

# Overcoming the Fear of Man

A.U.G. Degree

by Zack M. Guess

## Overcoming the Fear of Man

By Zack M. Guess

Note: This part of the study is gleaned from a video of a sermon preached by Del Fehsenfeld three days before he died of a brain tumor. I have modified it, deleted some parts, and added some thoughts of my own.

Primary Scripture: "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." (Prov. 29:25).

I. This fear **imprisons** people and is a result of **insecurity**.

A. Insecurity is the result of placing confidence and trust in people

or things that can be taken away from us, such as:

1. Material goods.
2. Talents, such as speaking ability.
3. Health, strength, personal appearance.
4. Family
5. The approval of certain individuals or organizations.
6. Status, reputation, and prestige.
7. The church. Our security is not ultimately in the church, but in God.
8. Our job.
9. Living in a particular location.

B. Security comes from placing our confidence in our **relationship with**

**God through Jesus Christ** and in our **constant meditation on the word of God.**

II. Some evidences of insecurity and the fear of man in our lives:  
(for

### 3

each of these write "guilty" or "not guilty").

A. We care more about what other people think than about what God thinks\_\_\_\_\_.

B. We cannot properly discipline our children because we are desperate  
for their approval\_\_\_\_\_.

C. We are very uncomfortable and feel intimidated when people disagree  
with us. We tend to cut people off when they even try to disagree  
with us\_\_\_\_\_.

D. When our children disobey, it grieves and angers us not so much because God has been dishonored, but because we are afraid of how  
it makes us look as parents\_\_\_\_\_.

E. We will not find someone to confide in and be accountable to in order to overcome some sinful habit, because we are more concerned  
with what people might think than with overcoming the sin to the glory of God\_\_\_\_\_. (James 5:16)

F. We even dress to please others. We have got to dress in name brand  
clothes\_\_\_\_\_. (Jeremiah 9:23,24)

G. We think that people just do not appreciate us as they should  
\_\_\_\_\_.

H. We are always angry, either with God or with other people\_\_\_\_\_.

## 4

- I. We cannot really talk with or be tender with those close to us-- wife, husband, brothers and sisters, parents\_\_\_\_\_.
- J. We do not want to be ostracized, so we will do things that are wrong, or we we will fail to stand up for what we know to be right  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- K. We are very self-conscious. We see a group of people off by themselves, and we are sure they are talking about us\_\_\_\_\_.
- L. We are very critical of others\_\_\_\_\_.
- M. We cannot confront someone privately when we think he has done something wrong. Instead, we talk about that person to others behind his back\_\_\_\_\_.
- N. We have nervous or destructive habits such as overeating, sleeping  
too much, being too talkative, indulging in excessive or inappropriate laughter, etc.\_\_\_\_\_.
- O. We are too concerned with our personal appearance. This may manifest itself in spending too much money on clothes. It may involve sinning against God and our body by starving ourselves. We may be too concerned with our weight or how our body looks  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- P. We indulge in "name dropping." We want to impress others with how  
many important people we know and how many places we have been  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- Q. We exaggerate, especially our own achievements\_\_\_\_\_.

## 5

R. We are not transparently honest. We are not completely honest with others\_\_\_\_\_.

S. We have a very hard time making decisions\_\_\_\_\_.

T. We are habitually frustrated, grouchy, discontented, given to murmuring, etc.\_\_\_\_\_.

U. We seek status by buying a new car or a new house in a prestigious neighborhood\_\_\_\_\_.

V. We become a "workaholic," consumed with the need to be very productive so that others will talk about our dedication. We do this to the neglect of our health and to the neglect of our families\_\_\_\_\_.

W. Preachers manifest insecurity and the fear of man by:

1. Clinging to denominational leaders for approval\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Blowing away people who come to church because of those who are are not there\_\_\_\_\_.

3. A need to always hear from others about how well we have preached \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Basing decisions on how we believe it will suit some wealthy or influential member of the church, rather than what God thinks about the matter\_\_\_\_\_.

5. Being more concerned about our own reputation than about the

## 6

reputation of God\_\_\_\_\_.

6. Being afraid to preach on a particular subject because we might

incur someone's anger\_\_\_\_\_.

III. God has placed in us a **drive for approval**, but Satan has perverted

that drive.

A. Satan's **false** drives:

1. **Acceptance.** From people. We have a **desperate need** for people to

like and approve of us.

