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Daily Devotions: Fear Less

APRIL 18TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: Fear Less

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe. —Proverbs 29:25 (NKJV)

When you scan through the scriptures, you see example after example of people falling prey to the fear of man. And once they fall, it always leads to devastating consequences.

Abraham is known as the forefather of the faith. But keep in mind he compromised his convictions by lying about his wife being his sister because he was afraid of man...and he did this twice! Elijah was perhaps the most powerful prophet in Israel's illustrious history. But he ran and hid in a cave for fear of Ahab and Jezebel. Saul was a king who was head and shoulders over every other Israelite. But he was paralyzed with fear at the sight of Goliath's stature.

The list goes on and on, and each example ends in the same sad state. The fear of man is never a good thing, which is why God goes so far as to warn us against it. He actually describes the fear of man as bringing a snare.

Think of what a snare is and what it does. It lies there and seems so innocent. But once a victim steps onto it, it completely grips and immobilizes them. It prevents them from being free or from going where they want or need to go. That's exactly what happens when we fear man.

God doesn't want that for us. He wants us to be free from the paralyzing effect of fearing man. So He warns us and says, "Focus on me instead." By setting our sights on the Lord and trusting in Him, we sidestep the pitfall of fearing man. It's then and there, when we're preoccupied with the greatness of God, that we recognize we're accountable to someone infinitely greater than any man or woman. We rest secure, knowing nothing can happen to us that He doesn't allow.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

Every time you read some of God's word you should take this approach:

THINK ABOUT IT...

What does this passage reveal to me about God?

What does this passage reveal to me about myself?

Based on this, what changes do I need to make?

What is my prayer for today?

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Daily Devotions: What Lurks Behind Your Anger?

APRIL 11TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: What Lurks Behind Your Anger?

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.
—Psalm 4:4

From time-to-time, we all get angry. Some of us are really good at hiding expressions of anger. Others aren't so good at it. Whether we admit it to ourselves or not, anger lurks.

There are no easy answers to anger, but there is an easy question to ask.

The default question most people ask is “What?” What triggered my anger? But, that's not a good question. It's too easy! It's too general! It's not all that helpful.

What triggered my anger? Music, a dirty room, traffic, rudeness, not flushing the toilet, deleted a recorded TV show, etc. Who cares?

Instead of asking “What?” I would encourage you to ask “Why?”

The why question forces you to peel back a layer from the surface and look inside your heart. Instead of asking what triggered my anger (that's too easy)... ask, why did that trigger my anger?

When you ask what, you'll continue to blame the triggers and that won't help you stop the pain.

When you ask why, chances are you'll discover one of two primary emotions hiding beneath the surface. You might imagine these two emotions hiding in the corner of your soul...one in the fetal position, and one in the attack position.

All curled up in the fetal position will be fear. Every time I try to learn from my anger, I meet fear. I encounter fearful Jim. Fearful Jim who expressed his anger because he was afraid he wouldn't be a good dad or husband, afraid of failure or rejection, afraid that he can't control others to compliance, and so on.

The second emotion is hurt. Hurt hides right next to fear, but like a wounded animal, hurt is very dangerous because all it knows how to do is attack others. If I hurt you with my anger, I don't have to focus on the hurt I feel or reopen the hurtful wounds I've never dealt with.

If we don't learn where anger is coming from, it keeps coming back out, over and over. Perhaps this is why in today's Scripture, we're told to "search our hearts."

If you want to slay the dragon of anger, search your heart. Ask the right question. Learn from your emotions. Change your behavior. Improve your relationships. Easy? No. Doable? Yes.

GOING DEEPER:

1. When you experience anger, are you more likely to ask "Why?" or "What?"
2. When you are angry, how can you benefit from asking "What?" rather than "Why?"

Ephesians 4:30-31 NKJV

(30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

(31) Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

James 1:19-20 NKJV

(19) So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

(20) for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

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Daily Devotions: No Resurrection, No Savior

APRIL 08TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: No Resurrection, No Savior

Submitted by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.... ye are yet in your sins.” - 1 Corinthians 15: 14, 17

It's an unthinkable question: what if there had been no Easter?

Suppose Jesus had not risen from the dead? Our faith would be futile, death would have dominion, sin would be sovereign and the future would be fearful. His death without His resurrection cannot save anybody. Our faith is worthless if He is still in the grave.

How do we know that Jesus Christ was not just a religious fanatic, someone with a martyr complex who happened to get crucified?

