

**General Topics :: Slaying the Mighty Giant of Our Day**

**Slaying the Mighty Giant of Our Day - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/10 6:57**

Beware: There is a mighty giant in the land! Oh - we don't call it a giant. We may not even recognize its presence, or its destructiveness. We may not see how this giant is playing havoc with every imaginable dimension of life. And that's a problem. As long as this giant remains obscure and unnamed, we cannot face it for what it is; and we cannot conquer it. We don't even know what weapon to use. In other words, we will not use our God-given resources to claim victory over this mighty giant in the land.

What is this giant?

God willing, over the next while I hope to comment further about this giant – and the means to victory – a weapon that has been put in the hands of all whom God has adopted into his kingdom.

For now:

Any guesses on what our this threatening giant may be?

What examples of "Conquering-the-Giant" stories are found the Bible?

Diane

**Re: Slaying the Mighty Giant of Our Day - posted by savannah, on: 2012/7/10 8:36**

"Any guesses on what our this threatening giant may be?"

Is it, "FEMINISM"!!!

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/13 15:08**

We could list many examples of mighty forces "out there" which threaten to swallow us up - it seems. This was true in bible times - and has been true in all ages. But we must ask: In scripture, were any of these forces ever the real giant - that is, the real threat? Are they in our day?

I say, no. The real giant was something far more subtle. This giant rules the lives of unbeliever and plays havoc with humanity; but it also besets us as followers of Christ. Great Christians have faced this giant. Hudson Taylor was concerned that this "giant" might disqualify him from his calling to China.

The psalmists addressed this "giant" over and over again - psalm after psalm. They understood its destructiveness because they were nearly capsized by it. But they also understood the only antidote. And that's what makes the Psalms so relevant for contemporary times. I myself have been struggling with this giant. Or rather, God has exposed it as something that I must conquer. That's why I find myself writing about it. Perhaps I will share my thoughts here as I journey on through this battle.

For now: Any other guesses? What is the giant? And what is the weapon against it?

Diane

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2012/7/13 15:24**

For now: Any other guessses? What is the giant? And what is the weapon against it?

Diane

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I know that the giant I have been facing and struggling with is "self" and for me the only weapon to use against it is the cross. I realize that is probably not the answer you are looking for though. I am interested to follow along as you share these things.

God bless  
mj

**Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/7/13 16:26**

I was going to say the same thing MaryJane. Self. I/Me/My as Milt Green would say.

But as Diane says, there are many depending on the context of the discussion. Looking forward to what she is thinking about and glad she did not forget this thread.

Diane, on your other very long thread, I know I promised to read a 22 page doc of yours, and am sorry I just have not gotten to it, yet. But, I wanted to acknowledge to you that I did not forget about it and will read it and give you my thoughts (when I get to it). I have some things to read from AtG, too and AtG knows I will eventually get around to it. We both have long reading lists that we need to get to.

Pilgrim

**Re: Slaying the Mighty Giant of Our Day - posted by proudpapa, on: 2012/7/13 22:13**

Pride is certainly a Giant

**Re: , on: 2012/7/14 0:52**

I'd also guess pride.

**Re: guess - posted by savannah, on: 2012/7/14 7:20**

"I myself have been struggling with this giant."

Is it not "FEMINISM"!!!! (Pro. 7:11)

"And what is the weapon against it?"

Childbearing(maternity)1 Tim. 2:11,15

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2012/7/14 9:54**

I've found that in accordance with Word of God and in my own experience Canaan is inhabited by many giants. One goes down, another arises. Anger, pride, lust, grudges, unbelief, fear, hypocrisy, resentment, covetousness, greed, indifference. They carry poisonous grapes on the vine, as large as a man's head, to feed to appetite of your flesh.

I'm not sure which giant you have in mind, but we are all mere grasshoppers without the power of the Holy Spirit before the least of them in any case. The giants are the powers of darkness, the principalities and rulers of the air which seek to conquer our hearts via our thought-patterns. If our consciences are defiled, they will have a grand entrance into our minds and slip into our vessels uncontested. It is here where they will set up a stronghold to bind-up our liberties in Christ. We go into slavery.

But when our hearts are pure and consciences blood-washed and clear of offense, we can keep them under our feet through the power of the Spirit of Holiness. If you are continually being overwhelmed and pummeled by a giant, regardless of what that giant signifies, it is an indication that your life is not right with God in some area, and He is giving the giant a legal right to overcome you.

Humble yourself and seek the Lord to find the reason for the giant's victory. Are you worrying about the cares of life? Are you debating with a brother or sister? Have you been dishonest at the workplace? Have you been letting dirty thoughts proliferate more and more within your mind?

Leave food out on the kitchen table and roaches will come; Leave sin in the heart and giants will come.

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2012/7/14 10:12**

Paulwest wrote:I've found that in accordance with Word of God and in my own experience Canaan is inhabited by many giants. One goes down, another arises. Anger, pride, lust, grudges, unbelief, fear, hypocrisy, resentment, covetousness, greed, indifference.

---

I was thinking about this also but I wonder wouldn't all these things you mentioned just be the fruit of "self"?

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---

I agree the only way to fight a giant is by walking in fellowship with JESUS. GOD does allow the giants to come in from time to time to teach us and show us those areas of our lives we have not surrendered but this is for our benefit I believe. These can be very painful lessons but when we repent and turn to HIM, the only ONE who can help us defeat any giant then it is a most valuable lesson.

God bless  
maryjane

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2012/7/14 10:23**

Quote:

-----I was thinking about this also but I wonder wouldn't all these things you mentioned just be the fruit of "self"?  
-----

In a way, yes. To be more precise, I like to think of "self" as the "flesh". The giants come to conquer our hearts through the satiation of the flesh. If you'd like to think of your flesh as a giant, that is fine too: It's all semantics anyhow.

However, I personally see the flesh as a part of my being (a tripartite of "self" which includes soul and spirit in the final 2/3); and as a dynamic that is automatically put down when I walk in the Spirit. When the flesh is subdued, the giants are still alive but I am dead to them. Our Adamic flesh loves the food of the giants. It wants the big grapes of knowledge, the wild honey of immorality, the fatted calf of the pride of life. We crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts so that the giants have no sway over its appetite during feeding time.

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2012/7/14 10:36**

by PaulWest on 2012/7/14 4:23:55

Quote:

-----I was thinking about this also but I wonder wouldn't all these things you mentioned just be the fruit of "self"?  
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In a way, yes. To be more precise, I like to think of "self" as the "flesh". The giants come to conquer our hearts through the satiation of the flesh. If you'd like to think of your flesh as a giant, that is fine too: It's all semantics anyhow.

However, I personally see the flesh as a part of my being (a tripartite of "self" which includes soul and spirit in the final 2/3); as a dynamic that is automatically put down when I walk in the Spirit. The flesh loves the food of the giants. It wants the big grapes, the wild honey, the fatted calf of the land. We crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts so that the giant has no sway over its appetite during feeding time.

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I often use the term flesh as another way of talking about self so I do see what your saying. I like the picture you painted of how the flesh(self) loves the food of the giants, really speaks to what I have been seeing on a personal level. I agree when we crucify the flesh(die to self) the world and all its distractions and attractions hold no enticement for us. When JESUS is LORD of my life and I am walking in fellowship with HIM then and only then do I have victory.

Thank you for sharing  
God Bless  
maryjane

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/14 11:55**

Thank you all for your insightful responses. They get me thinking. I too considered the giants in Caanan. These were mighty giants indeed! They were so tall that in comparison humans were the size of grasshoppers.

But were these giants truly that big? Why did these "giants" have such a profound effect on the Israelites that they didn't even want to enter the Promised Land? Obviously the people had exaggerated the size of the giants. But not everyone saw them so ominously large. Why did Caleb and Joshua have a different perspective?

It seems that we have two kinds of giants to consider: The one we imagine, and the real one. We want to be sure to fight the right one!

The question remains: What was the real "giant" that needed to be conquered in the Sinai Desert - as in our contemporary lives?

A wee note on the word "self". I recall Ron Bailey recently challenging our use of that word. He noted that you don't see his use of the word in scripture. Interestingly as I read through Hudson Taylor's material I don't see the word either. But I would agree that there is something about ourselves that is indeed a potential giant - as you have noted!

I've been reading "Streams in the Desert" and see that it repeatedly addresses the "giant" I have in mind. Today I happened to pick up a book by A W Tozer - and there it is again- where the book fell open. I think Tozer is getting at the giant when he says:

"The problem that ever confronts Christian people in a world like this, is ultimately just the one problem of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_" ?

I say, here is the stomping ground for our mighty 'giant'. I also say, God is definitely trying to get my attention on this issue!

At this point I think it is best not to give it away - as it is worth pondering over some more. I know you all are aware of this. It's just that we aren't so good at labelling it for what it is - and linking it to so many of our difficulties today.

Keep guessing! We have an exciting adventure ahead yet.

Diane

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2012/7/14 12:39**

Quote:  
-----A wee note on the word "self". I recall Ron Bailey recently challenging our use of that word. He noted that you don't see this use of the word in scripture.  
-----

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."(Luke 9:23)

I find a daily denial of "self" most certainly pervading NT scripture. This is one example, but there are plenteous others in the teaching ministries of Christ and Paul. But I don't hold "self" to be a giant in any case. The giants cannot be slayed by you or me, but we can become dead to their influence through walking in the Spirit. The powers of darkness (aka giants) seek to quicken the flesh and domineer the heart via the establishment of strongholds of fear, lust, unbelief, contention, greed, hatred, doubt, religious pride, etc. They seek to "draw" out the lusts of the flesh and stir our autonomous desires to rise and war against the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. But the giants themselves cannot be slayed, and there is no mention in scripture of us killing giants or demons or devils or any other extraneous angelic power. We resist them and they flee. It is only the flesh that must be crucified, by virtue of our collaboration with the Holy Spirit.

**Re: The Giant is Unbelief - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/7/14 14:07**

Quote:  
-----Thank you all for your insightful responses. They get me thinking. I too considered the giants in Caanan. These were mighty giants indeed! They were so tall that in comparison humans were the size of grasshoppers. But were these giants truly that big? Why did these "giants" have such a profound effect on the Israelites that they didn't even want to enter the Promised Land? Obviously the people had exaggerated the size of the giants. But not everyone saw them so ominously large. Why did Caleb and Joshua have a different perspective?  
-----

I think there actually were bigger and taller people and this illustrates how men look on the outward and walk by sight and not faith (in God's promises).

