her," says George. "There is nothing wrong with our marriage!"

Mary replies, "He is so good to me and he is so patient about my faults. George is really my loving leader. However, if he spent more time with me, my sleep problem would go away. Then I wouldn't worry so much. Maybe I just worry too much about nothing."

You ask, "What specifically do you worry about?" Mary replies, "I worry about my marriage. I don't want it to fail like my parents did. Everything seemed ok until all of a sudden things came apart. I have read Philippians 4:6-7 on the subject of worry and I know that worry is sin, but I can't seem to stop. It just goes on and on."

I. The upward path - How do people come back?

- A. _____ the sin (Matt 7:3-5)
- B. _____ the sin (Ps 32:1-5; 1 John 1:9)
- C. _____ of the sin (Job 42:5-6; Acts 26:20)
- D. _____ priorities
 - 1. Commit yourself to God's sovereignty and rule - Rom 12:1-2
 - 2. Pray for wisdom to walk in His ways - Prov 2:6-8
 - 3. Pray that He would cause you to delight in His Word - Ps 1
 - 4. Meditate on the Word and be obedient to it - Ps 1; John 14:15
 - 5. Walk in the Spirit - Gal 5:16

II. Whom do you fear?

Your son Ed, a high-school senior, opens up one night at the dinner table, recounting the awards ceremony that he attended earlier that day. He shares,

“Today was the awards ceremony at school and I was up for an award, and I was scared to death I would get it!

The auditorium bulged with over two thousand high-school juniors and seniors. From the back, where I like to sit, it seemed a good mile or two up to the platform. All I could think of was what my classmates would think of me while I walked to the front. Would I walk funny? Would I trip going up the stairs? Would one person -- I prayed it would not be a girl I liked -- think I was a jerk? What about those who were also nominated or who thought they were deserving? What would they think of me if I won instead of them? What would I ever say for a brief acceptance speech? *God, please don't let me get this!* I prayed.

After a number of lesser awards were announced, the vice principal went to the podium to introduce the winner. He began with a short, somewhat cryptic biographical sketch. It did not sound exactly like me, but it was generic enough to fit. I was starting to sweat, but I sat motionless for fear that someone would think I was getting interested. Finally the announcement came: ‘And the winner of this year's senior award is...Rick Wilson.’

Rick Wilson! I could not believe it! Of all people. No one even thought he was a candidate!

You can imagine my reaction. Relief? No way. I felt like a total failure. Now what would people think of me? They knew I was up for the award, and someone else was chosen. What a loser I was.

Immediately I began thinking, *if I had worked at all this year, I would have won. I certainly had the potential, I just didn't want to win. I'm a late bloomer; when I get to college, I will show them.* I was ashamed to go back to class.”

A. What is fear?

B. When is fear sinful and when is it right/ok?

1. Fear is sinful when it is caused by focusing on _____ rather than on God. This is called _____, and it comes in different forms. For example:
 - a. What does man *think* of me?
 - b. What can man *do* for me?
 - c. What can *God* do for me?

All of these heart-motivations are sinful and show a high view of _____ and a low view of _____ – the exact opposite of how Jesus described a follower of Christ:

“And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” – Luke 9:23-24

2. Fear is right when it is caused by a _____ for God (Prov 1:7; Eccl 12:13-14; 2 Cor 5:10-11).

C. What are some examples of fearing man?

- We tell and participate in inappropriate jokes *because* we want to be accepted.
- We dress in ways that purposely draw attention to ourselves *because* we want to impress others.
- We don’t obey the Lord by disciplining our children *because* we are afraid of their response, that they will dislike us.
- We don’t tell a loved one what they need to hear *because* if we do, they may not like us.
- We don’t continue to love our spouses as God has commanded *because* if we do, they might continue to “run over” us.
- We buy new cars and houses we can’t afford *because* we “need” them.
- We don’t get into a community group *because* we’re afraid people will find out we don’t know very much about the Bible.

D. What are some examples of fearing God?

- I dwell more on what God thinks of me rather than what others think of me.
- When I must choose between violating God's commands or doing something that could potentially cost me my job, not only am I willing to lose my job but I wouldn't hesitate to boldly state the reason for my decision.
- When I feel like screaming at someone, I don't because I realize that I consistently stir up the anger of the Lord and yet He is always slow to anger and abounding in love.
- Instead of refraining from eating dessert so I look good in a bathing suit, I consider what action reflects the best way to honor God with my body.
- I spend more time looking into the mirror of God's Word than the mirror of the bathroom.
- I care more about how my day went spiritually than circumstantially.
- When my wife or kids don't like my decision, yet I know it's what God wants me to do, I stand by my decision.
- When someone I love needs to be confronted about sin, I do it (with a proper sense of fear and trembling).

