

Here's the Antidote to Spiritual Ebola

Reports of the deadly Ebola virus are spreading faster than the highly-contagious virus itself. As the Center for Disease Control and its Division of Global Migration and Quarantine (DGMQ) work to prevent further outbreak in the U.S., Ebola is the most feared virus on the planet because once it infects a person, its ability to spread and cause death is astounding.

But the fact is fear of Ebola is more infectious than the biological virus. Fear of the fever is what's driving our government to contain it. Fear is what's capturing the headlines, and spreading like wildfire.

Like the biological virus, fear is a spiritual Ebola that can infect even the most faithful God-fearing Christian. In the book of Numbers, chapters 13-15, the Bible tells the account of how the spiritual Ebola of fear infected the Israelites—even though they had just witnessed God's power to escape Egyptian slavery.

In the story, God told Moses to send out 12 men to check out the land promised to them, survey the fruitfulness and scope out the enemies. After 40 days, 10 of the 12 men reported the enemies were too big, and cities too strong. They injected fear, which spread like Ebola through the population. The people "raised their voices," "wept aloud" and "grumbled," even proposing they choose a leader and return to Egypt and slavery.

But two of the 12 scouts, Caleb and Joshua, give us a lesson of the antidote to spiritual Ebola. In short, we need to be a "culture of Calebs." Here's the passage we can learn from:

"(Caleb said) ... If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and

will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them” (Numbers 14:7-10).

1. Get perspective. Remember God’s person—who He is, and what God promises. If we lose sight of God’s person and God’s promises, the obstacles in life becomes big and God becomes small. But Caleb had the right perspective, remembering God’s almighty hand and promise of victory.

Our enemy wants you to have short-term memory, forgetting miracle moments where God has delivered great things. Because when you forget, he can instill fear. But if you remember, you can exercise faith and let God be God.

“Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it” (Numbers 13:30).

2. Get a promise. Whatever issue is striking spiritual Ebola in your life, get a promise from God’s word. Caleb knew God’s promise of victory to win the “promised land.” Here’s the promise Caleb remembered:

“When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with not be fainthearted or afraid; do not panic or be terrified by them. For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory” (Deut. 20:4).

Trouble with money? Loneliness? The future? Being unloved? Calamity? Trauma? There’s a prescription from the Bible for anything that can strike fear in your life. Here are some examples:

- Trouble with money? Read Philippians 4:19

- Facing a battle? Read Deuteronomy 20:4
- Afraid of the future? Read Jeremiah 29:11
- Going through trauma? Read Romans 8:28

3. Get with God. Now, pray the promise. In the passage the infected people wailed to Moses, threatening to stone Joshua and Caleb. I would be willing to bet Joshua and Caleb were praying. When we pray, God promises to hear us. Prayer is an act of faith that is the antidote to spiritual Ebola.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us" (1 John 5:14).

4. Speak the promise. Caleb had seen the land, and heard the other reports. But he remembered God's person and promise. Yet, until he spoke the promise nothing happened. There is power in our speech, in our words and in God's word. Speaking God's truth out loud establishes which side of the force you stand. Jesus modeled this when tempted by the devil during a 40 day fast in the desert. What did Jesus do? He spoke the Word.

"It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4).

5. Act in faith. Too often, people bail out early on God's promises, and never see or experience his power. Sometimes, it takes perseverance and patience. But eventually you have to put your faith into motion. God rewards the faithful, but "without faith it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6).

"So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For, in just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay." And, "But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back." (Hebrews 10:35-38)

The spiritual Ebola of fear shuts down your faith system, and releases consequences. The Israelites who lost their faith also lost their lives. But God recognized and rewarded Joshua and Caleb, allowing them and their descendants to live in the Promised Land. Their faith triumphed over fear.

“(The Lord said) But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it” (Numbers 14:24).

So be a contagious Caleb, infecting others around you with faith. Let God be God and watch your mountains become molehills.

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