

Today: Looking at how rejection can produce a performance mentality in serving God

I. THE ROOTS OF PERFORMANCE

A. 2 deadly roots of rejection

1. Rejection rooted in performance: Conditional love or acceptance – IF...

a. I will love/accept you only if you: Do what I want/do right/act like you sibling/win/succeed/get good grades...

1. **Genesis 27:4** When you prepare the tasty food that I love, bring it to me, and I will eat. Then I'll bless you before I die

b. **Some people found that they could never do enough: More! Better!**

1. So their feeling of love/acceptance was always uncertain: Am I doing enough/am I good enough?

c. **Some people lived the roller-coaster of love/acceptance: I love you today – I'm disgusted with you tomorrow**

d. **Some people discovered the truth: At times you will not measure up**

1. You won't win/won't succeed/you're not like someone else/won't be good – do wrong

2. Rejection rooted in guilt or shame: Other people can give us the message of shame

a. This can begin with guilt over things we have actually done wrong

1. Other people remind us/hold it over our heads/cut us off in disgust: How could you...?

a. A little boy was running in the house/being naughty. His pregnant mother chased him, slipped and fell. Lost the baby. So the family banished him/sent him away to live somewhere else. His father never had anything to do with God again.

b. Or it can simply be their opinion of shame – not measuring up

1. Not you've done wrong – but you ARE wrong! There's something wrong with you

c. This becomes deadly when we accept their false opinion as being true

1. Brené Brown: Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging.

B. So now this kind of person becomes a Christian – enters into relationship with God

1. Some have already spent a lifetime performing/striving to gain love and approval from people

a. They hear about God's love – God can be your Heavenly Father!

2. But they now view relationship with God and themselves through the eyes of the past

a. For some: God as your Father is not good news at all! That is all negative

1. He will hurt/abuse/abandon me – can't be trusted

b. For others: God will be demanding/hard to please/fickle: He will change his mind about love

3. So what is produced is a Performance Mentality in serving God

a. **I will make up for the past – I will make up for my shortcomings**

1. **Matthew 18:26** the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.'

What does God need me to do? Tithe. Attend. Pray. Sure... anything. Ill pay it back.

a. Doing right not b/c of love or b/c it's right: But to pay God back – make up for sins/failings

2. **Luke 15:19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

b. **I will earn or deserve God's love:**

1. Cleaning up your own life: Mistake of religion – I've done enough to be good enough!

a. If my good deeds outweigh my bad...

2. Doing right things – to try and make God love us

a. Read my Bible/pray/come to church/give money... do you love me now?

3. Working for God – to earn His love/favour

b. I help in the church/involved in multiple ministries every night of the week: Not b/c of love/right – to earn love!

C. Rejection comes through people: So we make a mistake of making God's approval come through people

1. We focus our efforts in serving God on pleasing and impressing people!

a. **Matthew 6:1-2** "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2" "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

b. **Matthew 6:5** "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

Are you praying to God... or for us? Pray in king James... thou oh Lord... Hast thy heard my cry? Come thither...

2. We seek God's validation – love & approval – through people!

II. THE DAMAGE OF PERFORMANCE

A. Performance-based Christianity is exhausting

1. Works based religion adds burdens: **Matthew 23:4** *They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders...*

a. *The blood of Jesus AND...clean up your act/work hard and try to be perfect*

1. Working for God's love is exhausting! 2. Trying to gain approval from people is exhausting!

2. Guilt is the mark of a performance mentality

b. *You have to witness to every person – this could be their last chance! Guilt is not basis of salvation.*

B. Performance-based Christianity is uncertain:

1. In a performance relationship: *Your value/worth/identity are based on what you do and how well you do it*

a. *How do you know if you've done enough? Says who?*

1. *Could I have done more? 2. What if someone else says what I'm doing isn't enough?*

a. **1 John 3:20** *For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.*

b. This is a life filled with pressure: *What happens if you have a bad day? You sleep in? You're sick?*

1. *Not "I get to" or "I want to" but "I must/I HAVE to!"*

C. Performance-based Christianity is not blessed by God:

1. You are actually saying something about Him – not you!

a. *You're not loving/you're hard to please/hard to get along with*

1. **Matthew 25:24-25** *"Then the servant who had been given one bag of gold came to the master and said, 'Master, I knew that you were a hard man. You harvest things you did not plant. You gather crops where you did not sow any seed. ²⁵So I was afraid and went and hid your money in the ground. Here is your bag of gold.'*

b. What Jesus did on the cross is not enough!

1. **Galatians 3:3** *Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*

D. The result of these errors – you never enter into God's rest

1. **Hebrews 4:3** *For only we who believe can enter his rest. As for the others, God said, "In my anger I took an oath: 'They will never enter my place of rest,' " even though this rest has been ready since he made the world.*

a. Rest: Peace/confidence in God's love – stopping the works of performance

2. Performance-based Christians do not experience the supernatural favor of God: *Displeases Him Men: confidence isn't that Gods loves me and wants to help me... rather: look how hard I work. Im gonna put in the time.*

II. FREEDOM FROM PERFORMANCE

A. Look at the path to freedom from performance-based Christianity

1. **We have to recognize the truth:** We CANNOT pay God back/make up for the past!!

a. **Matthew 18:24** *In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars.*

1. *Hundreds of millions! You make \$15 an hour...you can never pay it back!!*

2. **We have to repent of our pride and unbelief:**

a. *It's pride to think I can be good enough/pay God off!*

b. *It is unbelief when we will not accept God's love for us and the payment he already made!*

3. **We must accept God's love:** Relationship with God only works if you accept His terms – which is love!

a. **Matthew 18:27** *Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.*

1. It had nothing to do with the servant – everything to do with the master!

b. Our sin is already paid for! You cannot make any other payments!

1. **1 John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

c. You are ALREADY Loved by your Heavenly father

1. **1 John 3:1** *How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*