



Maranatha Baptist Church
Equip University
Christian Living Track
Fearing and Following God

Class 4 – Why do we fear man? We fear they will reject us.

Introduction

Where do I find my identity? When do I gain my sense of value and worth? When do I feel “honored”?

People do reject us.

How do we manifest fear that other people will reject us?

- Concerns about personal characteristics.
- Desire for approval.
- Fishing for compliments.
- Perfectionism.
- The way we dress.
- Name dropping.
- Favoritism.
- Avoiding sharing the gospel.
- We don't confront sin.
- Passivity toward others.
- Church philosophy.
- In our speech.

How does fear of rejection and desiring approval harm us?

1. It enslaves us to others.
2. Love for praise actually undermines our receiving it.
3. We miss out on heavenly rewards.
4. It causes us to be increasingly blind to our own sins.

5. It makes us more susceptible to being ensnared by flattery and deceit.
6. It causes us to be more susceptible to other sins.
7. It can take a physical and psychological toll.

How does pride fuel our fear of rejection?

Pride can do a variety of different things in relation to the fear of man:

1. Can cause us to distort our sins and faults, either maximizing or minimizing
2. Will tempt us to elicit praise from others.
3. Can cause us to misapply the praise we receive ... “look at how great I am, they said this about me ...”
4. Will tempt us to change our behavior but not seek a changed heart.
5. Will tempt us to dismiss confrontation over sin or weakness. “It must just be their opinion. I’ve thought about it – I’m not that way.” Pride cannot handle criticism.

When is it appropriate to please other people?

Only when it is a means of pleasing our Father in heaven.

1. As much as it is required for gospel ministry and proclamation (1 Timothy 3:2, 7).
2. In relation to pleasing and respecting parents and authorities, it is not only appropriate but also commanded (Titus 2:9-10; 1 Peter 2:13-17).
3. If you are married, it is right for you to seek to please your spouse (1 Corinthians 7:32-33).
4. It is right to deny yourself of your Christian liberties for the sake of helping a weaker brother (Romans 15:1-2).

Fear of rejection in Scripture

- Fear of rejection is idolatry (Romans 1:25; Exodus 32 – golden calf).
- Temptation for those in authority to show partiality (Deut. 1:17).

- Temptation to please men rather than God (1 Samuel 15:24).
- Can keep us from trusting the Lord (John 12:42-43).
- Leads to hypocrisy and the distortion of the gospel (Galatians 2:11-12).
- Leads to murder (Mark 15:15).

How do we overcome fear of rejection? Trust your gospel acceptance.

Jesus received the rejection that we deserved.

Jesus guarantees acceptance with the Father (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:5-7).

Jesus gives us a purpose: live to please the Father.

- John 5:40-44 – seek the honor that comes from God: to be called by His Name.
- John 8:29, 42-44 – Imitate the Father; always do what pleases Him.
- John 12:25-26 – Follow and serve Jesus and be honored by the Father.
- 2 Corinthians 5:9-11 – Live in light of His judgment; aim to please Him.

Response: How does the Gospel intersect our fear of rejection?

At home:

At work:

At church:

Conclusion

There's only one rejection we should fear: the rejection of God the Father. That fear should lead us to receive the gift of acceptance into God's family through faith in Jesus Christ. Having been honored by God – to be able to call Him Father – we never fear rejection again and only live to please Him.

Additional Resources:

- Ed Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small*
- Lou Priolo, *Pleasing People: How not to be an Approval Junkie*
- Ed Welch, *Running Scared: Fear, Worry and the God of Rest*
- John Murray, *The Fear of God: The Soul of Godliness*
- Kevin DeYoung, *Just Do Something*
- Tony Payne & Philip Jensen, *Guidance and the Voice of God*
- James Petty, *Step By Step*

Class Outline:

1. What is the fear of man?
2. What is the fear of God?
3. How do we fear man? We fear that people will expose us.
4. How do we fear man? We fear that people will reject us.
5. How do we fear man? We fear that people will harm us.
6. A new vision for life: loving God and loving neighbor
7. Anxious or Restful?
8. God's Providence
9. God's Will
10. Faithfulness
11. Tools of the Trade Part 1: God's Word, Prayer, Counsel
12. Tools of the Trade Part 2: Circumstances and Feelings
13. Panel Discussion—Fearing and Following the Lord