2. **Status.** This is why we want the name-brand clothes, the new car,

the prestigious job, the expensive house in the "right" neighborhood. This is why the woman is ashamed to be a keeper at

home and **must** have a "career."

3. **Productivity.** This is why the "workaholic" kills himself, and why

the wife and children never see him. He is **not in fellowship with God.** He stills his own tortured conscience by working, and

is gratified with the approval he is getting from his employer and others.

B. The **legitimate drive** that God has placed in us is the **drive for approval form God, Himself!**

1. We need to seek the **A.U.G. degree.** "Approved unto God." See II Timothy 2:15.

2. We need to **confess** the **sin** of fearing man, and ask God to **cleanse**

us and set us **free**. We need to ask God to **unshackle** us. (I Jn 1:9)

**WE NEED A GODLY CONTEMPT FOR THE APPROVAL OF MEN  
AND AN INSATIABLE APPETITE FOR THE APPROVAL OF GOD!**

IV. Important thoughts and questions to ask ourselves:

A. Without the fear of man we will be as **birds set free** to soar with

the power of the resurrection life in our lives and ministries!

B. The freedom from the fear of man is **glorious!**

C. Are you tired of having to impress others and fearing what they think of you? Are you weary with fearfully making decisions based

on what others may think? What a terrible load this is to bear!

D. God can set you free. It will take time; it will be a process, but

you **can** get the A.U.G. degree.

E. Are you willing to embark on a **PILGRIMAGE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH** until

God has freed you from the fear of man?

"The fear of man bringeth a snare; but **whoso putteth his trust in**

**the Lord shall be safe.**" (Proverbs 29:25).

"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence; and his children **shall have a place of refuge.**" (Proverbs 14:26).

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \*\*\*

Note: The following section of this study is gleaned from Chapter Thirty-six of *The Christian Counselor's Manual* by Jay E. Adams. This chapter is entitled, "Helping Those Who Fear."

I. Miscellaneous Observations:

A. The **opposite of fear** is really **love**. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." (I John 4:18).

1. The enemy of fear is love; the way to put off fear, then is to put on love.

2. Love is **self-giving**; fear is **self-protecting**.

3. Love moves **toward** others; fear shrinks **away** from them.

4. Assurance of love **from** God and **for** God erases fear.

5. The wall plaque correctly reads, "***The fear of God is the one fear that removes all others.***" This fear of God involves loving God and keeping his commandments.

B. The origin and development of this love:

1. Origin: That which enables Christians to love is God's prior love to them. "We love him, because he first loved us." ( I John 4:19 ).



2. Development: This love grows as we walk with the Lord in **loving**

and **obedient** fellowship. Growth in this love produces **boldness**

and **confidence**. See I John 4: 17-19.

3. A quote from Adams, p. 415: "Fear and love vary inversely. The more fear, the less love; the more love, the less fear. They tend to seesaw. But the encouraging fact. . . is that love is the heavier. It is interesting to notice in the Scriptures Jesus

never is said to be afraid. The obvious reason for this was that

His love was perfect."

II. Eliminating fear by love:

A. Determine the **source** of fear.

1. Is it an improper fear of God? One that comes from an unscriptural idea of God?

2. Is it a fear of men?

B. If it is an **improper** fear of God, the relationship with God must be explored.

1. Is there any misunderstanding of the Scriptures about God's wonderful forgiveness or about anything else?

2. Is there any sin involved which is disrupting the relationship with God?

- |                              |                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| a. See Deuteronomy 28:65-67. | d. Genesis 42:21. |
| b. See Proverbs 28:1.        | e. Genesis 45:3.  |
| c. See Leviticus 26:36.      | f. Hebrews 10:27  |

## 10

C. If it is the fear of man, then the following things can be considered as solutions:

1. Engage in **loving ministry**. Consider this quotation from Adams,  
p. 417: "As always in Christian service, he will *find* his life in *losing* it. His fears of men will diminish as his loving service to them increases. It is more blessed to give than to receive."

2. Some fears may be caused by **laziness**, and **lack of preparation**.

For example, a preacher may fear his congregation because he is not adequately prepared to preach.

3. We may fear some people because we have wronged them. We wish to avoid them because of the guilt that we feel. But avoidance only makes things worse. Running and hiding is not the answer. The only proper and effective action is **confession** of sin, **repentance**, and **reconciliation**. (Matt. 5:23,24; Gal. 6:1; I Tim. 5:1,2; II Tim. 2:24-26; Heb. 10:24).

