



November 26, 2021

### **Killers of Faith**

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here in south Texas. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, you've enjoyed Thanksgiving, and that again your week has been blessed.

Back in the summer of 2015 my wife and I traveled to Montana to spend a few days with some dear friends and fellow pastor I've known for the last 50 plus years, Glen White and his wife Connie.

On a Friday, after arrival in Montana, I had the opportunity to drive deep up into the Bitterroot Mountains, (part of the Rocky Mountain Range in Western Montana) and then hike another 2.5 miles to a Glacial Lake hidden deep inside the forest where I did some fly fishing for Grayling. It was a very isolated area. Knowing that in this area, (where we have no cellular service, and smart phones do not work) we are "on our own" during this trek to and from and while fishing.

In this part of the country live some well-known "killers" in the animal world. Grizzly bears, cougars, wolves, bobcats, Lynx, Black bears and other animals that are usually timid, but sometimes are very dangerous, inhabit this area and are quite common. The two men with me carried side arms for protection if needed. I simply had a small knife and a fly rod for fishing.

As we began walking and entered the remote area, I began to have a feeling of trepidation, doubt, and fear. Was this a good idea? Was I testing God in venturing into an area like this? Would I face one of these killers? I reflected on **Proverbs 28:1**. Several spiritual analogies became my reflection as I walked the challenging path in front of me, step after step.

Friends, have you considered what undermines, weakens, and kills our faith? What literally destroys faith in the life of a Christian?

We live in a time where our adversary Satan has influenced the culture of our day to destroy living faith! Doubt, worry, fear, compromise, and a lack of obedience to God all bombard our convictions.

As I've often mentioned, doubt and fear especially hinders our spiritual growth and weakens the boldness I mentioned in Proverbs 28 in regards to vision and obeying God. In **Romans 4:20-21** we read about Abraham, known to us as the father of the faithful: "*He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being*

*fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.*" The word *waver* used here is the same word as *doubt* in the Greek. To waver can mean to be in strife with oneself, to hesitate or doubt. Abraham was a very real strong example of faith in that he was fully convinced that what God promised, He would fulfill and He would do.

The Lord's brother James, asserted a similar thought in **James 1:5-8**: "*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*"

In the last couple of years I've heard many say, "I feel so unstable in this crazy world!" - "Will we ever be back to normal?" - "Things have got to stabilize."

Notice what the Louw/Nida Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament says about being double minded or unstable. This pertains "*to being uncertain about the truth of something-double minded, doubting, doubter. In a number of languages 'doubt' is expressed by means of idioms, for example, 'to have two thoughts' or 'to think only perhaps' or 'to believe only a little' or 'to question one's heart about.'*"

If God says it (i.e. we read it in the Word of God), we shouldn't question what God says. Just believe and do it.

Many have struggled with "do we obey Man, God, or how can we determine when one is above the other?" "I'm so uncertain...it's so difficult!" And so our faith can be snuffed out or killed.

If God says to save a festival or 2<sup>nd</sup> tithe, we save it! If God says don't work on the Sabbath, we don't work on the Sabbath. If God says "Keep the Feast of Tabernacles 7 days" we do it. Or do we waiver?

Your and my life must be directed by the eternal values and principles taught in the word of God, not on secular humanism and the cultural thinking of the day. We follow God's Word in **Proverbs 3:5-6**.

We genuinely need the discernment of right from wrong. Paul expressed it this way in **Hebrews 5:14**: "*But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*" We shouldn't be vacillating between two or several opinions. But humans do that don't we?

Are you and I walking by faith or only by what we see and hear? Faith is not based upon what

we see, but upon what God has promised. Therefore, we know that God exists and are willing to follow what He teaches us.

How do we grow in faith? (By the way, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit and the faith of Christ).

We must ask for it daily. We must ask God to increase our faith. Every instance of when we obey and show God that we believe and are willing to follow Him, we grow in faith. We often say "That trial was a faith builder". The opposite is simply "dead faith" or having no action. Faith also comes through the frequent and daily study of God's Word.

Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible says this in regards to faith: *"Faith and faithfulness are logically and linguistically one in the OT and NT. That is, the major words for faith in both Testaments also connote the concept of faithfulness. This indicates that faith is more than momentary assent to the truth of God. It is commitment to that truth, and it manifests itself in continued obedience.*

*"Abraham's life in this regard is instructive. He assented to, relied upon, and acted in conformity to the revealed Word of God. He received God's revelation as true...and his subsequent actions proved his faithfulness. He left home and country, settled in a strange land, and offered up his son Isaac as God commanded...Faithfulness, then, must not be viewed as an isolated act. Rather it is an attitude that should characterize the entire life of those who say they have faith in God."*

Doubt, fear, and compromise, undermine, and kill our faith. Again, we must be completely convinced that what God has promised, He will do. Faith says we trust Him, obey Him, and our spiritual inner man won't be killed.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

**-Scott Hoefker**

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