

Turn Your World Upside Down
Part 4 – “Conquering the Fear of Rejection”
Pastor Dale Campfield – Eastgate Community Church
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Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Often times, we get ourselves into a rut, doing the same old thing over and over again. Our lives lose their IMPACT due to lazy attitudes and taking things for granted. To put it simply – we’re spoiled. It’s time to turn our life as we know it UPSIDE DOWN.

During this series we will look at how to turn our way of doing things UPSIDE DOWN to make an even greater IMPACT in an ever evolving culture. Doing life differently, thinking about life differently, and refining the way we’ve always dealt with our issues in new and innovative ways. How do we change the paradigm of the church in the way we think and act towards the different issues of life? How do we allow the Holy Spirit to turn our lives “UPSIDE DOWN” in order to make a greater IMPACT for the Kingdom of God?

That’s what this series is all about.

In looking back, we’ve seen the lives of three people, and how, out of their personal encounters with God, turned their world’s upside down. The key is to have that special encounter with God.

What is an encounter with God?

Question: What is an encounter with God?

An encounter with God is when (1) He intentionally meets with us, (2) in a time of great need, (3) through unexpected circumstances, (4) to tell us something about Himself, (5) so we will know Him more intimately and, (6) learn something about ourselves, (7) even though we do not understand all of the mysterious elements of the experience.

3 weeks ago we looked at the encounter of **Saul and God**.
2 weeks ago we looked at the encounter of **Mary and God**.
Last week, we looked at the encounter of **Moses and God**.

I believe we've established the fact that it is out of our personal encounters with God, our lives will be turned upside down, thus we can turn our own world upside down.

So..... let's assume this morning that you have had and are currently experiencing that personal encounter with God; that it's not just a one time occurrence, but that you are having that encounter every day. With that being the case, the key now to you turning your world upside down is Obedience and Boldness, but there are obstacles that we must face as we desire to walk with obedience and boldness.

One of those being, "The Fear of Rejection"

That's what we're going to talk about today.... The fear of Rejection.

Many think the fear of Failure is the same as the Fear of Rejection. I think there are some distinct differences.

- **The fear of failure focuses on my performance, on what I do.**
- **The fear of rejection focuses on me as a person and who I am.**

Fear of failure:	What I do	Focus on performance
Fear of rejection:	Who I am	Focus on me as a person

Two very distinct differences.

Illus: Chuck E. Cheese Ball Play

Do you remember at Chuck E Cheese when they had the little plastic balls in big pens? I use to love that. I had no problem at all jumping in and having lots of fun. I had no fear of going up and down the slides and ropes, etc. at the restaurant. But what I did have was the fear of rejection from the other parents. As I stood in front of all those slides and trampolines and the ball pen, my fear was not the fear of failure, that I could not maneuver the trampolines or slides or climb over the little balls or whatever. My fear wasn't failure. My fear was rejection. That the dozens of parents that were sitting out in the chairs sipping Snapple with smug smirks on their face would look at me and say, "Who's that idiot?" But I went in and played with my Kids.

Illus: The fear of rejection from fellow pastors

When we changed churches, the enemy tried to plant into my head that I'd be rejected from the fellow pastors in the city. I worried about that. I almost didn't want to attend the next pastor's meeting... but I did. And I'm glad that I did, for I was embraced and encouraged like crazy from my fellow peers. But the fear of rejection was there.

There's a difference between those two failures – fear and rejection.

As we talk about the fear of rejection it's a fear that everyone can relate to. We all struggle with the fear of rejection at some point in our life. Some of us are consumed by it. The fear of rejection seems to grow with us as we age. If you did a study on little children you wouldn't see the fear of rejection, because they haven't had the past experience on which to build that fear. You might see the fear of failure but not the fear of rejection.

In our desire to turn our world's upside down, we'll have to deal with the fear of rejection. We've had this wonderful, powerful experience and encounter with God and we're ready! We're ready to take on the world! We're ready to make an IMPACT and turn our world upside down – but what will they think of me? How will they respond to me?

- **The basic question is: “What will other people think about me?” That’s what a fear of rejection does to you...**

This morning, we’ll take note of Two Things

I. HOW THE FEAR OF REJECTION BECOMES A TRAP

II. HOW TO OVERCOME FEARING THE REJECTION OF OTHERS

I. HOW THE FEAR OF REJECTION BECOMES A TRAP

God knew that this was a fear that we live with.

Proverbs 29:25

"The fear of man is a dangerous trap. But to trust in God means safety."