III. I close this section with a quotation from *Shepherding God's Flock*

by Jay Adams. Here, on page twenty-eight, he is speaking of the need to be straightforward when confronting people with their sins:

"Straightforwardness is uncomfortable because you fear the possible

consequences. Yet this is an unworthy motive for refraining. Fear

will never be conquered by submission to it; it is one enemy

that

can be defeated only by a head-on attack. Since we know that love

is greater than fear (indeed, love throws fear out!), the pastor's

combined love for the God who called him to shepherd and for the sheep who is in need of help will prevail. . .Pastors, like their

Lord, must be willing to lay down their lives for the sheep."

\*\*\*\*\*

Note: The following treatise was written by the present author many years ago. The date of the preparation of this entire study is July, 1996.

## **BE NOT AFRAID**

### Beneficial Fear

-

Fear is a very basic and common emotion experienced by humans, both Christians and non-Christians. One type of fear was built into us by our Creator and is useful to us to aid in our protection. This type of fear is a feeling of anxiety caused by the presence of danger, evil, pain and similar things. This type fear warns us to flee or to fight. This is basically fear of physical danger and is very useful to us.

### Fear of the Lord

-

There is another type of fear that is absolutely essential for the child of God--the fear of the Lord. Solomon said that, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge..." (Proverbs 1:7). Jesus Christ said. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: But rather fear him which is able to kill both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28). All of God's children have this **reverential fear of God**. Only a fool lacks this fear. See Psalm 14:1. Those who do not have spiritual life are foolishly blind and lack this Godly fear. They live their lives as if there were no God to Whom they must answer for their thoughts, words, attitudes, and

deeds. Paul says of them that, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:18).

### Sinful Fear

-

While the previously mentioned fears are built into us by God and are useful to us, there is a type of fear which **does not** come from God. This fear is sinful and must be overcome by the grace of God. This is the fear referred to in II Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." If God did not give us this kind of fear, where did it come from?

The kind of fear that is under consideration comes from our fallen, sinful human nature. When God made Adam in the Garden of Eden, He made him a whole and complete person. He was sinless and free from all emotional hang-ups. In fact, Adam was "very good" in God's eyes. (Genesis 1:31). When, however, Adam fell into sin his perfect personality was wrecked. He immediately began to manifest this sin-marred nature. He began to **lie** and to try to **blame** his sin **on his wife** and **even on God!** A casual reading of the third chapter of Genesis will reveal the terrible mess into which the fall into sin plunged Adam. His sin-wrecked personality was passed on down to all mankind. (Romans 5:12). This inherited sinful nature is the reason the human race has its phobias and other emotional defects.

When an individual receives spiritual life via the new birth (John 3:8), he has a dual personality. He still retains the old, sinful nature that was inherited from Adam, but he has gained a spiritual nature infused into him by the Holy Spirit. These two natures are in perpetual conflict. Paul describes this struggle in Galatians 5:17, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other..."

The gospel, prayer, Christian fellowship, and other helps provided by God, are designed to enable Christians to overcome these sinful defects. These helps assist the Christian to increasingly manifest the characteristics of the "new" nature, which were given in the new birth. This is what it means to "grow in grace." (II Peter 3:18). This is what is meant by "the perfecting of the saints." (Ephesians 4:12). We will always be troubled by our sinful nature until we lose it in death. We can, however, by using the means that God has provided for us, gain greater ability in overcoming it and in

living as God would have us to. Yes, there **is hope!**

### Sinful Cowardice

-

Paul says in II Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love and of a sound mind." The New Testament Greek noun translated "fear" here is *deilia*, and is used only one time in the New Testament. It means "fearfulness, timidity, cowardice." The truth contained here is very important. Christians are called upon to be brave and to even be willing to endure persecution for the sake of the gospel. Many of God's children have had to face **physical persecution**, even torture and death. Many of them have had to face **economic persecution**, having their houses and lands confiscated. Some have had to bear **social persecution**. They have been slandered, ridiculed, and misunderstood. They have suffered the humiliation and loneliness of ostracism.

No matter which form of persecution we are called upon to face, we **must** be brave! We must not be cowardly or ashamed of our Lord. We must overcome the tendency in each one of us to be cowardly in the face of persecution. This timidity will greatly hinder our Christian testimony.

