

WISE WORDS
THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Lesson 30: Wisdom for all people who face intimidation
Proverbs 29:25

When we were young it was called “shyness.” In our teens years it was “peer pressure.” For all age groups it can be found in our struggle with self-esteem, shame, difficulties in saying “no,” or the fear of failure. Look around the world and you will fit in every known culture. Scripture calls it “the fear of man,” and it lies beneath a host of modern problems(Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small*).

Proverbs 1:7
The fear of the Lord
is the beginning of
knowledge, but fools
despise wisdom and
instruction.

1. Review the *fear of the Lord*.
 - Means to recognize God’s character and respond by revering, trusting, worshipping, obeying and serving him. It is a state of mind in which one’s own attitudes, will, feelings, deeds, and goals are exchanged for God’s.
 - The focus is on a person, namely, God.
2. Apply these thoughts to *the fear of man* (unlock the proverb).
 - Means to recognize man’s character and respond by revering, trusting, worshipping, obeying and serving him. It is a state of mind in which one’s own attitudes, will, feelings, deeds, and goals are exchanged for another man’s.
 - The focus is on a person, namely, another man.
 - Why would one person fear another? Answer: because of the potential harm that may come. What kind of harm is possible?
 - Biblical examples: Abraham (Genesis 12:13ff), Peter (Mark 14:71).
 - Current examples: With extended family, wanting to be seen as godly, housework, ...
 - The *fear of man* is a snare because the result is one knowingly does what is wrong, sins against God, and offends his conscience in the process.
3. There is a way of escape i.e. *trust in the Lord*.
 - To trust the Lord is a similar expression for *the fear of the Lord*.

- Safe translates a word that means to be inaccessible high, like a bird's nest.
- Security in the Lord removes intimidation by man.

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 Commentary on the Old Testament).

4. Think about it: Isaiah 51:12 *I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die, and of the son of a man who will be made like grass?*