E. How do we get to the place of really "fearing God" like that?

1. _____ yourself (Ps 51:1-4 6-10, 17)
2. Make a _____ (1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 5:9)
3. Be faithfully _____ (Eccl 12:13-14)

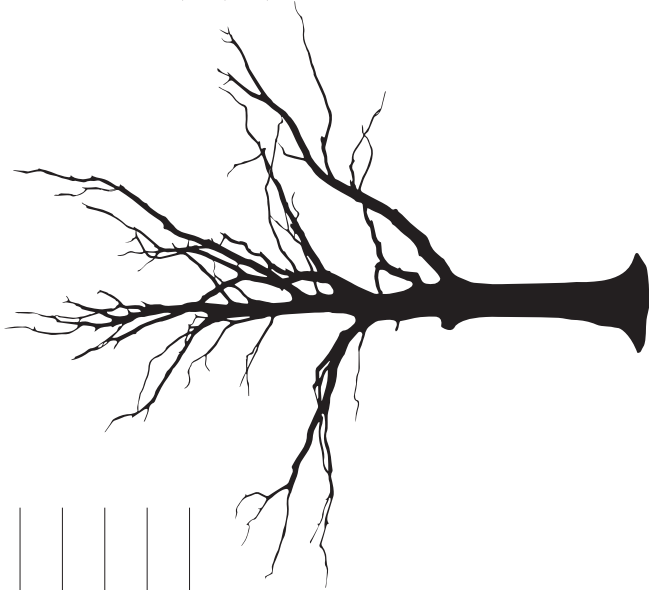
F. Practically speaking, how do we make that happen?

1. Self-Confrontation Manual – page 85
2. Self-Confrontation Manual – page 86
3. Gal 6:8-10 (reaping and sowing)

"If I do not organize my life in such a way that it pleases God, it will organize itself to please itself."

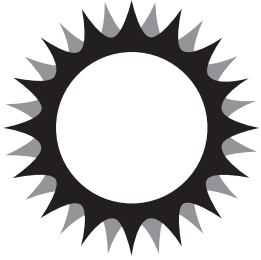
Bad Fruit

Gal 5:19-21
Mt 7:17
Lk 6:43-45



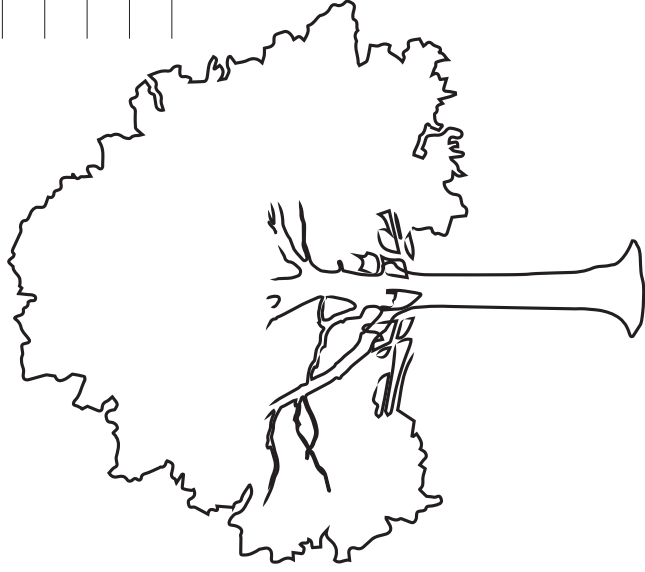
Jer. 17:8

The Heat



Good Fruit

Gal 5:22-23
Mt 3:8
Jn 15:4-5,8



James 1:14-15

I must...

Idols
1 Jn 5:21
Mk 7:21-23
Ezek 14:1-8



CONFESS

REPENT

Ps 51:1-17
Ps 32: 1-5
1 Jn 1:9

Job 42:5-6
Act 26:20

I must...

Please God
2 Cor 5:9
1 Cor 10:31
Ps 139:23-24

"Thus says the Lord,
'Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind
and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from
the Lord. For he will be like a bush in the desert...
'Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord
and whose trust is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by
the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear
when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green..."

- Jer 17:5-8