

the need to
please



Driven to impress

Have you ever felt burdened with the continual expectations of perfection you need to meet up to day after day? Are you tired of feeling like you need to hide behind the fake facade you display for others to see?

It's a never-ending battle to feel accepted in this world we're in. We live in a society that tries to include everyone, but by doing so it is impossible to effectively please everyone, resulting in people feeling upset and overlooked.

As a graphic designer, I've found it challenging, and very belittling at times, with the constant influx of opinions and ideas thrown at me day after day. I put my heart and effort into a project to make sure it's the best I can do. I spend time trying to focus on what each client is desiring, and create something I think they will like. It's a struggle to not become discouraged when things don't meet up to the expectations of others. When others voice their negative feedback of my work it feels personal. It seems as though my work wasn't good enough, making me not good enough. I've carried this aspect into various areas in my life.

I don't know about you, but I find myself constantly basing my worth by my performance. I allow how others perceive me to become truth in my mind. I conjure up thoughts in my head of what I think others may be perceiving me as, and at times, I probably let them grow way out of proportion. This leaves me feeling insecure and leading me to become discouraged, all because of what I imagine others are saying or thinking.

People pleasing is extremely tiring. Once we begin to feel accepted, it seems like we're always awaiting a drastic rejection to occur. If you've ever ridden a roller coaster, consider it smooth sailing in comparison to the act of pleasing others. When you take a ride to please others, you're in for some mountainous road ahead.

Trying to keep everyone's approval is a constant battle. It's like a juggling act with 100 flying balls in the air, trying to catch them all with no mishaps. It often feels impossible to have everyone's acceptance all the time, but yet we continually crave the ability to make it happen. Once we think we've gained approval of one, we desire the need to have more. It's like a disease that we keep letting spread and take control of our thoughts and actions. It's a battle that truly does involve a change in thinking to refocus our longing souls.

Even amidst the endless amounts of people we consistently need to please, we can remember that in the end their opinion does not determine our worth. When faced with a daunting task, I often place excessive pressure on myself to make sure I don't let anyone down or make an utter fool of myself. At times I've bought into the lies that others expect me to perform the task at hand without making mistakes and that anything less than perfection is

unacceptable. I can't count the times that I let fear get the best of me and I ended up messing things up for the worst. I've allowed my failure to convince me that God was disappointed in my performance, when in reality, all God ever asks of us is a willing heart. He doesn't expect perfection, just a humility and willingness for Him to use us.

I have recently come to realize that no matter how many people may be watching or expecting me to rise up to their expectations, I only truly have an audience of One. I can find rest knowing that when I'm fulfilling the task at hand I only need to be focused on doing it for God, and nobody else. It relieves me from the pressure and opinions thrown at me from every side that expects me to perform with perfection. I'm not perfect. I make mistakes. God sees our heart and our sincere intent. Others may mistake our actions, but God sees our true intentions. Knowing this truly puts things into perspective and allows me to remember the drive for my effort. It gives me peace knowing that I don't need to be perfect or flawless to be used by God.

It is a constant battle to fulfill the need to please others and consistently meet up to the endless levels of perfection we see around us. In today's society, ideas of who we are and where we should be in life bombards us from all sides. Expectations choke us in discouragement when we cannot fulfill the accomplishments of who we think we should be. I've let so many of these thoughts grow at insurmountable rates into debilitating truths that feel so defining of my worth.

Thoughts like

1. You have to be perfect all the time. Mistakes define you. Admitting your faults shows weakness.
2. You can't admit you are feeling upset or struggling. You can't be real.
3. You have to be at the top to be successful.
4. You have to be making good money to be happy.
5. You have to be married early in life, if not, something's wrong with you.
6. Rejection displays that you are not worthy of love.
7. You need to blend in with society, different is bad.
8. The amount of friends you have determines your value.
9. You need to be good at everything and if you're not the best, you need to be.

Now, let me take a moment and switch those worldly perceptions into truths God has given us.

God's truths

1. **You have to be perfect all the time. Mistakes define you. Admitting your faults shows weakness.** I sent My Son to die for you, so through Him you don't need to be perfect. I choose those who are imperfect and weak in the eyes of the world for greatness.