How is the fear of man or the fear of rejection a dangerous trap? I've listed seven traps. It's not conclusive, there are many more.

Seven Traps from a Fear of Rejection

1. The fear of rejection causes us to conform our life styles and our values.

In order to avoid rejection we sometimes become chameleons with those around us. We settle in whether it be through clothes or car or lifestyle or even values in what we believe because we don't want to be rejected for who we are. Because we want to be accepted, we start to conform to the way we think people want us to be, as opposed to being who we really are.

2. The fear of rejection keeps us from speaking the truth.

Many of us will lie or distort the truth in order to keep from being rejected by other people. That’s how powerful it can be. And at times, we think it’s okay to tell this “little white lie” that really won’t make a difference in the long run; but it does. And at other times, we totally reject speaking truth to someone when it really needs to be spoken out.

Illus: Telling Phil Driscoll he was rude...

I remember picking up Phil Driscoll, the trumpet player, from his private jet. He didn’t say a word, got in the car, turned off the music, took out the mouth piece of his horn and just started to blow into it. Completely rude. I wanted to say something, but I didn’t want him to think I was the one that was being rude. The truth was, he was rude – but my fear of being rejected by him kept me from speaking the truth.

3. The fear of rejection prevents us from giving and receiving love.

This is a biggie. Many people have shut down because they've been burned once and they don't want to be burned again. They fear the rejection so they don't give or receive love. Many marriages are like that. They fear the rejection of a spouse and so they shut down.

4. The fear of rejection leads to isolation and loneliness.

Because we fear the rejection of other people we build walls around us to protect ourselves rather than bridges to relate to one another.

5. The fear of rejection moves us toward unhappiness.

This is the bottom line of rejection. It's an unhappy state, constant pressure to try to please other people. That's a miserable way to live life, wondering what other people are thinking of us. These people also tend to be very critical people. If they're critical they can reject other people before people can reject them.

When it comes to spiritual matters, how does the fear of rejection affect us spiritually?

6. The fear of rejection silences our sharing about Christ.

Why don't people share about Jesus? Because they're afraid of other's response about them. It robs us of the courage that we need to share about the most important relationship that we have. The truth is, people need Jesus Christ, and the fear of being rejected by them is keeping us from telling them about the love of Christ. We bow down to that fear and keep our mouths quiet, when we should be speaking up! People want to know, whether they express that or not. I know that if there's something in my life that needs to be addressed, I want to know!

7. The fear of rejection keeps us from spiritual maturity.

I'm convinced that we spend far too much time turning our heads, wondering what other people are saying about us rather than focusing our head and our eyes on God.

So...

What does the scripture have to say about this fear and what might we be able to do about it? I'm convinced this is the only place we can go for help with this fear.

ACTION STEPS

II. HOW TO OVERCOME FEARING THE REJECTION OF OTHERS

1. FACE THE FACT THAT PEOPLE LET YOU DOWN.

We place far too much value on the opinions of other people. We're shaped by their words and we're tyrannized by what they may think of us. God knew this and that's why He said this in...

Isaiah 51:12

"The Lord says, 'I am the one who comforts you, so why should you be afraid of people who die? Why should you fear people who die like the grass?'"

People have their right to an opinion but why fear their opinion. They're going to die. And their opinion's going to die with them.

One person says, "You mean you can live life and not fear the rejection of other people? I don't think that's reality." I don't think it's reality either. But I think I have an interesting angle on it. I think we can be affected by the rejection of other people but we don't have to be directed by it. We can think about it but we don't have to allow it to control us or to consume us or to conform us to their thoughts and opinions and feelings.

Paul wanted to make this same thing clear as he wrote to the people in Galatia. He says...

Galatians 1:10

"Do you think I'm trying to make people accept me? No. God is the one I'm trying to please. If I wanted to please people I would not be a servant of Christ."

People are vital to our existence but they're human. They are not God. Because they're human, they're going to let us down. Because they're human, we do not put our faith in them. I've watched so many people in the church put their faith in a person or in a pastor and they were devastated because that person let them down. Face it. People are going to let us down. Our faith is not in people. It's in God.

An important truth: People will not love you as much as you need to be loved.

An ironic truth: We focus on the wrong fear.

We fear people whose opinion is temporary rather than fearing God whose rejection is eternal. We spend so much time looking around thinking of what other people are going to say and their opinion is only temporary. We don't fear God's rejection and His rejection is eternal. If you're checking out Christianity and trying to figure out what it's all about, the Bible tells us that some day there will be a point where God will separate the wheat from the chaff. He will reject those who don't know Him and we need to fear that, rather than fearing other people.

