

VAIN IMAGINATIONS & LOFTY THINGS

We live in a neighborhood where the streets are lined with huge maple trees and during the fall the streets are covered with very large maple leaves. There are a few weeks in the fall where there are leaves everywhere until all the leaves have fallen and the city cleans the streets.

The other morning Linda and I were driving to the gym at 5:45 am. On the way my headlights were flickering like a bulb was going out or there was a problem with the headlights. It was so severe that I almost turned around and got our other car, but I didn't. All the way to the gym I was thinking about taking my car into the dealer, because it is on a lease, and what a hassle that was going to be. I was thinking about whether or not this would be covered by the warranty or how much it was going to cost me. I was also concerned because of my schedule I couldn't get the car over to the dealer for several days and how long could I drive before the headlights went out all the way. Linda was thinking that maybe we should just turn the car in and get another one and what a hassle that would be. All the way to the gym we both were having these independent thoughts, not sharing with each other, but both very concerned about the problem.

As we pulled into the gym parking lot, I got out of the car to inspect the headlights. What I found just made us laugh. There was a large maple leaf stuck in front of my headlight. The stem of the leaf was wedged between the lamp and the hood of the car and as we drove the leaf would move back and forth in front of the headlamp causing what we thought was a flickering headlamp. We both just laughed as we had independently spent the 7 minute car ride partnering with vain imaginations to the point that by the time we reached the gym, we both had thought we needed to trade in our car when in reality, it was just a leaf.

I think this is an amazing example of what Paul was writing to the Corinthians about in II Cor. 10:3-7. He says in vs. 5 – “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” In this portion of the letter, Paul is reminding his fellow believers in Corinth of their position and authority over how the enemy uses “vain imaginations” and “lofty things” to derail us from our established position of authority.

Specifically, Paul is targeting the issue of whatever captures your attention is what you release and what sets the agenda for your life. If you are captured by vain imaginations or the process of worry, anxiety, and reasoning in your mind scenarios that may or may not happen, then you have empowered those things, rather than the reality of the kingdom of heaven. You remove yourself from the partnership with heaven and empower the partnership with your circumstances and demonically inspired fear thus taking yourself out of the position to bring those circumstances into alignment with heaven.

He says in vs. 3 that our war is not against people, nor do we war or fight the enemy according to the flesh or what is natural. Vs. 4 clarifies the weapons arsenal of the believer and that it is

not based on natural ability, but “divinely powerful through God.” The weapons are instruments of precision as used by an artisan as well as powerful in war. In vs. 5 he states that “we are destroying vain imaginations” and “we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” as a matter of fact, and it just is. I think it is interesting how this has turned into a maybe for many believers and that the perception is that we are obedient when we take thoughts captive. Paul is stating that destroying the enemy’s lies and vain speculations is just what we get to do when we use our heavenly arsenal and those things have to come into obedience to Christ. Those thoughts that are taken captive are treated as prisoners of war and Jesus wins, every time!

Vs. 6 – “And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.” What Paul is saying here is that we are prepared, ready, bold, certain, zealous, active, and certain to avenge, execute right and justice and to maintain right in this place of torment by the enemy for ourselves and then for others. When our obedience is full or when we begin to walk in freedom in these places, part of the deal is to avenge the enemy’s previous torment. Our obedience is a catalyst that puts us in a position to partner at a greater level with Jesus in bringing His world and His thoughts into these places in our lives and the lives of others.

Common lies are that as believers we have to tolerate the enemy’s lies, vain imaginations, and lofty things and that we have to become more obedient, have more quiet times, and try harder to be more obedient and gain control of my thoughts. That we have to live our lives around the fortresses or strongholds of the enemy in our lives and that I have to hang on and can get rid of those things when Jesus comes back. That freedom from these strongholds is not for today.

Jesus has offered the arsenal of heaven and is partnered with us to bring those things into obedience to Him and then exercise our given authority in those places. Jesus’s design is that at the end of the day we all just realize “it was just a leaf.”

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