Quote:  
-----A wee note on the word "self". I recall Ron Bailey recently challenging our use of that word. He noted that you don't see this use of the word in scripture. Interestingly as I read through Hudson Taylor's material I don't see the word either. But I would agree that there is something about ourselves that is indeed a potential giant - as you have noted!  
-----

That is true, "self" was never a word that stood alone or was used alone in those days. It was always connected to someone's attitudes, actions or speech and was not an independent concept.

Mar 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny HIMSELF, and take up his cross, and follow me.

To understand what it means to "deny ourselves" it requires the awareness and admission of our selfish tendencies patterned in the "flesh". And it does not refer to a subjective, psychological denial, but a volitional denial whereby we choose to disallow the expressions of selfishness in our behavior.

Titus 2:12 - "deny ungodliness and worldly desires"

Phil. 2:3,4 - "do nothing from selfishness...do not look out for your own personal interests..."

Denying ourselves is not a "work" of self-effort and performance whereby we overcome and get rid of the "flesh"

Gal. 5:17. Such is a denial of God's grace.

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Gal 5:18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Then, Paul goes on to talk about the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit and then...

Gal 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Denying ourselves is part of the process of sanctification.

But the biggest problem that we all contend with is UNBELIEF.

Heb 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

It is always unbelief that will keep us from entering into God's promises.

Heb 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Heb 4:6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

Heb 4:11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Pilgrim

### **The giant is unbelief!, on: 2012/7/14 19:23**

Then in addition to all these things there were troubles also arising from within the church, and this second Epistle of Peter is particularly concerned about these problems. For the problem that ever confronts Christian people in a world like this is, ultimately, just the one problem of unbelief. We can therefore understand why the great message of this second Epistle of Peter was written to strengthen Christian people against various forces and factors that were tending to shake and to unsettle them in their faith. Certain doubts and queries were insinuating themselves into their minds. Peter tells us at great length in the second chapter that false teachers had crept into the churches and that these, with their false teaching, were trying to undermine the faith of these early Christian people.

### **Re: The giant is unbelief!, on: 2012/7/14 19:47**

Let us examine again what Hudson Taylor wrote.

"All the time I felt assured that there was in Christ all I needed, but the practical question was how to get it out. He was rich, but I was poor; He was strong, but I was weak. I knew full well that there was in the vine, in the root, the stem, abundant fatness; but how to get it into my puny little branch was the question.

As gradually the light dawned on me, I saw that faith was the only prerequisite to laying hold of His fullness and making it my own. But I had not this faith . . . I strove for it, but it would not come; I tried to exercise it, but in vain. Seeing more and more the wondrous supply of grace laid up in Jesus, the fullness of our precious Savior - my helplessness and guilt seemed to increase. Sins committed appeared but as trifles compared with the sin of unbelief which was their cause, which could not or would not take God at His word, but rather made Him a liar! Unbelief was, I felt, the damning sin of the world - yet I indulged in it. I prayed for faith but it did not come. What was I to do?

When my agony of soul was at its height, a sentence in a letter from dear McCarthy was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and the Spirit of God revealed the truth of our oneness with Jesus as I had never seen it before. McCarthy, who had been much exercised by the same sense of failure, but saw the light before I did, wrote (I quote from memory): "But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One."

As I read I saw it all! "If we believe not, He remains faithful." I looked to Jesus and saw (and when I saw, oh, how joy flowed) that He had said, "I will never leave you." "Ah, here is rest!" I thought. "I have striven in vain to rest in Him. I'll strive no more. For has He not promised to abide with me - never to leave me, never to fail me?" And Dearie, He never will!"

It appears that Hudson Taylor's problem was solved when he saw the reality of his union with Christ.

So now the REAL question - how to open the eyes of the blind or those that only partially see the reality of this union in Christ?

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2012/7/15 2:34**

Quote:

----- We may not see how this giant is playing havoc with every imaginable dimension of life  
-----

The most pervasive giant I see playing havoc with every dimension of life today is fear.

It's a simple answer, but afterall, we are simple creatures:)

MC

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/15 20:08**

Pilgrim said:

Quote:

----- But the biggest problem that we all contend with is UNBELIEF  
-----

That's it. This is the word Tozer uses: unbelief, as tuc quotes:

Quote:

----- Â.... ultimately, just the one problem of unbelief  
-----

Of course it's easy to pull this word, "unbelief" out of the hat - or rather, the Bible. But what do we mean? "Unbelief" says something is NOT present. And what's that? The word "belief" is often used as the assent of a body of propositional truths. In that sense, "unbelief" is not necessarily the problem. Yet there is a problem - a very serious one at that.

In the psalms we find a word that helps us. It is the word TRUST. The human problem then is an inability to TRUST God for his word and his faithfulness (as tuc notes, quoting Hudson Taylor). The Bible gives us many examples - for a good reason. This is a serious problem - considering that that humanity lives in a world filled with threats. We face threats continuously - though we are not aware of many of them till we experience them.

What happens to us when we cannot trust God in this threatening and fallen world - when belief is deficient? Just as the natural world abhors a vacuum, so does our own inner world. A GIANT fills the vacuum that is created by the absence of trust.

Quote:

----- The most pervasive giant I see playing havoc with every dimension of life today is fear.  
-----

This is it! FEAR is likely to undo us far more readily than the threats we perceive around us. Fear causes us to enlarge the threat to supersize. (as the Israelites did) Fear drives our world. It makes many people rich and it robs many. Fear threatens our relationships. It builds barriers. It keeps God at arms length. It keeps us from entering the Promised Land and enjoying the fruits.

Fear is the antithesis of restful TRUST in God.

Fear, like water, seeps through the cracks in our faith — into the areas where we have yet to learn trust. And God knows where the cracks are.

I've begun a project: I made two columns on a sheet of paper: The left side is labeled: DISTRUST. The right side is labeled TRUST. In each column I am listing words drawn from my readings that describe these two conditions. Then I apply my own thought life to this list — and lo and behold — it's amazing how often my mind dwells on the distrust side.

More on that later....

Can you think of some words I could add to my list?

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2012/7/15 20:50**

Quote:  
----- Just as the natural world abhors a vacuum, so does our own inner world. A GIANT fills the vacuum that is created by the absence of trust.  
-----

Interesting. If you have a bottle filled with poison water, how do you pull the poison water out without creating a vacuum? You fill it with clean water!

Likewise, "fighting against" fear and unbelief doesn't seem to work very well...in fact such a focus seems to strengthen our fears. The only real way forward from fear is to displace fear with something opposite.

Quote:  
----- In that sense, "unbelief" is not necessarily the problem. Yet there is a problem — a very serious one at that.  
-----

Along these lines, I find it also interesting that the bible doesn't seem to say bravery is the remedy for fear, but rather love is. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." (1 John 4:18)

What is the true nature of this love that John talks about, a love that liberates a once tormented heart from fear and unbelief? Why is the fearless heart described as a heart flowing with love, rather than courage or faith?

Quote:  
----- it's amazing how often my mind dwells on the distrust side.  
-----

Good discussion topic tonight:)

MC

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/17 8:17

Quote:  
----- If you have a bottle filled with poison water, how do you pull the poison water out without creating a vacuum? You fill it with clean water!  
-----

I thought of similar imagery: If you try to empty water out of a spot in a brook more water immediately fills the space. But if you put a ROCK in that spot, water cannot enter that space. Likewise, it is futile to try to eradicate fear -- or, for that matter, the many effects of fear (to be discussed later). Our efforts merely wear us out. This is works-centered living. Of course that heightens our fear -- because we can never be secure. (Is that not why legalism and anxiety typically coexist?) Of course the Rock is Christ who himself fills the void. We need only rest by faith (confident trust) in His promises, presence, power and --....

Quote:  
----- the bible doesn't seem to say bravery is the remedy for fear, but rather love is. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." (1 John 4:18)  
-----

So the ROCK is love -- the steadfast, merciful, faithful love of our Lord!

Quote:  
----- What is the true nature of this love that John talks about, a love that liberates a once tormented heart from fear and unbelief? Why is the fearless heart described as a heart flowing with love, rather than courage or faith?  
-----

Good point! It is not faith itself, but the object (the ROCK) on which our faith rests through which fear is conquered and love can freely flow.

Okay --... now that we can pat ourselves on the back for such wise insights we are confronted with the practical outworking of this simple, basic truth. That is another matter! Hudson Taylor had already learned to trust the Lord for his material needs, and for much more. He was a seasoned missionary in China, and had already endured many tests of faith. Yet when God called him into a new level of trust -- for a greater work of God in China, Mr. Taylor had an intense struggle. He used words like FEAR and UNBELIEF to describe himself. I found this amazing for such a man of faith. But reading his words was intensely comforting. It is my struggle too -- even though God has already brought me through seasons of rigorous --"training"-- in the area of trust. I don't know what God has in mind for me. But lately, through a series of --"pressure cooker"-- testings, I am being confronted with a host of besetting fears that have never been dislodged. I find this intensely disturbing -- to see that I am yet so weak in faith. Yet if I don't press on this matter, I will be capsized by the waves -- discouraged and despondent. So --... alas, --... I press on --....

My background in health care has trained me to carefully examine signs and symptoms before proceeding with treatment. I think that applies in the area of spiritual care too --... and indeed, that's a key role of the Spirit.

So what are the signs and symptoms of distrust contrasted with that of trust?

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/7/17 8:32

Well, I just love Corrie Ten Boom and her simple quotes explain things better than I could hope to do so I will use a few of them to help me communicate.

Quote:  
----- So what are the signs and symptoms of distrust contrasted with that of trust?  
-----

One sign of distrust is worry.

--"Worry is a cycle of inefficient thoughts whirling around a center of fear." --  
&#8213; Corrie Ten Boom

Another sign of distrust is it cripples your ability to trust with child-like faith and to see things as God wants us to see and be at rest.

“If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God you'll be at rest.”

Corrie Ten Boom

Unbelief or Distrust, causes one to try to live the Christian life apart from God, apart from His life operating inside you. Trust keeps you connected to His life and His burden then, is light.

Trying to do the Lord's work in your own strength is the most confusing, exhausting, and tedious of all work. But when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, then the ministry of Jesus just flows out of you.”