Some Christians have a natural disposition that tends to be cowardly. It seems that Timothy was a very timid young man. That is why Paul wrote this particular admonition to him. Even those who are naturally bold and courageous, however, can fall victim to this fear if they try to stand in their own strength. Peter was probably the boldest of all the apostles, but he behaved very cowardly when he denied his Lord three times. See Matthew 26:69-75. Instead of standing on the precarious ground of our own natural strength, we must be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." (Ephesians 6:10).

Even though the noun, *deilia*, is used only one time in the New Testament, its cognate (derived from the same root) adjective is used three times and the cognate verb is used one time. Let us examine these passages to get a fuller understanding of how this sinful fear is described in the New Testament.

The adjective, *deilos*, is used in parallel accounts in Matthew 8:26, and in Mark 4:40. The disciples had entered into a ship with the Lord Jesus. As they crossed the sea a great storm arose. The situation soon became desperate. They began to fear that they might all be lost at sea. Christ was asleep and was seemingly oblivious to the danger. The disciples woke Him by saying, "Lord, save us: we perish." Christ said to them, "Why are ye fearful (*deilos*), O ye of little faith?" As it is recorded in Mark 4:40, Jesus said, "Why are ye so fearful (*deilos*)? How is it that ye have no faith? Jesus was, in effect, rebuking His disciples for being cowards. He was not commending them nor sympathizing with them; He was rebuking them! They had seen Him work miracles--they should have **trusted** Him to handle the situation. That is what faith is all about--trusting Him. To not exercise faith is sin, and it makes cowards of us.

The other New Testament passage where this adjective is used is Revelation 21:8. There it is plainly shown that this particular form of cowardice is sinful. Cowardice is here listed with a long list of other despicable sins. "But the fearful (*deilos*), and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Some commentators think that the reference to "fearful" in this passage is referring to those who only professed Christianity. They were actually devoid of true grace in their hearts. These false professors, in times of persecution, denied the faith because they feared suffering. R. C. Trench advocates this view on pages thirty-four and thirty-five of *Synonyms of the New Testament*. This passage definitely teaches that cowardice is very sinful.

The cognate verb, *deiliaoo*, is used in John 14:27. There Jesus, speaking to His disciples on their last night together, said, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (*deiliaoo*). The disciples were about to endure intense persecutions, and their Lord was commanding them to not be cowardly. He told them to be brave and fearless as they testified of Him.

#### Comments On This Fear

It is very interesting to see what some of the able commentators of the past have said about this fear:

A pusillanimous, cowardly spirit, so as to be afraid of

men, and of what they will say or do: and so as to be discouraged in, sink under, or be deterred from the work of the Lord, the preaching of the Gospel, opposing the errors of false teachers, and reprovng men for their sins, and doing other parts of the ministerial function: such a spirit is not from God, and such a fear brings a snare. (John Gill, Commentary, Vol. VI, p.625).

The great hindrance of usefulness in the increase of our gifts is slavish fear. It was through base fear that the evil servant buried his talent (Matt. 25:25). The spirit God gives to his ministers is not a fearful, but a courageous spirit. (Matthew Henry, Commentary, Vol. VI, p. 835).

Timothy needed to stir up the gift of God in him, being constitutionally timid. Fear results from the spirit of bondage (Romans 8:15). Fear within exaggerates the causes of fear without. (Jamieson, Fausett, and Brown, Commentary, Vol. VI, p. 503).

#### How Cowardly Fear Is Overcome

-

In the same verse in which Paul condemned this fear he gave the remedy for overcoming it. The God-given weapons with which we must fight are "power, love, and a sound mind."

We may be weak in ourselves, but if we are acutely conscious of God's power working in and for us, we can be brave and strong. Paul said that we must be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Ephesians 6:10). The Lord Jesus told His disciples where this power comes from. He said, "But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you. . ." (Acts 1:8). Here, then, is the **key to power**--we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul prayed for the Ephesians, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." (Ephesians 3:16).

What is one of the major keys to a Spirit-filled life? An intense and constant prayer life. This seems so simple that many overlook it or just scoff at it. However, one of the major reasons there is so little **real power** manifested by Christians today is because there is so little time spent in **ferveat prayer**. The prayers that we do pray are often superficial. Our Master taught a powerful lesson on the necessity of **intense and persistent prayer**. He closed the lesson by saying, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good

gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the **Holy Spirit** to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13). Prayer, then, is one of the major keys to spiritual power.

