

Fear and Procrastination Two of Satan's More Effective Tools

If anyone wants evangelism to be hindered, it is Satan; and among his best tools are fear and procrastination. Fear can be a terrible thing and can adversely affect our discipleship. Fear caused Peter to deny the Lord (Mat. 26:69-75). It may have been fear which caused John Mark to depart from Paul and his company in Acts 13:13 (Barnes). J.W. McGarvey believed this idea to be plausible. The fearful are first listed, in Revelation 21:8, of those cast into the lake of fire. Fear is a reason many members of the Lord's church do not evangelize; fear of rejection; fear of failure; fear of not knowing enough. In this instructor's experience, fear of not knowing enough tops the list of fearful reasons for not teaching others the gospel - *"Someone will ask a question and I will not know the answer."* After all, Peter said: **"...be ready always to give an answer..."** (1 Pet. 3:15). It is certainly understandable for a disciple to feel that he/she is unprepared to give an answer. What is not understandable is a disciples living his/her entire Christian life with this excuse, instead of seeking preparation. Whatever the fear is that is keeping us from being evangelistic, it can be overcome. We must face the fear and then do it. The only way to overcome fear of flying is to fly. The same is true with public speaking, driving, and evangelism. If one is afraid of evangelism, he will not overcome that fear until he evangelizes; in other words, "GO." As we go, Jesus promised to be with us always (Mat. 28:18-20); truly, a comforting thought. When we allow fear to keep us from teaching others the gospel, Satan successfully hinders the gospel and diminishes our discipleship.

Likewise, procrastination is a hindrance to evangelism. Daily, while we put off evangelism, thousands of the 6.7 billion are entering eternity with Christ that we might have otherwise reached. The Lord said: **"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest?...look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest"** (John 4:35). Jesus is plainly teaching us that we must not put off the reaping of souls. But so often we do put off soul winning; putting it off to wait on a big church event; putting it off to wait until the weather is better; putting it off to wait until...the list can be endless, just like our waiting. While we are waiting, even with good intentions, Satan has successfully hindered the spreading of the gospel. When one is contemplating obeying the gospel, we urge him to heed the New Testament examples (Acts 2:38-41; 16:25-33; 19:1-5) and commands in the New Testament of immediate obedience: **"...now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"** (2 Cor. 6:2). We should heed our own advice regarding the urgency of the gospel, and may we trust in the promise of the Lord to be with us always as we spread the gospel. Fear and procrastination — two effective tools of hindrance easily overcome by simply **"going."**

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