2. **You can't admit you are feeling upset or struggling.** I understand what it feels like to struggle and face the pain you're in, I created it, so I know. You can be honest with Me, I already know what's on your heart.
3. **You have to be at the top to be successful.** I desire to use those who are willing and humble. I choose the lowly and outcasts to do amazing things.
4. **You have to be making good money to be happy.** True joy is only found in Me. Money and fame will not bring long-lasting contentment.
5. **You have to be married early in life, if not, something's wrong with you.** I have an amazing plan for you. I will provide exactly what you need in My perfect timing.
6. **Rejection displays that you are not worthy of love.** Others will reject you, but I will never leave or forsake you. My love for you will always remain the same. Nobody loves you more than Me.
7. **You need to blend in with society, different is bad.** This world will not accept you, it's okay. Because you live for Me, others will reject you. Choose to shine in this dark world, because you were created to make a difference.
8. **The amount of friends you have determines your value.** People or possessions don't determine your worth. I created you in My image and you are valued in My sight. I'm on your side.
9. **You need to be good at everything, and if you're not the best, you need to be.** Others look at your performance and focus only at what they can see, but I look at your effort and your heart's intent.

When others criticize something I've done or reject me for who I am I allow it to dig deep into my heart and grow into seeds of humiliation and discouragement. I empower those thoughts to define who I am, while I'm losing sight of God's perspective of me. Others perceive me through only what they can see, while God looks past the appearance and delves deep below the surface. God sees the real you and doesn't focus on all that you've messed up, but sees you as valuable and loved. You don't have to perform or meet up to His expectations to make Him proud.

I've always found great consolation in Moses's transparency with God. I've never been good at expressing my thoughts through spoken words, so this passage with Moses has always comforted me in times of speaking.

Exodus 4:10

But Moses pleaded with the LORD, "O Lord, I'm not very good with words. I never have been, and I'm not now, even though You have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled." Then the LORD asked Moses, "Who makes a person's mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say."

God chose to use Moses because he was willing and humble. God chose Moses, not because he would accomplish the task with flying colors, but because God could show His power through someone who was imperfect. God doesn't place expectations of perfection upon us. He will supply what we need, but we just need to have trust and a willing heart.

God doesn't love or accept us for who we are or what we will become, but loves us despite our mistakes and imperfections. We no longer have to feel defined when someone criticizes us. We don't have to feel unworthy when we can't fulfill the expectations others burden us with. We can be reminded that no opinion should ever take the place of God's view of us. He wants to protect us from the weighty load of carrying everyone's opinions and judgments and refocus only on what He sees. We can rest in God's truths in how He sees us, because they are unchanging and flawless. People's perceptions and opinions are based solely on whims, one-sided thoughts and faulty ideas, while God's perceptions of us are based on truth, remaining the same amidst the test of time.

When we allow people's
thoughts to enter in
we cast God's view
out the window

Prayer

Dear Lord, you see my heart every day and You know the effort I put in. You see my heart like nobody else does! I don't have to perform great and amazing things to be used and cherished by You. I don't have to impress You with my career, job position, status, popularity or perfection to be welcomed and accepted by Your unchanging love. Thank You for never giving up on me and having faith in me even when I don't have confidence in myself! Lord, help me view myself like You see me. Don't let me define my worth through other's thoughts, words and perceptions of me. Take my eyes of the acceptance of this world and the approval of others and live solely for You. Keep my eyes focused on You and not grow weary in doing good. Keep me committed and not let the negativity and doubts overtake Your truth. Let me see me how You see me. Change my mindset from being driven to impress to being driven to live a humble life glorifying You in all I do, whether it be large or small!

Application

01. If you struggle with trying to perform to gain people's approval or love, what do you think is the root problem behind this pressure?

02. Who are you consistently catch yourself trying to seek approval from?

03. What are some expectations you feel like others have of you?

04. List out some of God's truths in response to the expectations you listed in #3

For as high as the
heavens
are above the earth
so great is
God's love
for those who
fear Him

Psalm 103:11

The fear of saying no

Have you ever felt like your day-to-day responses only consisted of "yes" answers to other's requests? Have you found yourself unable to say "no" when you're feeling overwhelmed and worn out? What reasons do you find are the source of your inability to refrain from taking on too much?

I am one of those people who has a very bad habit of being unable to say "no" to the incessant requests that others throw my way. I often find myself overworked in doing favors for others because I have the fear of letting them down. Don't get me wrong, I do enjoy when others reach out to me, since I find great encouragement in being able to help. Although, I admit my weakness when it comes to saying "no." I don't want to put others in a bad situation and disappoint them, but in all honesty, I want to be perceived as the person others can count on. I want to be reliable. I admire to being their "go to" person in times of need.