Corrie Ten Boom

Pilgrim

**Re: Facing the Giant in This Land of Prosperity - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/18 9:28**

“I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” Gen. 3:10

“Do not be afraid...” Gen. 15:1

Have you noticed that the word “FEAR” rarely enters an average conversation? Yet, as has been asserted, “fear” is the mighty giant in our land. It looms ever so ominously in the human psyche- even though many of the reasons to fear have been eradicated, thanks to our plethora of modern resources. In spite of our prosperity fear remains as a mighty giant – or rather, BECAUSE OF our prosperity. I suggest that our prosperity has helped create our present crisis of fear. This ravaging giant of fear is mushrooming, much like the giant poisonous Hogweed plant which takes over the soil and crowds out all other growth.

I say, as a civilization we are quickly using up our resources in our attempt to suppress this giant in our minds. Yet we cannot continue to let “the sun go” down on our fear. We cannot continue to medicate our society with anti-anxiety pharmaceuticals. And our many avoidance strategies – be that weaponries, substance abuse, shallow entertainment, shallow socializing, religiosity, legalistic efforts to eradicate evil, blame, anger, and so forth – merely deteriorate the quality of our relationships – and that makes our anxieties grow even bigger. Our “fig leaves” inevitably crumble.

Let’s admit, collectively we cannot bear to face our fear truthfully because it means we must face our nakedness. Yet the question Jesus asked his disciples remains before us: “WHY ARE YOU SO AFRAID? Matt. 8:26

Through answering Jesus’ question- that is, acknowledging our fear, we open ourselves up to God’s exhilarating solution for fear. Of course that's true for society in general. But more importantly for you and me: It is part of the spiritual journey of every believer.

So... let us boldly face the giant - as Jesus calls us to do:

Why are you afraid?

What do you fear?

Any suggestions?

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2012/7/18 9:51**

But first.... Let us face this giant of our day:

Why are we afraid?

What do we fear?

Any suggestions?

I can't answer this on a corporate level for everyone but if your interested in answers from a personal level then

I have struggled with fear, have actually shared about that here once or twice :) The thing I have feared most was the "unknown" and I think the real reason is because it is beyond my control. So my answers would be "What do I fear"-the unknown

"why am I afraid"-because its beyond my control

On a personal note I have been seeing by HIS mercy that both of these are really rooted in unbelief.

God Bless

mj

**Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2012/7/18 10:58**

I would say that one of the biggest giants in the land today, through my eyes, is lazyness/slothfulness.

This is something that I am guilty of on a daily basis. I know that something needs to be done, but will put it off because too much work is involved. This is something that I have been praying about (when I'm not to lazy to pray) and asking the Lord to change in me.

I see this in many cases for many men and women. I've noticed that lazyness/slothfulness takes the place of our very best. We take the path of least resistance, which I am most guilty.

I repent of my lazyness/slothfulness.

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/20 8:50**

Quote:

----- We take the path of least resistance,  
-----

Miccah, This is a point worth exploring! What is actually being resisted? Why? Why do people eagerly work hard in some areas of life, but hold back in others (exhibit passivity)? Is this not related to FEAR – that is, anxiety? You believe you can avoid the risk of experiencing the horrible sense of anxiety if you can avoid that which you fear. (Of course you likely aren't aware of that motive.)

Mary Jane gives a common example:

Quote:

----- I have feared most was the "unknown" and I think the real reason is because it is beyond my control.  
-----

This is so very true of human nature! We've all heard that this is why people keep practicing something negative rather than change – even though they know it is bad. Change is more terrifying than staying the same! Change means moving towards that which you have not known – and therefore is beyond your control.

How does this relate to a trust in God? –.... or to Abraham – as the Bible's prime exemplar of faith (ie, trust)?

Diane

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/20 10:42

Look at this folks!! I found two verses that are almost identical:

- 1) "I WAS AFRAID because I was naked; so I HID."
- 2) "I WAS AFRAID and went out and HID your gold in the ground."

The first is spoken by Adam (Gen. 3:10); the second by the recipient of the one talent in Jesus' parable of the Ten Talents (Math. 25:25 NIV)

Amazing! Don't you think that both these people viewed their Master/Lord as UN-TRUSTWORTHY and made their choices accordingly? ("...I knew that you are a hard man..." Matt. 25:24)

That would point directly to what Pilgrim said:

Quote:

----- Unbelief or Distrust, causes one to try to live the Christian life apart from God, apart from His life operating inside you.

Thoughts?

Diane

STOP trying!, on: 2012/7/20 10:53

Quote:

----- Unbelief or Distrust, causes one to try to live the Christian life apart from God, apart from His life operating inside you.

Then the answer to this is STOP trying!!!!  
WE can only embrace daily the Life of Christ within us because of HIM!

Re: , on: 2012/7/20 11:39

Quote:

-----Look at this folks!! I found two verses that are almost identical:

- 1) "I WAS AFRAID because I was naked; so I HID."
- 2) "I WAS AFRAID and went out and HID your gold in the ground."

Amazing! Don't you think that both these people viewed their Master/Lord as UN-TRUSTWORTHY and made their choices accordingly? ("...I knew that you are a hard man..." Matt. 25:24)

That would point directly to what Pilgrim said:

"Unbelief or Distrust, causes one to try to live the Christian life apart from God, apart from His life operating inside you."

Thoughts?

Diane

It gets even more interesting/scary.

Check this out:

Revelation 21:8

"But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Look who's first on the list. Before the unbelievers, the immoral, the idolaters, the murderers, etc.

Sobering, wouldn't you say?

**Re: STOP trying!, on: 2012/7/20 11:54**

Lets look at Hudson Taylor again

"When my agony of soul was at its height, a sentence in a letter from dear McCarthy was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and the Spirit of God revealed the truth of our oneness with Jesus as I had never seen it before. McCarthy, who had been much exercised by the same sense of failure, but saw the light before I did, wrote (I quote from memory): "But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One."

As I read I saw it all! "If we believe not, He remains faithful." I looked to Jesus and saw (and when I saw, oh, how joy flowed) that He had said, "I will never leave you." "Ah, here is rest!" I thought. "I have striven in vain to rest in Him. I'll strive no more. For has He not promised to abide with me - never to leave me, never to fail me?" And Dearie, He never will!

But this was not all He showed me, nor one half. As I thought of the vine and the branches, what light the blessed Spirit poured directly into my soul! How great seemed my mistake in having wished to get the sap, the fullness, out of Him. I saw not only that Jesus would never leave me, but that I was a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. The vine now I see is not the root merely, but all - root, stem, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruit; and Jesus is not only that; He is soil and sunshine, air and showers, and ten thousand times more than we have ever dreamed, wished for, or needed. Oh the joy of seeing this truth! I do pray that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened, that you may know and enjoy the riches freely given us in Christ."

This is the key

"I have striven in vain to rest in Him. I'll strive no more. For has He not promised to abide with me - never to leave me, never to fail me?" And Dearie, He never will!

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/20 12:10**

Quote:

----- Look who's first on the list, before the unbelievers, the immoral, the idolaters, the murderers, etc.  
-----

Answer: The "cowardly"! Oh my! Now we face the giant with a much more sobering tone. We can say that fear is the antithesis of "faith/believing".

Let's press on.....

Diane

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/20 12:13**

Quote:

----- STOP trying!  
-----

True, Tuc. But for now I'm going to pretend that I did not see your H. Taylor quote (and back up a step). We Protestants are trained to think: "by faith alone" - and it is our instinct to say: not by work or effort. But still we must ask: Stop trying what?

How do we distinguish "not-trying" from passivity, from refusal to enter "The Promised Land", from refusal to app

enhend the gifts and enablements inherent in our salvation – in other words life habits which we may view as “faith” living but which mask the underlying condition of UN-belief.

Here's the question: How do we distinguish fear-driven Christian living from faith-empowered Christian living?

A thought: Was it not the third servant in Jesus' parable who was guilty of not even trying – by merely burying the money? Conversely, how did the first two servants exhibit faith by investing their “bags of gold” (a good analogy for the life of Hudson Taylor)?

Diane

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2012/7/21 8:06**

Hi all,

Underneath many of our complex issues, I think fear and love are an everpresent fundamental tension. And perhaps to clarify, I think we should separate fear from anxiety. Fear can be helpful at times...say to move out of the way of an oncoming car, but anxiety thinks the driver is turning around to make another pass at you.

Anxiety is so native to humanity, that I think it pervades every aspect of our thinking. Of course not all of us admit to knowing fear...indeed some of us may overcompensate so successfully that people think we are impervious to worry. I observed this first hand growing up in the church, where the word anxiety is replaced by its spiritual pseudonym “wisdom”.

Now, I think it's important to recognize that while anxiety has a neurological, chemical, and even physical component, it is ultimately a spiritual issue. To be sure, as we experience life, our hippocampus becomes buffeted and scarred by a number of painful episodic memories, making it harder and harder to not become filled with “wisdom” towards everything and everyone we meet. In light of this, Jesus' encouragement for us to dare to become as little children is healing. Moving past anxiety, I believe requires a healing that begins spiritually and then reaches even our brain chemistry.

However, because fear and anxiety is so commonplace and ubiquitous, we tend to overlook its influence on our thoughts and actions. As a result, we do not address our fear, but the objects of our fear. We focus on anything and everything that is tormenting us...things that are real, and things that are imagined. Fear and anxiety informs everything from our beliefs towards economics to our taste in comedy, from our convictions in politics, to our interests in theology. I feel confident in making a such a generalized statement simply because of the general lack of love I see even in Christians who know better.

Speaking for myself, I recognize this one issue as a central battle because it interferes with the flow of God's love within.

Anxiety and fear gives us a mindset of scarcity and pessimism in the best of times, while love possesses abundance and hope even in the worst of times. Fear worries, while love believes all things. This is why I believe the tension between the two fuels our struggles, no matter how complex or rational we think we are. Fear and love are like two rubber bands around our waists anchored in opposite directions. The more we move towards one, the more the other wants to pull us back.

"At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved."

Blessings brethren,

Mike

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/21 9:55

Quote:

----- Speaking for myself, I recognize this one issue as a central battle because it interferes with the flow of God's love within  
-----

In other words, fear inhibits our ability to live out the greatest commandment: to love God, others, and ourselves -- because fear alienates us from the source of love -- God himself. Fear also alienates us from one another-- and from ourselves. Fear inhibits truthfulness in our inner being.

