

### Lesson #3

## Relationship Problems – Sources & Solutions

### Case Studies

Motivators of Behavior

Pursue pleasure – Prevent pain

1. Man-centered desire / demand for approval and acceptance – self worth
2. Man-centered fear of rejection and pain – no self worth
3. Reaction to adversity and loss – anger, self pity, fear
4. Human agenda corresponding to the above
  - Maximize pleasure and minimize pain

#### **1. Sarah – Presenting issue: she is barren and culture bound**

ISBE – Article 1174 – barrenness was a woman's and her family's greatest misfortune.  
Gen 15 – God promises Abraham an heir from his own body – within monogamy

16:1 – Sarai had borne no children – she is in distress

16:2 – Lord has prevented me from having children – for good reason

16:2 – obtain children – build a family through her

16:2 – Abraham listened – shama – obeyed her

16:5 – Sarai blames Abraham for the results of her plan

16:6 – Sarai takes her anger out on Hagar – mistreats her

- a. God's view: Sarai is barren because God will to use her to produce a miracle baby
- b. She is part of the Seed program leading to the virgin birth of the Messiah
- c. Divine perspective: trust God for His promise and be content with His will
- d. Sarai hungers for a child because she believes her worth is tied to children
- e. Sarai is terrified of being barren because of the shame attached
- f. She reacts to an imagined adversity and loss – barren = shame and rejection
- g. She demands that her life be what she believes is necessary to attain a sense of worth and avoid the shame of rejection.
- h. She has her own agenda and her own plan to make it happen – rejects God's
- i. She is angry and reactive toward God because He has not given her what she "needs" to make her life work as she demands – get it herself
- j. Sarah had trusted God for other issues, but this issue was non-negotiable
- k. Solution: stop believing approval/rejection man is a valid measure
- l. Stop believing that her worth is determined by the approval/rejection of man
- m. Believe that God's love/approval has counted her worthy forever
- n. Believe that God's plan (barren) is perfect for His purpose – real impact

#### **2. Peter – Presenting issue – Human agenda – need for approval**

Mt 16:13-20; 21-23

16:16-17 – Peter's proclamation and praise from Jesus

16:21 – Jesus discusses God's plan – death, burial & resurrection

16:22 – Peter's rebuke – this will not happen to you

16:23 – Jesus’ rebuke – focused not on things of God – on things of man

- a. Peter’s success in vs 16-17 blew his head up like a balloon – approval
- b. The praise he received fed into his agenda to feel like a success
- c. He goes from feeling unworthy to feeling worthy to confront the Lord.
- d. His human agenda found it inconvenient for Jesus to die and leave him.
- e. Peter has imagined the future at the Lord’s side – ruling Israel – success.
- f. His human agenda being threatened, Peter decides to take over the plan.
- g. He was focused on earthly things and how Jesus fit into his earthly plan.
- h. Solution: stop believing his earthly plan was a valid means of approval
- i. Abandon his earthly plan as the imaginings of a child seeking approval
- j. Believe that what God allowed (D,B,R) was for the ultimate good
- k. Believe that God’s love and approval had met all of his needs – salvation
- l. Focus on what God had already provided by grace and pursue it.

Mt 26:31-35 – Presenting issue: Peter’s false self – the mask

26:31 – you will all fall away tonight

26:33 – I will never cut and run

26:34 – 3 times you will deny me

26:35 – even if I die I will not deny you – all others said the same

- a. Peter is being confronted with his real self – fearful
- b. Peter refuses to face his fear and instead presents himself as fearless – denial
- c. Peter wears a mask – present himself loyal and brave – eyes of others
- d. Peter probably doesn’t even know the fear that controls him inside – repressed 26:69-75 – Peter’s 3 denials 26:75 – wept bitterly – broken
- e. Peter has come face to face with his real self and finds that he is a coward
- f. His mask has been broken and he sees his own sinfulness and depravity.
- g. He wore the mask even for Jesus – produced what he thought God wanted
- h. The breaking of Peter’s self-delusion will become a great blessing to him.

Gal 2:11-14 – Presenting issue: Peter’s fear of rejection

2:11 – Paul confronts him – to his face

2:12 – separated himself – fear of the Jews who came from James

2:13 – even Barnabas was drawn into this hypocrisy

2:14 – Paul confronted him in front of all

- i. Peter’s need for approval from his own made him vulnerable to possible rejection
- j. Approval/man is always accompanied by fear/rejection by man.
- k. Peter has abandoned the Lord’s plan to pursue his own - security
- l. Peter needed to be confronted with the truth about his wrong thinking
- m. Solution: stop believing that the approval of James/Jews was necessary
- n. Stop believing that fitting into his crowd was more beneficial than God
- o. Believe that God’s love and approval was all He needed to feel worthy
- p. Believe that man’s rejection because of God was a blessing not the end.