

“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.”

Proverbs 29:25

14 QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE IF YOU STRUGGLE WITH THE FEAR OF MAN

Adapted from Ed Welch’s book,
When People Are Big and God is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man.

1. Have you ever struggled with peer pressure? “Peer pressure” is simply a euphemism for the fear of man.
2. Are you over-committed? Do you find it hard to say no when wisdom indicates that you should? You are a “people-pleaser,” another euphemism for the fear of man.
3. Do you “need” something from your spouse? Do you “need” your spouse to listen to you? Respect you? Unless you understand the biblical parameters of marital commitment, your spouse will become the one you fear. Your spouse will control you. Your spouse will quietly take the place of God in your life.
4. Is self-esteem a critical concern for you? This, at least in the United States, is the most popular way the fear of other people is expressed.
5. Do you ever feel as if you might be exposed as an impostor? The sense of being exposed is an expression of the fear of man.
6. Are you always second-guessing decisions because of what other people might think? Are you afraid of making mistakes that will make you look bad in other people’s eyes?
7. Do you feel empty or meaningless? Do you experience “love hunger?” If you need others to fill you, you are controlled by them.
8. Do you get easily embarrassed? If so, people and their perceived opinions probably define you.
9. Do you ever lie, especially the little white lies? What about cover-ups where you are not technically lying with your mouth? Lying and other forms of living in the dark are usually ways to make ourselves look better before people.
10. Are you jealous of other people? You are controlled by them and their possessions.
11. Do other people often make you angry or depressed? Are they making you crazy? If so, they are probably the controlling center of your life.
12. Do you avoid people? If so, even though you might not say that you need people, you are still controlled by them.
13. Aren’t most diets, even when they are ostensibly under the heading of “health,” dedicated to impressing others? The desire for the “praise of man” is one of the ways we exalt people over God.
14. Have all these descriptions missed the mark? When you compare yourself with other people, do you feel good about yourself? Perhaps the most dangerous form of the fear of man is the “successful fear of man.” Such people . . . have more than others. They feel good about themselves. But their lives are still defined by other people rather than God.

REMEDIES TO THE FEAR OF MAN: Psalm 27:1; 118:6; Matthew 10:28; Galatians 1:10