

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

Psalm 36:9

— the Life Word —

with Michael Green



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Dear Friend:

JAWBONE OF A FOOL

"... and he said, "I will go out as before and shake myself free" but he did not know that the Lord had departed from him." Judges 16: 20b

Those sad words described the mighty Samson when it was apparent that the game was over. After years of riddles, games, arrogance, weak character, all wrapped up in a self deceived, egotistical package, God finally just pulled back and left him out there in the cold, peddling on his own. He ended up blind, bound and bummed out. I'm sure he was the most surprised guy in the room.

You see, it had always worked for him before and he was always able to pull off the home run blast for the *"bottom of the ninth"* win but not now, the power was gone. Without ceremony, without fanfare or warning, God took His power and went home. Right here, we finally find the answer to the eternal question, *"Does God have a last nerve?"* You bet he does and we now know it is a bad place to land on.

Get on God's last nerve and His available arsenal is bigger than the Terminator and all of the X-Men combined. He can blow you up, just ask Sodom after the warnings or ask Pharaoh after he ignored the first few rounds of the *"Let My People Go"* back and forth. He can do the fire thing, the wind, the locusts and the floods. Why, He can even open up the earth or just rain frogs if He wants to.

Or, He can just walk away. That really hurts and His silence can be deafening. It always ends up tragically and lonely, ask Samson.

Out of the starting block, this guy was something. It wasn't his hair or his biceps that made him so mighty, it was his covenant and he was gifted and blessed because of it. Ripping up lions, clearing enemy land with 300 flaming foxes (sounds funny, doesn't it) and the toting of the massive front gates of the city were just a few of the exploits of this covenant man. Everybody, Hell included, took notice.

My favorite story is the taking out of the 1000 Philistines with the jawbone of just one ass. That was probably one of the coolest things you'll ever see but likely not the biggest miracle. After all, we've all seen the *"still working"* jaw bones of a few, you know what, wail enough to kill the reputations and character of at least a thousand folks in their path. (That's another story for another day). But, a chattering jawbone can do some big time fatal damage.

Seriously, the point is, God was with Samson and as long as he understood that and as long as he remembered who was to be honored by each act, all would go well. Problem was, he got dumb, distracted and finally, debilitated. He wanted the adulation and got careless and casual about his gift. He was a fool and he thought the power would always be there.

Tragic as it was, the lesson was not learned. About six chapters after the Samson debacle, the army of Israel, feeling cocky and intoxicated from their past victories, went out to battle *"in their own strength"* and God allowed them to limp back home with their hineys in a sling.

This, walking without God's presence, is a point that carnal man has been warned about and experienced repeatedly; yet he cries, *"Where is God? He has failed us!"* Isn't it amazing how we keep repeating the same mistakes and still get puzzled when the same outcome happens to us?

If your car gets stolen, you'll know it. If your boss is hacked off, you'll know it. If your wife leaves, you'll know it. If you get audited, you'll know it. If you lose your wallet, you'll know it. If the store is out of your favorite Ben and Jerry's flavor, you'll know it. If the cable goes out during American Idol, you'll know it. The point is, we are pretty well aware of most of the stuff that goes on around us. But in this story, The Eternal, All Wise, All Powerful, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob left Samson and he didn't even know it!

How does something like that happen?

It is the result of negligence and the losing of the awareness and specialness of His touch in our lives. It also happens when, after a few lion victories, we become intoxicated into thinking, *"Gee, I'm pretty spectacular, aren't I?"* Then, we get nuts.

We have all seen those who spin in their little worlds, those whose only identity is wrapped up in what used to be; they have gotten away from their original awe and have forgotten who really enabled the victories. The Power has moved on but they wouldn't know it. So, the feverish self propagating, self-important drum beat just gets ratcheted up. It is sad, almost fool like.

Proverbs 13:16 says, *"A fool flaunts his folly"* and this fool spirit becomes arrogant, unteachable and fully narcissistic. This then gives birth to the insidious entitlement mindset and as James so aptly says, *"Every evil thing."* All the while, the jawbones are flapping away.

In parallel to the Samson thought, a natural businessman must always be alert and aware of new technology and change as it comes. He can't use that old ribbon typewriter and those black and white tube TVs or be, as the country song says, *"Lost in the Fifties Tonight."* The businessman can't live on the past victories or rest on the hardy laurels of old. It is true in all we do. Paul told us all to be alert and vigilant knowing that the *"competition"* is out there waiting to eat us up.

In the things of the Spirit, without a fresh anointing and a devoted heart to grow in the Word and in Worship, we will continue to run on a battery power that is quickly draining out. At the moment of need, we will jump up to find that there is nothing to draw on.

Losing God's presence is a tragic thing and it is really bad when you don't even know it. David said, *"Cast me not away from Thy presence and do not take your Holy Spirit from me."* Sounds like a guy who knew the difference.

Till next time, keep fervent in your spirit but watch out for those flailing jawbones.

Michael

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