**Fear’s Snare and Faith’s Haven**

*Proverbs 29:25*

**Introduction**

1. ***“The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.” (Proverbs 29:25)***
	1. **Objective reading** – fearing other men, i.e. what they can, or may do to you.
	2. **Subjective reading** – fear within man, i.e. any fear that man may harbor within himself.
	3. **Snare** – i.e. by which he is caught and destroyed.
	4. ***“shall be safe”*** – lit. set on high – i.e. in a secure, unreachable place far from danger, with God.
	5. **Fear** – cowardice condemned – **Revelation 21:8**
		1. Leads to negligence – **Matthew 24:12-13** (concerning destruction of Jerusalem)
	6. **God doesn’t give fear** – **2 Timothy 1:7** – He empowers us with His word, emboldens us by the love He provokes, and settles us by His truth and hope.
		1. Leads to faithful obedience – **(v. 8**)
2. “The fear of man plunges him into yet greater suffering than that from which he would escape; confidence in God, on the other hand, lifts a man internally, and at last externally, above all his troubles.” (Keil and Delitzsch)
3. “He who, through fear of what man may do to him, think or say of him, does what he knows to be wrong, lets his moral cowardice lead him into sin, leaves duty undone,—such a man gets no real good from his weakness, outrages conscience, displeases God. See our Lord’s words. Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe (Pro 18:10). Such trust carries a man safe through all dangers; fearing to offend God, living as always under his eye, he feels Divine protection, and knows that whatever happens is for the best.” (Pulpit Commentary)
4. We cannot let fear of man alter what God’s will dictates. We cannot live with any fear within, for it will consume us, and lead us away from the narrow path.
5. We must put our faith in God – such will be a haven of victory in the Lord (**cf. 1 John 5:4)**.
6. Identity – Fearing exclusion or trusting in God’s love?
7. Servants of God are called to distinctiveness in devotion to God. This separation from the majority can be intimidating, though it is a blessing.
	1. **Exodus 19:4-6** – a blessed relationship through the sanctification of the covenant.
		1. **1 Samuel 8:4-5** – desire to be like all the nations.
	2. **1 Kings 19:10** – Elijah in despair from solitude. (**v. 18** – yet 7,000 are reserved)
	3. **Psalm 73:1-3** – Asaph became envious of the ungodly.
	4. **1 Peter 4:3-4** – they think it strange that we do not do these things.
	5. Fear of distinctive identity from the world will lead to negligence and compromise.
	6. We must not fear being different, what others think, or them not appreciating or understanding the true value in what we stand for as children of God, but we must trust in the Lord and our identity with Him – will lead to faithfulness, and reward.
8. **Psalm 139** – the blessing of identity with God.
	1. NOTE: **Psalm 138** addresses the Lord’s condescension in help of the faithful – **(v. 6)** – He has regard for the lowly (especially in spirit – faithful).
		1. **Psalm 139** expounds on this regard and care.
		2. Speaks of one whose identity is with the Lord, and finds solace and strength in that fact, drawing ever near Him.
	2. Guiding and Supporting Omniscience and Omnipresence of God (**vv. 1-12**)
		1. Relationship
			1. ***“Lord”*** – *yhwh* (Jehovah) – personal name related specifically to His covenant people.
			2. Me, my, etc. – personal, not generic.
				1. God’s regard and care for one of His own – **Psalm 138:6**
				2. God’s loyal love (mercy – *hesed*) toward one of His own **– Psalm 138:7-8**
			3. **(vv. 1-4)** – Intense interest in His people.
				1. ***“sitting down…rising up…path…lying down”*** – whole round of activity – life.
				2. **(v. 3)** – ***“comprehend”*** – ***“scrutinize” (NASB***) – *zârâ* – “to scatter, fan, cast away, winnow, disperse, compass, spread, be scattered, be dispersed” (Brown-Driver-Briggs)

“He scattered all that was chaff, or all that was valueless, and saw what there was that was real and substantial.” (Barnes)

He truly knows you (others may not understand).

