

## **Program Notes**

This performance encompasses the effects of fearing the world compared to the effects of fearing the Lord. While researching the topic for this piece, we learned that the brain interacts differently with those two contrasting sources of fear. Fear of the world directly impacts the amygdala of the brain, which is the trigger for fight, flight, and freeze responses to situations. Fear of the Lord impacts the precuneus and the frontal lobe of the brain, which can overcome the responses in the amygdala. This performance embodies the positive reactions of the human body to fear of the Lord along with the negative reactions of the human body to worldly fear. High levels of worldly fear can result in significant stress levels that can produce disorders, phobias, isolation, and shorten one's span of life. Fear of the Lord improves social skills, confidence levels, and overall performance. The human body's response to these fears is demonstrated and contrasted throughout the entirety of this piece. We used the research we discovered on the body's reactions to these fears throughout our choreographic process. When creating this piece, we also desired to have music in the background that supported the story and moved it along effectively. We discovered a clip of a sermon by John Piper that spoke specifically on the effects of fearing man (or the world) vs. fearing the Lord. We placed a music track behind this sermon to provide better moments for musicality and intentionally stronger and weaker moments within the choreography to support the words Piper is speaking. The first half of the piece features two distinct groups of dancers – one fearing the Lord and the other fearing the world. We intentionally created the choreography for each group based off the results found in our research. The group fearing the world has movements that are smaller, more isolated, somber, and fearful in nature. On the other hand, the group fearing the Lord is joyful, confident, interacting with each other, and performing larger and more uplifted movements. We also choreographed those fearing

the Lord to have lighter movements, while those fearing the world have heavier movements to show the weight of trying to live up to man's expectations. While these two groups are dancing, there is often a dancer in the center, unsure which group they are identifying with at that certain point in time. We intentionally created the piece this way to show how fearing the Lord or fearing the world is not a one-time choice, but a daily decision. There can be moments of drifting away from fearing the Lord and towards worldly fear, but we utilized the choreography to demonstrate the importance of having godly community who can encourage and bring one back towards fearing the Lord. We specifically choreographed these moments of interaction and physical connection to contrast the strength found in that community with the isolation and loneliness found in worldly fear. Our research also stated that the trajectory of one's life can drastically change depending on what their brain is focusing on and how they are letting fear – whether fear of the world or fear of the Lord, control and guide their life. Within the culture at large, this research is impactful because Christian or not, everyone is affected by worldly fear at some point in their life. Within our choreography, we utilized moments where the group fearing the Lord and the group fearing the world were performing similar choreography to demonstrate how the two different fears can drastically affect the same movements. Those fearing the Lord perform the movements openly, upwards, and confidently, while those living in worldly fear perform towards the ground, fearfully, and with more condensed motions. One Bible verse we found during our research is Proverbs 19:23, “The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.” This verse supports our research that fearing the Lord results in living life more confidently and being satisfied in that fear. In the second half of the performance, we focused on the positive reactions of the human body to fearing the Lord. We choreographed sections of unity, where all the dancers have come to the point of fearing the

Lord. While dancing together and in unison, the performance shows the unity and support from others in Christ that is found in the church as believers. This performance significantly contributes to the discipline because by using dance and movement to communicate the results found in our research, we believe it will impact others in a way that words and facts cannot. Being able to visually see the outward results of a mindset of worldly fear compared to a mindset of fearing God allows the audience to feel the emotions portrayed through the performance. Jesus also used parables and stories to explain a message and allow others to decipher meanings, so by communicating the results through storytelling, we believe that our conclusions will be understood more easily and fully.