

THE FEAR OF MAN

The **fear of man** can be a killer. Why? Because the Christian life is a walk of faith, which **requires courage**. It is an intense spiritual war with sin, false doctrine, persecutions, cares of this life, physical health issues and other things, including **fear**. There are also different types of fear which will come our way. There are the fear of circumstances, fear of man and the fear of God. Only the fear of God is spiritually healthy and exalted in Scripture. On the other hand, the fear of man is especially ensnaring and destructive:

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe. (Prov 29:25)

The Hebrew word translated *snare* can also be rendered *trap* or *noose for catching animals*. It is also found below and shown to be descriptive of what false worship of pagan gods is:

I will hand over to you the people who live in the land and you will drive them out before you. Do not make a covenant with them or with their gods. Do not let them live in your land, or they will cause you to sin against me, because the worship of their gods will certainly be a **snare** to you. (Exo 23:31-33)

Hence, *the fear is man* (which can be equal to *idolatry* with its devastation) must be crushed to start and/or maintain a relationship with God through the Lord Jesus. **To be an overcomer and escape the lake of fire one must not be silenced by fear to the place that he doesn't acknowledge the Lord Jesus. All through Christianity, past and present, faithful overcoming people have been wise and victorious martyrs because, when they were tested in the most extreme way, they openly acknowledged Jesus and would not disown him.** On the other hand, to become a coward is spiritually lethal:

He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But **the cowardly**, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral,

those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—**their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur**. This is the second death. (Rev 21:7,8)

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by **the word of their testimony**; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. (Rev 12:11)

NOTE: Placed next to the blood of Jesus in importance is one's testimony!

Though the darkened ignorant world will sometimes say a Christian is a *coward*, the opposite is true—he is *courageous*. To follow Jesus is to be misunderstood and greatly outnumbered in a hostile persecuting society. We must hold on:

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, **if we hold on to our courage** and the hope of which we boast. (Heb 3:6)

The words we speak are very important. They definitely affect our **salvation**:

For by thy words thou shalt be **justified**, and by thy words thou shalt be **condemned**. (Mat 12:37, KJV)

On the positive side Jesus taught those already saved this:

Whoever **acknowledges me before men**, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. (Mat 10:32)

I tell you, whoever **acknowledges me before men**, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. (Luke 12:8)

We determine if the Lord Jesus will acknowledge us before the Father and his angels. Such is conditioned upon us first acknowledging him before men. It's possible the people may be murderous enemies, but we must still acknowledge Jesus for our own good:

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. **So don't be afraid;** you are worth more than many sparrows. Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But **whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.** (Mat 10:28-33)

For those who wrongly think a saved person would never disown Jesus, please read the Scriptures and discover the Lord's apostles disowned him, with Peter doing that three times! The fear of man, at that horrible hour, overcame them to that lethal degree. Afterwards, Peter wept bitterly because of his sin. He later returned to God and salvation.

We also read of the devastating effects of the fear of man hindering people from coming to initial salvation:

Yet at the same time **many** even among the leaders **believed in him.** But because of the Pharisees **they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue;** for they loved praise from men more than praise from God. (John 12:42,43)

Those leaders anticipated what would happen to them if they acknowledged Jesus in a saving way, but refused! Similar were the parents of the man born blind whom Jesus healed:

"We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." His parents said this because **they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.** That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." (John 9:20-23)

To have Jesus and eternal life, we must count the cost and pay it. Regardless the effects of acknowledging Jesus, we must do it. **It's all about Jesus:**

No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. **If it does,** you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us—even eternal life. I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. (1 John 2:23-26)

The Last Generation Overcomer

One of the chief identifying marks of an overcomer among the last generation is a person who **maintains and holds to their testimony of Jesus:**

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and **the testimony they had maintained.** (Rev 6:9)

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and **hold to the testimony of Jesus.** (Rev 12:17)

I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been **beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God.** They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Rev 20:4)

The Choice is Yours

*** If you disown Jesus before men,** he will disown you before the Father (Mt. 10:33)

*** If you acknowledge Jesus before men,** Jesus will acknowledge you before the Father (Mt. 10:32)

*** The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him,** he will be found by you, but **if you forsake him,** he will forsake you. (2 Chr 15:2)

*** If anyone is ashamed of Jesus and his words,** Jesus will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. (Luke 9:26)

*** Come near to God** and he will come near to you. (James 4:8)

Your decisions about Jesus are vital. What will you do? To acknowledge Jesus before others is to strengthen and bring blessings **upon yourself.** It will also help others who want truth.

Not to identify yourself with Jesus before other is, at the very best, to be like a physically sick cancerous person who has withered away to skin and bone and is on the verge of death. Is that what you are like spiritually? Does God see you like that? Remember:

Be on your guard; **stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.** Do everything in love. (1 Cor 16:13,14)

Remember also that death is better by far for the person who is living for Jesus (Phil. 1:23).

He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. (Rev 3:5)

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