* + - * 1. **(vv. 2b, 4)** – you know it altogether.
		1. Guidance
			1. **(vv. 7-10)** – not a place you can go where God is not there to lead.
				1. His omniscience and omnipresence make Him the ultimate guide.
				2. We can trust His guidance.
			2. **(v. 11)** – darkness of doubt, despair, turmoil, etc. – may seem it will overwhelm, but God’s presence is light.
			3. **(v. 12)** – ***“shall not hide”*** – *ḥâšaḵ* – to be dark (STRONG).
				1. ***“Even the darkness is not dark to You” (NASB)***
				2. **Psalm 119:105** – His word always lights the path.
				3. **Ephesians 5:8-10** – sons of light who know the way (Lord’s will).
		2. Support
			1. **(v. 5, 10)** – He has ***“besieged” (YLT)*** us – not to conquer us, but to support/protect us.
				1. ***“hedged me” (NKJV***) – **Job 1:10**
				2. His hand is upon us to hold us – support us as we follow Him through life.
	1. Wonderful Purpose with God **(vv. 13-18)**
		1. God’s knowledge and presence (active) in your origin (creation) – **(vv. 13-16)** – poetic language describing the knowledge, presence, and creative power of God in human conception and gestation.
			1. **(v. 13)** – ***“covered”*** – *sâḵaḵ* – to weave together (as a fence or hedge is woven together, hence ***“covered,” NKJV***) – “to plait, interweave, viz., with bones, sinews, and veins” (Keil and Delitzsch) (**cf. Job 10:11**)
			2. **(v. 15)** – ***“frame”*** – bones
				1. ***“lowest parts of the earth”*** – metaphor for the womb (**v. 13).**
			3. **(v. 16)** – ***“my substance, being yet unformed***” *– g̱ôlem* – a wrapped (and unformed mass, i.e. as the embryo) (STRONG); formless, embryo (HALOT)
			4. **(v. 14)** – ***“fearfully”*** – what inspires reverence; ***“wonderfully made”*** – to distinguish.
				1. ***“because that [with] wonders I have been distinguished.” (YLT)***
				2. “I am distinguished among thy works by things which tend to exalt my ideas of God, and to fill my soul with reverent and devout feelings.” (BARNES)
		2. God knew you before there was a you to be known by others, and His thoughts concerning you were abundant – **(vv. 16-18**)
			1. **(v. 16)** – ***“The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.” (NASB***) – not in the sense of predestination, or foreordination.
				1. Knowledge of life, personality, being – and the days which accompany such.
			2. **(vv. 17-18)** – thoughts of God regard me, and they are precious!
				1. **Psalm 8:3-5** – what is man that you are mindful of him?
				2. **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** – the glorious purpose of God for man.
		3. **I.e. you are made special, in awe inspiring ways, and with precious invaluable purpose.**
	2. Passionate Fellowship with God **(vv. 19-24)**
		1. Passionate and righteous indignation toward those who oppose God – **(vv. 19-22)**
			1. **(vv. 19-20)** – knowledge of the result of those who dismiss such a God, and desire for separation from them.
			2. **(vv. 21-22)** – complete fellowship with God in the distaste for wickedness, and utter disgust with it – total opposition.
		2. Passionate plea for nurtured and sustained fellowship with God – **(vv. 23-24**)
			1. **(v. 23)** – request for God to continue to do what He already has been doing **(vv. 1-3).**
				1. **(v. 6)** – such knowledge is too high for Him – let God show him!
				2. **Psalm 119:17-19** – open my eyes that I might see.
			2. **(v. 24)** – Lead me to life.
1. **With God so invested in your life, with total knowledge of you – your strengths, weaknesses, needs, etc. – and with matchless eternal purpose for you, there is no reason to fear exclusion from those who exclude Him from their lives.**
	1. **We only need God. We only need Jesus – “You are my strength when I am weak, You are the Treasure that I seek, You are my all in all; Seeking You as a precious jewel, Lord, to give up I’d be a fool; You are my all in all.” (You Are My All In All)**
2. Evangelism – Fearing failure or trusting in God’s reward? (1 Corinthians 3)