For that reason, as conscientious believers we cannot pamper this mighty giant. It is detrimental to deny its operation within us and within those we interact with - and indeed in our society at large. By ignoring its presence, we work against our very calling: to be messengers of God's hope through faith (trusting faith) in Christ and his gifts. We could label this condition "antichrist" -- because fear usurps the role and place of Christ in the human heart. And it leaves the unredeemed - and even ourselves - in bondage to fear and beset by the sinful patterns that arise out of fear. The Light remains hidden under a bushel and others see no reason to trust our God.

This cannot be!

Why not start here:

Quote:

----- "We do not address our fears, but the objects of our fear."  
-----

How are we doing that? What are some objects we commonly feared? WHY do they make us anxious? What's going on within us?

To add to Mary Jane's earlier point: I think we fear losing control because we have bits of the forbidden fruit from the Garden stuck between our teeth.

Diane

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2012/7/22 3:57

To begin with, I agree with your inclination to include Mary Jane's concern over slothfulness inside this issue. I believe they are related...and in the very least I don't want to ignore anyone as we press forward on this one track.

I also want to disclose that I have a special interest in this topic. Whether it is because of my own past, or because I am responsible for leading people today, understanding fear has been an area of interest to me.

Regarding my earlier comment about focusing on the objects of our fears, rather than our fearfulness, you raised a question for discussion....

Quote:

----- How are we doing that? What are some objects we commonly feared? WHY do they make us anxious? What's going on within us?  
-----

When discussing the objects of our anxieties, a starting point I am interested in, is not real objects like a burning building, but false objects...and how convincing these illusory objects are to our minds. We know most of our anxieties are based on perception rather than reality. Yet both real objects and unreal objects can feel exactly the same in our minds. The building may not be burning but we still swear we smell the smoke! So how do we tell the difference between something that is real and something that is nothing more than the manifestation of some spiritual, emotional, or chemical nature?

The conundrum I am thinking of can be described with the analogy of a music band performing on a stage using amplifiers. Let's imagine that half of the members of the band can't make the performance, so the other musicians in the band d

decide to fill in their sound with a prerecorded sound track. During the concert, half of the instruments are "live" and half the instruments are recorded. Since both the live and recorded music is being projected through the same amplifier and P A system, the audience has no discernible way to tell the audio difference between the live instruments and the recorded ones. Both sources of music are being reproduced through the same speakers with the same fidelity at the same time. In this way, we can describe how our mind is blending real life external inputs, with our own imaginary internal inputs, constantly and seamlessly. The "audience" in our minds has no sensory way of telling the difference between something that is actual, and something that is "prerecorded."

For a real life example of this pickle, you might remember the movie "Beautiful Mind", which was based on the life story of a Nobel prize winning mathematician who suffered from acute schizophrenia. From his youth into his older years he literally "saw" several people who were figments of his mind, but were as real to him as everyone else in his life. He would not only see them, but have two way conversations with them that resulted in disastrous situations occasionally. Because his brain projected them using trustworthy sensory experiences, he had no sensory or experiential ability to dismiss them away.

His hopeful breakthrough came not through sensory discernment, but through a simple observation: the imaginary people never aged or changed like real people.

This is exactly how we can tell the difference between real objects and imaginary objects. Real objects come and go, but the ones that haunt and torment us the most never age or change. I have experienced perceived objects that seemed absolutely real to me..but over the years I begin to recognize unchanging telltale patterns. I began to notice that despite variations, these were the same fears I've always had! I discovered how easily my brain can easily inject these illusory objects into almost any situation.

Now this "emotional intelligence" of learning to separate illusory objects from real objects is itself not really a solution but it does form the basis for moving forward. If my point in this post seems agreeable I would like to share with you how I do manage (somewhat) to move forward practically...or at least experimentally.

Blessings,

MC

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/22 22:14**

Quote:

----- understanding fear has been an area of interest to me  
-----

Mike, I believe you are here reflecting the very heart of God. I say this in view of the multitude of scripture verses, stories, and analogies that touch on the human experience of fear -- beginning in the Garden of Eden. Even the Messianic announcement itself touches on human fear: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good news!" Those many references are surely placed in scripture because God cares about our anxieties and fears.

In fact, I think this quote deserves a stand-alone post. Perhaps others would like to enrich Mike's comment by quoting scriptures or hymns (there are so many) or writings to portray the fact that FEAR is of significant concern to God -- in his love for humanity. That then opens the way for reflection on how the gift of salvation serves as God's remedy for fear.

(I'll return to touch on MC's other points.)

Diane

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/22 23:48

“But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, where there was nothing to dread.” Ps. 53:5

Quote:  
----- Yet both real objects and unreal objects can feel exactly the same in our minds.  
-----  
Becoming aware of this distinction is key. Most of what we fear is imagined; it is constructed from a fragment of reality. Yet our minds perceive it as totally real. Fear, then, is deficient in truth. And that has significant implications spiritually. God does not redeem what is untrue, non-existent. There can be no forgiveness and no miracle for a mirage.

After pondering over your real-vs-recorded music imagery it occurred to me that the object I fear most is myself. I have a smoldering anxiety that is founded on real episodes in the past. I know I have a besetting propensity to mess up. I can be disrespectful, thoughtless towards others, overly accommodating and passive, or overly blunt and forward. And I can deny my Lord a thousand ways over. Life, unfortunately, is an unrehearsed script. Only afterwards do I remember the right “lines”. But that does not give me any assurance that I will get it “right” the next time. Unfortunately in real life there is never a chance to rewind and retake.

My perceived “reality” about myself is that I am untrustworthy; and that drives my anxiety.

Quote:  
----- the imaginary people never aged or changed like real people  
-----

Now let me try these words on for size: My imagined self has not changed since childhood. Then it is surely God himself who has been using others in my life to validate what is real about myself - something that I am reluctant to accept because it clashes with my “preset” image in my mind. So then..... in reality, I am indeed changing by the grace of God and being used by him. The challenge for me, (and I know this theologically) is to deepen my trust in God and his work in and through me – that this may become “emotional intelligence” (as you put it).

Quote:  
----- I would like to share with you how I do manage (somewhat) to move forward practically...or at least experimentally.  
-----

Do go for it!

Diane

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2012/7/24 2:03

Quote:  
----- Only afterwards do I remember the right “lines”.  
-----

A favorite song of mine is The Crooked Road written by Darrell Scott.

"I walk a crooked road to get where I am going  
To get where I am going I must walk a crooked road  
And only when I'm looking back I see the straight and narrow  
I see the straight and narrow when I walk a crooked road"

"I love with all my heart, there is no way of stopping,  
I have no way of stopping I just love with all my heart.  
Through the broken and the beautiful, the bad news and the good news,  
The bad new and the good news is I love with all my heart."

There is more grace and wisdom in these lyrics than many Christian songs out there today. I guess that because Christi

ans are supposed to have all the answers before they take the test...and in that way, Christianity as a "religion" has honestly added to my anxiety.

I relate very well to your self diagnosis about feeling "untrust worthy." But isn't this closer to the imperfect person we really are...the actual person God has redeemed...not the one we wish was there inside us.

Quote:

----- God does not redeem what is untrue, non-existent.  
-----

This is quite an excellent thought to meditate on.

Because of the hour tonight I'll pause before sharing how I've personally moved forward through my own anxiety. For now, I will offer the following teaser:) My solution doesn't free me from feeling fear and anxiety...in fact it may at times make it worse! However, the practical solution I have arrived at, (through a scriptural perspective I believe) has enabled me to navigate through my fears and anxieties. So while it may not lessen their feeling inside, I believe I have learned some simple ways to lessen their control over my decision making.

See everyone soon,

MC

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/24 7:16**

Quote:

----- I see the straight and narrow when I walk a crooked road"  
-----

On this note, I have made a fascinating discovery through recent sharing times with certain believers - some whom I have known for years and some I have never met. In our visits they shared with me their "crooked" journey - their life of trials and pain, and their own struggle in it. As they talked, I perceived a radiating, beautiful calmness - the evidence of deep resting faith in the Lord which had developed through their years of trials. I was deeply encouraged and comforted by them. But when I pointed out my observation about their faith, they were all reluctant to accept it. They were seeing the crooked road and sensing their anxieties.

On the other hand, I have also chatted with countless believers who emanated an uptight aura as they shared their troubles. They made me feel uptight, and sometimes I would leave their presence all weighed down with anxiety. I would then have to work hard to distinguish these "recorded" sounds of anxiety which I absorbed from those people - and then reject it, lest I be defiled by it. Their stuff was not my stuff! (I have a tendency to absorb anxiety "loads" that are not my own) Of course, these Christians would not likely have acknowledged their fearfulness/faithlessness if it was pointed out to them. They were simply too obsessed about the externals - the OBJECTS of fear (ex spouse, children, job, boss, bank account, government, etc) Instead of assuming their own "load" and taking responsibility for it, they had a habit of dumping it on to others. I've had that habit myself, so I can't be critical. No one does this deliberately.

Quote:

----- My solution doesn't free me from feeling fear and anxiety...in fact it may at times make it worse! ..... So while it may not lessen their feeling inside, I believe I have learned some simple ways to lessen their control over my decision making.  
-----

I look forward to reading this!

Presently I am studying First Thessalonians. It is full of references which address the struggle to conquer fear with faith. Here we see a group of Christians who had learned the secret. Much can be drawn from this epistle.

Â....something for laterÂ....

Diane

Re: THE GIANT IN THE LAND - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/28 10:55

Now I address FEAR from a societal perspective - as the giant in the land. I draw from lyrics in popular Broadway songs - such as these words: "WE'LL SLAY THE GIANT"?

These words are from the song, "Seize the Day" in the musical, "Newsies" which is based on the New York City newsboy strike of 1899. Young newspaper sellers are exploited beyond reason by their bosses, and so they set out to enact change and are met by the ruthlessness of big business. The lyrics express their resolve to slay the giant - as they see it:

"Open the gates and seize the day,  
Don't be afraid and don't delay....  
Friends of the friendless seize the day  
Raise up a torch and light the way ....  
WE'LL SLAY THE GIANT,  
Neighbor to neighbor, father to son.  
One for all and all for one."