Matthew 10:28

"Don't be afraid of people who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. The only one you should fear is the one who can destroy the soul and the body in hell."

Not a pretty verse. It would be one easy to pass over. Those of you who are believers, instead of fearing other people we need to fear God. If you're a believer you don't have to fear His rejection but fear Him in the Old Testament sense of awe or reverence. We're fearing the wrong thing.

2. FOCUS ON HOW GOD SEES YOU

This is a liberating truth if you can embrace this. In 1 Samuel, Samuel was asked by God to appoint the new king of Israel. Saul had just been rejected and Samuel was directed to the house of Jesse. When he goes to the house of Jesse, Jesse brings before him seven of his sons. As he does, Samuel looks at the tallest, the best looking, and the most handsome of the seven sons. He's thinking, "This must surely be the next king of Israel." But look at what God says...

1 Samuel 16:7

"The Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'"

That's good news. This is the constant theme in the New Testament in the words of Jesus. Jesus doesn't care what people look like and how religious they look. He goes right after the heart. That is the main difference between people and God. When people look at us, they look at us externally. They look at our appearance. They look at our homes, our position, our salaries, our car, etc. God doesn't care about that. He looks at our heart.

Illus: In Africa being judged by the way I dressed.

Some people carry themselves in certain ways, and some ministers in Africa like to impress others in letting them know they are the "anointed ones". Not all certainly, but a few. When we were there one year, the people at a hotel just dismissed me as "one of the guys" and didn't think I was the pastor. They just passed me by, if you will. It didn't affect me at all, until they found out I was the pastor, then they started offering me all kinds of things. They looked at my outward appearance, no suit, etc, and assumed I wasn't the pastor.

We all have a story to tell of how we've been rejected by others because of our looks, our position, etc. You've been rejected in your life. Maybe because of something that people have no idea of what's going on in your heart and they haven't taken the time or the energy to find out. The good news is that God knows your heart. God knows your motive. God has a different way of evaluating us than people evaluate us. That's a beautiful thing!

3. FALL BACK ON GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

If you're sinking in the quicksand of rejection now and you only have one hand left under the discouragement and under the fear, you've got to know that God can pull you out and set you on the solid ground of His unconditional love.

1 John 4:10

"This is what real love is: It is not our love for God; it is God's love for us in sending his Son to be the way to take away our sins."

When I say unconditional love I know what goes through many of your minds, especially if you've been a believer for a while. You go "Heard it!" I meet a lot of people who have heard about God's unconditional love, a lot of people who even theologically understand it. But I haven't met many people that know it, that embrace it, that are able to fall back and know that God loves us not for what we do but for who we are. When you know His unconditional love and you fall back on it, it gives us liberty to live. It gives us freedom to live.

Do you know it? Do you know God's unconditional love? When you do your life will be radically different.

God is waiting for us to know His unconditional love. We can relax and be unconcerned about the rejection of other people and focus on His love. He's waiting for us to know it. He's got the upper hand on us already because He knows everything about us.

Hebrew 4:13

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Another translation:
"Everything is naked before God."

He knows everything about us. He knows everything about you. He sees our weakness. He sees our insecurities. He sees our failings. He sees our fears. He sees our inadequacies. And He loves us.

Some of you have a really hard time with this. Those of you who have been believers for a while feel like when you sin God rips His love away from you. That's wrong. God's love is unconditional. God hates sin. It disgusts Him and He wants nothing to do with it. But He doesn't pull out His love. Imagine Jesus in a boat and Peter wanting to walk on water. Peter says, "Jesus, I want to come to You." Jesus says, "Come!" Peter begins to walk on water and then he begins to sink. Jesus doesn't think of him as an embarrassment.

Some of us think that's what God thinks. That when we perform and behave He loves us and when we don't He pulls His love from us until we walk on water again. That's not true. God loves you unconditionally. Fall back on that love.

1 John 4:18

"Where God's love is, there is no fear, because God's love drives out fear. It is punishment that makes a person fear, so love is not made perfect in the person who fears."

We can live in this trap of wanting the inconsistent and false approval of other people or we can resign the game and fall back on God's unconditional love. I like to think it's this unconditional love that stops our head from moving side to side and seeing what other people think about us and it stops our head and focuses our eyes on the only one who really matters anyway and that's God.

When we live to please an audience of one, as is the vision of Pastor Gerson, our worship pastor, God's love crowds everyone else out and we are totally accepted by Him.

