

How to Defeat The Devil's One-Two Punch

"God, I can't do this. I'm so sick and tired of fighting."

"Yes, you can. You can do all things through Me; I give you strength."

"This isn't fun anymore, God."

"Trust me. I will lead you. I will give you the words. Do you trust Me?"

"Yes Lord, I trust You."

"You can do this. With Me."

"God, my heart. It's so ... afraid."

My heart is so afraid? Of what? Surprised at this personal revelation, I asked God why. What do I have to fear? Pain? Lack of provision? People's opinion? Or how about the deep-seated fears of failure, rejection, inadequacy and being seen?

I recently asked God how I will overcome my fear of rejection. His response? "By being rejected and realizing you are OK. More than OK." Because in Christ, fear is a fraud. Apart from Him, I would be terrified.

"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

So what am I believing? Why is my heart so afraid? What is my heart afraid of? What is fear? Is it a feeling? A fact? A façade?

Fear: (n).

– a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the condition of being afraid

– a specific instance of such a feeling

– concern or anxiety

Fear is a feeling. A falsehood. An illusion. A deception of grandeur.

Imagine I am coming home late one night. I walk up the stairs into my dimly lit apartment, and I see a dark shadowy figure in the corner. *Who's there? What are they doing in my home?* I'm gripped with fear and begin to back away.

Jesus nudges me forward and says, "It's OK. Don't be afraid. I'm here. There is nothing to fear. I am with you." He coaxes me forward, but I don't fully believe Him until He turns on the light. The shadowy figure in the corner is revealed for what it truly is—a coat on a coat rack. An inanimate object with no power over me except for the authority I gave it. I feel a fool for fearing and doubting Jesus. Doubting His goodness and His word. Doubting who He is and who He says I am. Standing there in the light, I see how silly my fear really was.

How did fear enter? Why does it keep coming back? All because of doubt

The enemy comes only to steal, kill and destroy. Doubt and fear are the devil's debilitating dynamic duo, the brains and brawn (respectively) behind some of his most excellent heists. Doubt comes to pick the lock of my home, perpetually patronizing me with "Did God really say ...?" until he gets a foothold. "Did God really say to start this blog? Did God really say to quit your job and trust He will provide for you? Did God really say He will never leave you nor forsake you?"

Doubt is extremely deceptive. He doesn't show up announcing his arrival, obvious and identifiable. Rather, he masquerades in my mind as my own voice, whispering thoughts that speak directly to the lies I am more inclined to believe: *Is what I write relevant? Will I have the words? Do the words I have even matter? Don't people already know the truth? What difference will my voice make? God, I ask You to use me, but will You really?*

Once I begin to entertain the thoughts Doubt has proposed to my mind, he's in. Fear plows through and ravishes my body, paralyzing me with anxiety, dread and panic. I'm frozen. Doubt circles back with some devastating blows as I stand there, motionless. *Did God really call you? Do you actually hear God? Do you even know Him? Did Jesus really save you?* Fear grips me even more tightly, while Doubt destroys everything I've built in my spiritual home.

Hopelessness and Despair waltz in through the wide-open door, stealing my peace, joy and freedom. In my unbelief, I am cut off from God. Isolated. An operative immobilized, useless in advancing the kingdom of heaven.

Steal. Kill. Destroy. The devil's done it again. The only way out of infinitely spiraling down the rabbit hole into the devil's wonderland of fear is up. Up to faith in Jesus Christ.

I have nothing to fear if I truly believe the Word of God and take Him at His word. If I believe He is the ultimate healer, then there is no pain this heart cannot take. "He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds" (Ps. 147:3). If I believe He is the ultimate provider, then there is nothing I need that I will go without. "But my God shall supply your every need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). If I believe His power is made perfect in my weakness, then not only will I *not* be afraid of inadequacy or failure, but "most gladly I will boast in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9b).

If I believe God is:

- Omnipotent (having unlimited power; able to do anything)
- Omniscient (having complete or unlimited knowledge, awareness, or understanding; perceiving all things)
- Omnipresent (present everywhere at the same time)

Then what on this earth do I have to fear? Nothing. No Thing.

Every new season will have a new set of doubts and fears. With new territory comes new giants. But fighting them will still be the same. By faith. The only antidote for fear is faith. Doubt goes directly for the heart of faith. It cuts you off from Jesus Christ—the one true source of freedom, life, hope and salvation. Doubt is not an option for the believer. Saved by faith. Healed by faith. Called to action and courage by faith in God. Faith is something you have, are given more of and is tested in your life. Faith can be grown and lost. You have to protect your faith. Feed your faith. Fight the good fight of faith. Grasp tightly to your faith in Jesus. He fuels you. He fills you. Apart from Him you can do nothing. No thing.

God is not going to remove us from the battle, He is going to teach us how to fight—how to fight and win. We are warriors in boot camp, getting stronger and being stretched farther beyond what we thought we were capable of. He is training us to send us back out. He frees us, saves us, heals us, trains us and sends us back into the valley of the shadow of death to help set other captives free. He does all the work. The only requirement of us is faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. {eoa}

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