



The Most Oft Repeated Command by Joe Chesser,

*All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.*

Of all the commands in the Bible, which one is repeated the greatest number of times? I think you may be surprised! Love is the greatest command, but it's not the one most often repeated. Writers often speak of pride as being at the root of human failures, but warnings against pride or encouragement to be humble are not the most often repeated commands. Neither are the warnings against sexual impurity or the urging to believe or repent.

The single command that occurs more often than any other is "**Fear not**". There are other forms of this command: "Do not be afraid", "Be strong and courageous", etc.; but according to Lloyd Ogilvie, **there are 366 "Fear not" verses in the Bible** – one for every day of the year, including one for leap year!

Fear doesn't seem to be the most serious vice in the world. It didn't make the "Seven Deadly Sins" list. No one ever receives church discipline for being afraid. So why does God tell us to stop being afraid more often than He tells us to do anything else?

John Ortberg suggested that the reason God tells us to "Fear not" so often is because "Fear is the number one reason human beings are tempted to avoid doing what God asks them to do". Fear causes us to lie in order to avoid pain or embarrassment. Fear of rejection causes us to listen to gossip. Fear of being poor causes us to neglect family, friends, and God to work more hours. Fear causes us to flatter someone because we're afraid they won't like us if we don't. Fear causes us to go along with the crowd instead of standing apart. Fear of being lonely causes us to justify unwholesome companions.

Fear is the reason so many will not step out of their comfort zones and teach a class or lead a song or prayer. Fear is one reason so little evangelism is being done. Fear is the reason we deny the Lord in difficult situations. Fear is the reason the storms cause our faith to falter. Fear is the reason we betray our values and friends in times of need. Yes, I'd say fear is a major problem for us. We need to be told often to "Fear not". At least I do.

Yet, there is another kind of fear that would help us overcome these other fears if we would learn to use it. Solomon wrote centuries ago,

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.
(**Ecclesiastes 12:13**)

In other words, we need to have deep-seated reverence and awe of God in everything we do every day of our lives – to live by faith in God alone – to keep our eyes focused

on Jesus and nothing else. Ironically, if we choose to "Fear God" in the sense Solomon said, we would be far less likely to need the 366 commands to "fear not".

Pity the person who is more afraid of the winds and the waves than he is of the God who created and controls them.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. (**1 John 4:18**)

--- *Joe Chesser*