

The Problem of Inferiority

Introduction

1. There are many prisons besides the ones of stone and iron bars.
2. Our thoughts can imprison us. They can enslave us and make us utterly miserable.
3. Many are imprisoned by feelings of inferiority.
 - a. They feel unimportant, inadequate, and unable to achieve and contribute.
 - b. They often become afraid to try new things or develop new skills.
 - c. They are often fearful, even terrified, of participation in things they would really like to do and could learn to do well.

Problem Stated

1. All of us have limitations.
 - a. At most we can do a few things well.
 - b. Does this make us inferior?
2. Many have an exaggerated sense of inadequacy.
 - a. They feel worthless and that they can do nothing well.
 - b. This is usually based on failure in one or a few areas counted as very important to the person.
3. Others have feelings of inadequacy in some areas.
 - a. For example they may feel confident at work.
 - b. But they may feel great inadequacy at church.
 - c. It is sad some are leaders in some or many areas of life, but are slow to use and develop their talents for the Lord.

Causes Of Feelings Of Inferiority

1. Criticism
 - a. Self-criticism
 - 1) This can be healthy.

- 2) All of us need to take a close look at ourselves.
- 3) This can be very destructive if too harsh.
- 4) Some are never able to overcome these criticisms and live in virtual defeat.

b. Criticism of others

- 1) Most of us are very sensitive to criticism, especially to those criticisms from those close or important to us
- 2) We may come to accept criticism to our detriment. "You're no good," "You're so dumb."
- 3) Criticism often comes early in life - Parents, Teachers, Peers and others

2. Opposition - This may come from friends, strangers, competitors, enemies, etc.

- a. One is not inferior because some may oppose him.
- b. Opposition has nothing to do with our ability and importance.
- c. It can be motivated by envy and fear or ignorance.

3. Financial setbacks often create feelings of inferiority.

- a. We live in a very materialistic society.
- b. Many measure success by money and things.
- c. God looks at our heart. (1 Sam. 16:7).

4. Guilt

- a. They feel unworthy because of some wrong they have committed.
- b. They feel unworthy because of some wrong of others.
- c. They fail to accept the forgiveness of God and others.
- d. Guilt keeps them from soaring like an eagle.

5. Lack of education or wealth

- a. They say, "I'm too dumb." "I can't learn."
- b. "I just finished high school and never went to college"
- c. "I'm too poor."
- d. "I don't know how."

6. Thinking accomplishments come easy

- a. Some accomplishments take years of training and experience.
- b. Some give up too easy not realizing diligent effort is required.

7. Personal problems

- a. This can be with children, spouse, in-laws, friends, others.
- b. This may come because of health or because of a handicap.
- c. This can come from accidents and things completely beyond our control.

8. Appearance

- a. One may be too fat or thin, too tall or short.
- b. One may be ugly or think he/she is ugly.
- c. Physical attractiveness is too high on the list of most people, but many of the most attractive people in the world are not happy.

9. Failure to achieve

- a. "I've failed at everything I ever tried."
- b. This statement may be true, but it is nearly always an exaggeration.
- c. "Everything" usually means one or two things that are real important to the person.
- d. There are countless things most have never tried and may not even know about.

10. Living up to negative expectations

- a. "I know I can't do it."
- b. "I can't learn."
- c. "It's too hard."

11. Lack of praise or expecting too much praise

- a. Some never receive praise and this is very destructive to one's ego.
- b. Some expect it all the time, and failure to receive continuous praise causes them to feel inferior and give up.

12. Seeking to do things which we have little or no talent.

- a. It is good to try new things.
- b. We need to accept we cannot do all things well.

13. Seeking to put too much emphasis on intelligence - not realizing the super intelligent are rarely happy and God

most often uses ordinary people, such as, the apostles to accomplish His will.

