

Which of the Enemy's 'Little Foxes' Is Keeping You From Giving God Your All?

Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. Many who were rich put in much. But a certain poor widow came and put in two mites ... He called His disciples to Him and said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. They all contributed out of their abundance. But she, out of her poverty, put in all that she had, her entire livelihood (Mark 12:41-44, emphasis added).

Have you ever felt that all you have to give to the Lord is like the widow's two little mites?

While growing up, I had a learning disability, and I didn't like myself much. I would often compare myself to others I thought were prettier and smarter than I was. I was insecure, and like the widow with two mites, I felt I had very little to offer.

In all honesty, we are much more vulnerable to pride when we are insecure and self-condemning. The enemy's strategy is to get us so consumed with our insecurities that we take our eyes off the Lord—it's the enemy's trap. Having pretense is a form of pride. It's pretending to be someone we are not, to look good in the eyes of others.

During a solemn assembly (an extended time of corporate prayer and fasting) last fall, my son pointed out a fox lying in our backyard sunning itself on a big rock. Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards" (Song 2:15a).

For me, a little fox that is spoiling my connection with Jesus is the fear of not being accepted, which feeds pretense, causing me to compare myself to others and strive to be someone I am not.

A few months ago, Holy Spirit started showing me that more opportunities to feel recognized and accepted in the eyes of people will not fill the hunger within that only He can satisfy. He then brought my attention to Colossians 3:

If you then were raised with Christ, desire those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:1-3).

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. For you serve the Lord Christ (Col. 3:23-24).

God is looking at our motives for why we do what we do or give what we give. Do we do what we do or give to others with the motivation of serving the Lord only?

In Luke 16:15 (CEV), Jesus said, "You are always making yourselves look good, but God sees what is in your heart. The things that most people think are important are worthless as far as God is concerned" (see Ps. 139:23, 24).

The other people in the story of the widow with two mites, whom Jesus observed putting money in the treasury, were pretending to give a lot outwardly but were giving very little in reality—that's pretense. To apply this story at a heart level, one question we must ask ourselves is what the widow's mites represent in our lives.

My daughter just had her first baby this year, and for her,

the widow's mites represent time. She teases and says that she barely has time to tend to any of her basic personal needs anymore. For some, it might be that they don't feel very gifted or skilled at anything meaningful. For others, it might be a limited amount of physical strength or emotional capacity. But Jesus notices even a cup of cold water given in His name (see Mark 9:41). He notices the little things we do from our heart to serve and glorify Him.

As Mother Theresa has been quoted, little things with great love impact God more than big things with little love.

I've been meditating on Ephesians 1:3–6, and I've turned it into a declaration of faith: "I can give my all, because God has blessed me with every spiritual blessing I need in Christ. Long before Jesus laid the earth's foundation, He had me in mind. God the Father adopted me into His family through Jesus Christ. To the praise and glory of His grace, He has made me accepted in the beloved."

1 Peter 2 takes the concept of adoption and being chosen by God even a little deeper:

But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do His work and speak out for Him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference He made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted. (1 Pet. 2:9, 10, MSG).

We are fully accepted in Christ! He's chosen each one of us before He laid the foundations of the world. If God is for us, who can be against us? We don't have to strive in pretense to earn this position or to be someone we are not. The way He has created each one of us is beautiful in His sight. We are entirely worthy in Christ. He never defines us by our weak moments. He doesn't compare us to others, because we are all uniquely created as a beautiful part of His creation.

Comparing ourselves to others is another “little fox” that spoils the life-giving connection in our hearts with the Lord. I was watching an animal kingdom program on the television recently. It was interesting to hear how foxes sneak up on their prey, and therefore, have the advantage of catching them off guard. The devil is sly like a fox, and he’ll catch us off-guard if we stay consumed in self-preoccupation and fearful that what we have to offer is not enough. My paraphrased version of Jeremiah 15:19 says, “If you return from your place of doubt and self-preoccupation, you will stand in My immediate presence—face to face with Me—you will behold My face, and you will be My mouthpiece.”

How powerful is that? My heart longs to be God’s mouthpiece to the generation in which we live. When trials come our way, God is testing us to see if we will choose earthly comforts or believe in His eternal promises and obey His commandments (see Deut. 8:2–3).

I encourage you to repeat this declaration of faith: “I believe and declare that who God created me to be is more than enough to do His will. I repent of all doubt and self-preoccupation. I believe and receive the truth that little things with great love impact God more than big things with little love.”

Another point about pretense that I want to highlight is how the walls of self-preservation feed false identity and rob us of a healthy connection with God. The Lord showed me years ago that when I hold onto fear and doubt, I am placing a wall of self-protection around my heart, which hinders me from receiving His love Psalm 138:6 says, “Though the Lord is exalted, yet He has concern for the lowly, but the proud one He knows from a distance.”

Jesus wants us to run to Him and not away from Him when we are hurting. When we hold onto walls of self-protection instead of turning to Him, we feel alone in our pain and insecure, which

again feeds pretense—pretending to be someone we are not.

An effective way to lay down a wall of self-preservation is to identify lies and faulty core beliefs connected to unhealed wounds from the past. King David's prayer in Psalm 86:11 is an excellent example of asking God to reveal walls around one's heart, "Teach me Your way, Lord, that I will walk in Your truth; bind my heart to fear Your name." When we have walls up, we can't be wholehearted or give God our all.

Beloved, don't allow the enemy to spoil your intimate connection with Jesus. I encourage you to give God your all without pretense.

Can you name any walls of protection that might be around your heart, hindering you from living wholeheartedly? {eoa}

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