

A 1 Corinthians 11 Strategy for Defeating Fleshly Vanity

If I'm being honest, sometimes the entertainment business scares me. At the same time, I love it a lot! I love the idea of being a part of a story, or being the means for people to escape reality for a few hours to just enjoy. I especially love the projects that make an impact and move people to action. Most of the time I can't believe that acting is my job! I have my moments where I can be pretty emotional, sensitive and slightly dramatic, so acting also gives me an outlet to explore, dig deeper and express so many levels of emotion in an alternate world. Fun, right? It's a beautiful way to empathize with people when you step in their shoes, so naturally it also makes me more compassionate towards others.

So why does this business scare me, you ask?

As an actress, you are constantly having to "market" yourself—call it what you want, but you're basically a show pony at the circus. To have the cutting edge, or be marketable, or to have a "successful" career, there's a mindset that you need to have followers and fans who will spend money to see whatever project you're doing next, follow you on social media, get something if you endorse it and love your latest Instagram post.

Don't get me wrong, I love Instagram and I absolutely love getting messages from people who have seen projects I've been in and how much the story or the character spoke to them. I'm a very "words" kind of girl, so that stuff encourages me a whole lot. But in the midst of all that—messages, comments, praise, criticism, followers, fans, excitement, disappointment, marketing, promotion—I fear the tendency to build my own kingdom. I fear the tendency to get trapped in what people think of me and pleasing others. Whether you're an

actress, musician, nurse or writer, I'm sure you can relate to that.

In the midst of the 21st century Instagram world, my prayer is that we all live for an audience of One. Too often, we rely on the opinions of those around us and seek the approval of our fellow humans. We start to compare ourselves to others, wondering if people like us, or if we're as good at a given task as we think we should be.

"For am I now seeking the approval of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? For if I were still trying to please men, I would not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

When we truly live for an audience of One, that is where we always experience true freedom, joy, value and purpose. The Lord has always, always proven to me time and time again, He is my promoter and the great orchestrator of anything that happens. I know He will be faithful to do the same for you. We need not worry about the approval of others or strive to get ahead. In fact, we're wasting our time if we do.

"Let nothing be done out of strife or conceit, but in humility let each esteem the other better than himself" (Phil. 2:3).

Another passage that comes to mind is Matthew 6:1–4 (emphasis mine):

Be sure that you not do your charitable deeds before men to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

Therefore, when you do your charitable deeds, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do your charitable deeds, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deeds may be in

secret. And your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

Let's be about encouraging each other and leading through example. Let's be passionate followers of Christ who look to Him for our confirmation. In our own walk and journey, let us each make sure our motivation is in the right place. We don't want to build our own kingdom for the sake of followers or the approval of man. For that is a wasted life.

In any area of our influence, whether big or small, I think Paul penned it right: "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

Masey McClain made her first true mark in film when she played the lead role in her first feature film, *I'm Not Ashamed*. She continues to pursue an acting career while also communicating a message of passion and purpose to today's young people. She is the author of *It's Worth It* (BroadStreet Publishing Group, Racine, Wisconsin).