Let me just say that there is a fine line between being reliable and being overworked. I can't count the times that I've put myself into stressful circumstances only to please others. I try to avoid conflict at all costs, so usually the best solution is to just push through it, even if I'm privately grinding my teeth through the process.

Seeking to fulfill other's expectations, we place the pressure on ourselves to fulfill their every desire in fear of looking incapable or imperfect. We don't want to appear flawed, so we do whatever we can to put on the mask of being superhuman and working ourselves to the bone to accomplish what needs to get done.

It is here where it is difficult to distinguish how far is too far in serving others. When do you decide whether it's time to say "no" when you feel so burdened to say "yes?" When I turn down someone's offer, I feel guilt flood over me, thinking that I let them down or appear ungodly for not being willing to help them out. While God admires a servant's heart, He also desires that we prioritize our lives effectively.

I tend to prioritize how others view me over God's perception of me. Often times I find happiness and contentment in knowing I am helping someone else. While this isn't wrong, I have found that it so easily transforms into selfish desires in trying to impress others. Even though I may be serving, my heart sometimes gets so caught up in the desire to satisfy the needs of others with selfish intent as my motivation. My happiness has fed off the expectations of others, instead of setting boundaries and focusing on the true purpose of God's intention of helping others. I don't need to take on more than I can handle to be fully loved and accepted by God.

We don't need to
to take on more
than we can handle
to be loved

by God

I can't count the times I've taken on too many things in the fear of letting others down and appearing incapable. I've felt like I've had to prove my worth by taking on too much. In result, I became worn out, weary and run down, resulting in my time with God being impaired, and probably looking like a total maniac in the process. It was during these times that I felt I didn't have enough time for God. If I only knew that I needed God the most during those times to get my perspective right. I can't count the times that I prioritized helping others, thinking I was doing the right thing, when in reality, my relationship with God was being so greatly neglected in the process.

We may feel the need to consistently say "yes" when our schedule is screaming at us to say "no." God doesn't expect us to wear ourselves thin in serving others. Especially when we've forgotten why we're serving and we're only in it to gain praise, fulfillment or personal gain. God desires us to have a servant's heart, but it all stems down to why we're saying "yes." Is it to receive praise, recognition, profit or to people please? Are we only saying "yes" to find fulfillment and look good in front of others? Maybe you even have the right heart intent in saying "yes" but you're finding yourself overwhelmed and stressed out with too many commitments.

Is your relationship with God being impacted due to your many commitments, pulling you away from the one thing that will satisfy your heart? Helping and serving others is something encouraged by God, but He never intended us to over-commit to things that will hinder our relationship with Him. The things we're doing don't influence God's love for us, but rather, He looks deeper into our heart's intent. He values when we take the time to spend with Him and desires that our heart be sincere in our relationship with Him before all else. We don't need to "do" anything to be loved and accepted by God. We don't have to prove ourselves to others to be valued by God. When our heart is right, we will have the desire to genuinely serve and help. When we are faced with opportunities flooding in we can seek God in prayer to ask for direction as to which areas He desires us to say "yes" to and which areas we should say "no" to.

Take a few moments in prayer and ask God if there are any areas that are pulling your attention away from Him or if He would desire you to say "yes" to. Seek Him for direction and wisdom in prioritizing your commitments and opportunities to be used to strengthen your relationship with Him. God admires a servant's heart who is willing to love and help others, but He never intended you to meet up to everyone's expectations and become overwhelmed by too many commitments.

The fear of man is a
snare, but the one who
trusts in the Lord
is protected
Proverbs 29:25

Galatians 1:10

Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Prayer

Lord, You know how this world gets a hold of my attention and sometimes I become so caught up on all that I need to do that I forget what I need most is You. Help me to keep my focus on You and not on gaining the approval of others by always feeling obligated to say “yes.” Give me wisdom in my current circumstances to know how much I should take on and when I need to say “no.” Don’t let my need to be accepted ever overtake my humility to serve You with the right heart intent. Provide me with areas that You want me to serve, and give me wisdom to know if there are any that are hindering my relationship with You. Guide and direct me to know where You want me. Show me areas that I should be spending my time more wisely in. Help me to desire to spend time with You and let my relationship with You strengthen and deepen when I make the time to spend with You each day.

