

Chasing Carrots 1 – Fame

Chasing Carrots: Fame Bumper Vid

Hello & welcome! This is Redemption Church. We are a mighty church of Jesus Christ in Plano Tx. My name is Chris Fluitt and I am excited to be sharing the Word of God with you today.

Chasing Carrots

Today we are starting a brand new sermon series entitled CHASING CARROTS – AND ENDLESS PURSUIT FOR MORE. I believe that it is going to be an important series for us and I encourage you to be here for every week of the series.

If you had a donkey or a horse that didn't want to move you would put a carrot on a string on it and hold it in front of them, and then you could control where they would go because they would chase the carrot. Life & the culture of this world have a way of leading us around like a carrot on a stick.

If you could just get this you would be happy... and that thing dangles in front of you like a carrot... but this thing always seems just out of reach. I can't really be happy until I have this, but it always eludes.

If you could just get that... so you put all your energy & time into getting that... only to find that it is not enough. You actually catch the carrot only to find it does not deliver and you are still unhappy.

Today and the next 4 weeks we are going to be talking about carrots like money and things, the idea of perfection, the approval of others, and comfort.

Today we are going to start with the carrot called fame.

Fame

Most people, in fact, most of you in this room would probably say you are not chasing fame. But think again...

- Do you want notable success & achievement?
- Do you want to be loved & accepted?
- Do you want to develop a skill & talent that is great enough to be admired?
- Do you want to be known for something...?

This is the definition of fame... “the state of being known or talked about by many people, especially on account of notable achievements.” Perhaps you are on some level seeking fame.

And most people in here are on social media... Facebook, Instagram, snapchat, twitter, youtube... and you often find yourself thinking “This would make a great post.”

Let me snap a selfie real quick...

- ...so you can get credit for an accomplishment.
- ...so everyone can know I am a good person.
- ...so that others can like me and my photo.

There have been times in my life where I have felt the draw of “this would make a great post.”

I am out with my good looking wife and instead of just enjoying her company... I am drawn to post on social because for some reason what others think is so important that it is actually drawing me out of the moment with my soul mate.

I am doing a good charitable work. Maybe I helped someone with a flat tire, gave someone some food, or ministered to Alzheimer care patients... I am drawn to post so that everyone will know what a good person I am... they won't know otherwise...

I have put way too much effort in getting a selfie just right or a caption just clever enough.. why? Could it be the pursuit of fame?

Am I the only one who has felt this draw?

And maybe you absolutely are not trying to be well known or broadly admired.. Don't check out on this sermon because the people you care about are probably feeling this pull of fame.

They polled 10 through 12 year olds about what their biggest goals were... What was the number 1 goal of 10-12 year olds?

Not financial success... Not personal achievement... Not community... but fame was number 1.

They polled 22 to 37 year olds and 50% believe their life should be made into a movie... I wonder if they are thinking a horror movie... a disaster movie...? But 50% think that their life should be a movie for others to watch, know, and enjoy... This is the pursuit of fame.

- 1 in 12 people would disown their family to become a household name.

- 1 in 9 would give up a marriage.
- 1 in 6 would give up having children. (This percentage goes up yearly)

The carrot of fame is real and perhaps we are all drawn by it more than we would like to admit.

Nothing wrong with being famous

Now I need to tell you, there is nothing wrong with being famous.

If you excel in any field, if you become one of the best, if you make a large difference in your community... then fame is almost inevitable. Let's look at the life of David..

David was unknown. He was just a shepherd boy, but his gifts, his service to the community, and the calling of God on his life caused him to become famous.

David became instantly famous after killing the giant Goliath...

1 Samuel 18:6-7 (NIV2011) When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."

David didn't ask for this. He didn't ask for a mob of women to sing and dance. This fame flowed out of his good works.

David had done nothing wrong. He had actually done something really good for God and the community. This fame flowed out of his service.

Fame is not evil. There is nothing wrong with being famous.

1 Chronicles 14:16-17 (NIV2011) So David did as God commanded him, and they struck down the Philistine army, all the way from Gibeon to Gezer. So David's fame spread throughout every land, and the Lord made all the nations fear him.

God actually made all the nations know, respect, and fear David. God made David famous.

There are many other examples in your Bible of people who God made famous...

King Solomon didn't ask God for fame & riches, but instead asked for wisdom... God was so happy with his choice that God gave him wisdom, and riches, and FAME!

Moses was called by God from the backside of a mountain in the middle of nowhere to become the famous deliver who withstood the Pharaoh and led millions from slavery.

The disciples followed Jesus and not only did their savior become famously known, but they also became known... The Pharisees knew about them... the towns people knew who they were... governors and kings are quoted as saying "aren't these the ones who are turning the world upside down?" (Acts 17:6)

Jesus himself was utterly famous. Huge crowds followed him. Huge crowds still worship him. We are here today because of His fame.

