

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



What Fear Creates

Proverbs 3:5-6

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There are moments when being afraid of some future negative outcome feels wise. It feels protective. It whispers that if we act quickly, we can prevent the disaster. But Scripture teaches that fear-driven action often becomes the doorway to the very trouble we hoped to avoid. We try to run away from a problem, but our running actually leads us right into it. This is a trap that many people fall into when they stop looking to God and start looking only at their problems.

Ancient Israel knew this lesson well. They lived in a world shaped by the law of Moses and the Torah. It taught them that blessings came with trust in the Lord and unnecessary hardship resulted from trusting in themselves. When leaders acted because they were nervous instead of being obedient, the results hurt the whole nation. This same pattern still happens in our world today. When we panic, we usually make costly negative choices.

FEAR LEANS ON FRAGILE SUPPORT

Proverbs 3:5 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

The command "trust" calls for settled confidence in the God who makes solid, dependable promises. The command "do not lean" forbids us to rely on ourselves. Trust must take the place of reasoning based on anxious.

The Hebrew word for trust means to feel secure or to place one's full weight on something dependable. The phrase "lean" paints a picture of a shepherd resting his body on a wooden staff. A staff was more than just a walking stick. It was a symbol of power and steadiness. Moses used one when he spoke to Pharaoh.

So, God tells us not to rest our full weight on our own ideas. Our ideas are like a weak stick that cannot hold us up when life gets hard.

This can be illustrated by an episode in the book of 1 Samuel. The Philistine army gathered for war. The people of Israel were becoming increasingly paralyzed with fear. The prophet Samuel had not arrived yet to lead the prayer and sacrifice. Saul saw his soldiers leaving him because they were scared, so he decided to act out of order by presuming he could perform duties the Lord had assigned only to Samuel.

1 Samuel 13:10-12

10 As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. 11 Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, 12 I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the Lord.' So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering."

Saul, moved by his understanding, and as a regretful result, God eventually took the kingdom away from him. His fear created the very future he was trying to avoid.

Have you been leaning on your own understanding in an area where God has already spoken clearly?

FEAR RUSHES WHAT GOD HAS TIMED

To trust in the Lord with the whole heart is not just about feelings. It is the place where a person makes decisions and uses logic.

The phrase "with all your heart" demands undivided loyalty. Partial trust leaves room for panic. Wholehearted trust restrains the impulse to rush ahead of God's appointed time.

In the worship system of Israel, timing was very important. Holy days followed a special calendar from God. Sacrifices had to be done in a certain order. Waiting was not seen as being lazy. Waiting was seen as being faithful.

Saul failed because he could not wait. He was more afraid of losing his soldiers than he was of disobeying God.

1 Samuel 13:13

You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God... For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. ESV

History shows when the stock market goes down, many people get scared and sell everything when prices are lowest. This act of trying to avoid losing money is exactly what makes them lose money. Faith knows how to wait, but fear always wants to run.

James 1:4

And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ESV

Being steadfast takes time. Fear hates waiting. Trusting God means we agree to follow His schedule, not ours.

Is there something in your life right now that you are trying to force because you are afraid of what will happen if you wait?

Conclusion

Fear feels very urgent. It feels like it is helping us stay safe. Yet the Bible shows us that trying to control things because we are afraid often leads to bad results. The Lord calls us to a better way of living. We must refuse to lean on our own weak ideas. We must wait when God says wait and move when God says move. When you put your full weight on the Lord, you will stand strong even when the world feels like it is falling apart.