Application

01. What areas do you currently have issues saying no to?

02. Where do you feel God wants you to be spending your time more?

The fear of man is

a snare

but the one who

trusts

in the Lord is

protected

Proverbs 29:25

feeding off praise

I often define my acceptance through the compliments and praise I receive. When I feel admired and complimented it helps me feel wanted. When I feel undervalued and overlooked it causes me to look within and wonder what's wrong with me. I begin to think "what have I done that I'm not receiving praise like others around me?" I have found that I seek approval most often in my performance. When my hard work goes unnoticed and someone else gets the praise, it leaves me feeling undeserving and invisible. I often catch myself comparing my performance with others who seem to get more praise. I define my worth on the compliments and praise I receive, or the lack thereof. I find my worth in what has been said about me and even in words that have never been uttered. I allow my attitude to become so reflective of the way others treat me and it stems into the way I view myself.

Praise and admiration from others is something we all need, but it shouldn't ever become something we crave. We shouldn't be empowered solely by other's approval that we let it consume our thoughts. We live in a society that craves acceptance and approval. We desire to get the most reactions, likes, shares, etc. and often forget to focus on the only One whom we should be serving. We don't have to constantly rise to the top and check off all the boxes of perfection to be highly admired in God's eyes. God doesn't have expectations for us like the world does. He only asks that we love others and serve Him with our heart.

Being the introvert I am, it takes effort to speak up. If I finally find the courage to speak, I quickly find that I'm drowned out by the loud rambles of others chatting away while my quiet thoughts go unnoticed. In times like these it becomes ever so difficult to muster up any love left within my heart to display to others. I find myself clenching my fists while displaying gratitude or encouragement when I'm not given the same treatment in return. When I'm feeling overlooked and this world leaves me feeling invisible and unacknowledged I let it take root in my heart. I let it steal my joy and grow into bitterness. Jealousy. Discontentment. Frustration. I see others receiving attention while my effort and intentions seem to be invisible to the rest of the world.

I allow the screaming perceptions of society and the belittling silence of neglect to dictate my worth. Both of which are ideas and assumptions, not firm truths that God has provided me with. The main source behind all of this negative thinking stems down to one source, Satan. I can't count the times that I have become so engulfed into negative thinking and forgotten who is the primary instigator behind my doubts, insecurities and anxiety.

I allow the screaming
perceptions of society &
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neglect to dictate my

Worth

I've allowed Satan to pull me so deep into discouragement and anger, that I've lost sight of God's purpose for what I'm experiencing. I get so caught up in desiring to feel accepted, admired and acknowledged that I lose sight of what really matters. I truly believe that Satan is using the very things that I struggle in the most to be consistently infiltrated into every aspect of my life with purposeful strategy. He threads in lies of deception that correlate with the areas I struggle with the most which causes me to stumble without realizing the source of deceit.

Growing up I often found myself in the corner of the room, feeling ever so invisible to the world. I was the reject that nobody wanted as their friend. Being quiet and reserved I didn't feel qualified to open up and share myself with others. I stuffed all the deep feelings of hurt and rejection inside so nobody could see how broken I was underneath the surface. I tried to show love, compassion and care for those who called me their "friend," but I didn't feel that same love in return. Time did allow some of those deep scars of the past to heal, although I have often found those same emotions still emerging into areas in my daily life today. Thoughts and memories quickly flood over me like it was yesterday, haunting me that I'll never overcome the past. As time goes by those memories compile, causing those negative thoughts from my past to be reinforced into lies that are impressed upon my heart. It's like my heart was permanently stamped with the lies of my past that endlessly entrap and hamper me from who I desire to become.

Satan likes to dig deep into our past and select things that he knows has caused us affliction in the past. Like me, I know Satan too is targeting you in areas that he knows he can defeat you in. We all have felt overlooked and unaccepted. Satan likes to use the very things we rely on the most for happiness to cause us to get tripped up and messed up. He will use anything that will hinder us in our relationship with God and displaying His light to the world.

