

YOU, Your Insecurities



IN PROVERBS 30:21-23 we come across some very interesting Scripture that gives insight into human nature. It has to do with various insecure people. We see how they react (especially after being repressed) when suddenly propelled to higher elevations above their peers when obviously they are not prepared for it psychologically, emotionally, or otherwise. Not many can handle a situation like this with a level head.

This Scripture reads: "For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear: For a servant when he reigneth: and a fool when he is filled with meat: For an odious woman when she is married; and an hand-maid that is heir to her mistress." This "King James" word-

ing is very good, but perhaps the Revised and the New American Standard versions are even better: “Under three things the earth trembles; under four it cannot bear up: a slave when he becomes king, and a fool when he is filled with food; and an unloved woman when she gets a husband, and a maid when she succeeds her mistress” (RSV).

Very interesting, but this Scripture does not represent isolated instances of bygone things. Whether we like to admit it or not, all of us have insecurities of one kind or another. No one is perfect. Thus, it is well for us to consider this matter a little more in depth.

Different Kinds of Insecurities (Feelings of Insecurity)

A person may feel insecure because of low self-esteem, which could be caused by a variety of things (known and unknown). A person may have pegged himself low on the social scale. He may think he has come from the “wrong side of the tracks.” He may feel insecure because of being poor or having come out of a background of poverty. He may feel insecure because of a lack of education (or for failure to do his best). An unstable home situation, or having come from one, may cause such feelings. A person may feel insecure because of some physical characteristic or imagined imperfection in this respect. For some, not having what they regard as nice clothes, or thinking they are not dressed properly, may cause feelings of insecurity. Wrong living, secret sin, and not being right with God (living under a dark impending cloud) are causes of deep insecurities. Because of question marks about ones salvation and relationship to God a life may be plagued with insecurity. Uncertainty about the economy; uncertainty about the future, etc.—yes, we could go on. There are so many different kinds of insecurity. And, all lives are touched in some way, directly or indirectly, by them and with them.

How Insecurities Manifest Themselves (With Resultant Problems)

In General

Some people who feel insecure become quiet and withdrawn while others become loud, boastful and domineering (put up a front). (What strange creatures we human beings are at times!). The know-it-all person has to show how much he knows because he feels so insecure. And snobbery really is but a display of insecurity.

Young people feel insecure. The young person who is not quite a man or woman yet (but almost) is subject to insecurity (and can be a “sitting duck” for the devil and all kinds of temptations and problems). He or she may be loud and bluster. Many feel the need of popularity. They want to prove themselves to the group, and be accepted, and are open to all kinds of possible problems involving drugs, strong drink and sex. Many times girls who feel insecure will want to wear makeup (and a lot of it) and will display themselves (and their bodies) to prove that they are a woman. And what boys will do! But only the weak must prove that they are strong. The strong won’t even think or worry about it. Only the person who is in doubt about his or her manhood/womanhood must prove it.

The wearing of makeup, jewelry, and an obsession with being in style are all evidences of insecurity and insecurities. Cosmetic industries try to make women feel insecure, unhappy and uncomfortable with themselves so they will want to buy their products, and how the weak ones fall for it. Many women would not think of facing the world with just the face that God has given them (1 Corinthians 12:24; 1 Timothy 2:9,10). They are made to feel insecure unless they are painted sex objects and sexy looking (Jeremiah 4:30; Ezekiel 23:40,41). (It is a welcomed compliment to be called “sexy” looking)

Men and women who are not faithful to their mates are insecure people. It is not always just a matter of simple lust, but insecurity enters the picture. They must keep proving to themselves that they are desirable. (Just think how insecure the many times married and divorced person must be!). The man who faces the so-called middle age crisis and chases younger women really is insecure. He must prove to himself that he is still a man

We are suspicious that the so-called “WOMEN’S LIB” movement is but the outcropping of insecurity. The hypersensitivity about the word “man” is really a joke. We are not supposed to say “chairman” anymore; it is now “chairperson,” etc. But anyone can see that you can’t say “woman” without saying “man” (and the word, we are told, literally means a man with a womb). However, the word “man” not only has reference to gender, it is used in the more general sense of humanity or mankind (Genesis 1:27). But we can’t use these words without saying “man” either: hu-*man*-ity, *man*-kind; likewise with fe-*male* and s-*he*.

This writer firmly believes that racism (being down on people of other races) many times is a form, expression and out-venting of insecurity. Insecure people seem to be more racially conscious and discriminating (as well as being class conscious).

Extravagance and one thinking that he or she must always have the most expensive of anything and everything many times are indications of insecurity. Obsessive preoccupation with clothing may be indicative of harbored insecurities brought over from childhood when families could not afford “nice” things like this.

The preacher who is always ostentatiously displaying his academic credentials surely must feel inadequate and insecure. He is pleased to be recognized as the “Doctor” or the “Reverend” so and so.

Alcoholism and drugs many times have their roots in deep imbedded insecurities. It is hard to deal with life and life's hard experiences.

