

Proverbs 29:25
Fearing God, Fearing Man

“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.”

What ‘Fear’ Is *Not*

- Phobias
- Healthy awareness of danger
- Psychological bewilderment

What ‘Fear’ *Is*

- A controlling concern or anxiety to gain or avoid something

Fear of Man

- Social ease
 - o “I don’t want to upset anyone or hurt anyone’s feelings”
- Life
 - o “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matt 10:28
- Material Consequences
- Acceptance/Approval/Perception
 - o **The Fusion Effect of Fear of Man:** Sin attempts to wed our identity in Christ with our strengths, abilities and performances.

The Landscape of Fear

- Fearing man *lays* a snare
- Fearing God and fearing man are our only two options.
- Fear of man leads to foolishness; fear of God leads to knowledge and wisdom
 - o “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Prov. 1:7
 - o “Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.” Prov. 1:28-29
- We obey, and our lives are shaped by, what we fear.

Fear of God in Christ

- I hate sin and wickedness in light of wisdom (Prov. 8:13)
- I have a controlling desire and anxiety to know God (Phil. 3:8)
- I have a controlling desire and anxiety to obey God (Phil. 2:12)
- I have peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1)
- My inheritance is an eternal kingdom (Matt 25:24)
- My identity is in union with Christ (Eph. 2: 1-7)

From Fear Man to Fearing God: Three Steps

- **Identify**
 - o Whose approval and acceptance do I *functionally* look to in order to “feel good” about myself and find value?

- Of the possible things that could be done to me in this life, what things am I the most anxious to avoid? What people and things might I even sin to avoid?
- To whom do I tend to avoid speaking difficult truths for fear of consequences?
- Whose disappointment in me is the most crushing?

- **Repent and Remember**
 - Repent to God
 - Confess your fears to others—they likely have the same ones
 - Overcoming fear of man is a community project
 - Remember Your Identity

- **Act**
 - What conversations do I need to have that I probably should have already had?
 - What actions do I need to take that I probably should have already taken?
 - In what areas and with which people can I be on high alert moving forward in order to crush my fear of man?