We have also been given the spirit of love. This must include both our love for God and His love to us. If we can just be assured that God loves us, we will be able to face any obstacle. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear. . ." (I John 4:18). If I can just know that God loves me, let the whole world hate me and it matters not! Satan wants to hide the love of God from God's children, so that they will be afraid. However, we can be assured of the love of God towards us. We know that God loves us if we find ourselves described in Matthew 5:3-10. Read that passage, examine it, and see if you can find yourself there. If you can, then rejoice! Be not afraid! God loves you so much He sent His own Son to suffer and die for you! If He did this for you, surely He will take care of you while you serve Him.

If God loves us, then we will love Him, too. See I John 4:19. If we really love Him then we will serve Him no matter what it costs us. We will stand up for Him even when our knees are trembling and our hearts are racing! Matthew Henry beautifully says, "The spirit of love to God will set us above the fear of man, and all the hurt that man can do to us. Love of God will carry us through all opposition we may meet with, as Jacob made nothing of the hard service he was to endure for Rachel." He was referring to Genesis 29:20 where it says, "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

Another weapon that Paul mentioned for us to fight fear with was "a sound mind." The Greek word for this is *sophronimos*. The word signifies "self-control, discipline of the mind, a restoring of one to his senses." Satan often tries to make us panic. He tries to distort things in our minds, and to make things look worse than they actually are. We have many enemies to our souls, both within and without. When we see how powerful our enemies are, and how difficult our problems are, we tend to panic, and to become paralyzed in our attempts to serve God. Paul tells us to get control of ourselves through the power of the Holy Spirit, to calm down, and to realize that we "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13).

Speaking of this mental self-control Peter says, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober. . ." (I Peter 1:13). In this fast-moving, hectic world that we live in we must be calm and realize that God will help us. As Isaiah said, "in quietness and confidence



shall be your strength. . ." (Isaiah 30:15). To have a sound mind we must constantly meditate on our Lord. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." (Isaiah 26:3). The same God who spoke to the winds and the waves can speak to our hearts and bid them be still.

Self-control enables us to remain calm even in the face of bad news. (See Psalms 112:7; Proverbs 3:25,26).

Self-control is so important that Paul determined that he would not allow anything or anyone besides God control him. See I Cor. 6:12. He made strenuous efforts to keep his own bodily appetites under control. See I Cor. 9:24-27.

One definition of self-control that has been given is "instant obedience to the promptings of the Holy Spirit."

The final weapon we are to use against fear was indicated by our Lord when He said, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" (Matthew 8:26). Faith is basically **believing** in God and **trusting** in Him. You may ask, "I, too, am of little faith. What can I do about it?" The answer is to spend time in **prayer**. Prayer is asking God. The apostles asked of God, "Increase our faith." (Luke 17:5). One man cried out with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." (Mark 9:24). We, also, need to **pray fervently with tears** for an increase of our faith. How different this prayer is from the formal, superficial ones that we usually offer up! One time the disciples found that they were unable to properly perform their duties because of their weak faith. They came complaining to Jesus about the situation. He said, "Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by **prayer** and **fasting**." (Matthew 17:21). How long has it been since you have been this serious with the Lord in prayer? Have you ever been? It is no wonder Christians are so weak and fearful today. This **serious, drastic, constant**, prayer for faith was the secret of the great power of the early church.

There is one other weapon that we must consider in our battle to overcome cowardly fear--**the power of a clean conscience**. When a person is doing the best he can to live close to God and to keep sin out of his life, he has great confidence toward God. He is not easily made afraid. However, when one is hiding secret sins, his heart melts like water when he even imagines that danger is approaching. He is struggling under a **load of guilt** and lives in the constant fear of being exposed. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." (Proverbs 28:1). Do you recognize yourself in this category? Do you say, "I am guilty of

hiding sin in my life. I am weak, fearful, and miserable. I would like to do something about this, but what can I do? Is there any hope for me that I can become bold and fearless?" Yes, there is certain hope! **Turn** from your sins today. **Confess** them to God. Sin no more. God has promised us that, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9). See Acts 24:16; Proverbs 3:21-26.