Jealousy is evidence of insecurity. On the job, the insecure boss is the "bossy" boss.

The insecure person over-reacts. Etc. Etc.—*and the manifestations go on!*

In the Bible

Proverbs 30:21-23 has already been called to your attention. The earth trembles when these insecure people are elevated: (1) When the slave becomes a king; (2) When a fool (*nabal*, empty person—a pun) is filled with food (not accustomed to such fancy eating, he further makes a fool of himself when invited to such a banquet); (3) When an unloved or odious woman finally gets a husband (odious means arousing or deserving hatred or loathing; disgusting; offensive)—thus the woman who had become an old maid because she was so hateful that no one will have her finally gets a man. Look out! (4) When a handmaid (slave, servant girl) falls heir to her mistress (an illustration of this, up to a point, can be seen in Hagar the handmaid of Sarah. Abraham and Sarah, being childless, followed a custom of their times. Sarah's handmaid Hagar was to bear children for her. When Hagar had conceived by Abraham, we read that "her mistress was despised in her eyes," Genesis 16:4. Then after the son of Hagar was born, and years later when Abraham and Sarah finally did have a son, Ishmael son of Hagar mocked the young Isaac—Genesis 21:9-11).

Saul responded in apparent humility to Samuel as he was being sought to be king of Israel, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" (1 Samuel 9:21). And it seems that insecurities are mixed with his humility for when Samuel

would publicly present him as the new king of Israel, he “hid himself among the stuff [baggage]” (1 Samuel 10:22). Saul at first did a good job of being king of Israel, but it seems that his insecurities later got the best of him and played a part in his downfall. He took things into his own hands bypassing Samuel in offering sacrifices and circumventing the commands of God (1 Samuel 12:13,14; 15:10-31). Perhaps the exalted position of the monarchy was too much for him to handle. It went to his head.

The principle of the earth trembling when the servant reigns can be seen in Herod and many of the Caesars. The original Herod (the one who had the babies killed when Jesus was born) was not a king by birth. He was a private citizen whom the Romans made a king, but he had to take his kingdom and consolidate his rule. Consequently his life was one of insecurity; he trusted no one. The fortresses and embellished places of retreat about the land are standing evidence of this. His tyrannical rule testifies to this. Not only did he have the babies killed when Jesus was born, a wife (his most beloved), three sons, two high priests, most of the Sanhedrin, and others suffered the same fate. And the story is the same with so many of the Roman emperors with the demise of the republic. Their position really was an unlawful one, and some of them seem to have been just common soldiers who made it to the top by violence and intrigue. Their insecurities are seen in their excessive living and tyrannical rule.

We could go on. Not many people can handle a sudden and high promotion; a gradual coming up the ladder is better. Even the disciples (apostles to be) of Jesus suffered from this. Most of them were just everyday ordinary people, i.e. fishermen, etc. Their misconception of the kingdom of the Christ is common knowledge. More than once there was bickering among them as to whom would be the greatest in the kingdom, or who would get to sit in the positions of

greatest honor on the right or left side of Jesus. Of course, with their spiritual change and enlightenment with the coming of the Holy Spirit, these thoughts vanished. Of all the Bible characters, Joseph in the Old Testament presents a superb example of a man who could handle his insecurities. He stands out.

In the Church

It is hard for the overly insecure person to be a real Christian if his insecurities are not brought under control. He will be intimidated by the world. Romans 12:2 plainly says: **"BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD."** There is so much in this present world at variance with God (1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 4:1-5). John tells us that "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19). Our Lord said, "Broad is the way that leads to destruction" (Matthew 7:13). But the insecure person will feel that he must go along with the crowd. Addressing Christians, James questioned and answered, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). The weak person can't say "NO" when offered a drink and will laugh at the dirty jokes. If the women of the world are wearing indecent "mini-skirt" dresses, the insecure Christian will be under great pressure to comply. If the men of the world are letting their hair grow long (like a woman), and like some ungodly rock and roll "star" presents himself, the insecure Christian will think it "cool" and want to do the same (although the Bible says it is a shame for men to have long hair, 1 Corinthians 11:14,15). Usually 1 Timothy 2:9,10 and 1 Peter 3:1-6 are totally disregarded (but they are as much a part of the Bible as John 3:16 and Acts 2:38).

Many leaders in the church, who think of themselves as self-respecting free men in a free society, may really have the heart of a slave (Proverbs 30:22). When preachers and elders like to be the "boss" and lord it over their brethren, they are really showing how insecure and unqualified they

really are. Jesus publicly said that such a procedure would not be in his kingdom (Mark 10:42-45; Matthew 24:45-51). Elders are not to be “lords over God’s heritage, but...examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:3). Diotrephes well illustrates this negative element (3 John 9). Even though Paul had the authority of an inspired apostle, it was used with restraint (2 Corinthians 13:10; 10:8-18; etc.). These thoughts make us recall the qualifications of the elder, one of them being, “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil,” the same condemnation the devil fell into when he got his eyes off of God and upon himself (1 Timothy 3:6). Christian growth and spiritual preparation was necessary for him to handle/rid himself of his insecurities. The church is a priesthood of believers (a kingdom of kings and priests unto God made up of all of us, Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5,9), and having weak, insecure persons lording it over others is very much out of place. We are all on the same footing before God.

