

Your Faith-Filled Strategy to Fight the Shadows That Keep You From Your Destiny

“Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow” (James 1:17, NLT).

Can we be honest? I am sure like me, at one time or another, you have been afraid of the dark, the unseen or unknown. I grew up in the '80s, and the truth is that horror movies were the big craze during that era. I admit; I did watch them on occasion. Not now, of course, and I would not allow my children to watch them either. It's so sad that as a child, I spent a lot of time clinging to my blanket, afraid of something that wasn't even real. So many times, I would lie awake— seeing shadows on the ceiling, on the wall, in the hallway when, in reality, it was usually just the curtain or the door or a picture on the wall.

Have you ever said to yourself, “I feel like something bad is going to happen?” These feelings are the shadows, and the what-if's that keep us in the corner, afraid. Sadly, so many times, these feeling have the power to paralyze us into believing we are not safe or at future risk, or that a loved one is in danger. My husband, evangelist Pat Schatzline, calls this “the paralysis of analysis!” These looming shadows of dread and doubt become faint whispers that haunt the soul and bring fear. And as you know, fear is one of the strongest weapons the enemy uses to keep us in the dark. Once this battle of the mind takes root, it has the power to cage your spirit behind the steel bars of doubt, insecurity and fear.

But the Bible tells us we have the power to cast down these attacks: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war

according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:3-5). In other words, the Bible tells us we have the power to open the back door to our minds and throw out the lies of the enemy.

That is exactly what God was trying to teach Pat and me to do a year ago when the enemy sent a diagnosis of cancer into my life. (Leukemia was my shadow). God was trying to show us during that time, that over time, our perceptions (the whispers of the enemy) can become more real than what is really taking place in our reality. As long as we sit in fear, licking our wounds of past failures that haunt us and listening to the lies of the enemy, we won't step into the destiny that God has for us.

Faith Is the Antidote for Fear, and Graduated Faith Is Trust

It's in our blindness and our inability to see what is next, that God uses to teach us to declare, "I trust you, God!" God is calling us to live by faith, not by sight! (2 Cor. 5:7) I've recently learned that sometimes we're afraid of what will happen if shadows temporarily surround us. We often fear difficulties, uncertainties, seemingly impossible circumstances, devastating illness, personal loss or challenging finances. Darkness and difficulties are inevitable in this life, but look what John 16:33 (NIV) says: "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Life will have shadows in it. There will be moments of darkness where the shadows loom over you, but look at one of my absolute favorite Scriptures, Psalm 23:1-4 (MEV, emphasis mine), which reads, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want

... *Even though* I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, *I will fear no evil*; for *You* are with me; *Your* rod and *Your* staff, they comfort me." When the shadows come. don't lie down and give up, get moving and keep walking! Don't set up camp or build a life there.

Here is what I have learned:

1. Shadows cannot hurt you.
2. Shadows appear bigger than their source
3. Where there is a shadow, there is always light.

3 Ways to Defeat the Shadows

1. Turn the light on. Psalm 18:29-42 (MSG) tells us this: "Suddenly, God, you floodlight my life; I'm blazing with glory, God's glory! I smash the bands of marauders, I vault the highest fence. What a God! His road stretches straight and smooth. Every God-direction is road-tested. Everyone who runs toward him Makes it."

God is light. He gave birth to the light! His Shadow is the only one that matters!

2. Restore the roar of praise; it drives out the enemy. Praise and worship is my nerve pill. When I got the cancer diagnosis, all we could do was wake up and praise God and sing of His might and power and love. My praise is a melody and a weapon that sends the enemy into confusion and chaos. 2 Chronicles 20:22 (NLT) says, "At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the Lord caused the armies of Ammon, Moab and Mount Sier to start fighting among themselves."

3. Take authority over the shadows!

Ephesians 6:12 (NLT) says, "For we are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits."

But the great thing is that our weapons are not carnal either, as we learned in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, our weapons are God-weapons for pulling down strongholds and everything that exalts itself against God. So often, we try to fight, in the natural, the shadows that are looming around us in the supernatural. How about we fight on the right battlefield from now on—in the supernatural?

Some shadows are spiritual and demonic forces of darkness, sent on assignment from the enemy, to destroy our peace and deter our destiny. God has given us every weapon we need to defeat the enemy and drive out the shadows. God has given us authority over the enemy (Luke 10:19-20). .