### Conclusion

-

Matthew Henry says about the sound mind: "The spirit of a sound mind, or quietness of mind, for we are often discouraged in our way and work by the creatures of our own fancy and imagination, which a sober, solid, thinking mind would obviate and would easily answer."

The entire issue is beautifully summed up in the following quotation from the *Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. IV, p. 155, "There was an element of *deilia* (fear) in Timothy's natural disposition which must have been prejudicial to his efficiency as a church ruler. For that position is needed (a) force of character, which if not natural may be inspired by consciousness of a divine appointment. (b) love, which is not softness, and (c) self-discipline, which is opposed to all easy self-indulgence which issues in laxity of administration."

Let us conquer this enemy of our souls with our God-given weapons, and go "Onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus going on before!"

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*

Note: The following article, by R.J. Rushdoony, is copied with permission from the June 1996 edition of *Chalcedon Report*.

### **Guilt**

One of the most important facts in society is *guilt*. Although not the subject of much popular discussion in or out of the church, *guilt* is a very important and governing fact. It was not without reason that Sigmund Freud made *guilt* so basic to his theory. Freud's approach was deadly, however, because he made guilt irremovable; he

saw it as part of our primordial inheritance, a natural and an irradicable aspect of our being. His goal was to teach men how to live with guilt, not to eliminate it. Freud saw himself as the leader of a new priesthood. The old order of clergymen offered salvation from *sin* through Christ, a mythical idea for Freud. He would teach them to live with their guilt.

But, long before Freud, Sir John Denham wrote, "Fear and guilt are the same thing" (*The Sophy*). This was an overstatement; but it is true that guilty men are fearful, and are more readily controlled. When I was a student, I saw a young man of means, profligate, handsome, and a playboy, fall in love with a calculating virgin. They married, and she used his sense of guilt to control him radically. As a pastor, I encountered situations where a husband or wife tried to push the spouse into adultery in order to gain freedom and self-justification in the other's guilt. The history of guilt is also a history of fear and control.

A strong, godly, and guilt-free people are not easily controlled. Guilt is a major weapon of control, because all men being created by God are *responsible* creatures, and, whether they recognize God as their Lord or not, they manifest it in their guilt that they are responsible to Him. Quite rightly, my wife Dorothy has commented that, while no "proof" of God is necessary because nothing is more certain, *guilt* is an eloquent witness to God, because it witnesses to our accountability to Him.

Since Eden, guilty men have hidden from God and have been afraid of Him. Guilty men also fear all authorities, the guilty child the parents, and the guilty man the state's authority. Guilt and fear are closely associate. "Guilt doth make cowards of us all," it has been said. A guilty people are more easily ruled than a population with a strong faith and a clear conscience. When I was very young, I was deeply impressed by a report from a visitor to the Soviet Union. The famine in the early 1920s had taken millions of lives; the people lived on a vastly lower scale than before the Russian revolution, but there was little rebellion in most of them. They knew themselves to be guilty men. Their consciences tormented them and left them impotent. One man had said, we deserve everything because we were so happy for a chance to loot.

Guilty men lead to tyrant states, to rulers who exploit the bad conscience of peoples, and who use their power to further the guilt of men.

The expression often used, "Don't lay a guilt trip on me," is a perceptive one. A "guilt trip" is a paralyzing and blinding thing. I learned, years ago, how deadly it can be. Once, after a sermon, a man came up to me to demand how I had learned his guilty secret, and who had told me? He refused to believe me when I earnestly pleaded ignorance of what he was talking about, and he was a problem to me after that.

The power of blackmail is guilt, and we live in an age of guilt because men are either without faith or have so defective a faith that they believe vaguely in God and Christ, but not in the atonement.

Sin requires restitution, atonement. Man cannot make atonement to God; only Jesus Christ can. Man's self-atonement is sado-masochism. In sadism, he tries to lay the guilt on others; in masochism, he tries to make atonement by punishing himself. In either case, his efforts are futile.

Jesus Christ, by His atoning death, makes restitution for us, and by His regenerating power makes us a new creation, a new human race with Him as our new Adam and head. Without Christ's atonement, we remain in our sin and guilt, unfree men to the core of our being. In Christ we become free men.

Guilt makes slaves of us all, slaves to someone or something. The fact of slavery is clear; its forms are optional. Slaves can be recognized because they are in bondage. When someone with a good family, beautiful wife and children, a high income, fine home, and more, became a slave to drugs, many commented, "How could he do that to himself?" But, given the emptiness of his life religiously, it was essentially a question as to what form his slavery would take. The dramatic form it took did not erase the fact that he was a guilt-ridden man, and a slave, prior to his addiction.