No doubt insecurities account for much apostasy in connection with the church (among the leaders as well as the rank and file “membership”). Some cannot cope with their insecurities in being associated with a small church group, and they desire something bigger (a mega-church). They have the mentality of the world. Some preachers may crave denominational status and recognition (which the simplicity of just the local New Testament church does not afford), so they seek it elsewhere (or create their own organizational structures where this can be realized). In reference to some of Paul’s writings, the apostle Peter said “they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16). Instability and insecurity seem to enter into their misapplication of the Scripture. They try to force meanings that are not there to meet their own fantasies. A stable person will

handle the Word of God aright and not be likely carried away with different winds of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14). An interesting Scripture that has a bearing on this is found in 2 Timothy 3:6. The wording in some of the older translations is confusing here, but the idea in the original is how gullible insecure and guilt-ridden women are to false teachers who go from house to house. Actually the word translated “silly women” (KJV) is the diminutive word for women, literally meaning little women. It is used as a word of contempt. They are so weak and insecure, and open to false teachers, “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (verse 7). They who are right with God and know it (really knowing God’s Word), have nothing to fear from false teachers. (This is the underlying thesis of 2 Peter). They are happy, well adjusted, and content. They are not candidates for apostasy. It is far from them.

Facing Up to and Getting Our Insecurities Under Control

We need to face up to our insecurities and get them under control. God knows who and what we are (and what we are not), and all of us basically are the same (sinful human beings who have sinned and fall short of God’s glory, needing a Savior, Romans 3:23). Hebrews 4:12 tells us that God is “a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” and the next verse says that “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” All basically have similar fears, similar problems, and similar needs (yes, similar, but some more and some less alike than others). There is no room for arrogance or snobbery. There is no room for self-righteousness or conceit. There is no big “I” and little “you” as we stand before God. In the language addressed to the Corinthians, Paul rhetorically asked them, “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7). And that is true any way you want to look at it,

whether it be salvation or the blessing of just simply living from day to day. We need to stop being uptight and defuse our feelings of insecurity. We need to be honest with ourselves. Face up to ourselves with all of our imperfections and insecurities. Be honest with yourself and God, and go from there. Like the alcoholic at the AA meeting who finally has come face to face with himself, stripping away all the veneer and delusion, publicly states: “I am an alcoholic,” you say: “I am a sinner; I am a weak human being basically with problems and needs.” This may not be a lovely sight. It may be hard to do. In fact, it may be a very traumatic and soul-shattering experience, but you will be eternally glad that you did. The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed [happy, fortunate] are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). By being poor in spirit, he means that we see our spiritual needs. And having seen them, we declare spiritual bankruptcy and turn it all over to God. The strong man can talk about his weaknesses; the weak man cannot—he is devastated! He doesn’t like what he sees. Be devastated! Get your values straight as to what really matters before God, and then go from there.

God’s amazing grace will help us get back on track. Through Jesus Christ, God will take away all of our sins (1 Timothy 1:15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5; Acts 2:38). There is no longer a need for a cloak to hide what we are. Our sins have all been taken away, never to be held against us again. “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 8:12). That’s what the Bible said. Just think of that! God who knows all things chooses not to know (or remember) my sins any more when He looks at me! He forgives and forgets (and may we do the same—in reference to ourselves and to others). Christ now becomes our all and in all. Paul declared, “I am crucified with Christ: neverthe-

less I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Self with all of its unloveliness and insecurities has been discarded. There are no reasons for us to have defensive insecure feelings (Christ is our all) for "of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). We are no longer the supposed object of attention and focus. Jesus Christ is! He is everything. Let us glory in him.

We have peace. We have hope. We have security (and it is all engulfed in love). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God...And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost [Spirit] which is given unto us" (Romans 5:1-5). The apostle John further tells us that "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God...There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment..." (1 John 4:16-18). As a byproduct of trusting God, We know that when we pray "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your [our] hearts and minds through Jesus Christ" (Philippians 4:6,7,13), and that with Paul we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. "For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5,6). Consider Romans 8:28-39. In being a Christian we know we are a winner even if we "lose." Eternity awaits.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me be-

side still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" (Psalms 23).

With "self" gotten out of the way, and all of its unlovely limitations, our eyes are fixed upon God. Insecurities will subside, be subdued and brought under control; yes, even vanish and go away. Self-consciousness involved with insecurities many times really is evidence of being too conscious of ourselves (inverted pride). If pride were not there, we would not even think about what other people thought. But as a Christian it really doesn't matter. What does God think? That's what really matters. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). We are right with God. Our value system has been set in order. Christ is all. He is our everything. □

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