It's time to realize that the darkness all around you might just be the shadow of His wings! Do you know that when you reside in the presence of God and create a "breathing room" for the breath of God to flow in your life, your home and your marriage, then you are sheltered safely under the wings of the almighty! Psalm 91:1 (NLT) says, "Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm 17:8 (NIV) says, "Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings."

I have some questions for you: What shadows are looming in your life? How are those shadows deterring you from your God encounter and your destiny?

When I think of shadows, I often think about Groundhog Day, and how sad an existence that groundhog's life is. Every Year, the Groundhog cautiously pokes its head out above his little prison of fear we call a burrow. He eases out ever so slowly and looks and listens for signs of danger, as if always suspecting danger is imminent. Then to his expectant horror, he sees this big, black, spooky, scary shadow looming in front of him. What does he do? He's gone as quickly as he appeared. His shadow sends him fleeing back to the safety and comfort of his prison den.

It occurs to me, how many times do I retreat from life, from opportunity, from freedom and purpose and joy, just because I was frightened by the shadow called “uncertainty,” “insecurity” or “inadequacy”? Perhaps our fears are completely unfounded, just as the groundhog’s are!

I think sometimes that our unfounded, illogical and absurd fears, which are ploys of the enemy to deter us from our purpose and destiny, prevent us from being and becoming the mighty lions we are called to be! We are called to defeat, overcome and conquer the spirit of fear with the breath and power of God. What might you do, or accomplish or conquer, if you allowed the roar of God’s breath to rise up inside of you today? Might you leave a legacy that would literally change the course of events and lead your family into hope, freedom, peace, purpose, integrity and obedience to Christ? Would you lead a movement that would restore the place of encounter in your own life, your family and in your community, that would ignite a Holy fire that could not be quenched for generations to come?

There is a famous poem by Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken.” It begins:

Two Roads diverged in a wood,

And I – I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

Have you ever thought about the fact that the road less traveled is less traveled for a reason? The common road is well traveled because, seriously, who wants to take a path that hasn’t been cleared and leads to who knows what or where? Can I tell you, we need not fear the shadows, and we need not fear the road less traveled! As you go through the valley of shadows, be encouraged by Psalm 63:7-8 (MEV), “Because you have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I

will rejoice. My soul clings hard to you; Your right hand upholds me.”

Sometimes it's not about finding the safe path with no shadows; it's about finding the one to whom your soul can cling hard to in order to find the glorious light.

Maybe your safe path has begun to feel a little uncomfortable, and you have begun to believe there just might be someplace better. The safe road isn't perfect, but you have bought into the lies that it's where the relevant people in culture live. It's comfortable, and at least you're surviving there. Some of you may be thinking, *I can't stay here! But I'm not sure I can go there—the road less traveled!*

Maybe that road terrifies you, stepping out in total abandonment and trusting God. But maybe that's what the Israelites were thinking in Numbers 13 and 14, when 10 of the 12 spies came back from Canaan, “the land of milk and honey,” with stories of giants and fortified cities. They heard the word “giants,” and immediately they were afraid. So afraid that they longed for the oppression of the Egyptians, despite Joshua and Caleb reminding them they could step out to receive what God had promised. While there may have been giants, the giants did not have God on their side. Their fear would mean an entire generation would miss out on the promised land. Their fear would keep them from the abundant life God truly meant for them. They saw giants instead of their inheritance!

But what if the scariest road full of shadows is the only road that leads to the promised land? What if the Israelites had just remembered who God is! He had split the Red Sea and caused it to swallow their enemy. What if they just remembered what God had spoken to them when He brought them out of Egypt? “I will bring you to the land with I swore to give to Abraham Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the Lord” (Ex. 6:8).

How about you? Do you want to miss out on your promises just because the shadowy less traveled road looks scary and uncertain?

Maybe the shadows are just that, shadows, and maybe God and I are going to slay those shadows and giants, or maybe I will learn to live courageously in the face of the shadows and the giants. All I know is this: If I stay on the safe, well-worn, comfortable path, always afraid of the shadows looming around me, I might just avoid the giants, but it will be dry and empty there! Or I can take God by the hand, face the shadows, turn the light on, restore my roar of praise, and take authority over the shadows in my life, so that I might live a life of abundance and provision and freedom like I have never known. {eo}

Read more about "When the Shadow Looms" in the powerful new book, Restore the Roar by Pat & Karen Schatzline (Charisma House, 2019).

Watch Evangelist Karen share more from this message by watching her latest episode of "The Breathing Room" below.