

Who Cares What They Think, Anyway?

I used to have such thin skin you could see my heart through my chest, or at least on my sleeve. I've had to learn to toughen up over the years, especially in the face of a constant barrage of verbal attacks from **religious spirits** who sometimes don't like what I say because it hits a self-righteous nerve.

But it wasn't a ministry encounter that caused me to grab the revelation that I needed to stop worrying so much about what other people were going to think or say about me. No, it was a very personal issue indeed.

I was going through hell at the time, watching my then-best friend make what I thought was one of the worst mistakes of her life. This was happening during the same season that the Lord was calling me out of an abusive church system. The **spiritual warfare** was coming at me from all fronts.

I stayed at that church for at least six months longer than I should have—and suffered more **spiritual abuse** than I needed to endure—because I was concerned that people would think I was leaving because my friend was getting married. I didn't want people to think I was walking away because I thought the marriage was a mistake or that I was upset by the sudden change.

The truth is, I was walking away because the church was unhealthy. I was agonizing over how it would look if I left before the wedding, and not just for myself—for her too. I didn't want to put a damper on the wedding, even if I had grave doubts that it was God's will. After all, I was in the wedding. How could I walk away then without causing a stir?

Holy Ghost Encounter

Finally, the **Holy Sprit** broke in to my emotional turmoil. He said, "Stop worrying about what other people think." Sounds like a simple **revelation**, but it changed my life. No longer was this just some advice from a friend. The **Spirit of God** Himself was giving me a **prophetic instruction**: "Stop worrying about what other people think!"

See, when you worry about what other people think, you are giving them a measure of control over your life that belongs to the Holy Spirit. If you worry about what other people think, you are in danger of becoming a people-pleaser rather than a God-pleaser. If you worry about what other people think, you may even give away some of your God-given identity.

I'm not saying that we shouldn't be sensitive to what we say or how we behave. That's not my point at all. What I'm saying is that when you are confident that God has told you to do or say something, then stop worrying about what people are going to think. And after you do it, stop worrying about what they are thinking after the fact. Constantly worrying about what other people think or are going to think is crippling existence, really.

What Would Jesus Do?

When Jesus healed the paralytic and forgave his sins, some of the scribes were sitting there and thinking, "Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:5-9) Jesus knew what they were thinking, but that didn't stop Him from healing the next guy. What if Jesus had worried about how it would look to heal and forgive on the Sabbath and started picking and choosing when and whom and how He would heal based on the day of the week or how sinful the sinner was? I don't even want to imagine that.

Jesus had a habit of casting out devils. After He healed a demon-possessed, blind and mute man, the Pharisees said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of demons" (Matthew 12:22-24). The Bible says Jesus knew their

thoughts. Did Jesus put a screeching halt to His **deliverance ministry** because the **religious spirits** accused him of casting out devils with the power of darkness? No, because He wasn't worried about what other people think.

Now, do you think Jesus was sitting up all night worrying about what people thought of His **Sermon on the Mount**? Hardly. Did everyone who heard it like it? Doubtful. There were probably religious spirits there who launched all manner of accusations against the Word of God made flesh. That didn't stop Jesus from speaking and doing the will of God. It's not going to stop me. And it shouldn't stop you, either.

Who Are 'They,' Anyway?

So commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established (Proverbs 16:3). Listen, it doesn't matter what they think. It doesn't matter what they say. Even if you make a mistake and really blow it, it doesn't matter what they think. It doesn't matter what they say. It only matters what God thinks and says about you. If you make a mistake, repent. We know that the thoughts God thinks toward us are thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11).

And, hey, more times than not people aren't really thinking and talking about you anyway. More times than not, it's just the enemy inserting imaginations into your soul to breed insecurity, rejection or fear. What does God think and say about that? Listen in to the apostle Paul's **Holy Spirit** wisdom:

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ... Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's" (2 Corinthians 10:5;7 KJV). Amen.

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