

## 8 Snares Set by Fear of Man *By Jamie Munson*

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? —Proverbs 8:3–4* We often care about other people’s opinion more than we care about God’s opinion. We worry about our status among fellow humans because we fail to grasp our identity in Jesus. When we fear man, we’re vulnerable. (I addressed this issue recently in a sermon about [The Parable of the Sower](#)—how fear of man keeps us from bearing fruit in our lives.) “The fear of man lays a snare,” the Bible says, “but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe” ([Proverbs 29:25](#)). Here are eight consequences—snares—that can result from fear of man:

1. **Idolatry.** When we care about what man thinks more than what God thinks, we turn people into idols that we worship—seeking to please them in order to earn their approval or respect.
2. **Ineffectiveness.** When we fear man we neglect God’s calling for us and we lose focus on executing the tasks in front of us because we’re too preoccupied with what others are thinking.
3. **Lack of love.** When we’re overly concerned with “getting it right,” we turn people into projects to accomplish. We withhold our compassion and grow reserved and calculating in our pursuit of people.
4. **Fakeness.** If you’re overly motivated by the opinions of others, you won’t act like yourself. You’ll be a chameleon, adapting yourself to any situation for the sole purpose of fitting in.
5. **Apathy.** Fear man and you’ll quit taking risks because of the potential for embarrassment in failure. If an endeavor is unlikely to succeed, you’ll never take the chance. In other words, you’ll never do much of anything.
6. **Dishonesty.** It’s tough to speak truth into someone’s life because the truth can be painful. If we fear somebody’s response, however, necessary words will remain unsaid because we care more about ourselves (being liked) than we do about the person (seeing Jesus work in their life). This negligence always creates more long-term damage than the hurt it avoids in the present.
7. **Isolation.** Fear of man won’t let you delegate anything because others might not do a good job (or they might do a better job), which could reflect poorly on your performance and reputation. Fear of man compels you to control everything—even if that means going it alone.
8. **Decision Paralysis.** When we live out of fear rather than out of the convictions God has given us, we spin in circles unable to move forward.

I invite you to join me in respecting and honoring others and submitting to authority, but also in repenting of our fear of man. Fear and worship are reserved for God. In the end, only his opinion counts.