Conclusion:

In the summer Olympics in Barcelona was an event that took place in the life of Derrick Redman. He was a runner for Great Britain. He tried to make it in the 1988 summer Olympics and he was injured and he had to make a decision, "Do I go through all the work for four more years to get to the 92 Olympics?"

He did and was in the semi finals of the men's 400 meter race. He's in one of the center lanes. He's destined to win and will probably have a shot at a medal. Out of the blocks he's leading the pack with 100 yards from the finish line he pulls a hamstring and falls painfully to the ground. As the crowd watches the rest of the race he picks himself up and begins to limp. He knows he's not going to win but he wants to finish. He limps to the finish line. People are coming at him and trying to help him but he keeps pushing them off. All of a sudden there is a commotion in the crowd and a man is coming out that the security guard is no match for. He busts through and runs on to the track. It was Jim Redman, Derrick's father. As he came alongside his son and put his arm around him Derrick collapsed and his dad whispered to him, "You don't have to do this alone son." And they walked together to the finish line. After the race Derrick Redman was interviewed and he said "My father was the only person who could have helped me, because he understood everything that I had been through."

I think we're a lot like Derrick the runner. You and I are around a lot of people who are watching how we live and how we perform, but only our heavenly Father really understands everything about us. He wants us to forget the crowds and embrace Him and His approval and His unconditional love as He walks with us to the finish line.

This week my challenge to you is to allow God's love for you to crowd out the opinions and the desire to please other people and go out and turn your life upside down. Face it. Other people will let you down. Focus on how God sees you which is so very different from the world. Fall back on His unconditional love and focus your eyes on Him. I challenge you to try that for a week....

And when you do... You watch, you wait, You'll see!

The Spirit of Adoption

To understand the spirit of rejection, we need to understand its opposite: the spirit of adoption.

The Spirit of Adoption is the Holy Spirit telling us that God loves us and Jesus accepts us.

He does this by bearing witness in our spirit that we are adopted by God: the spirit of adoption occurs no matter what we have done!

If these questions point to your problem as the spirit of rejection, then you need to take it to God in prayer. If the problem persists, get someone to pray with you for deliverance. But first, realize this, rejection often carries with it unforgiveness toward those who have offended you. We might have been an innocent victim but we have to take responsibility now for our reactions.

Prayer:

DELIVERANCE PRAYER to BREAK the FEAR OF REJECTION

Remember the devil cannot read your mind so please pray this prayer out loud before GOD.

FATHER, I come to You in the name of JESUS with love, thankfulness and great expectation to be completely set free from a spirit of rejection. I praise You that Your Word says if we confess our sins, YOU are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Right now, I repent of all my sins. Whether it was wrong thoughts, wrong words or wrong deeds – forgive me.

(IF YOU HAVE ANY DETAILS, SHARE THEM WITH GOD HERE)

LORD ALMIGHTY, I come before You to set free all **my ancestors, family, friends, work colleagues and strangers** for what they have said and done to me in the past. The words or actions that broke my heart, disappointed me or times they took me for granted; I give them all to you.

(IF YOU REMEMBER THEIR NAMES, YOU CAN SAY THEM TO THE LORD NOW)

I forgive each one of them for every hurtful word they have spoken or hurtful deed they have done. I take each one of them off my back ask You to wash them clean as they are before YOUR throne. I pray that YOU will bless them and that You will save them if they have not yet been saved.

I forgive myself for all the old feelings of guilt, negative thoughts and negative words that I had because of all the mistakes that I made, wrong decisions that I took and wrong doings that I did.

I ask you to take it all off my back and wash it clean in the BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST. Spirit of fear, rejection, insecurity and inferiority, I break all your chains over my life and I command you to leave me right now. **Fear of any form I break now** – I take back the authority I've given to these spirits. I declare that I have nothing but love and power and a sound mind. That is how I choose to live from this day forward.

I claim, receive and take on a Spirit of Adoption! I declare that I am **washed clean** by the blood of JESUS CHRIST. I am crowned with glory and honor. I am more than a conqueror through Christ that loves me. **I am a prince/princess from GOD**, because my FATHER is the King. You have called me by my name and I belong to YOU. I claim, receive and take on a Spirit of Adoption!

Please fill me now with the HOLY SPIRIT. Increase within me a hunger for Your mighty presence. Increase within me a desire for Your Truth. Increase within me a heart of obedience and humility. Increase within me a true passion for those who do not yet know You. Increase within me a desire to love, grow and serve!

And as you do.... I'll watch... I'll wait... and I know I will see Your Kingdom come forth in my life and those around me.

In Jesus name! AMEN!