

SUNDAY SERVICE MESSAGE
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[19TH MAY 2019](#)

THEME: HOW TO DEAL WITH THE SPIRIT OF FAMILIARITY IN THE CHURCH.

SCRIPRURES; Leviticus 10:1-4 1Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. 2So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. 3Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: "Among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored." Aaron remained silent. 4Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, "Come here; carry your cousins outside the camp, away from the front of the sanctuary.

John 6:41-42; The Jews do not "see" Him because they say, in effect, "How can He say He came down from heaven when we know who His father and mother are?" Their emotions have reached the pitch of dissatisfied, sullen grumbling. They are saying to each other, "We have known Him since childhood. How does He expect us to believe Him?" They are not taking His words in and believing and assimilating them as part of themselves for use in improving the quality of their lives

INTRODUCTION; Familiarity is a curse. Familiarity is the source of many problems in our life. The problem however is that familiarity is not too familiar to many people such that they do not know its effect on their life. Too many marriages are breaking because the couple has become familiar to each other, too many families are being torn apart because children have become too familiar with their parents. Familiarity with God is a Disease of the heart and a dangerous spirit that must be avoided in our lives and the Church. We cannot treat God as nothing and at the same time expect Him to do something for us.

The spirit of familiarity is a spirit that causes people who are close to someone to become lax and depreciative of a connection or relationship with someone. It often comes into play with people who are close to those around them who have great anointing. People may be close to their Pastor or mentor so much so that they see their flaws. As a result of this they stop seeing the spiritual side of the man or woman of GOD.

FAMILIARITY WITH GOD AND IN THE CHURCH.

In our churches today we can see the love for God is fading from the hearts of people. They no longer value nor honour the word of God nor the man of God. They attend a church service and are amazed at the Pastors teachings. They are receptive to the words of the pastor and growing spiritually. Along the way they join the ministry within the church and get closer to the Pastor and so you get to know him better outside of church. They learn his flaws and began to question His authority and no longer honour him the way they use to. We have got to be careful of walking in the path of familiarity. It is

detrimental and will restrict the blessing that God has given your pastor to be at work in our lives and it can also cause a curse to come upon you for disobeying and dishonouring the man or women of God just like Moses sister Mariam. This includes honouring and respecting His messengers whom He speaks through.

A pastor is a shepherd who seeks after God's heart and feeds the people with knowledge and understanding (Jeremiah 3:15). This person is empowered by God to release the power of God in our lives. One of the biggest hindrances to him fulfilling his role is familiarity. Familiarity is a mindset that when in full swing it robs the man of God of honour. The result is the power of God is hindered from flowing through him to you. It literally stops the anointing. In Mark 6:1 - 6 as I stated on Friday night, the passage of scripture we see that Jesus was not honoured at His hometown because they felt they knew him. After all He was just Jesus. The danger with familiarity is it reduces the person to being common. Things that are common to us we take for granted, we reduce their importance, and we even disregard their input until we need them.

When a pastor becomes common, there is a tendency to lose respect. This creates a barrier between you and the anointing on that gift. The result is unbelief is fostered, faith is diminished, and miracles are hindered. **Familiarity also breeds contention**. As a result of seeing the man of God as common, you feel authorized to question his authority, criticize his decisions, and negate the vision that God gives him. This attitude drains the life out of a body of believers and eventually leads to strife and division. This is foolishness and the book of **Proverbs 6: 15-18** warns against that.

Malachi 1:11-14 says; "God wants us to realize how great He is, and when we give an offering, we are to do so with His greatness in mind. The offerings Israel made at this time were not done with a right heart. They were becoming indifferent toward God and the way they conducted their lives. They were treating the commands of God with familiarity and carelessness. They came to look upon them as simply ordinary. Thus, He says that He has no pleasure in Israel and would not accept their offerings.

HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS SPIRIT AND AVOID FAMILIARITY IN OUR LIVES? (antidote)

- By renewing our minds with the word of God constantly {Psalm 26:2}
- By spending time with God in prayer
- By coming to Church with an expectant heart
- By responding to the presence of God always
- By seeking after God and making him number one in our lives.

The sin of familiarity or "familiar spirit" is very destructive and has recently surfaced in friendships, marriages and prophetic ministries. Some have even mistaken it for a "Jezebel spirit." Although it is destructive like a Jezebel spirit, it is much more subtle. It doesn't necessarily seduce; however, seduction can be a manifestation. It usually is hidden beneath pseudo friendliness and loyalty. In other words, you just don't see it coming! It takes the Holy Spirit to reveal it to you.

Here are 5 Steps to Overcome Pride which is the catalyst to familiarity that leads to sin.

If you are struggling with a form of pride which is the catalyst to familiarity that leads to sin? I have outlined a five-step process to help you change and heal in this area of your life. Take all the time you need with each of the steps included below.

Step 1: Adopt a Correct View of God and His servants;

When you have a distorted view of who God and His servants are, you will not give Him the reverence and respect that is due to them. As a result, your arrogance will be free to develop until you suffer the consequences of your familiarity through pride. Consider some truths about God that will help you with your pride and familiarity problems because:

- God is infinitely superior to us.
- He is absolutely perfect, and we are not.

