

Deal With the Foxes in Your Life

Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom. –Song of Solomon 2:15

When these things are present in my life, I have discovered that God's special presence is absent:

- * Self-pity. Feeling sorry for myself always seems right at first, but I should never give in to it if I cherish the presence of the Dove.

- * Self-righteousness. This is the identical twin of self-pity. I reflect on my obedience and imagine that God is giving me a little pat on the back.

- * Defensiveness. This is not merely being "touchy"; it is the natural instinct to resist any criticisms. It is the opposite of turning the other cheek (Matt. 5:39).

- * Seeking a compliment. "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips" (Prov. 27:2).

- * Listening to gossip. I am not sure which is worse—telling another "the latest" or listening to it. It is hard not to listen, especially if it is delicious, bad news about someone I find threatening.

- * Talking too much. "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise" (Prov. 10:19). John Wesley often said that for every hour we spend talking, we should spend two hours in prayer!

- * Rushing. Getting in a hurry almost always moves me ahead of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not in a hurry.

* Pointing the finger. “Do not judge, or you too will be judged” (Matt. 7:1). Pointing the finger in judgment invariably includes keeping a record of wrongs—which the Bible advises us not to do (1 Cor. 13:5). Doing so will result in the departure of the Spirit’s special presence.

When I come to terms honestly with the absence of God’s special presence, I am more likely to be in a position to find Him.

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