Be alert & of sober mind.
The enemy prowls around
like a roaring lion, seeking
for someone he can

Devour

1 Peter 5:8

Every so often I enjoy hitting the ice at a local skating rink near my house. I find it a great stress reliever to slip on my skates and drown out the noise of the world with some music. Not being the pro like some of the other skaters that are often regulars at the skating rink, I find myself often comparing my lack of ability in comparison to others around me. I find myself getting tripped up when I begin to look at others around me and what they might be perceiving me as. Doubts flood into my mind and I know that when I begin to lose focus I quickly become wobbly and unbalanced. When I lose focus and Satan fills my mind with doubts of all that's wrong with me and my abilities, I allow those lies to overtake my confidence. I forget that my abilities and areas for enjoyment are not based on having to please or impress others. I don't have to be a professional skater to bring God glory. I can just use what He's given me to the best of my ability and praise Him with what I have. God looks at our heart, not our abilities.

Amidst dealing with the frustrations people pleasing brings I have to remind myself of this truth. I'm not living to please others. I'm living to display God's love to them. I don't have to be accepted by them. They don't have to like me. I'm not here to be admired, liked or loved by the world. I'm not defined by their opinion of me. Their perception of me

isn't truth. My mistakes don't determine my worth. Jesus was rejected and despised, but that never defined who He was. It defined those who were treating Him wrongly. When we display love to others and treat them how we would be treated, it displays what is within our heart.

If you find yourself craving admiration, approval, praise or appreciation, you are probably looking in the wrong place. We never need to search for scraps of acceptance because we are fully accepted by the only One who truly matters. We can take that weight off of trying to please everyone, because it is humanly impossible. We weren't made to live up to the expectations of everyone and cause it to inhibit us from who God created us to be. God never intended the thoughts of others to be so dominating that it overtakes our joy and self-worth. He provided us with His promises that He would always love and accept us so we wouldn't have to run to the approval of this world.

When you feel like Satan is pulling you down a road of despair and you feel neglected by others, remember you don't need to be defined by how you are treated. It's rather how you act, react and treat others during difficult circumstances that displays your true character. You can't control how others treat you, that is up to them, but you can control how you react. Choose to let go of the lie that praise defines your worth. Rest in the firm truth that God's love for you is all that matters and He knows your heart, even when others fail to see you, respect you, choose you, admire you or appreciate your effort. God sees and it will all be made right in time. What matters is the intentions of your heart and how you react when difficult situations arise. Choose to show your light to others despite how you are treated. Take all the mistreatment and injustice and let it be released into God's hands for Him to seek justice. He's got it and is taking care of it. Go and be the example of Christ that you long to see in others.

Colossians 3:23-25

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

Prayer

Lord, don't let me seek to be praised to feel accepted and loved. Help me to work hard and love others, even if it isn't acknowledged or admired. Help give me love to display to others even when I don't get any in return. Give me a heart like Yours that is humble and solely serving You, no matter if I get worldly praise or not. Remind me that You see all things and You know my heart. You're a just God. When I don't receive the praise for my effort here on earth, I know You will one day make all things right! Even in this world that shows favoritism, You love me and treat me fairly. You don't overlook me or love me less due to my shortcomings. You love me no matter what. Thank You for viewing me as special and worthy of Your love and recognition, even when the world casts me aside.

Application

01. When do you find yourself craving praise the most?

02. What area do you desire to receive praise in the most?

03. Who do you catch yourself longing to be praised by the most? List out some words of praise you wish that person would say about you.

04. List out some words God would say to praise you.

Work with all your

heart

as working for

the Lord and

not for men

Colossians 3:23

stuffing emotions

I like to be real and authentic, but sometimes I catch myself faking a smile or forcing a laugh when I feel differently inside. Going along with the “crowd” is often easier than taking a stand, although I beat myself up for it later. I want to be real. I don’t want to go along with everyone else to seek acceptance. I don’t want to do something just because everyone else is doing it. It takes courage to stand up and hold fast to who you really are, and even greater, remaining faithful to God. I fall short in this area and shrink back in fear of being perceived as weird. I stuff emotions of what others think of me and things that have been said about me deep inside. I let the fear of being rejected keep me silent, and isn’t that what Satan wants?

In this day and age it is difficult to live for God and not feel rejected by the world. As Christians, others should see a difference in us. They should see our lifestyle is different than theirs. Unfortunately since we are different, people will use our faith against us, resulting in us feeling excluded and alone. Others will use our faith as a reason to treat us differently because of Who we serve. Jesus warned us that rejection in this life would occur. Even though it feels personal, He said that we can take great delight in knowing that we are considered His royal children and it is because of this we are treated differently. We are chosen and accepted by Him, and that’s all that truly matters. Others may perceive our intentions wrongly, but God sees our heart.