I discovered this song this week through my involvement in Music Camp. I asked the children learning the song, "What is the giant?" They didn't know the storyline, so they had no context to suggest that the OBJECT of fear was the ruthless giant of powerful big business. However, their other songs helped them see that FEAR indeed underlies the many expressions in their songs - fear of being abandoned, fear of life becoming meaningless, fear living in a world that can trample over you and swallow you up:

In "Annie", orphans sing:

It's the hard-knock life for us!  
No one's there when your dreams at night get creepy!  
No one cares if you grow...of if you shrink!  
No one dries when your eyes get wet and weepy!  
No one cares for you a smidge  
When you're in ! (We substituted the words: "on the edge")

Then there are these words from "Seussical":

I'm alone in the universe  
So alone in the universe

No one notices anything  
Not one person is listening  
They don't have any way of knowing

And.... And one day soon I know there will be  
One small voice in the universe  
One TRUE friend in the universe  
Who believes in me ... Please believe in me"

When the children sang these songs, they used cell phones as props. Through dance and actions they conveyed a sense that, while they might have hundreds of Facebook "friends" they may not have even one true friend - one person who would be there for them when they wanted to talk. Was there one person who would come and dry their tears, comfort them? Was there anyone who truly cared?

Then the kids learned "Kumbayah" – a contrasting song. I selected this one myself for its value in teaching musician ship. Yet it worked well thematically. I noted how it points to One who does indeed listen, one true friend, who does indeed care, who hears your crying... praying... singing.

So you see: Even in secularized contexts, it is not difficult to label FEAR as the mighty giant in the land. Symptoms are everywhere. Somebody must have the courage to acknowledge its expressions. Broadway may be doing that better than we who are Christians. You see, only in the context of fear can a song like Kumbaya (O Lord, Come by me) stand out as surprisingly refreshing. It is a simple song that expresses trust and hope in God.

While working on Kumbaya my colleague (who herself does not believe in God) asked the children: "Are you happy about what will come of this?" In other words, can you sing this song with the hope that it expresses? If you can, you will have INTENTION and you will convince your audience.

That is all the more true for us who have real faith in God! We are not merely conveying a character of another person's hope. To the extent that our trust and hope is real we will convey INTENTION in our lives - not merely when in the spotlight - but in the dark corners too. It is an intention that flows from a vibrant trust in our Lord. And the world will see it.

Diane

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/28 21:18**

Quote:

----- Lets look at Hudson Taylor again  
-----

Oh, Tuc, I haven't forgotten your quote by Hudson Taylor! I'm still mulling over his story ("The Growth of a Soul" by Dr. and Mrs Howard Taylor Bk. 1) .... getting there very slowly.

Meanwhile, I think a few scriptures (or hymns) about fear and trust would be helpful. What's been meaningful for any of you?

Diane

**Re: Slaying the Mighty Giant of Our Day - posted by dspks, on: 2012/7/28 21:59**

Our "Giants" seem to be many:

Do we struggle to understand God?  
Are there times we do not seek God?  
Do we do those things which we regret?  
Do we poison others with our words?  
We find ourselves condemning others?  
Others find us hard to live with?  
Do we have fear where there should be peace?  
Does our life demonstrate a lack of the fear of God?

Read Romans 3 to find THE "Giant".

Hear is a clue:

Mt 13:58 "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Heb 11:6 "But without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please him: for he that cometh to God MUST believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The Word of God declares the GIANT of ALL Giants:

You can trace EVERY defeat to this Giant...

The Giant UNBELIEF!!!

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/29 8:20**

Quote:

----- Do we poison others with our words?  
We find ourselves condemning others?  
-----

Yes, dspks, these are indeed among the symptoms of unbelief. And they can be so toxic! Why are we not inclined to view these patterns as fear-driven? I wonder. Yet we can easily recognize the effects on us when we have been in the presence of an anxious person. We feel contaminated, dirty. We walk away feeling burdened down.

It's less easy, I think, to realize when we may be doing this to others. I speak for myself. If we can learn to be sensitive to this, we can also be stirred to move towards deeper faith. We see the need.

One of the aims of this thread is to label FEAR as a driving force – fear – that is the result of a failure to trust God – and his faithfulness. Otherwise, we may find ourselves well-stocked up with Bible references and Christian examples of belief – but have little application to it all within our own personhood.

Diane

**Re: King Saul: The perfect portrait of FEAR - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/30 7:48**

“He was afraid; terror filled his heart...” 1 Sam. 28:5

King Saul had a reason to be terrified: A mighty, threatening giant was marching straight for him. This was no imagined giant! It was the giant Philistine army. Such an encounter would surely strike anyone with terror. But Saul wasn't just a nyone.

You know the story of King Saul – and you know the outcome. Fear begets fear. That was true for Saul. His fear-driven life was rooted in resistant unbelief – not only his own unbelief, but also his nation's, Israel. Remember, distrust is why they wanted a king like the other nations.

Speaking of other nations, the Philistines themselves were defiant unbelievers who mocked the living God. In those two nations we see unbelief confronting unbelief. That's a modern trend too. It's disastrous. Saul was merely following the crowd. He could never stand apart and trust God - in spite of the many opportunists to witness God's FAITHFULNESS - that is, proofs of God's trustworthiness. Saul couldn't trust God so he couldn't obey God.

Saul's inauguration itself got off to a bad start. When his name was chosen, he couldn't be found. But God knew his whereabouts: “He has HIDDEN himself among the baggage”. Here again we see this HIDING behaviour – just like Adam did, and just like the third servant in Jesus' parable who hid the talent of gold.

Hiding and Fear are mutual partners. That was true for the entire Israelite army. When they saw the approaching Philistine army giant, “as numerous as the sand on the seashore”, we read, “they HID in caves and thickets. (All the troops with) were quaking with FEAR.” 1 Sam. 13:6,7

Next we see how Saul's fear drove him to disobey God. On his own accord, he assumed a priestly function because he could not wait for Samuel to arrive and perform the sacrifice. Here is human nature at work. We all know how fear

makes us impatient, unable to wait. Fear drives us to act prematurely rather than wait on God in faith. And “whatever is not of faith is sin.”

Saul demonstrates how fear tempts us to get defensive and dishonest. When Saul was confronted by Samuel, he denied his wrong: “But I DID obey the Lord,” he said. Later he did admit his fear, as the reason for his rebellion “I was AFRAID of the people so I gave in to them.”

May those words not be written on my tombstone!

CONT'D

**Re: King Saul, cont'd - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/30 7:49**

People-fear. That is a huge problem for us – especially in our humanistic culture. When we put our trust in people, we will inevitably fear people. We give people power over us that is idolatrous. We count on them. And so when people fail or threaten us, we respond out of fear. Fight or flight. Those are the two typical responses. If we perceive ourselves as stronger than them, we control, dominate or attack. If we sense that they are stronger than us, then we run away – we give in to them, or we “throw in the towel”, gossip about them.... remove ourselves from their lives. Fight or flight. Either way we hide ourselves. We hide behind self-constructed facades. And we shield ourselves from our obligation to love. When we can't trust God, we can't nurture trust in others either.

Let's admit, people-fear is a struggle we face all the time. We recognize it most easily when we encounter its effects – other people's failures or our failures.

As we ponder over Saul's story in Scripture we see that it is, in fact, a contemporary story. We see that that when God's Spirit hovered over the shaping of the biblical text, God saw fit to preserve, not only the heroic stories of faith, but also the stories of failure. In fact, God had a hand in shaping the story of Saul! That, in itself, inspires us to trust God! He understands human nature – and he wants us to understand it too.

When we are sensitized to the effects of unbelief, we learn the value of faith, and why it is more precious than gold.

Diane

**Re: Saul - The Fearful Giant - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/30 21:13**

More on Saul:

“Saul... an IMPRESSIVE young man without equal among the Israelites, A HEAD TALLER than any of the others.” 1 Sam. 9:2

“... as stood among the people he was A HEAD TALLER than any of the others.” 1 Sam. 10:23

I'd say, Saul was a giant of a man. Actually, that word “giant” is a bit of a loose term and is not necessarily the best rendering for the four OT Hebrew words translated as “giant”. Modern translations have fixed the problem (Revell).

In many ways Saul fit the concept of a “giant”. He was tall, of great stature, a warrior. Imagine a gathering of thousands of people, and one person stands a head taller than everyone else. That's Saul. You couldn't miss him.

There seems to be some irony here. Long ago the Israelites were afraid of giants in the land. Now a giant of a man is afraid of the Israelites. Yet Saul possessed all the regal stature and potential of being every inch a king. When a new king was being chosen Saul's failure makes God's command all the more poignant: God cautioned, “Do not consider his appearance OR HIS HEIGHT, for I have rejected him. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” 1 Sam. 16:7

That makes perfect sense. After all, it's in the heart where the real victory is won and the real enemy is conquered. Thi

s gets drawn out in the Armour of God passage in Ephesians: Faith is enacted inwardly. The shield of faith operates in the heart/mind – where it quenches the flaming arrows of the evil one. That’s where the mighty forces of evil do their dirty work.

Fear is a serious breach in the armor. Fear makes us vulnerable to cunning suggestions by the “prowling lion”. (You’ll know some examples.)

Normally armour parts are worn outwardly. Yet in Ephesians Six they operate inwardly. That’s a startling shift in the imagery! But this is where the “giant” resides. And that’s the point of emphasis.

David himself did not conquer Goliath. Really God did – through David. David did however conquer fear - through a life practice of trust in God. Saul’s armor, a massive contraption in itself, could not do that. Ohhh – here’s that irony again! Can’t you see little David trying to don that grossly over-sized armor! It was just as useless as the cumbersome devices we don to conquer the imagined giants of our day. For us too, fear can drive us to go overboard. But we merely weigh ourselves down, only to get incapacitated by our over-protectiveness. Besides, second hand “armor” doesn’t work! You can’t live by someone else’s faith.

One more point: I see the Spiritual armour of God as being Christ himself abiding within us. Every armor part is encompassed in Christ himself. Really it is Christ who brings the victory – working in and through us. Our role is to trust him. On that point, I know you would all agree!

PS – Other biblical passages?

