

For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.

Psalm 36:9

— the LifeWord —

with Michael Green



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Dear Friend:

MISCHIEF IN THE AIR

Just yesterday I got another one of those phone calls, the kind you get tired of getting. My calling friend is a fun loving but spiritual person. Over these years, I've watched this one walk in integrity and love while facing big challenges. My friend has lived the Gospel in the real world but my friend had also lost a few "friends" in the process. My friend realized that those friends were not really friends at all but a bitter traveling show.

The call came after a distasteful encounter with the gaggle of the discontented. You know, the type of encounter that, when you leave, you start thanking God for your wife, your husband, your kids, your guinea pig, your ability to sleep at night and even that bunion on the big toe. Then, after that "thank you" list, you start reaching for the Purel bottle to get 99% of the germs off of your hands.

During our earth time, we will all experience the joy of walking through some distasteful things and, with each challenge, we will face multi levels of emotions and mingled with possible responses. Paul told us not to walk like a fool but, admittedly, at times it feels like the "Fool Parade" is passing right out of our front door and we'd just like to address the crowd.

Discernment, on every level, is the need here. Sometimes, in the natural, you just know something ain't right. Other times, God graciously switches on the discernment light. To my friend, the light came on. I understand the pain and disappointment my friend faced; so does Linda and both of our boys. So do some of you.

We are well drilled on the exploits of the "mean old devil out in that sinful world" but it really takes you back when you discover it coming from the hand, no, make that mouth, of someone you had deemed safe, spiritual and loving enough to watch for you. We know of the outside dangers but we are just sometimes slow on the uptake regarding the evil stuff that tries to snake its way into our lives, our homes and our churches. My friend saw it first hand.

The hard headed spirit that can't get its way is ruthless, even to the point of working 24/7 to discredit, demean or destroy. The pharisaically pious are the most dangerous here because in their narcissistic sphere, while on their destructive misdirected mission, they deceive themselves into thinking that God is actually blessing their quest.

Long ago, I ceased believing public pandering contrition displays. The driven covet an audience and the antics weary even God. The words are threadbare and vinegar laced. My thoughts are further validated by the crushed spirits and carcasses left as the demanding steamroller chugs along. I've seen the passive/aggressive behavior that screams love and loyalty while winking at every action that tacitly approves the very opposite. So skillful in practice, even CSI won't find any prints here.

These types actually become walking embodiments of the Proverbs Top Seven List. *The proud look, lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that can't wait to run to mischief, a spreader of false witness and he who sows discord among the brethren* (notice, not among the heathen.) But, how does this happen?

A few years ago, I felt a Holy Spirit imparted word of comfort and explanation while I was asking a bunch of questions and asking for wisdom. Clearly a light came on and it has served as a comforting

template of information. *"What the ego driven can't control, they will attempt to destroy".*

Like the rejected, crying boyfriend at the top of the county water tower, these buffoons will blow up what they can't have or control. In this game, all rules, protocol and scriptural yammering is pitched to the curb.

Just this week we've heard news reports of a man who was in obvious deep distress. He and his wife had lost their jobs and the walls in his deranged mind caved in. It would end this way because He gave more ear to that screaming harassment voice predicting a hopeless future; he killed each of his five children, his wife and then himself. He felt that everything was out of his control and, in one last deed, he decided to destroy that which he professed to love the most. It is tragic to know that he was not mindful of David's word, *"the Lord is near to them who have a broken heart"*.

I've also observed that those, like my friend encountered, will always seek to fellowship with those of like spirit; never seeking those who would challenge them, intercede with them and point them to the life of the Word but they'd rather seek the old familiar deadness. *"As a dog returns to his folly, so a fool returns to his vomit."* They just love getting back together.

As the phone conversation ended, my friend actually spoke the deliverance and direction we both needed to hear. *"I will keep my spirit right, I will watch my mouth (they can't control how I respond), I will pray for them and I will keep away from them"*. That sounds like James' advice.

Dear weary ones, those who might be facing some mean, controlling roars, keep walking in God's love and know that He is mindful of your cry. Don't stop in your worship and devotion to God the Father. You will walk in favor and blessing if you don't give in to the discouragement or the clamor.

Today, I woke up humming one of Geoffrey's favorite Sunday School songs. As a little guy, he'd walk through the house singing, *"Be bold, be strong, for the Lord Thy God is with you!"* That little song is God's truth that will sustain you and protect you from all of the miserable schlock shoveling assaults.

Michael

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