One of the primary ways I people please is through stuffing my emotions. I’ve often found myself feeling bitterly upset, hurt and broken within, while on the outside I can force a laugh while trying to hold myself back from the tears welling inside. I’ve found myself hiding how I really feel when my opinions differ from others and it could lead into confrontation or conflict. I avoid conflict at all costs. I’d rather suffer through the pain than face opposition. I’ve come to find that when I stuff my emotions deep within it builds up over time and some days it just explodes out of control. Sometimes I just can’t take hiding the pain anymore and I need to release it all.

Stuffing how we really feel and hiding who we are is not healthy for us. God never intended us to hide our thoughts and struggles. While it is not intended that we go around expressing our every thought and opinion disrespectfully, we do need to express who we really are and not shrivel back in fear. I’ve allowed fear to become so debilitating that I have missed so many opportunities God was calling me towards. If only I could tap into God’s power and rely on Him instead of my own strength.

You will be hated by everyone
because of Me
but the one who stands firm
to the end will
be saved

Matthew 10:22

I've often found that my standards and lifestyle is different from most. I was raised in a home with strong morals and a Christian upbringing. Growing up in a home where we didn't drink, dance or curse has caused my lifestyle to be different than most. I have to be honest in saying that there have been many times I've kept quiet and felt afraid of expressing my strong beliefs due to the fact that others don't have those same standards and would think of me as being too strict. I prefer to abstain from things that could influence my mind or walk with God in an inappropriate way or lead someone else into sin from my actions.

Being different from the world can be tough. I'm the type of person who hesitates in expressing thoughts or ideas due to the cost of rejection. I let my fear overtake my confidence. I stuff my thoughts, opinions and emotions deep inside so it doesn't cause any conflict or awkwardness with others. Sometimes I feel like remaining silent is the key to looking normal. Then I am reminded that God has instructed us not to become silent in living for Him. I'm not here to lead a normal life and fit into every box that society has laid out. I don't want to live a cookie cutter life fulfilling all the desires and expectations others have of me because I'm too afraid to live out my faith freely.

I have found that the more we do to be different for God in this life there is more opportunity to be criticized, rejected and judged. It seems like day after day the same heart-wrenching lies eat away at my determination to keep living for God. Over time I've tried my best to develop thicker skin to combat the negativity this world attacks me with. Although, I've grown to find that there are many days that it only takes just one comment or hurtful action to rip open the walls to my frailty and let it seep down deep within. And once this wound is made, doubts, lies and insecurities all start flooding in.

Thoughts from the present, painful memories from the past, and worries about the future all overwhelm me with indescribable emotions that I stuff deep inside so only I need to bear them. Some hurts have never fully healed and continue to re-expose time after time on a deeper level. Sometimes I wonder if they'll ever fully dissolve or dissipate.

What I have found refreshing with stuffing emotions and hiding heartbreak, is nothing goes unnoticed by God. He knows exactly what those emotions are that you try to hide. He sees how you try to look strong even when you're walled up with hurt behind your disguised facade. He knows how those darkest moments caused your heart to never be the same again. He saw the weight of those harsh words or that terrible heartbreak that crushed your soul.

God not only sees our pain, He wants to help take those painful burdens and all those stuffed emotions to ease our load. When we let go of them and release them into His hands we can find freedom from the nagging burden they have caused to wear on our soul. It may require us to do it time and time again, but He's there for us to turn to when our load is getting heavy and others don't seem to understand the deep impact they have caused us to endure.

The more we do to be

Different

for God, there is more
opportunity to be

Criticized

God never intended for us to hide ourselves in fear of being accepted by others, especially because of our faith. When you feel the weight of your troubles crushing you down, don't let the negativity, rejection or judgement from the world become so dominant that it drowns out God's voice. Seek God in prayer. Give it to Him. Look to Him for how you should handle the situation. Set free those lies and thoughts that others have of you and focus on God's never-changing love for you. It doesn't matter what the world perceives you as. They may have wrong interpretations, judgments, perceptions and gossip spread about you, but what God thinks of you is always true and His love for you will never change even when everyone else may reject you.