Diane

#### Re: Money-mania and Fear - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/7/31 12:49

Recently the Lord mercifully allowed me to be tested in this very issue of fear-vs-faith. It was over a financial loss of substantial proportion (in my mind). It would have been quite instinctive for my husband and I to go after each others' throats over this - or to withdraw from each other and not speak. Fight or flight. Those are common fear-driven responses in marriages in times of crisis. I had been working on this thread theme, so I knew I had to practice what I preached or I’d be a hypocrite. I admit, it took some time because I am a slow learner. First I had to face my own fears. The moment of victory for me came when I sang a little song learned in Sunday School:

He owns the cattle on a thousand hills  
The wealth in every mine,  
He owns the rivers and the rocks and rills,  
The sun and stars that shine,  
Wonderful riches more than tongue can tell  
He is my Father so they're mine as well  
He owns the cattle on a thousand hills  
I know that He will care for me.

The GIANT was slain when I considered that my Lord owns an infinite supply of wealth. And it is HIS bank account from which I draw! From that perspective what’s in the local bank (or not) is inconsequential by comparison. Through abiding in Christ I know my needs are amply-supplied – beyond all measure. That day I found myself far richer than ever before, because I saw myself tapped into the greatest source of wealth ever. And here is no need to fear. Only trust. Later on the problem was resolved – but more importantly, the lesson was learned through this heaven-sent trial.

The love of money spawns all kinds of evil because it is fear-driven. It isn’t godly love at all! Money-mania might be a better word. Money-philía would be an ideal translation of the Greek for “love of money: philarguria. .

Think of Hemophilia, a disease of frequent bleeding caused by a genetic defect. Similarly, “Moneyphilia” is money-bleeding caused by a spiritual defect: unbelief. You are controlled and ultimately ruined by money addiction. In the end you have nothing left but your fear - because you’ve never been able to trust God to provide enough.

“For the love of money (money-mania) is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” 1 Tim. 6:10

“The one who loves money will never be satisfied with money, the one who loves wealth will never be satisfied with his income.” Ecc. 5:10

HERE’S GOD’S BETTER WAY:

“Your conduct must be free from the love of money and you must be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you and I will never abandon you.’” Heb. 13:5

Fear focuses you on what you DON’T have. Faith focuses you on what you DO have. That’s apparent in the above admonition. Oh.... and did you notice how the verse centers you in trust – based on God’s faithfulness? Scripture does that masterfully. That’s also how we should encourage each other.

Diane

**Re: Praying: by fear or by faith - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/2 8:23**

Fear focuses on the empty half of the cup; Faith focuses on the full half.

Let’s consider how fear and faith play out in our prayer life. It’s possible that our prayers are not answered because our praying flows out of anxiety more than faith. Our prayers, after all, arise from where we are looking. Fear-based praying is focused on the empty half of the cup: what we don’t have. When we can only see the empty half, that’s where our prayers are centered. And so we merely want God to fill the vacuum. We merely want God to remove whatever causes us anxiety. We want circumstances or people to improve so that our “empty-half-cup” existence can feel more secure – and we can feel better about life. But, alas, we are still left depleted in the vacuum. We’re still looking at the empty half; and we’re still driven by fear.

Faith, as in trust, revolutionizes our prayer life because faith inspires us to look at the full half of the cup. And then something remarkable happens to us. Through faith-praying we discover that the “full” becomes infinitely fuller and fuller – as we draw deeper and deeper. We realize that in the “full half” there is no bottom. This is the kind of praying we see in the Psalms. You see this faith-based praying in Paul’s prayers too, as in this example:

“...according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.... For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Eph. 3: 1-21

Paul slayed the giant, didn't he!

Why not list all the references to the full "half" in the above bible passage. There are many!

Diane

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/2 21:40**

The biblical word "cup" sometimes refers to one's lot in life - whether joyous or adverse, divine appointments, whether favourable or unfavourable. We know that on this side of eternity our "cup" is not yet filled up yet with perfect bliss. But it is not empty! Fear or faith - the one that predominates will determine where we mostly look: the empty half or the full half.

In Paul's Eph. 3 prayer we see what he draws from the full half of the cup. It's an impressive list!

- 1) "His eternal purposes that he accomplished in Christ Jesus"
- 2) "A...our Lord."
- 3) "the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name"
- 4) "his glorious riches".
- 5) fullness of God
- 5) "his Spirit in your inner being"
- 6) the love of Christ: wide and long and high and deep is... surpassing knowledge
- 7) is able to do immeasurably more...
- 8) his power
- 9) throughout all generations for ever and ever!

Did I get it all?

Cont'd

**Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/8/2 23:18**

Some other ideas concerning "Cups".

A "Cup" is an interesting symbol in the Bible, not so much for what it is but for its contents. The "Cup" is a container, much like the Christian life. We are cartons, cups, receptacles, etc., etc., for good or evil things, for the Holy Spirit or the unholy spirit. We bring good or evil things out of the treasure of our hearts.

In Matt, 20:23 we see that the cup contains Suffering.

In 2 Samuel 11:13, it contained Treachery. (The Cup that David offered to Uriah)

"And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house."

In Mark 14:36 it contained the wrath of God upon sin. Jesus took the cup of God's wrath (anger against sin).

And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."

Jesus took the cup of wrath so that we may now take the cup of salvation that He offers.

Psa 116:13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

However, if we refuse the cup of salvation we will drink of the cup of God's wrath. Rev 16:19

And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

Either way, there is a cup that we will be drinking from.

We have all been offered cups filled with genuine fellowship and "pure" drinking water and we have all been offered cups filled with strange fellowship (that we thought was genuine) and polluted water (truth mixed with lies) which always turn out to "poison" an individual. This "poisoning" always takes one away from the simplicity that is in Jesus Christ.

The other thing regarding the "cup of salvation" is the fact that Jesus does not force-feed us. We have to receive His cup of salvation and then bring it to our "mouth" and drink deeply of it. The taking and receiving of what God gives is our responsibility. The giving is His.

Joh 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

On another note, we have all drank mixture (lies and truth together). Maybe we should sip a bit more and gulp less. Slog it around in our mouths a bit and see if we sense any bitter taste before we actually "swallow" it. Sometimes, you just don't know something is bad for you until you actually do swallow it so we need our "senses (palate) exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb 5:13).

Are we supposed to "know" evil by experiencing it? No, we are not. We are to discern it, but not experience it. So, how do we exercise our spiritual senses? Certainly not by partaking of evil as Satan deceived Eve into doing. Rather, by getting to know the Lord and obeying Him will you learn to discern evil. And how is this done? How do you discern evil by getting to know the Lord? Well, the more you know the Lord the more you recognize what is not of Him. This is how we are to recognize evil. By partaking of Jesus (Tree of Life), drinking of Him. Not by experiencing evil (the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil), drinking of the Evil One, but by "knowing" the Lord. Any by knowing Him, we will know what is contrary to His nature and character and stay away from it.

Psalm 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Here is a good test that you can keep in mind. If it takes away from Jesus Christ in any way, or diminishes Him or brings Him lower than something or someone, then it does not pass the "simplicity test" and you should not drink from that cup.

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/3 17:27**

Quote:  
----- The other thing regarding the "cup of salvation" is the fact that Jesus does not force-feed us. We have to receive His cup of salvation and then bring it to our "mouth" and drink deeply of it. The taking and receiving of what God gives is our responsibility. The giving is His.  
-----

Following the context of this thread, how does fear (as discussed above) affect "taking and receiving" from God?

Diane

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/3 18:41**

Paul's Ephesians 3 prayer is one way to address Pilgrim's point about our role vs God's role. I post the text here. Perhaps you would like to ponder over these words and consider how Paul applies those distinctions in the way he writes and prays:

Ex: Eph. 3:11-21

"... according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

See also Eph. 1:15-23

**Re: Something far bigger than any giant we may fear - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/4 7:25**

From Eph. 3, Paul's prayer:

“Christ may dwell in your hearts”  
“his Spirit in your inner being”  
“rooted and established in love”  
“power that is at work within us,”  
filled to the measure of all the fullness of God

With the infinite abundance that the Father has made available through his own Son, by his Spirit abiding within—why do we Christians have a tendency to dwell in the desert—clinging anxiously to the few withering blades of grass we find? But they are never enough to preserve us through hazards and trials that befall us. They're not enough to equip us for our high calling: to love the unlovely. They're not enough to convince the lost of what we've found. And they're not enough to conquer the ravaging giant within: fear.

This spiritual dirth really is a problem, isn't it! That's why we've had the Abundant Life Conferences, Deeper Life retreats, and so forth. There's no end of books and seminars on the subject.

Hardened people don't have this problem. So why must the more spiritually-inclined people strive so anxiously for God's gifts—as if access to it is nearly elusive. You'd think, by the way we handle these matters, that there is a stricture in the Narrow Path—as if God requires that we go through some rigorous moral/ascetic gymnastics in order to pass through.

Yet in fact, we already have it all—fully available to us. Pilgrim earlier pointed out that God has done his part, but we must do our part: RECEIVE. That's exactly where we get ourselves into a quagmire. When God's promises seem elusive we get ourselves into an anxious knot over what we should be DOING—how to receive. What must I do better? How can I get it? We strive endlessly, day after day, assuming that we haven't tried enough to receive. We are hard on each other, chastising each other for lack of faith. Over and over we tell each other: Jesus is all you need! God alone! Just have faith. Then we are left wondering, How can I muster up more faith? It's a discouraging existence. It's a heavy load on our back, and we put it on each other. Victory seems so far away—on the top of a high mountain somewhere in the distance.

This is not merely a “sign of the times”—proof of how bad Christianity has become lately. It has been a struggle over the centuries. The greatest saints we know have endured this struggle—John Bunyan, AB Simpson, Ironside, Hudson Taylor, and countless we'll never know about. I emphasize this because I think we need to respect this as a genuine struggle among caring, conscientious people—wise people. This is no place for simplistic answers and little quotes. It is an inner journey. The apostle Paul seemed to realize that. And that's why he prayed as he did for the believers. You see Paul's concern for what happens within their hearts (minds).

Notice in the following scriptures how Paul prays for the inner being. Notice especially the theological foundation of his prayer—what GOD does. (a point for those who smuggly think they can shun "theology".)

Eph. 1:11-23 THESE ARE BREATH TAKING WORDS!!

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same

me as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Question: How does this passage affect you?

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/4 14:31**

Quote:

----- How does this passage affect you?  
-----

I am convicted as I meditate on these scriptures. They challenge me to view earthly troubles (the empty half) in light of far grander matters (the full half). Of course it's not half and half. That is not the true proportion. Still, wouldn't you agree that a faith-based proportion will look insurmountably different than a fear-driven proportion - and that is evident in our prayers?

