

Destructive Fear

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.
Proverbs 29:25

There is an ancient Arab folktale which relates the story of Pestilence. On a desert road leading to Baghdad, Pestilence overtook a caravan. The caravan's chieftain engaged Pestilence in a conversation. "And pray," asked the chieftain, "what are you going to do in Baghdad?"

In a voice which would send shivers through your soul, Pestilence replied, "There I shall claim 5,000 lives."

When the caravan arrived in Baghdad, the chieftain learned that a plague had struck the city. A total of 50,000 people died within the city. The chieftain was amazed at the news, because that total was far more than Pestilence had said.

Months later Pestilence and the caravan chieftain met up again. "You were unfair, Pestilence," proclaimed the chieftain. "You promised to take only 5,000 lives and there were 50,000 people dead within the city."

"I kept my word for my word is truth," responded Pestilence. "I took but 5,000 lives. The other 45,000 died of fear."

Fear is a trap. It robs us of peace. It steals our sleep. It turns our lives into chaos and confusion. When fear reigns supreme, hopelessness soon follows. Jesus died to free us from fear of sin, death and the devil.

The Old Testament Book of Proverbs is part of the ancient wisdom literature. It provides truths by which people can live. After acknowledging the dangers of fear and its ability to ensnare the lives of people, the writer tells us that there is an answer for fear. The answer is to trust in God. He is the ultimate protector. He is omnipotent (almighty), omniscient (all-knowing), and omnipresent (present everywhere). That is the nature of our God—the God who hold us in His protective hands and removes the fear from our lives.