How do we know He is the Son of God, God incarnate?

Romans 1:4 says He is “shown to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.”

How do we know that God accepted the sacrifice of Calvary? By the resurrection.

The Bible says He was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. No resurrection, no Savior. No Savior, no forgiveness. But Jesus went into the tomb and three days later walked out like a butterfly bursting from a cocoon. He is a risen Savior.

He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs.

-Acts 1:3

Albert L. Roper was a prominent Virginia attorney, a graduate of the University of Virginia and its law school, who eventually became mayor of the city of Norfolk. He once began a thorough legal investigation into the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, asking himself the question: Can any intelligent person accept the resurrection story? After examining the evidence at length, he came away asking a different question: Can any intelligent person deny the weight of this evidence?

Even those who traveled for three years with Jesus experienced disbelief over His resurrection, but Jesus showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. We don't base our faith on legends, myths, or fairy tales. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is well-documented, and many critics have been silenced (and even converted) when they've carefully investigated the evidence.

We have a risen Savior! He offers Himself to us today with many infallible proofs.

Many people say the Bible is a myth, but they're myth-taken, myth-guided, and myth-erable.

-Vance Havner

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Daily Devotions: Take My Son

APRIL 05TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: Take My Son

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art...

When the Vietnam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands.

He said, 'Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly... He often talked about you, and your love for art.' The young man held out this package. 'I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this.'

The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. 'Oh, no sir, I could never repay

what your son did for me. It's a gift.'

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected.

The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection.

On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. 'We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?'

There was silence. Then a voice in the back of the room shouted, 'We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one.'

But the auctioneer persisted. 'Will somebody bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?'

Another voice angrily. 'We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Gogh's, the Rembrandt's. Get on with the Real bids!'

But still the auctioneer continued. 'The son! The son! Who'll take the son?'

Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. 'I'll give \$10 for the painting...' Being a poor man, it was all he could afford.

'We have \$10, who will bid \$20?'

'Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the master's!'

The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections.

The auctioneer pounded the gavel. 'Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!'

A man sitting on the second row shouted, 'Now let's get on with the collection!'

The auctioneer laid down his gavel. 'I'm sorry, the auction is over.'

'What about the paintings?'

'I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will... I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets everything!'

God gave His son over 2,000 years ago to die on the Cross. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is: 'The Son, the Son, who'll take the Son?'

Because, you see, whoever takes the Son gets everything!

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, WHO SO EVER BELIEVETH, SHALL HAVE ETERNAL LIFE...THAT'S LOVE.

God Bless.

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Daily Devotions: Too Busy to Pray

APRIL 04TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: Too Busy to Pray

Mark 1:35 NKJV (35) “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”

Most of us aren't evil. We aren't trying to stay away from God on purpose. We race from morning to night to keep up with the pace of our lives. We are just too busy to pray. Can you identify with this?

Have you ever had a conversation with God like this?

God: I'd like to spend some time with you today, Jim.

Jim: Great, I'd love to.

God: How about right now?

Jim: Right now? Uh, I'm already late for an appointment. I'll catch you later, though. I promise.

God: OK, I'll be waiting.

Jim: Maybe, I'll have some time during lunch.

God: OK, I'll be waiting.

God: Hey Jim, I missed you at lunch. Your body was there but your mind wasn't.

Jim: I know. I'm sorry. I've got so much to do and so much on my mind. I just forgot to pray.

God: Are you ready to spend some time with me now? I know you only have a few minutes before your next meeting.

Jim: Well, uh, I'd like to, but I need to review my agenda. I'll have to catch you later.

God: Okay, I'll be waiting.

(Before bed)

God: Jim, I love you and I miss you. I've been waiting all day to be with you. Let's just focus for maybe five minutes.

Jim: I know. I'm sorry. I really feel bad. I'm so busy. Thanks for being so understanding, God. Thanks for... (Jim falls asleep.)

God: Oh well, maybe he'll have time for me in the morning.

Are you too busy to pray?

If you are, then you are simply too busy. God loves you and wants regular time with you because you are so special in his eyes.

When is your special appointment with God?

This may seem overly simplistic but it is true: People who spend a regular time with God will have a closer relationship with Him.

1. What did Jesus do in Mark 1:35?

2. Do you have a set time and place to meet with God daily? If not, set an appointment with God today.

Psalms 1:1-3 NKJV

(1) Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

(2) But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

(3) He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

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