Guilt is a matter too great for us to cope with. It requires Christ's atonement, and, in our day-by-day living, prayer and God's grace. Only so can we be free men. In a slavery-marked world, free men will be "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*

I would like to relate from memory a gripping account I read many years ago from a book entitled *The Korean Pentecost*. This book told about the persecution that Christians were subjected to during the early twentieth century in Korea by their Japanese conquerors. Many of the Christians were subjected to torture as their tormentors tried to get them to deny their faith.

One man in particular had been very strong and brave. He had been repeatedly tortured, but he had been blessed to remain firm in his convictions. However, he allowed something to break his close fellowship with his Lord. In some way he compromised his conscience. The next time he was subjected to torture he had no strength and almost immediately broke and denied his faith. This is a frightening example of how sin makes us weak and unable to

withstand the enemy!

The good news is that this man later repented of his sin and was restored to fellowship with God. He then had the courage to stand up to his enemies and sealed his testimony by dying a martyr's death.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*

## APPENDIX A

We must realize that this sinful, cowardly fear of man is one of Satan's chief weapons against us. This monster is always lurking in the background, seeking to waylay us. We must walk closely with our Lord and ever be on the alert. Many saints, eminent for their courage and piety, have been damaged by this fear. Among them are:

I. **Abraham:** When he went down to sojourn in Egypt he lied and said that Sarah was his sister, exposing her to the danger of being taken as a wife by another man. He did this because he was afraid for his own life. God delivered him and his wife. Incredibly, at a later time and in a different place, Abraham did the same thing again! Abraham was often strong in faith and courage, but on these two occasions he showed the terrible effects of sinful cowardice. See Genesis, Chapters twelve and twenty.

It is well to note here that if we are voluntarily in a place where we can't comfortably call on the name of the Lord, we are in the wrong place.

II. Abraham's son, **Isaac**, committed exactly the same cowardly sin his father had. It is so sad when the poor examples we sometimes set because of cowardly fear are duplicated in our children. See Genesis 26:6-11.

III. **King Saul** committed a grievous sin and disobeyed God because he feared man. Because of this sin God rejected him from being king over Israel. Making an excuse for his sin Saul said, "I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice." (I Samuel 15:24).

IV. **Peter** is one that we normally associate with great courage. He was not a habitual coward. He boldly tried to defend Jesus when the soldiers approached Him in the

garden. But Peter is also an example of the terrible influence of fear in a person's life. He denied his Savior three times! When he realized what he had done, he "went out, and wept bitterly." (Matthew 26:75). The Lord Jesus graciously forgave Peter and restored him to a place of service. However, many years later, Peter again succumbed to the fear of man. He had been made to realize that God had a people among the Gentiles. He was very happy about this and had fellowship with these people. He withdrew this fellowship, however, because he was "fearing them which were of the circumcision." (Galatians 2:12).

The fact that both Abraham and Peter were guilty of giving in to sinful fear more than one time in their lives should make us aware that we will have to guard against this tendency for our entire lives.

- V. There is a very sad instance of this sinful fear recorded in John 9. There the Lord Jesus gave sight to a man who had been blind from his birth. We can imagine the anguish it must have caused the parents to have a blind son. They knew that he had never seen a sunrise, a sunset, or a field of beautiful flowers. He had never even seen the faces of his beloved parents. What a joy it should have been to them when Jesus caused him to see. No doubt there was some joy, but that joy was tempered by fear. They would not acknowledge that Jesus had healed their son. What was their reason for this terrible act of ingratitude? "Because they feared the Jews."
- VI. Another time when this sinful fear was demonstrated was when God was preparing Gideon to go against the Midianites. Gideon's original army numbered thirty-two thousand men. God gave Gideon a command to reduce the size of his army. The Lord told Gideon to proclaim to the people that "whosoever is **fearful and afraid**, let him return and depart." Twenty-two thousand who had cowardly hearts left, leaving only ten thousand in Gideon's army. In God's army today there is no place for a cowardly spirit!
- VII. The terrible consequences of giving in to the fear of man was evident in the failure of the children to immediately go into the land of Canaan when instructed by the Lord. They had been promised the land. Previous to their actually going in, the

Lord had told them to send twelve men to spy out the land. They did so and each of the twelve men came back with a good report of how desirable the land was. Ten of the spies, however, demonstrated the fear of man. They said that the people who inhabited the land were so strong that they could be overcome. Joshua and Caleb tried to persuade the people to obey God and go into the land. Joshua said, "Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither **fear ye the people of the land.** . . ." The people sadly were persuaded by the cowardly spirit of the ten, and the Israelites were not permitted to enter into Canaan until after forty years of wandering in the wilderness.

