

The Inferiority Complex

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Scripture References

Colossians 2:8-10, *MSG*
Colossians 2:8
Colossians 2:8-16, *AMPC*
Acts 17:28
2 Corinthians 5:17

Matthew 7:3-5
1 Thessalonians 5:6
1 Thessalonians 5:6, *AMPC*
1 Thessalonians 5:6-11, *MSG*

Summary

We live in a world surrounded by spiritual influences, not all of them good. If we are not careful, we can fall prey to philosophies that make us feel inferior. A philosophy is a set of beliefs, values, or ideas handed down from generation to generation that we can begin to live by; some of them elevate human wisdom over God's wisdom. The spirit of inferiority is not God's will. When He made mankind, He made men and women in His image and at a level where they could have equal fellowship with Him. Jesus brings equality to everyone, with no distinction; an understanding of who we are in Him banishes all feelings of inferiority. Accepting our identity in Christ allows us to receive what He came to give.

A. We must beware of any philosophies or ways of thinking that make us feel inferior.

1. In this context, a complex is a basic set of ideas and values we can live by.
2. Inferiority is a spirit that influences our mindset.
 - a. Many people today live with the feeling that they are inferior. This is a curse that resulted from Adam and Eve's sin.
3. Watch out for people who try to dazzle you with big words and intellectual double-talk. They want to drag you off into endless arguments that never amount to anything. They spread their ideas through the empty traditions of human beings and the empty superstitions of spirit beings. But that's not the way of Christ. Everything of God gets expressed in him, so you can see and hear him clearly. You don't need a telescope, a microscope, or a horoscope to realize the fullness of Christ, and the emptiness of the universe without him. When you come to him, that fullness comes together for you, too. His power extends over everything (Colossians 2:8-10, *MSG*).
 - a. There are plenty of voices in the world today; we must make sure that we are tuned in specifically to God's voice.
4. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (Colossians 2:8).
 - a. Not all philosophies agree with God's Word. Some of them make us captive to ideas that devalue us and make us feel inferior.
5. See to it that no one carries you off as spoil or makes you yourselves captive by his so-called philosophy and intellectualism and vain deceit (idle fancies and plain nonsense), following human tradition (men's ideas of the material rather than the spiritual world), just crude notions following the rudimentary and elemental teachings of the universe and

disregarding [the teachings of] Christ (the Messiah). For in Him the whole fullness of Deity (the Godhead) continues to dwell in bodily form [giving complete expression of the divine nature]. And you are in Him, made full *and* having come to fullness of life [in Christ you too are filled with the Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and reach full spiritual stature]. And He is the Head of all rule and authority [of every angelic principality and power]. In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, but in a [spiritual] circumcision [performed by] Christ by stripping off the body of the flesh (the whole corrupt, carnal nature with its passions and lusts). [Thus you were circumcised when] you were buried with Him in [your] baptism, in which you were also raised with Him [to a new life] through [your] faith in the working of God [as displayed] when He raised Him up from the dead. And you who were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh (your sensuality, your sinful carnal nature), [God] brought to life together with [Christ], having [freely] forgiven us all our transgressions, Having cancelled *and* blotted out *and* wiped away the handwriting of the note (bond) with its legal decrees *and* demands which was in force *and* stood against us (hostile to us). This [note with its regulations, decrees, and demands] He set aside *and* cleared completely out of our way by nailing it to [His] cross. [God] disarmed the principalities and powers that were ranged against us and made a bold display *and* public example of them, in triumphing over them in Him *and* in it [the cross]. Therefore let no one sit in judgment on you in matters of food and drink, or with regard to a feast day or a New Moon or a Sabbath (Colossians 2:8-16, *AMPC*).

- a. There is no inferiority in Christ. When we are in Him, we are made equal.
- b. For in him we live, and move, and have our being... (Acts 17:28).
- c. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

B. Feelings of inferiority are manifested through various negative, destructive behaviors.

1. There is a pattern to the inferiority complex. Sin causes us to fall short of God's intentions.
 - a. Sinning and falling short produces a sense of inferiority. This, in turn, produces insecurity, pride, and a false sense of superiority.
 - b. The spirit of inferiority causes us to feel powerless and depressed. This opens the door to anger, which is a manifestation of fear.
2. The signs of feelings of inferiority include:
 - a. Grudgingly admitting our shortcomings while enthusiastically pointing out others' shortcomings. We need to take care of our issues first before criticizing someone else (Matthew 7:3-5).
 - b. Bullying people or talking about others with disdain.
 - c. Feeling attacked when someone disagrees with us.
 - d. Feeling belittled upon receiving correction or confrontation.
 - e. Blaming others for our problems. This signals a victim mentality.
 - f. Deriving our worth and value from our performance or appearance.
 - g. Being touchy, fragile, and easily hurt, whether we show it or not.
 - h. Being critical and defensive.
 - i. Feeling as if we have to talk about ourselves to get others to like us.
 - j. Finding fault in others so we look better.
3. We need to think soberly, in line with God's Word, and be on guard against the spirit of inferiority. To be sober-minded is to be watchful; it is to be clear about the situation we are in, and aware of what the enemy is doing.

- a. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober (1 Thessalonians 5:6).
- b. Accordingly then, let us not sleep, as the rest do, but let us keep wide awake (alert, watchful, cautious, and on our guard) and let us be sober (calm, collected, and circumspect) (1 Thessalonians 5:6, *AMPC*).
- c. So let's not sleepwalk through life like those others. Let's keep our eyes open and be smart. People sleep at night and get drunk at night. But not us! Since we're creatures of Day, let's act like it. Walk out into the daylight sober, dressed up in faith, love, and the hope of salvation. God didn't set us up for an angry rejection but for salvation by our Master, Jesus Christ. He died for us, a death that triggered life. Whether we're awake with the living or asleep with the dead, we're *alive* with him! So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind. I know you're already doing this; just keep on doing it (1 Thessalonians 5:6-11, *MSG*).

Category: spiritual growth

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