

Application Questions



Messy Life: The Fear of Man

Jacob fears his father-in-law Laban. Laban fears his Jacob. The fear of man is written all over Genesis 31. But God says to Jacob “return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you.” Jacob is presented with a choice, who is going to be bigger in his life - man or God?

Read Genesis 31

1. In his book *When People are Big and God is Small*, author Ed Welch defines the fear of man as “holding someone in awe, being controlled or mastered by people, worshipping other people, putting your trust in people or needing people” (p. 14). How would you define the fear of man?
 2. Welch provides a helpful list of questions (pp. 14-17) to help diagnose the fear of man in our lives. Which of these is a struggle in your life? Why do you think that is? How does that struggle specifically relate to the fear of man? Explain.
 - a. Have you ever struggled with peer pressure? Are you driven to prove your success or resume?
 - b. Are you often over-committed, always finding it hard to say “no”?
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- c. Are you constantly in “need” of something from your spouse?
 - d. Is self-esteem a critical concern for you? Does your life and value depend on what others think?
 - e. Do you ever feel you might be exposed as an imposter (or even a failure)?
 - f. Do you second guess decisions because of what other people think?
 - g. Do you easily get embarrassed?
 - h. Do you find yourself telling little white lies to paint yourself in a more positive light?
 - i. Do other people constantly make you angry, depressed or crazy?
 - j. Do you find yourself attempting to avoid people?
 - k. Do you find that you compare yourself to others, in order to feel good about yourself?
 - l. Do you find yourself timid in sharing your faith in Christ because others might see you as foolish?
3. The fear of man is a struggle in our lives when people are big and God is small. When fighting the “bigness” of people in your life, how can you grow your view of God?
 4. What is God calling you to walk through with Him? How may you be avoiding this opportunity to be with God?
 5. How is the fear of man currently discrediting God’s ability to work in the life of someone in your circle? How can you be specifically praying for that person and their spiritual life?
 6. In what relationship do you feel helpless? Where can you pray for God to act in that relationship today?
 7. Read Ephesians 2. Where do you see yourself in this passage? What was your life like before the “but” of verse 4? What has life your life been like after the “but” of verse 4?
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