Nothing wrong with being famous

There is nothing wrong with being famous, yet the desire for fame is dangerous to your faith.

The desire for fame is dangerous to your faith

Being famous is different now days. It used to be that people became famous because of doing something significant... walking on the moon, curing a disease, winning a sports championship, being a war hero...

Now people are famous for simply creating silly or shocking videos...

Millions of people will watch a live stream of someone playing a video game

Millions of people will watch a cute kid open toys

Over 100 Thousand have watched a video of a woman smash her face into bread.

Bread face

These people are famous. Breadface girl more views than a lot of the people running for president in 2020.

You can be famous for anything... It's not even important why you are famous... it only matters that you are known... and this is dangerous.

Alex from Target

This is Alex. He was a simple teenage boy working his first job bagging groceries at a Target. A girl thinks Alex is cute and she takes a picture of him and posts it on twitter.

Alex started the day with 144 twitter followers. At the end of the day he had over 300,000 followers. The next day Alex is on CNN & Headline News. Within a week he is on Allen...

Fame used to flow out of doing something of value... now it is just about being known for something.

The desire for fame is dangerous to your faith

Now it is possible to build a following & use that platform to make a difference. But I need to warn you...

Like wealth, fame makes it more difficult to follow Jesus. Fame is a great burden.

Alex from Target became famous in 2014, and today he is off of social media because it was too much for him to handle. Many who become famous end up going through counseling because it messes with your mind and heart.

Fame moves the trajectory of your life. Fame causes you to focus on yourself. What do others think? How many people like me? Is this image good enough to draw an audience...

The Bible tells us clearly that our trajectory should be Loving God and Living Others. The carrot of fame draws us away from the love of God and others and draws us to love ourselves above all.

There was a guy in the Bible who became very famous. He was a crazy prophet who wore crazy clothes and ate crazy things. He had a crazy message that the messiah was coming and that all should repent and be baptized.

This famous guy was John the Baptist and he had large crowds of people who would meet out in the middle of nowhere to hear his message and to be baptized by him in the Jordan river. John the Baptist was hugely famous, but he never lost sight of his true purpose.

John 1:26-27 (NIV2011) “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

John the Baptist declares the fame of someone else. John declares that there is someone greater that I am not even worthy to tie their shoes... I am not worthy to share the stage with them... I am at best the opening act...

John does something so powerful. He moves his fame over for Jesus Christ.

John 3:30 (NIV2011) He must become greater; I must become less.”

John the Baptist was willing to become less so that Christ may become greater.

Are we willing to become less, so that Jesus can become greater?

It's a question of motive. I want you to examine your motives today.

Who are you representing? Whose approval matters most?

Who are you representing? The Sunday school answer is Jesus... but is that true? Are you representing Jesus... or yourself.

The answer for me... is often me.

I often wonder what you are going to think of me... What will they think of this sermon... this series... What will they think if I do this... say this...

I gotta tell you that these are the worst thoughts that go through my mind. These thoughts rob me of all peace. There is no security in these thoughts. I can't control what you think about anything...

And what you think really has very little bearing on my life... it is all so pointless and fruitless.

Representing myself brings no joy and fulfillment... Let's represent Christ instead.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV2011) We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Could we use all of our notoriety and influence to represent Jesus Christ?

Who are you representing? Whose approval matters most?

Whose approval matters most? We know the answer ought to be Jesus right? But is it?

In worship today did you spend more time thinking about what God thought... or what other people would think?

When we come pray later, will you spend more time thinking about what God thinks, or what other people think?

When we leave here today whose approval will you seek? In your home... on your job... in your school... on the internet...

The desire for fame is dangerous to your faith

Psychologist say that the desire for fame has roots in injury & neglect. This fame craving comes from moments where we felt insignificant.

Maybe your hard to please parents injured you more than you admit.

Maybe that rejection from your friends is affecting you to this day.

Maybe that time you were overlooked is not something you really ever healed from.

Who are you representing? Whose approval matters most?

Examine your heart. Examine your motives. Who are you representing and whose approval matters most.

We are not called to be famous! We are called to be faithful!

God will not say well done my good and famous social media star. No he will say well done my good and FAITHFUL servant.

I may not ever be famous. Doesn't matter! I am faithful to God and the God of the universe knows my name.

I may never have the approval of others. Doesn't matter! I am faithful to God and I have his approval.

We are not striving to become celebrities. We are submitting ourselves to become servants.

Not living for the applause of the crowd. Living from the love & approval of God!

Less of me! More of him!

I have had plenty of ME... and it has never made me more happy... I need more of God today.

I am about to invite you to come... I want us to come pray with the motive of this verse.

Psalm 115:1 (NIV2011) Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.