

A business man was in a great deal of trouble. His business was failing, he had put everything he had into the business, he owed everybody it was really bad. As a last resort he went to a pastor and poured out his story of tears and woe.

When he had finished, the pastor said, "Here's what I want you to do, put a beach chair and your Bible in your car and drive down to the beach. Take the beach chair and the Bible to the waters edge, sit down in the beach chair, and put the Bible in your lap. Open the Bible, the wind will rifle the pages, but finally the open Bible will come to rest on a page. Look down at the page and read the first thing you see. That will be your answer, that will tell you what to do."

A year later the business man went back to the pastor and brought his wife and children with Him. The man was in a new custom-tailored suit, his wife in a mink coat, the children shining. The businessman pulled an envelope stuffed with money out of his pocket and gave it to the pastor as a donation in thanks for his advise.

The pastor recognized the benefactor, and was curious, "You did as I suggested?" He asked.

“Absolutely,” replied the businessman.

“You went to the beach?”

“Absolutely”

“You sat in a beach chair with the Bible in you lap?”

“Absolutely”

“You let the pages rifle until they stopped?”

“Absolutely”

“And what were the first words you saw?”

“Chapter 11.”

Four things the people of God must rid themselves of.

These four things have plagued the people of God and the Church has not spoken loudly enough against them and that in turn for some has crippled their effectiveness in the Body of Christ.

Are you ready for the four? Here they are, and after I share them I will share my thoughts of each.

- Fear
- Apathy
- Worry
- Complacent

I'm sure that there are more but these are the four I want to tackle today.

Fear - the term do not be afraid or do not fear appears 365 times in Scripture. What is the opposite of fear? Allow for responses.

May I propose to you that the opposite of fear is love.

If you are a Child of God one thing that should not overwhelm us is fear.

But think about it, it seems to me that as believers we can be some of the most fearful people around. Many churches even use fear to get people to come to salvation. They scare them to Jesus by using hell as a tactic.

When Scripture tells us in Romans 2:4 - Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

Look at this 1 John 4:18 - There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

1 John 4:18 (AMP) - 18 There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors *and* expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love's complete perfection].

Churches and pastors are afraid to follow Gods leading out of fear of what some might say. Christians are afraid to take risks out of fear. We do or negligent to do so many things out of fear. Often times the motivation for our obedience is fear. (Talk about that).

Someone once said, “fear that is tolerated contaminates your faith.”

Next we have another that we need to shred and that is Apathy by definition it means: lack of interest, enthusiasm or concern.

I believe church that one of the reasons why people are not wanting to become followers of Jesus is because of our apathetic approach to God

Think about it, there's is nothing normal about God. He is Super. . .natural. His love for man is without measure and His ways are so much higher than ours. He is altogether good.

And we as believers walk around acting as if He is just Ok.

No wonder there are so many that want nothing to do with what we call the church.

I think that religion was invented by man to keep God at a

safe distance.

God wants relationship with His bride. And we are the bride of Christ.

We need to show some enthusiasm for the things of God. The creator of the universe wants to spend time with you.

I don't know about you, but that is worth getting excited about.

Scripture tells us the joy of the Lord is my strength.

We have been a people not concerned with the things of God. Feel as though the gifts are not for us, experiences or encounters are no longer. Miracles are far and few between. That is not how it should be.

We need to show interest, enthusiasm, and concern for the things of God.

1 Corinthians 14:1 - Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy..

Listen to this from the Amplified Bible.

EAGERLY PURSUE and seek to acquire [this] love [make it your aim, your great quest]; and earnestly desire and cultivate the spiritual endowments (gifts), especially that you may prophesy (interpret the divine will and purpose in inspired preaching and teaching).

Shouldn't we be so transformed by God that people want to ask what is it about us? Even if they hate God, don't understand Him or want nothing to do with Him?

Our obligation to to give an opportunity for them to encounter Jesus. And when they do, often times they too become disciples. But we need to be excited about who we serve. Not so scary excited we chase people away, but excited to share who He is and what He has done.

Talk about these:

- In Acts 8 Peter share Jesus with an Ethiopian Eunuch that was reading from Isaiah
- Paul in Acts 26 is before Festus Paul was sharing his encounter he had with Jesus

Next we have worry. This I think is the second cousin to fear.

Philippians 4:6 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

From the New Living Translation. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

Listen to verse 7 I love this.

Philippians 4:7 - Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Paul tells us worry about nothing.

Ok that was Paul I want to know what Jesus said about all that. Surely Jesus said something different right.

Matthew 6:25-34 - Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? 28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need

them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well.
34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow
will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its
own.

Leo F. Buscaglia has said, “Worry never robs tomorrow
of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy.”

Erma Bombeck on the other hand has stated that,
“Worry is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do
but never gets you anywhere”

Here’s the truth worrying is symptomatic of a larger issue....
And that is lack of faith.

But Scripture tells us everybody is given a measure of faith
so I challenge you today to activate that measure. Be like
Timothy and stir up that gift that’s within you.

Let me say this and you need to hear this when we worry
we are putting energy into something we cannot change.

Lastly today complacent.

When the church becomes complacent or comfortable with what it has experienced it has already begun to die.

Here's what you need to do, you need to fall in love again. When I was first dating my wife I would pursue after her.

I took flowers and put them on her desk at Grand Valley.

I'm not saying that I have necessarily become complacent with such things, but it is so easy to do so.

We must pursue after the things of God. I don't care how long you have been on your journey with the Lord there is always more revelation, more encounters, more of Him.

1 Timothy 6:11 - But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

See what needs to happen is that we need to move from our mind to our heart. (Talk about miracles, etc).

Complacency satisfies and settles where you shouldn't.

God desires for us to seek Him and love Him with all our hearts. That's certainly not something we are able to do if we are complacent..

Jeremiah 29:13 - You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart..

Complacency is getting in a rut. It is not having motivation to change. It is settling for less than what God has for you.

Talk about a car in a rut (move back and forth trying to free it up).

We need to step out and take risks. That's faith.

I believe the more you love God, the more you will love people. And the more you love people the more impact you can have to speak into their life.

But in order to love more, we need to know Him more. And to know Him more you need to spend time with Him more. And as you seek Him, pursue Him, you will have no choice but to come less complacent in Him.

