

3 Sure Signs You're Addicted to Passive Faith

Last night, I was at the prayer service at my home church. Part of this service is a short devotional thought from one of the pastors. Worship director Mark Alan Schoolmeesters was sharing from the Lord's Prayer on the phrase, "Lead us not into temptation" (Matt. 6:13a). I have written elsewhere on this important prayer, but Mark had a great line that really caught my attention. He said, "Are you strategic or reactionary in your faith?"

This question got me thinking and my mind spinning with the stories of faith from the Bible. I'm not sure all of Mark's intention, but where it took my thinking could be revolutionary to your faith. When I think of strategic faith, it is a faith based on the truth of God's Word that moves us into bold decisions to follow Jesus. Reaction "faith" reaches out to God based on the crisis at hand and sometimes may not be faith at all. Here are some principles of God's Word that can move you into more strategic faith.

Strategic faith is forward-looking while reactionary faith is focused on the current crisis.

Often our faith is based on the difficulty of the moment. It may be the current temptation we are facing or the problem that seems to be overwhelming us. Abraham, however had strategic faith, "For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10) In what areas is your relationship with God drawing you to take steps beyond your current circumstances? Caleb and Joshua called the Israelites to strategic faith even though the circumstances said otherwise.

Strategic faith is based on the promise of God, and

reactionary faith is based on the appearance of circumstances.

Abraham, again, is a great example of both sides of this story. When he had Ishmael with Hagar, he was acting based on the appearance of things. Isaac, however, was born based on the promise of God. What are the promises God has spoken into your life that should be guiding your life? Maybe you need to go back and take hold of them again.

Reactionary faith may help me out of my current difficulty, but strategic faith puts me in a situation to change the course of my life and those around me.

I am not saying that there are not times when reactionary faith is important. When we are in temptation, that is the time to call out to God for help, not simply wish we had prayed, "Lead me not into temptation" sooner. When we are sinking in the sea as Peter was, that's the moment to simply reach out in faith and say, "Lord, save me." The difference is we also need strategic faith that gets us out of the boat in the first place.

An easy illustration of this is to compare reactionary faith to caffeinated coffee, tea and energy drinks. When you are tired, these can help you get through the day. But strategic faith is like a healthy lifestyle that gives you energy every day. It is not that you might not have a day where you have a bad night's sleep and drink a cup of coffee, but the healthy lifestyle gives you the energy for normal days. Crisis will come and we should react to reach out to God in faith, but may we grow in taking strategic steps of faith that change the direction of our lives.

How are you going to grow in taking strategic steps of faith?
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