God should be who we go to first, but He also created others to help ease our load and provide us with encouragement through our struggles. Going to someone you respect and displays Godly wisdom is often helpful to express what you've been dealing with. Having someone to lean on during a difficult time can be refreshing, helping put things into perspective and supplying you with godly wisdom and truth. I have also found great encouragement knowing someone is praying for my needs and taking them to God in prayer.

God didn't want us to struggle alone. He didn't want us to suffer alone. He created us to be able to come to Him with our requests, struggles and troubles. He created others so we could turn to them in times of heartache. Even when it feels like others may not understand and choose to reject us, we know where we will one day be accepted.

Don't shrink back in fear of other's acceptance but stand on God's promises and let them give you courage to stand up for Him. Even when it feels like God is farther away than you've ever felt, He's as close to you as He's always been. He's never left. He's right there ready and eager to hear the burdens on your heart. Take them to Him and refrain from stuffing those emotions that cause your heart to be weighted down in discouragement. He's waiting to take the weight and heavy burdens from you and accept you in with His unchanging love!

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Prayer

Lord, You know how I hold things deep inside so others can't see the hurt. You know the areas that dig deep within my heart that I can't let go of. You know how I allow those emotions to become defining of my worth. Help me to give these deep-rooted emotions and let You cut me loose from tight hold they have on me. Give me the ability to let go and not hold onto the pain that I wallow in anymore. If it's Your desire for me to open up my heart with someone to let go of these emotions, lead me to a wise, dependable person who will guide and love me. I give these things I've held inside for so long over to You to handle justly. Thank You for being there for me to go to with the heavy burdens on my heart and always being willing to listen.

Application

01. What emotions do you tend to stuff deep inside the most?

02. What emotions have you been giving over to God to take care of? What emotions haven't you given over to Him?

03. Are you currently stuffing emotions? After going to God, is there someone you can think of that you could lean on for a listening ear?

04. What are some benefits of not stuffing emotions, but rather giving them over to God?

Come to Me all
who are weary and
burdened
and I will give you
rest

Matthew 11:28

study quote printable cards

The more we do to be

Different

for God, there is more
opportunity to be

Criticized

When we allow people's

thoughts

to enter in

we cast God's view

out the window

I allow the screaming
perceptions of society &
the belittling silence of
neglect to dictate my

Worth

We don't need to
to take on more
than we can handle
to be loved

by God

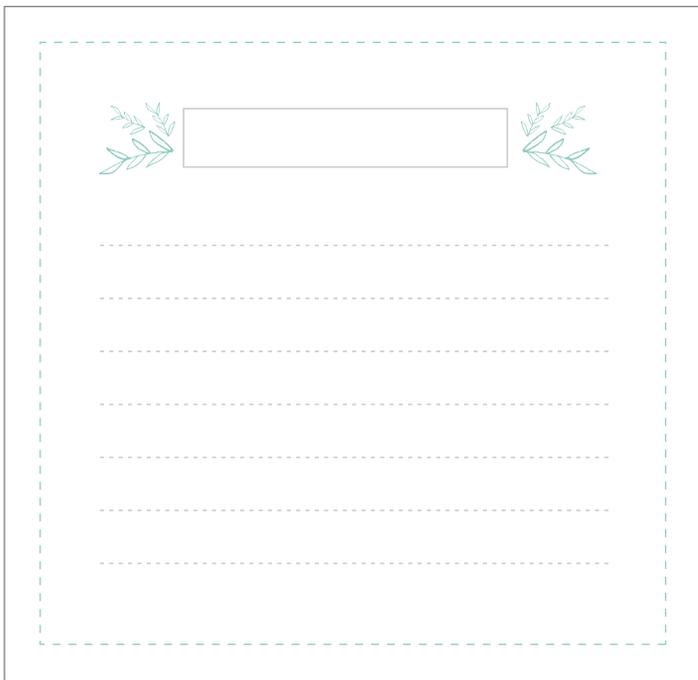
fillable printable cards



A rectangular card template with a red dashed border. At the top, there is a white rectangular box for a name, flanked by two red leafy branch illustrations. Below the name box are seven horizontal dashed lines for writing.



A rectangular card template with a red dashed border. At the top, there is a white rectangular box for a name, flanked by two red leafy branch illustrations. Below the name box are seven horizontal dashed lines for writing.



A rectangular card template with a teal dashed border. At the top, there is a white rectangular box for a name, flanked by two teal leafy branch illustrations. Below the name box are seven horizontal dashed lines for writing.



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