

“The Plague of Inferiority!”

Romans 12:3-8

Intro. – Story is told of a man who went to a psychologist. When asked why he had come, the man said, “I’m suffering from a terrible inferiority complex.”

In the following days/weeks, psychologist put this man through an intense battery of tests and therapy. Finally, the doctor called the man in for his consultation. “I have some helpful news for you,” the doctor said. “You mean I’m finally going to be cured?!” the man responded. “Well,” said the doctor, “It’s no complex. You really ARE inferior!”

The power of the human body and mind is nothing short of incredible. Yet, in spite of this each of us, some more than others, wrestle with timidity and inferiority. Why? Why do you and I “look down” upon ourselves and others knowing we are created in the image of God? What can and should be done about it?!

Purpose: to have a more Biblical understanding of the plague of inferiority

I CLARIFICATIONS of Inferiority

A. Not Necessarily Related to Intelligence

1. Recent studies have shown those with 130 or higher I.Q. (intelligent Quotient) suffered more inferior feeling than those below (great deal more).
2. Point is obvious, intelligence is not determining factor having inferiority complex.

B. Not Easily Detected

1. People usually do a good job masking this up.
2. Boisterous people seem to be on top of things, but, more times than not the extraverts... are often covering up their inferiority.
3. Sarcastic people, often use to cover up their inferiority.

C. Not Unique to Unforgiven Sinner

1. Christians (families, churches etc.) wrestle with this problem as do non-Xtians.
2. James Dobson writes of a young Bible College student approached him with tears streaming down his face opening declaring to Dobson gross feelings of inferiority. Administrators of the college later told Dobson that out of the 300 students in school, he’d be the last suspect... Christians not exempt from inferiority...

II BIBLICAL Examples of Inferiority

A. Moses (“Drawn Out One”)

1. Living in seclusion because of a rash act of murder... Moses was approached by God through a burning bush that wasn’t being consumed...
2. Here he was instructed to go to his people to lead them out of Egypt.
3. Exodus 3 – all Moses heard was “I send you...”
4. Immediately, this 80 year old servant began excusing himself because he didn’t “feel up to the task”...
 - a. note: not humility = case of inferiority.
 - b. with his background of failure (guilt in murder etc.), Moses thought of himself as useless and inferior...

Rest of the story: he became God’s man, one of Jews greatest leaders!

B. Jeremiah (“Weeping Prophet”)

1. Often have the mistaken idea that God's prophets never had self doubt or feelings of inferiority. Read Jeremiah 1:4-5 *"Now the word of the Lord came to me saying; 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.'"*
2. Jeremiah 1:6-7 *"Then I said, 'Alas, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth.'" But the Lord said to me, 'Do not say, I am a youth. Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak.'"*
3. Jeremiah 1:8 *"Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord."*
 - a. often feelings of inferiority are right in line with fear(s)
 - b. Romans 8:31 *"If God be for us who can be against us..."*
 - c. Psalm 27:1 *"The Lord is my shepherd... I will fear no evil for You are with me..."*
4. Jeremiah did go/spoke God's Word, BUT, inferiority would have nullified any good he did...

C. Amos ("Burden Bearer")

1. Amos not well known, not cultured like Isaiah, Daniel other prophets.
2. Made his living as a fig farmer = not exactly occupation giving high credentials/work experience...
3. Here was a man who had every reason to feel inferior; yet, he wasn't. Why?
4. Amos 7:7-10 we read he wasn't given a popular message to give at all; yet, he doesn't back down.
 - a. says he didn't ask for the job = God called him!
 - b. reasons abound for his feeling inferior; yet, didn't
5. Key – man who kept his eye on the Lord and didn't let preoccupation with self turn into self-doubt, unlike Moses and Jeremiah did at points in their lives!

III God's ESTIMATE of Us

- what God thinks of His people is critical:

A. Matthew 6:26-30

1. what are we worth? = much more than birds of the sky...
2. Infinite worth to God = proven in His sending Christ to pay for the penalty of man's sin...
3. Next time you "feel" little or inferior in worth to God, remember we remain the OBJECT of His attention and His affection...

B. Ephesians 2:10

1. No two of us are alike – i.e. God gives individual attention because we're not alike.
2. In this sense, God doesn't "bless in mass" – e.g. He doesn't pick out a bunch and shower with blessing like smearing on peanut butter on bread.
3. He knows us better than we know ourselves... He knows us personally and is working individually with us!...

C. Philippians 1:6

1. *"He who began... will carry to completion..."* -- God is not through = we're an unfinished project of the living God!
2. Illus. – button says "PBPGINFWMY" = Please be Patient God is Not Finished With Me Yet!
3. Often we get sucked into the practice of comparing ourselves with others – yet, God deals with us individually and he's not done with us yet!
 - point: we must persevere with this understanding!

D. 1 Corinthians 12:14-18

1. Each member has particular function... Illus. – picture our body with just a BIG MOUTH... = no beauty and certainly not very functional...
2. To the body every part is useful:
 - a. God made each of us fit to function in certain ways or capacities.
 - b. inferiority arises when our function takes on little or no significance... Note: many vital organs of our bodies are unseen... even so in church work...

3. Why did God do it this way? = 1 Corinthians 12:25 – body cares for itself = if one part gets hurt the rest of the body responds...

God's estimate of us is HIGH – in turn we need to view ourselves as God views us!

IV God's PRESCRIPTION for Overcoming

- A. Remember God's Work
 - growth process still going on in each of our lives – God isn't finished with us yet!
 - B. Refuse to Compare
 1. Comparing demoralizes... Refuse to do it or inferiority is inevitable.
 2. Stop looking at those around and start looking at Jesus!
 - C. Respond to Shortcomings
 1. Try to make the necessary changes to overcome these traps.
 2. Pray about it, even as Paul prayed about his *thorn in the flesh* 2 Corinthians 12:8-10...
- 3 R's = Remember... Refuse... Respond...

Conclusion: Chuck Swindoll writes of a friend in seminary. He had a bright red, birthmark unattractively down his face. Swindoll said, as far as he could tell, this man had no problem with inferiority. Asked why one day, "Because my dad taught me that part of my face was where angels kissed me marking me as his son... All through younger days taught I was important and special to my parents. To tell the truth, I began to feel sorry for those who didn't have birthmarks across their faces!"

Until we can thank the Lord for our scars, our imperfections, we'll never overcome inferiority. This preoccupation with self and constant secret analyzing of how high or low we are in comparison to others will continue!! God help us to conquer this plague. No one can make us feel inferior without our consent. God help us to see ourselves as He sees us and to function in the way He equipped us to function!