May our prayer life become like Paul's - rooted and established in love through faith.  
Diane

**Re: Faith among the Thessalonian Christians - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/5 14:06**

Fear holds our minds hostage. It sabotages our calling. Faith is the one weapon that conquers this ravaging giant. The apostle Paul understood the value of faith and he took great pains to commend the Thessalonian Christians for their faith. Do take some time to reflect on these verses. How could Paul tell that their trust in God was genuine? What were his own responses concerning their faith?

From First Thessalonians:

“We remember before our God and Father your work produced by FAITH, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1:3

“The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your FAITH in God has become known everywhere. 1:8

“We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God’s service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your FAITH.” 3:2

“For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your FAITH. I was afraid that in some way the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.” 3:5

“But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your FAITH and love.” 3:6

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your FAITH.” 3:7

“Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your FAITH.” 3:10  
“... let us be sober, putting on FAITH and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet and the hope of salvation as a helmet.” 5:8

From Second Thessalonians:

“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your FAITH is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.” 1:3

“Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and FAITH in all the persecutions and trials you

u are enduring.” 1:4

“With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by FAITH.” 1:11

DO YOU THINK PAUL GOT A POINT ACROSS?

Why not, like Paul, make it a goal to encourage fellow believers whenever you see evidence of genuine trust in God! And in turn, allow yourself to be encouraged.

Diane

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/7 13:55**

It is significant that Paul was able to recognize the outworking of faith in the Thessalonians believers. He commended them for it. For what? For their FAITH! Paul wasn't merely giving them a pat on the back for doing a good job. Paul was not commending works in themselves, and certainly not works driven by desires to EARN God's or man's approval, to absolve guilt, or merely to feel good about oneself. Paul could recognize the presence of faith by the quality of the works.

These works flowed out of trustful faith in God's trustworthiness. In other words, the believers trusted God to be true to his promises. By faith they had entered the "Promised Land" of the New Covenant. That faith inspired them to reach deeply into the well of God's promises, gifts and enablements through his Spirit. In him they received the empowerment to love – as God would have them love. Without faith it is impossible to obey the one supreme commandment, the one which summarizes all others. That is because faith puts you in the very presence of God – where alone you know God's love, God's purposes, and God's destiny. And it will be apparent in your habits and choices.

When faith is weak, fear will have some measure of control over the way you treat others. Do you agree? Without faith, the "giants" – such as the insults, the rejections, etc - have power to hold us back in our "safety zones". We are not convinced that God will come through for us.

Paul knew that faith alone would preserve the church through the centuries - through all the testings from within and without.

Faith is a treasure, more precious than gold. Yet like gold, it is a rare quality among the people of God. Why - we may barely have our big toe in the Promised Land.

On the other hand, genuine faith knows no denominational boundaries or theological camps. Do you agree?

Diane

**Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2012/8/7 18:06**

Forgive me if I am repeating something that has already been said. I have been busy and logged on to read briefly and this thread caught my eye. I have read some of what has been said, but not all.

I have been teaching a Bible study that is, right now, centered around the importance of the word of God in our lives. Tonight we will dive into the parable of the sower. Much of what we have been learning, and some of what I will talk about tonight, has to do with the inextricable union of the word of God and faith.

Paul (I am assuming it is him) has much to say in Hebrews 3 and 4 about unbelief. Here are a few verses I pulled out.

Heb 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God

Heb 3:18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

Heb 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Heb 4:11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

I am appalled so often at how little emphasis most modern American Christians place on the word of God. The word of God is the bedrock of our faith (I speak not of the "christian faith", but of our faith in believing God.) Yet we are so immersed in this world. Most of us watch hours of television, spend hours surfing the net, spend hours playing video games, spend hours reading magazines and books, spend hours and many dollars at the movies, have facial recognition of movies stars, television personalities, and music icons, can usually tell what movies so and so starred in, know the statistics of athletic teams and team members, can spend hours discussing political figures and their platforms, and the list can go on. Yet most of us could not name all of the Ten Commandments or quote more than half a dozen well known scriptures. Most of us have difficulty remembering which chapter or even which book contains key teachings and truths. And then we wonder why we struggle with unbelief and why our faith seem so weak. Then we cry out to God to give us more faith.

This world and its system is anti-Christ and will charge you to capacity with unbelief. If what this world feeds us is not directly attacking or opposing the word of God it is keeping us so full of trivialities that we have little or not time to fill ourselves with that which combats unbelief and builds our faith.

Now, I am not saying that we should take a sledgehammer to every electronic device we own and live in a commune or a monastery. But we do need to be aware of what we do to ourselves and make, in most cases, some radical changes in our lifestyles. We must saturate our minds with the word of God. It must become living reality to us. It must be the thing that we meditate day and night. For it is through the word of God that our faith grows and our unbelief shrinks.

A side note. Ultimately the sins of every man and woman who has ever lived has been forgiven. The price has been paid. The real issue that sends men to hell is their rejection of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is their failure to receive by faith that thing that was so freely offered them. They do not believe and choose to remain in their sins. It is, ultimately, their unbelief is it not?

**Re: - posted by learn (), on: 2012/8/7 20:52**

Hi Diane,

Forgive me also as I only briefly read some of the later posts. But it seems to me about faith and how we get more faith and how we struggle with earthly things.

Well, I was seeing this youtube video : Pray and Be alone with God by Paul Washer and I think it will answer your question. Not sure whether Sermonindex has it but I do feel its a very good video that will bless you.

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/7 20:57**

Quote:  
-----We must saturate our minds with the word of God. It must become living reality to us. It must be the thing that we meditate day and night. For it is through the word of God that our faith grows and our unbelief shrinks.  
-----

Yes, building one's faith is the intended outcome of regular Bible reading. Yet, it is possible to read the word through the lens of unbelief, and be immune to its faith building capacity. It is quite possible that fear rather than trust becomes the motivation. And then the primary aim for obedience is to avoid God's punishment. When scripture is not grasped through the eyes of faith, the word tends to become a behaviour modification program. The Bible gets combed for all the rules and laws with little value seen in faith.

Luther was a biblical scholar. Yet for him every phrase in it the bible shouted with divine wrath, and it made him miserable.

ble. After his experience with divine grace, that all changed. Then every word in scripture shone with promise. That is because Luther came to see scripture through the eyes of faith rather than fear. (and I'm not referring to the fear of God in the trusting sense, but in the distrusting sense (the latter is driven by a distorted view of God)).

Travis, How many of the resistant unbelievers you outline might have an accurate understanding of the blessings of the New Covenant promises? I ask because virtually anyone I have ever met who has expressed a rejection of God can see no reason to trust God – and they base that on what they have seen in the church. We can easily call that an excuse. But surely, if professing Christians cannot demonstrate the insurmountable, awesome benefits of living by faith in God and his many promises, why should unbelievers believe?

Here's a challenge: Why not write a post about the divine promises inherent in living by faith – and make it at least as long as your comments about NOT believing.

Diane

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/7 21:04**

Quote:

----- I was seeing this youtube video : Pray and Be alone with God by Paul Washer and I think it will answer your question.  
-----

Thank you. I think I have seen pretty well all of the Youtube clips by Paul Washer, so I may have heard the message you refer to. For the sake of discussion, can you explain which question you refer to and how you see Washer touching on it.

By the way, you may wish to browse through this thread to see how the material has been developing to this point. I'm curious to consider how Paul Washer's teaching integrates with all this - (edit) this theme of faith conquering the mighty giant of fear. What do you think?

Diane

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/8 6:41**

Quote:

----- 15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.  
-----

As we move along, we must keep this Pauline text firmly in our front view. After all, we ourselves are prone to peering back into the desert behind us – and fix our eyes on threatening giants – those things which merely aggravate our fears, suspicion, distrust, and unbelief.

Let's admit, human nature finds it easier to focus on the threatening problem of unbelief "out there" than on the treasures of faith within us - through Christ Jesus.

Notice how Paul's prayers tend to include many words about God himself - the treasure itself - the blessings in the Promised Land - the Kingdom of God. Paul is looking at the full "half" of the cup when he prays!

Seek first the kingdom of God, and then all the things which you are inclined to fret over will be taken care of. Set your vision, goals, and aspirations on the Promised Land, and there you'll see that your needs are met - ABUNDANTLY!

May our spiritual eyes become skilled at recognizing the evidence of trustful faith in others — lest we find ourselves focusing on what we see wrong — and we become critical and cynical.... without a single prayer for the faith growth of brothers and sisters in Christ. That is NOT faith living!

It's time to disengage our minds from the discouraging reports by the "ten spies" and seek after the encouraging reports by the "two spies".

NO MORE DWELLING ON THE EDGE - WITH ONE FOOT IN THE DESERT AND ONE FOOT IN CAANAN!

Do I hear an "Amen"?

Diane

Be THOU my vision.....

**Re: Now the Lord is not only with us He is IN US!!!!, on: 2012/8/8 16:30**

Numbers 13:33, "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

Let's look at what Joshua said in response to this.

Numbers 14:1-9, "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:

And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

----

Neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

Now the Lord is not only with us He is IN US!!!!

Why fear???

\*edit added verse

**Re: - posted by learn (), on: 2012/8/9 16:25**

Hi Diane,

It was not so much a question but the general perception I got that you were asking on how to get more faith and how to let go of earthly things. Now bear in mind I only briefly read/skim your latest posts and so may be wrong and if so I apologize.

The Paul Washer sermon touched on how we need to pray so that the Holy Spirit empower us and when we do so we get more faith etc. When I saw the sermon, I immediately thought of this thread and thought that it might help.

Currently I do not have time to really read through the whole thread and meditate/discuss as I'm off pursuing another area of God although there's certainly some overlap with faith.

Perhaps I may come back to this thread at a later point.

**Re: Drawing from our weaponry - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/13 6:30**

I praise God for how the Church has provided us with a mighty weaponry against this giant of fear. Our rich hymnody is a good example.

Today this one especially encourages me and strengthens my fragile faith. Here is an expression of deep trust:

Jesus! I am resting, resting  
In the joy of what Thou art;  
I am finding out the greatness  
Of Thy loving heart.  
Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee,  
And Thy beauty fills my soul,  
For, by Thy transforming power,  
Thou hast made me whole.