IX. In Exodus 32 there is another sad example of the sad consequences of disobedience to God which was, no doubt, prompted by the fear of man. In this instance Aaron was obviously influenced by the fear of man as he made the golden calf and allowed the children of Israel to worship it.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*

#### APPENDIX B

We will here list several Scriptures that we trust will fortify us against this awful fear of man:

1. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I shall fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).
2. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise  
His word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can  
do unto me." (Psalm 56:3,4).
3. "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"  
(Psalm 118:6).

- 4. "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you." (Isaiah 35:4).
- 5. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isaiah 41:10)
- 6. "I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?" (Isaiah 51:12).
- 7. "And fear not them which kill the body, but which are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28).
- 8. "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Hebrews 13:6).
- 9. "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. . ." (I Peter 3:14).

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \*\*\*

**APPENDIX C**

**Approval Addiction Inventory**

<u>Rating Scale</u>	<u>Points</u>
-	
Never (Hardly Ever)	5



## 25

Seldom 4

Sometimes 3

Frequently 2

Always (Almost always) 1

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_ 7. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_ 12. \_\_\_\_\_ 13. \_\_\_\_\_ 14. \_\_\_\_\_ 15. \_\_\_\_\_ 16. \_\_\_\_\_ 17. \_\_\_\_\_ 18. \_\_\_\_\_  
19. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

### Rating Scale

-

#### **Score**

#### **Grade**

96-100 You have no problem with men-pleasing.

90-95 You probably are free from the inordinate love of approval.

80-89 You are too concerned with the approval of others.

70-79 You are probably a Men-pleaser.

69-below You probably are an approval addict (in bondage to approval).

### **Questions**

1. I listen with anxious attentiveness when others discuss that which

pleases or displeases them.

2. I strive to be politically correct more than biblically correct.

3. I "go fishing" for compliments.

4. I gossip about others to people whom I believe will be pleased with

me for giving them such luscious tid-bits of information.

5. My desire for a good reputation is based predominantly on how such a

good reputation will benefit me in some way rather than on how such a

good reputation will serve as a means to a greater end, such as the

glory of God, the good of others, or some other similar unselfish objective.

6. I value the approval of certain individuals from whom I expect to receive certain honors more than the approval of others from whom I

expect not to receive such honors.

7. I worry what people will think of me.

8. I am willing to sin rather than face the rejection of certain individuals.

9. I have an attitude of personal favoritism. (I am a respecter of persons).

10. I believe that being rejected is one of the worst things that a person could possibly experience.

11. I avoid conflicts rather than trying to resolve them.
12. I take unnecessary precautions in order to protect my good name.
13. I become angry when I am contradicted by others-- especially when publicly contradicted.
14. When meeting a new person I spend more time thinking about how to impress him or her than how to minister to him or her.
15. My fear of being rejected paralyzes me to the extent that it keeps  
me from getting close to others.
16. I forget that being rejected by others is a part of the suffering for righteousness' sake that is my reasonable service to God and a  
part of my calling as a Christian.
17. I long to be noticed more than I long to be godly.
18. I give in to peer pressure rather than standing up for what I know  
is right.
19. I do not witness to others as I should due to my fear of being criticized or rejected.
20. I overreact to criticism by dwelling too long on it or allowing it  
to depress me unnecessarily.

This inventory was developed by Lou Priolo of **The Atlanta Counseling Center**.

## APPENDIX D

Believing in the Sovereignty of God helps to overcome the fear of man. See Psalms 15:3; Proverbs 21:1; Daniel 4:35; Ephesians 1:11; and many related Scriptures. Elder Wilson Thompson, a great pioneer Primitive Baptist preacher who lived in the 1800's, encountered many dangers from rough, ungodly men on the frontier. Many times his life was threatened and endangered. He took great comfort from Psalms 76:10.