Results of Inferiority

1. Individuals

- a. Talents useful to the Lord are wasted
- b. Many are unhappy (even miserable) because of feelings of inferiority.
- c. Others are made unhappy and unproductive by what they do or say because of an attitude of inferiority.
 - 1) They are affected by our lack of achievements.
 - 2) They are affected by our downtrodden attitude.
 - 3) Our feelings of inferiority are very dangerous and contagious.
 - 4) Others held down by one's feeling of inferiority
 - 5) We can influence others for good.
 - 6) Others can be discouraged by us.

2. Churches

- a. Outreach weak - Some churches have a defeatist attitude.
 - 1) This keeps them from growing numerically and spiritually.
 - 2) This keeps them from having a positive impact on the community and the world.
 - 3) This keeps them in a state of lukewarmness.
- b. Benevolent programs effected
 - 1) There is limited giving to the poor. "We can't do much."
 - 2) There is no vision and motivation to reach out to the poor. "We are small."
- c. Other programs are hurt because of feelings of inferiority on the part of elders, ministers, teachers, etc.

How To Overcome Inferiority

1. Realizing who we are.

- a. God's creation made in God's His image. (Gen. 1:26, 27).
- b. Of great value to God (Psa. 8:4,5; Matt. 10:29-31; Jn. 3:16).
- c. Sons of God (Gal. 3:26, 27).

- d. Friends of Jesus (Jn. 15:14)
- e. Members of family of God (1 Tim. 3:15)
- f. Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-21).
- g. Heirs of heaven (Matt. 5:12; 1 Pet. 1:4).

Matt. 5:12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1 Pet. 1:4 to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

2. Realizing who is on our side

- a. God (Rom. 8:31).
- b. Jesus (Matt. 28:20)
- c. Others stand ready to help and encourage us.
 - 1) It is vital we accept this help and encouragement.
 - 2) Some are too proud and this is very harmful and destructive.
- d. We are a part of a large Christian family - local and universal.

3. Realizing we do not have to be the best.

- a. In reality we are probably never the best.
- b. It is important that we feel good about ourselves and that we contribute.
- c. It is important we seek to make the world a better place than we found it.

4. Prayer

- a. We must discuss our problems including the problem of inferiority with God
- b. God is greater than any problem we have.
- c. God is able through us to accomplish things that do not seem possible. (Eph. 3:20).

Eph. 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

5. Positive thinking (Prov. 23:7; Phil. 4:13).

- a. We must not be afraid to try new things and seek new challenges.
- b. We must not be afraid to dream and set goals.

- c. We must not be afraid to fail.
- d. Failing is a vital part of life, but most often leads to success.

6. Education

- a. Sometimes even a course or two can make a difference in our skills and confidence level.
- b. Some skills can be learned at home.

7. Set realistic goals

- a. Setting goals too high can make us feel inferior.
- b. I might not be able to memorize every scripture, but I can memorize some scripture.
- c. I might not be able to achieve every goal, but I can achieve some goals.

8. Trust God

- a. God is all-powerful and the more we trust in Him the more confident we will be. (Eph. 3:20).

Eph.3:20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

- b. We can do great things by trusting in the living God. (Rom. 8:31).

Rom. 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

9. Realizing confidence is a series of small things, small accomplishments.

- a. Each improvement gives more confidence and leads to other improvements and more confidence.
- b. It is vital that we constantly improve in small things.
- c. This will make us happier and more productive.

10. Must not let fear be our master, but need to use it.

11. Recognize service does not make us inferior.

- a. Jesus did not view service in that way. (Matt. 23:11,12).

Matt. 23:11 But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

Matt. 23:12 Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

- b. Having an humble attitude and humble service are necessary to be saved. (Matt. 5:3; Jas. 4:6).

Conclusion

- 1. None of us can do everything, but we must not feel useless or inferior.

2. Each of us is important and this realization should give us the confidence to develop and use the talents God has given us.
3. Remaining in a state of inferiority keeps us from being a blessing to others and manifests a real lack of faith in the Almighty God.

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