



Do Not Be Afraid

I was doing a little bit of research for a Watchword on the subject of Hell and came across some interesting statistics on a slightly different topic, Fear. Here's a little trivia fact: In the Bible there are 365 references to **fear** and its variances, such as being afraid, worry, fretting, etc. Just the phrase "fear not" appears slightly over 100 times in the Old Testament, and slightly over 40 times in the New Testament.

Despite the number of cautions God presents to us against being afraid, we fragile humans still invest a lot of time, and health and worry, not just about tomorrow, but often about things that have long passed. We fear our way into an early grave. We fear our way into gray hair and wrinkles. We fear our way into being grumpy old man and old women. We fear our way into making poor decisions, and fracturing friendships and alienating our own children.

Why in the world can we not get it through our thick heads that God wants us to be at peace? By the way, the word "Peace" appears in the Bible 429 times! Jesus used the word "peace" 23 times. But no doubt Jesus used the word many more times that aren't recorded. So why do we elect discomfort and health-eroding fear, over being at peace, and calm in our lives? Interesting question. If I had the concession on a fool-proof panacea to fear ... wow!

My daughter sent me this cartoon: It shows Satan saying, "We used to do the hellfire and hard-labor thing. But now we just hold people to their own standards. Way more entertaining." It is unfortunate that we make our own hellfire and hard-labor just by being hard-headed humans.

Ah, could that be the answer to the question, "Why?" Do we elect fear by our own choices, our own standards? Do we allow our yesterdays and tomorrows to crowd out our peace for today? Is that our nature?

Now don't get me wrong, fear can be a very important and useful element in our lives. Fear can serve to protect us, to warn us, to keep us safe. But, when taken to an extreme, it becomes an obsession, it drives us away from a peaceful and calm life and it drives a wedge between us and our faith in Christ. Jesus' admonition that we cannot serve two masters applies here. When fear is our master, it can take away our faith.

If Christianity had a single motto, it might be: *Fear not, be at Peace*. I believe that Jesus may have said that. So be it.

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This essay was the Meditation in Stan Escott's [Watchword](#) for June 12, 2021. The content of Watchwords is written from inspiration born of Scripture, devotional readings and reflection. Each post is meant to encourage and give you a sense of peace in these troubled times. To explore Watchwords or sign up for the mailings, visit bosworth30.com/watchwords/.