Jesus! I am resting, resting  
In the joy of what Thou art;  
I am finding out the greatness  
Of Thy loving heart.

2 Oh, how great Thy loving kindness,  
Vaster, broader than the sea:  
Oh, how marvelous Thy goodness,  
Lavished all on me!  
Yes, I rest in Thee, Beloved,  
Know what wealth of grace is Thine,  
Know Thy certainty of promise,  
And have made it mine.

3 Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,  
I behold Thee as Thou art,  
And Thy love, so pure, so changeless,  
Satisfies my heart,  
Satisfies its deepest longings,  
Meets, supplies its every need,  
Compasseth me round with blessings,  
Thine is love indeed.

4 Ever lift Thy face upon me,  
As I work and wait for Thee;  
Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus,  
Earth's dark shadows flee.  
Brightness of my Father's glory,  
Sunshine of my Father's face,  
Keep me ever trusting, resting,  
Fill me with Thy grace.

**Re: The biggest giant, on: 2012/8/13 8:12**

There is a giant that has not been truly exposed so far. In my opinion it is the worst and biggest giant. One reason it is so dangerous is that most people do not even consider it a giant. What is this giant? it is the giant of religion. Now when I say religion I am sure many ideas may pop into your mind so to make it very clear - I am talking about the giant of "Christian Religion".

Now True Christianity is NOT a religion at all but is really just embracing, walking in, enjoying and participating in Christ's Life daily in our union with Him. Now all of this is just the result of what God in Christ has already accomplished for us and in us.

**Re: by the rock band, Rush - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/16 7:43**

The Weapon (Part II Of Fear) by Rush:

We've got nothing to fear -- but fear itself  
Not pain or failure, not fatal tragedy  
Not the faulty units in this mad machinery  
Not the broken contacts in emotional chemistry

With an iron fist in a velvet glove  
We are sheltered under the gun  
In the glory game on the power train  
Thy kingdom's will be done

And the things that we fear are a weapon to be held against us...

He's not afraid of your judgement  
He knows of horrors worse than your Hell  
He's a little bit afraid of dying --  
But he's a lot more afraid of your lying

And the things that he fears are a weapon to be held against him...

Can any part of life -- be larger than life?  
Even love must be limited by time  
And those who push us down that they might climb --  
Is any killer worth more than his crime?

Like a steely blade in a silken sheath  
We don't see what they're made of  
They shout about love, but when push comes to shove  
They live for the things they're afraid of

And the knowledge that they fear is a weapon to be used against them...

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/16 8:29**

Quote:

----- They shout about love, but when push comes to shove  
They live for the things they're afraid of  
-----

I think this is an amazing observation of humankind. History has proved this to be true over and over -- certainly in the historical church. I think this line of lyrics, in itself, is worth considering. How does this observation play out even today -- among the people of God -- especially in view of our weak faith?

It's true, isn't it: We can easily speak of love as the ultimate virtue, but when "push comes to shove" – that is, in temptations (perceived threat), our behaviours are determined by what we fear. What is it that we fear so intensely? How is that revealed in our choices and habits?

Diane

**Re: I'm being taken over": Popular music and the fear of the impersonal - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/17 16:23**

article by Rachel Thorpe January 2010  
(CAPS MINE)

"It takes a worried man to sing a worried song." So croons popular singer Paolo Nutini in a song on his latest album Sunny Side Up (May 2009). In doing so he reveals the serious side to the glossy pop culture of the twenty-first century. In the era of the iPod, Spotify and free music downloads, song lyrics are fast becoming one of the most important windows into the thought-world of our society.

One concern resurfaces regularly across the genres – that FEAR LIES AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING. As we shall see this is probably an echo of the earlier existential "angst" or brooding disquiet about the apparent meaninglessness of everything. An obvious example is Lily Allen's 2009 hit entitled simply 'THE FEAR'. In January 2010, the song has been re-released on the internet with a new promotional video. Young people from across the country are filmed singing along with Allen, and these snippets are put together to create a montage. A whole generation joins together to affirm her words, which speak of an overpowering FEAR. This kind of FEAR, the chorus points out, is the cause both of emotional numbness and the loss of a moral code:

I don't know what's right and what's real anymore  
I don't know how I'm meant to feel anymore  
When do you think it will all become clear?  
Because I'm being taken over by The Fear.  
(Lily Allen, 'The Fear')

One could make a thorough and convincing critique of modern society by extending some of the points that Lily Allen picks up in these verses. We see a society defined by "free-for-all celebrity, rampant materialism and triumph of self" (Jod Mitchell). Allen mentions the love of money ("I want to be rich and I want lots of money") and the culture's obsession with appearance and the superficial ("Everything is cool as long as I'm getting thinner"). But all is blamed on this all-pervasive fear, which seems to be at the root of capitalism itself:

I am a weapon of massive consumption,  
But it's not my fault, it's how I'm programmed to function.  
(ibid)

Mechanistic man is at the mercy of his FEAR and attempts to douse the flames of an ever growing fire with possessions, wealth and momentary fame: "I'll take my clothes off and it will be shameless / 'cause everyone knows that's how you get famous".

But what is this fear? It is the angst that Francis Schaeffer was already writing about as early as 1971. Facing the kind of existentialist despair expressed in writers like Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, he claims that "fear can come in many guises, but it mostly comes in three areas: the fear of the impersonal; the fear of non-being; and the fear of death". It is what Graham Bretherick calls "negative fear", to be distinguished from the fear of the Lord.

Much could be said on each of these areas, but my focus here is on the most persistent of the three fears which Schaeffer lists.

Fear of the Impersonal

cont'd....

<http://www.rachelthorpe.com/im-being-taken-over-popular-music-and-the-fear-of-the-impersonal.html>

**Re: cont'd - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/17 18:39**

## FEAR OF THE IMPERSONAL

The fear of the impersonal saturates song lyrics, the poetry of the twenty-first century. One singer who deals with this issue specifically is Sam Sparro, who released his song 'Black and Gold' back in March 2008. Internet discussion asked if it was about the God of Christianity, since the singer's father is a minister. Sam Sparro's response was "is pretty much about existential moment. Does God exist? What are we all doing here? I was thinking about the origins of the universe when I wrote it - you know, nothing much, really!"

The song is a seemingly harmless dance track with a catchy tune. But Sam Sparro's use of the word "existential" points us towards the serious philosophical considerations that underpin his lyrics. Fear or "angst" (to use Kierkegaard's term) about the unbounded freedom of man quickly surfaces. Within its first verse the song is already tackling one of the big questions about the "origins of the universe". It highlights the uncertainties which a wholesale acceptance of Darwinian evolution inevitably raise.

If the fish swam out of the ocean  
And grew legs and they started walking  
And the apes climbed down from the trees  
And grew tall and they started talking  
Now I'm looking for a reason why  
You even set my world into motion.  
(Sam Sparro, 'Black and Gold')

The song quickly comes to the point and defines the FEAR under consideration here. Without a God, everything we see is meaningless - matter which does not matter, existence without significance. Lily Allen's song expresses the fear that eats away at emotions and morality. But Sam Sparro's song goes a step further in claiming that this fear poses questions about the fundamental basis of reality:

'Cause if you're not really here  
Then the stars don't even matter  
Now I'm filled to the top with fear  
That it's all just a bunch of matter.  
(ibid)

The concern that everything we see and feel is just material substance is one of the most powerful messages of our culture.

"I want to be next to you"

Paolo Nutini returns to this theme in his song 'Coming up Easy' (Nov 2009), when he remarks in a refrain, "It was in love I was created and in love is how I hope I die." What Nutini refers to is something all human beings experience - a deep desire to bracket life in personal human contact; that is, to escape the all-powerful impersonal. But, if we have come from matter and death is simply a release from matter then his remark is meaningless. Can love, a concept which is itself challenged by song lyrics, really be strong enough to banish the fear we have been considering?

It is - but only if two things are true: first that there is a real personal Creator, and second that this creator loves. Only the agape love of the creator has the power to banish 'The Fear': 'There is no fear in love,' says the apostle John, 'but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love (1 John 4:18, ESV). God's unconditional, active love is the only antidote to the rebellion that automatically produces fear, and also to the punishment that is feared. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10, ESV).

What is involved here is the need to replace matter as the bottom line in the universe. The existence of an objective personal God who loves, and who is love is in fact the ultimate foundation of all reality (1 John 4:16). The personal replaces the impersonal and fear, 'angst', is swallowed up by a love that gives an infinite meaning to human experience and an assurance of infinite mercy. And God's love doesn't just come down from an ethereal space above the universe. It is intrinsic within it. Humans are made in, by, and for love, and it is only because we are personal beings we can deal in categories such as 'love' and 'fear'. They are no longer empty words. Nutini is right - in love we were created, and in that same love we can live and die, free of fear.

The words of the songs we find whirring in our brains and tripping off our tongues are a window into the intense emptiness of contemporary life. They deserve attention. And there is an answer. Once we accept this, both in looking at our culture and in listening to its music, we are able to echo Sam Sparro's address to the creator:

'Cause if you're not really there  
I don't want to be either  
I want to be next to you.

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/8/18 7:51**

Quote:  
----- The words of the songs we find whirring in our brains and tripping off our tongues are a window into the intense emptiness of contemporary life. They deserve attention. And there is an answer.  
-----

Fear is the agonizing end-product of a society without God. Yet, tragically fear also keeps God's people from being all they can be - from living in their own destiny: to be a light in our hurting and fallen world. Here I see a collision of two mighty forces of FEAR at work fear in the unbeliever and fear in the believer (for different reasons). This is surely a sinister work of the devil - to keep the world in such a death grip through the power of fear.

Praise God for those many followers who by faith have conquered the giant and been effective ministers of hope and redemption.

Oh Lord, open up our sensitivity to the cry which our society is expressing so loudly through its song, behaviors, and pursuits. May that heart cry echo deeply in our minds - that we may ponder more seriously over the gift of life God has given humanity. You have called us to be privileged guardians of a vast and awesome Truth - the very Springs of Living Water - the Water that alone can quench the parched soul.

Free us from the grip of fear that we may reach more deeply into the Spring of Life within, walk more boldly in the Promised Land - and in that way, through our trust in you, be living evidence of hope in Christ. For in him one can be truly filled. And He is fully trustworthy to his promises!

Diane