



Maranatha Baptist Church
Equip University
Christian Living Track
Fearing and Following God

Class 5 – Why do we fear man? We fear they will harm us.

Introduction

Is it ok to fear being harmed?

- To honor God, we pursue safety and security.
- A desire to avoid harm should not rule us.
- We fear God and trust Him through times of physical harm.

Types of Physical Harm

- Physical abuse in the family.
- Exploitation.
- Bullying.
- Combat.
- Persecution.
- Terrorism.
- Racism.

Types of Non-Physical Harm

- Hurtful speech.
- Sexual harassment.

Fear of Harm can Shape our Lives

- Feeling Paralyzed.
- Victim Identity.

- “This is my fault” mentality.
- Self-Pity.
- Distrust toward others.
- Bitterness.

What we need to know about the harmful person.

1. Their problem is not you.
2. They need the gospel not our fear of them.
3. We are also “harmful people.”
4. What if I am the one harming others?

Examples in the Bible:

Negative

- Abraham (Genesis 12).
- The Israelites as they approached Canaan (Numbers 13).
- Peter.

Positive

- Joshua (Joshua 1).
- Esther (Esther 5:1-8).
- Daniel and his friends.
- David.
- Paul.
- Hebrews 11.
- Jesus.

Responding to fear:

Common Cultural Perspectives

- Victimization.

- Stoicism.

Gospel Perspective

Gospel Help

Physical abuse:

- The Lord will ultimately protect His children (Hebrews 13:5-6).
- God uses suffering for good (1 Peter 1:6-7).
- Physical harm cannot separate from God's love (Romans 8:35-37).
- We can fellowship with Him in suffering (Romans 8:17; Philippians 3:10).
- We can forgive and love those who have harmed us because Christ has already done this for each of us (Romans 12:14).

Verbal assaults:

- Christ endured both physical harm and the cruel insults of others (Luke 23:35-39).
- We can respond like Christ who didn't respond with counterassaults (1 Peter 2:21-23).
- We love and serve others, regardless of how we fear they may take advantage of our love.

Racism:

- Within the body of Christ, we get the opportunity to demonstrate that our fear of those visibly different from us has been removed (Colossians 3:9-11; Romans 15:7).

Conclusion

In utter respect for God, we ought to avoid harm and pursue peace in accordance to His will. We must not let fear of harm keep us from doing His will, and we must walk through any suffering He allows by faith, aiming to imitate Jesus.

Additional Resources:

- Ed Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small*
- Lou Priolo, *Pleasing People: How not to be an Approval Junkie*
- Ed Welch, *Running Scared: Fear, Worry and the God of Rest*
- John Murray, *The Fear of God: The Soul of Godliness*
- Kevin DeYoung, *Just Do Something*
- Tony Payne & Philip Jensen, *Guidance and the Voice of God*
- James Petty, *Step By Step*

Class Outline:

1. What is the fear of man?
2. What is the fear of God?
3. How do we fear man? We fear that people will expose us.
4. How do we fear man? We fear that people will reject us.
5. How do we fear man? We fear that people will harm us.
6. A new vision for life: loving God and loving neighbor
7. Anxious or Restful?
8. God's Providence
9. God's Will
10. Faithfulness
11. Tools of the Trade Part 1: God's Word, Prayer, Counsel
12. Tools of the Trade Part 2: Circumstances and Feelings
13. Panel Discussion—Fearing and Following the Lord