If you ever thought of any question, ask yourself these questions;

- How can a mortal be innocent before God?
- Can anyone born of a woman be pure?

God is more glorious than the moon; He shines brighter than the stars. In comparison, people are maggots; we mortals are mere worms. (Job 25:4-6)

God has supreme authority over us. He determines our eternal future.

How foolish can you be? He is the Potter, and He is certainly greater than you, the clay! Should the created thing say of the one who made it, "He didn't make me?" Does a jar ever say, "The potter who made me is stupid?" (**Isaiah 29:16**)

If you tend to think too highly of yourself, focus more on the greatness of God. Undertake a Bible study on the nature of God, especially His majesty and power. Ask God to reveal Himself more clearly to you.

Step 2: Revise Your False Beliefs

God wants His people to be living examples of His love to others. Yet pride that leads to familiarity is the single greatest obstacle to loving people. Reflect on your attitudes with the help of the questions that follow.

- Do you think you are better than others and your pastor?
- What gives you the right to make such a judgment?
- What do you have that God hasn't given you?
- And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift? (1 Corinthians 4:7)
- Do you think that you are indispensable?

By the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. (Romans 12:3 NIV)

- Do you think that your accomplishments and position entitle you to special favour?

It's not good to eat too much honey, and it's not good to seek honours for yourself. (Proverbs 25:27)

Such beliefs are all self-centred, self-appreciating, and degrading to others and your pastors. Yet your identity in Christ is not to be one of selfish ambition and pride but rather one of self-denial and grace-filled humility. Allow Scripture to inform your views of yourself, other people, and life in general so that you will not be proud in a sinful way.

Step 3: Repent of Your Sin

The hardest thing for a proud person to do is admit that he or she is wrong. Are you prepared to do that? If so, give your type of pride a specific name (conceit, vanity, or whatever).

Then pray the following prayer (or a similar one of your own making) in faith that God will forgive your sin and empower your obedience.

God, I know I have sinned against my pastor and the people I felt they are nothing. I am sorry for the pain I have given to You and to the people around me. Please forgive me for my sin. Wash away all of the spirit of pride and familiarity from me. And by Your Spirit, give me the strength to sin no more in this area but instead to live in humility. In Jesus Christ's name, amen.

If you have harmed others with your sin, apologize to them. Seek reconciliation and offer restitution where appropriate.

Step 4: Defend against Spiritual Attacks

Pride and familiarity are easy to slip back into after you have repented. You can even become proud of your humility! Be certain that the world, the flesh, and the Devil will do all they can to pull you back into your sin of pride. The values of the world system are confused, including promoting pride as a positive thing. The world system gives us messages like “You should think highly of yourself” and “Try to keep yourself in the spotlight.” Overcome the world by inviting God to transform your thinking so that you come to agree with Him about the importance He places on humility.

Your flesh (sinful nature) craves the good feeling it gets when you inflate your ego and selfishly seek attention from others. So, remind yourself that your sinful nature is actually already dead. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit, who seeks to magnify God, not God's creatures. Satan will lay opportunities in your path that will make it easy for you to exercise your pride. Resist his schemes by putting on the whole Armor of God. Especially use the “belt of truth” (Ephesians 6:14) by reminding yourself that God is the one who deserves honour, not you. Spiritual attacks will never cease. So, remain alert. The power of God is more than enough to defend you against spiritual attacks so that you may continue to live in a way that is consistent with your repentance.

Step 5: Flee Temptation

You will never fully be able to escape temptations to be proud which leads to familiarity. But you can significantly reduce these temptations – and thus improve your chances of remaining free of pride and insolence – if you will take specific steps to avoid temptation.

Focus on your relationship with God. Strengthen your devotional life. In particular, focus on giving God glory and humbling yourself before Him.

Latch on to God's promises; Search the Scriptures for truths about pride and humility, then memorize the verses that you think can best help you to resist pride. Recall these verses whenever temptation arises. The following are a couple of verses you might want to memorize. “Anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. **(Matthew 18:4)**

Humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time He will lift you up in honour. **(1 Peter 5:6)**

Establish safeguards; Make changes in your lifestyle that will reduce your temptation to be prideful life and familiarity. Be bold here! Be creative! These are a few possibilities to get your thinking going:

- If you tend to look down on people of a lower social class than your own, volunteer to serve some of society's down-and-outers.
- If you are proud of your looks, get rid of the clothes or makeup that you think flatter your looks the most.
- If you like to show off by driving up in a flashy car, trade it in for a vehicle that is more modest and practical.
- Ask a trusted Christian friend to hold you accountable in your commitment to not be prideful.

Expect victory; Do not focus on your failures of the past but rather on God's ability to give you lasting victory over pride. Believe that He will implant a humbler attitude in your heart—for good. And give Him the praise in advance! IN JESUS NAME; AMEN

IF YOU ARE BLESSED BY THIS MESSAGES, PLEASE PARTNER WITH OUR MINISTRY AND SUPPORT US TO REACH WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS IN REMOTE PLACES. CALL US ON +61 470240210 or +61 8 61132273. Or email us or write to us on the above addresses.