

Last week we began this series with the statement that our relationships are the greatest asset that we possess. That is why we want to learn everything we can to strengthen and improve our relationships.

Regardless of the relationship, whether it is with a spouse, a co-worker, a child; the climate of your life dictates the forecast of your relationships.

Because we can't see our climate; I asked you to spend the week asking three people one question: *"What's it like to be on the other side of me?"*

If you followed through, some of you have been pleasantly surprised by the answers while some of you are in counseling. But what I want to do today is build on that question. And the good news is that you get to ask one more question! But this time you don't have to ask anyone else; this time the question is just for you to ask yourself.

Today we are going to talk about one of the most important climate shapers and one of the most significant climate influencers in our relationships. And when we are done today, it is my prayer that we can, with God's help, create a climate change in your life and likewise in your relationships.

I'm sure that by now you are wondering why I have two mirrors up here. Well, if you give me a few minutes I think I can explain what they have to do with why we need a climate change and how we can go about creating that climate change.

We said last week that no matter how hard we look in the mirror, we tend to be unable to see what it is like to be on the other side of me. But the world provides us with a mirror from which we get an image of ourselves.

We see ourselves through the lens of other people, things, and experiences.

All of these have a way of reflecting an image of ourselves that can be like looking in a fun house mirror. What we see is not who we really are; but who we perceive ourselves to be based on the reflections of us through the lens of others.

And often times the image that we perceive leaves us feeling very insecure. And insecurity is one of the most significant climate shapers in all of our relationships.

If you've ever been on the other side of a person who is insecure you know how difficult the relationship can be. And the truth is, all of us have pockets of insecurity.

That's what makes us so susceptible to the ads that we experience every day. Marketers are pros at playing on our insecurities. And what marketers do is play to our insecurities and tell us that self-esteem is the cure! Just watch some commercials on television today and see if I'm not right.

Marketers take their product and position it as a solution to help you with your self-esteem; and that in turn will solve your insecurities.

One of my favorite commercials from the Super Bowl was the ad for Audi .

The scene opens with a young man in a tux looking at himself in the mirror. In walks his mother assuring him that going to the prom alone is not a problem. Then his dad tosses him the keys to his Audi and says, "Have fun tonight!"

The boy hits the accelerator and arrives at the school, parking in the principals reserved parking space. He walks confidently across the crowded dance floor; takes the beautiful prom queen in his arms and plants a big wet kiss on her. While everyone is in shock, the prom king comes into the scene. Cut to the black-eyed young man behind the wheel of the Audi screaming "Wooooo!"

Then comes the tag line for Audi: Bravery. It's what defines us.

It makes me want to own an Audi! If I own an Audi I'll never have a problem with my self-esteem! If I own an Audi I'll never be insecure again!!

And that is the power of the one mirror. The mirror of the world tells us that if we look a certain way, drive a certain car, then we will never be insecure again.

But self-esteem is like a five-hour energy drink. Just give it enough time and the insecurity will slink back in. And the reason self-esteem doesn't work is because self-esteem is trying to deal with the outside of you and me. Meanwhile, that deep-seeded insecurity is inside of us. You can get the surgery, drive the right car, whatever it is that you want to do to the outside to build your self-esteem; but at the end of the day the insecurity will still be in there.

Insecurity, creates an unstable climate; and the climate dictates the forecast of your relationships.

In the Bible we find someone who learns what I want you to learn today. His name is Paul. He is the author of the majority of the New Testament. And in one of the letters that he writes to the church at Philippi he demonstrates that the mirror of the world will never reflect an image of us that overcomes our insecurity.

Phil 3:3

We are not to boast about anything else but the image that God gives us through Jesus.

Phil 3:4

Paul says if anyone can look in the mirror and see all the right curves it is him. Now the significance of the things Paul says are lost on us today, but in Paul's day it was like owning an Audi!

Phil 3:5-6

And now Paul begins to say it is like that five hour energy drink; it doesn't last, it doesn't satisfy; all the outward things just can't fill the inner need for security.

Phil 3:7-8

Now Paul says, I've found a new way to look at myself; I've got a new mirror to reflect who I am and it changes everything—not just on the outside, but most importantly on the inside.

Then Paul keeps writing. And Paul eventually gets to the line we find in Philippians 4:13.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Our tendency is to look at this verse and concentrate on the first part, I can do all things. But it is the second half of the verse that defines the first half of the verse- *through Christ*.

Through Christ. When you accept Jesus, God sees you *through Christ*. And when you begin to see you through Christ, everything changes, and it gives you a new image, a new reflection on which to build your life.

Let me describe why Philippians 4:13 is so important as it relates to insecurity. Because at the heart of insecurity there's something deep and sinister that goes unseen, the fear of rejection.

The fear of rejection is what creates so much instability in our relationships. Because as you trigger someone else's insecurity, what they're doing, what they're scrambling for is they're feeling the fear that in some way they're being rejected.

This is why self-esteem doesn't work. It's not the cure. Here's the cure: When you begin to see you through Jesus and when you begin to understand that God sees you through Jesus, you see that you are redeemed. You see that you are loved. But specifically, as it relates today, you see that you are unconditionally accepted. And that's the cure—acceptance is the cure for insecurity.

Acceptance, to know that, hey, this world may reject me, but at the end of the day I can put my head on the pillow knowing that the Creator of the universe looks at me and says, You are my beloved son. You are my beloved daughter. You are accepted.

And what that means for us is that we don't need to accept the world's reflection of who we are based on what we see on the outside.

What supersedes all of that, according to what Paul is saying, is that through Jesus you have been accepted. Now here's why this is important as it relates to the climate of our relationships, and this is our bottom line for the day.

The climate of your relationships improves ***when you see you as God sees you.***

Do you see you as God sees you? The odds are that whatever insecurities you struggle with today it's because you're not doing this. You're not seeing you as God sees you. But when you do it provides the strength—when you see yourself through Jesus it gives you the strength, the acceptance. And that gives you the strength to do whatever it is that God has called you to do. That's Philippians 4:13.

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

So let me ask you, which mirror are you looking at you through?

Ladies, if you see you through the mirror of the world, then you think you need to look like Kate Upton and have a career like Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook and the author of the best-seller, *Lean In*; and be able to create all the things you pin on Pinterest.

You can have all that on the outside and still never touch the insecurity you have inside.

Guys don't think you are immune here. Working all the late hours to get the corner office, driving the Audi to impress the neighbors, trying to have it all...those are only outward images that the mirror of the world tells us we need to see.

We could talk about parenting according to the mirror of the world. Parents, whose acceptance are we trying to achieve? Being super-parent, over-scheduling the kids; why, because we want to be seen through the world's reflection? What our kids need is a mom and dad who lives out the truth that *I see me as God sees me*. What we should want for our kids is that they grow up *seeing me as God sees me*, not striving to look at themselves through the reflection of the mirror of the world.

Whose acceptance are we really after?

The world's mirror will tell us that we need to find security in things so that we will not be rejected. But when I see me as God sees me; I can do all things! I never need to fear rejection. I know that I will always be loved. And seeing myself through the mirror of the greatest relationship of all will help me change the climate in my life and in my relationships.