

## **Fear of Man Small Group Guide**

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part altogether, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Would you rather have the ability to fly or to become invisible?
2. What is your favorite holiday?

**Read the following passages:** Proverbs 29:25; 1 Samuel 15.

Although Saul had great potential, the fear of man became a snare in his life. Saul claimed that he had obeyed the Lord's instructions when, in fact, he had given in to his men. He invested time and resources attempting to bolster his fragile identity by building a monument to honor himself. He was afraid to take on Goliath in a moment of national crisis. Most of us are affected by the fear of man in various ways throughout our lives. David, however, shows us the way forward. We can overcome the fear of man in our lives by: 1) seeing the reward of conquering this fear; 2) focusing on God; 3) starting small; and 4) accepting who we are.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. What are some ways in which the fear of man can become a snare in our lives?
2. Can you think of any areas in your life in which you are prone to compare yourself to other people?
3. Describe a time in your life in which you failed to do something because you were afraid of how somebody else might respond.
4. Saul claimed that he had obeyed the Lord's instructions even though, from Samuel's perspective, he had clearly disobeyed. How can the fear of man distort our view of reality? In particular, how might our fear of disappointing people cause us to take responsibility for things that are not our responsibility? How might our ability to set healthy boundaries be impacted by our fear of man? What about our view of truth?
5. Saul set up a monument to honor himself. Samuel addressed Saul's arrogance in 1 Samuel 15:23. What is the connection between pride and the fear of man?
6. Saul could not handle David's success. (See 1 Samuel 18:6-16.) What are some ways the fear of man affects our relationships?

7. David's experiences while caring for sheep and his encounter with Goliath suggest four tactics for conquering the fear of man: 1) seeing the reward of facing our fear (1 Samuel 17:26); 2) focusing on God (1 Samuel 17:26, 37); 3) starting with a small step (1 Samuel 17:34-37); 4) accepting who we are (1 Samuel 17:38-40). Which of these actions seem most helpful to you right now? Explain.

**Pray**