

# GUARDRAILS

## LESSON 2 // GUARD YOUR PERSPECTIVE

The Bible is full of wisdom, promises, instructions and warnings. Warnings are a significant part of Scripture. God loves us enough to communicate cautions and sound alarms regarding destructive activities. Jesus often warned both the multitudes who listened to Him and His disciples in His teachings.

In Luke 12:4-21 Christ warns us about a wrong kind of fear and instructs us about the right kind of fear we should have. In these warnings and instructions, He also teaches us the importance of keeping an eternal perspective:

**Luke 12:4-21 (NIV)** *“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. <sup>5</sup> But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. <sup>6</sup> Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. <sup>7</sup> Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. <sup>8</sup> I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. <sup>9</sup> But whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God. <sup>10</sup> And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. <sup>11</sup> When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, <sup>12</sup> for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.” <sup>13</sup> Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” <sup>14</sup> Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” <sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” <sup>16</sup> And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. <sup>17</sup> He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ <sup>18</sup> “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. <sup>19</sup> And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’ <sup>20</sup> “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ <sup>21</sup> “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”*

What do we learn from this passage that can provide a guardrail for our lives?

### 1. Don’t fear people.

In Luke 11:53-54 we see that Jesus was under attack by the Pharisees and teachers of the law who opposed Him “fiercely.” The disciples with Him must have felt this attack and experienced some of the fear these antagonists were trying to instill.

Jesus addressed this clearly in Luke 12:4: “My friends, don’t be afraid of people. They can kill you, but after that, there is nothing else they can do” (CEV).

Christ was warning us, “There’s a wrong kind of fear you must avoid, a terror of mind and emotions based on what people can do to you.” He went on to explain that this kind of fear:

- dangerously affects your responsiveness to God and the work of His Spirit (verses 9-10).
- makes you preoccupied with material possessions, pleasures and protection, to the disregard of eternal concerns and consequences (verses 13-21).

## 2. Fear the God of eternal life.

After this warning, Jesus gave His disciples instructions on the right kind of fear: “God is the one you must fear. Not only can he take your life, but he can throw you into hell. God is certainly the one you should fear” (Luke 12:5, CEV).

The fear of God is about reverence for Him as Lord of all. It acknowledges His greatness and stands in awe of His authority over us in this world and into eternity. This is a healthy fear that we should desire and cultivate, as we see in the following verses:

**Psalm 33:8 (NLT)** *Let the whole world fear the Lord, and let everyone stand in awe of him.*

**Proverbs 19:23 (CEB)** *The fear of the Lord leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by harm.*

**Proverbs 22:4 (Msg)** *The payoff for meekness and Fear-of-God is plenty and honor and a satisfying life.*

## 3. Live with an eternal perspective.

At the heart of Jesus’ warning is an important message for us: we need to embrace an eternal perspective. This means we live free from the terrorizing fear that dominates the world around us and fear only the eternal God. Our reverence for the Lord must supersede all other fears.

It also means that we clearly understand and live for what matters most. We can easily get derailed from God’s best by valuing and pursuing temporal pleasures. Pursuing what lasts forever is a guardrail that keeps us track with God’s eternal purposes.

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)** *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup>So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

## Discussion questions

1. How can fear of people negatively affect your relationship and responsiveness to God?
2. What are some of the benefits the fear of the Lord can have on your life? How can you cultivate this attitude in your daily walk with Him?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. How do these verses speak to you about embracing an eternal perspective? What difference should this make in how you live?