

Trade Your Fear for This Kingdom Truth

Fear has filled my life in the past few months. About a month ago, God showed me where this fear was coming from. It was coming from the idea that my fruitfulness is up to me. I'd buried myself in activity, hustling in order to keep what I have and attempting to achieve more so I might build up my storehouses of reputation, honor and a sense deep inside myself that I am not a disappointment.

I wasn't sleeping well. And no wonder, because I felt as if the whole world were waiting for my command! In my own eyes, I'd made myself and my abilities bigger than God and His abilities.

God gently took me back to the basics. He took me to creation. I held out my hand and inspected it thoroughly, tracing the veins with my eyes, wiggling my fingers and imagining the bones moving inside. I thought about how He created me. He created me flesh and blood. I'm dirt and dust, and to dust I will return. I didn't make my heart start beating or put breath in my lungs. I'm not sending blood pumping through those veins. All that I am I was given—my personality, skills, breath and life, even the place and time in which I reside. The people in my life are similar miracles, moving and breathing beside me through this life.

Then, perched on the couch, I looked out my window and thought about how God created everything I could see and how I don't understand it fully. How do birds fly? In what way do hydrogen and oxygen fit together to form water? Sometimes I think I know things, that I've thought them and understood them on my own, but when it comes to making and sustaining the simplest parts of this life, the things I simply take for granted, I know nothing and have no power to make or sustain anything.

I think maturity means coming to a greater sense of our own helplessness and powerlessness and at the same time turning to see how much God is doing and has done, how He is sustaining our hearts and lungs and the trees and the birds right outside our windows. And how a baby is formed in the secret, and how a soul comes to faith and how love and grace happen. This is why God is worthy of our allegiance, because He's doing everything and gifting everything, and we're doing nothing but what He's given us to do—breathing, parenting, ministering, thinking, understanding and even believing. How can the self-idolatry of anxiety exist with that same belief?

Jesus teaches us that, as kingdom citizens, we must be attentive to what cultivates a confidence in God. The command in Matthew 6 summarized is, "Don't attend to what is not your responsibility; do observe and consider what underlines this truth." In other words, we should consistently think about God and all the ways He provides.

Look at the birds. Look at the flowers. If you're in the city, look at the diversity of faces; feel the sun on your skin.

It's just what God reminded me of in my months of worry: Look at your hands, examine your breath, notice the bird's song as he's perched on the porch railing. Remember who sustains these things. Your security is in this God who provides, and He willingly provides from a place of Fatherly love.

When we choose a wrong attentiveness, we live as functional orphans, those who must fight for what they need, care for themselves and who respond to life from a place of fear rather than love. Of course this births anxiety, because we know we're but children who need. Why would we expect ourselves as children to also provide?

The good news about God as Father is that He is constantly engaged and present, and He chooses to be so. Our God is one who never needs rest (Isa. 40:28); He is always working,

always aware.

The lesson is clear: We shouldn't be attentive to how our needs may be met, but rather, to the God who meets our needs.
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