

## **The Little Foxes**

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It's a wonderful thing to have joy bubbling up from way down deep in one's heart and soul day after day. I want to minister to you about the joy of the Lord – but not like I usually minister about the joy of the Lord.

The joy of the Lord is our strength. We must keep the shield of faith high enough so that the devil's fiery darts won't rob us of that joy.

When Satan wants to succeed in crippling us spiritually, all he has to do is to catch us off guard and send his little foxes to destroy our joy. He knows that if he succeeds in destroying our joy we'll wither up like a leaf cut off from the vine.

When we don't have the joy of the Lord nothing goes right – church doesn't even seem worth going to!

### **IT'S USUALLY THE SMALL THINGS**

Sometimes it's a great big thing that comes along and robs us of our joy. If the house burned down and we lost all of our belongings, we might find it difficult to keep our joy.

But it's usually not the big things that bring discouragement and cause us to lose our joy – it's those little things: just a little fiery dart that hits us hard when our shield is down. It's such a trivial little thing – yet we lose our joy over it.

*Song of Solomon 2:15*

**Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.**

### **THE little FOXES**

Consider these little foxes – the young ones that like to snip away at the tender grapes. Think about those little foxes – those trivial little things that often can get at you and hit you so hard. Consider that little thing that eats away at your joy – that little thing that keeps you so upset all of the time, making your life miserable.

You let the same thing get in your heart time after time. That same thing bothers you and bothers you and bothers you – until your joy just can't seem to climb up any more.

You need to realize that Satan would like to drain your joy to the point where you just can't serve God anymore. He wants to get you so discouraged that you don't want to serve God.

If it becomes a drudgery to serve God you need to realize that something is happening: something is drastically wrong! Somewhere along the line you let down your guard. You let that little fox sneak in and get at you.

## **BE SPIRITUALLY MINDED**

*Romans 8:6*

**For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**

To be spiritually minded is to have the things of God dwelling foremost in your mind – all of the time. It is to have your mind set on serving the Lord, walking with Him from day to day – every day.

The spiritually minded have a love for God. The fire of God burns in their hearts and souls continually. This produces joy unspeakable, and full of glory!

Now, the Bible says that to be carnally minded is death. The carnal mind gets shaken up over everything.

The carnal mind says, *That dirty little fox. If he'd just get off my back and leave me alone, I'd be all right.*

Yes, that carnal mind starts to act like an old record that has two grooves stuck, repeating itself over and over. We need to kick that little fox right in the head. We need to rebuke that thing in the Name of Jesus – telling the devil to get off our back: because we intend to keep our joy.

Let's look at an example in the Bible of how little foxes can spoil the vine –

*see Luke 18:1-8*

**There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while:**

**but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.**

This woman went to the judge, and told him she wanted him to avenge her of her adversary. She kept coming back – until she got the judge so annoyed, so troubled, so weary of seeing her face that he did what she asked him to do.

We need to be careful that we're not like this judge – giving in to the little foxes just to get them off our back. We need to consider those little things that eat at us and annoy us. We need to realize what it is that annoys us, and put the blame where it lies.

If I take every little thing someone says to me as an offense, then something is wrong with me. After all, every little thing that is said is not meant to be an offense.

If we're not careful, we can let it get so bad in our hearts to where we get upset at every little thing: *They're talking about me again! They won't let me alone!*

There is nothing – absolutely nothing – worth getting upset over. I don't care what it is! It's not worth getting upset and losing our joy.

If someone knocks us to the ground and blackens both eyes, what should we do? We should get up and shout, *Thank You, Jesus!!!*

Yet, with some, when someone says just two words about them it gets into their mind – and they don't get over it for weeks. They let that little fox rob them of all their joy.

That little fox represents a little spirit that carries a tale – or a little spirit that causes something to appear before our eyes for us to notice and be troubled about.

We need to be careful. There are so many little things that can irritate us – if we let them.

It's our joy that's being robbed. If something is bothering us, then we are the one who is losing the victory. It's not the one beside us who has lost the victory. It's us! Therefore it is up to you and me to do something about restoring joy to our soul. We can't let that little fox rob us of the joy of the Lord.

We have to keep the victory! We have to come to the place where we see and recognize

those little foxes; where we see how they can rob us of our joy, rob us of our peace and blessing in the Lord.

Realize that these little things come to annoy you and steal your joy. Don't let the devil use his little foxes to destroy the love of God and steal the joy of the Lord in your life.

In church your mind should be on worshipping, praising, and magnifying the Lord. Nothing should hinder you from this. If you allow things to distract you, the devil will always have something there to keep you from pressing in.

If those little foxes can get one of your children upset and on your nerves, they'll do it: or they'll get the children on each other's nerves! That devil is foxy. He likes to let loose his little foxes in the midst of your home so your whole day is ruined.

You begin to think about the trouble, and about the disturbance, and about a thousand other things: then your mind becomes contaminated, and the joy leaves.

If you want to be spiritually minded, and be at peace in your heart, then you can't allow those little foxes to annoy you. When you are being troubled on every hand, you need to rejoice and be exceedingly glad.

When you are being persecuted, rejoice and be happy about it.

*Matthew 5:11-12*

**Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.**

When you think someone is doing something against you, you should rejoice and thank God. You shouldn't let these things change your heart. You should never allow yourself to become carnal because of something someone has done to you.

In another place we are told not to revile when someone reviles us. When someone renders evil unto us, we are to render good unto them.

*1 Peter 2:21-23*

**For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He**

**threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.**

Never render evil for evil. Never render a little dig for a little dig. Rather, render good for evil. Love those who turn against you.

*1 Peter 3:9*

**Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.**

It doesn't matter what happens. You don't have to let anything rob you of the victory.

But the little things tend to get at us so many times, because we let them get at us. Many have become bitter over five or six little words their mother said – and, as the result, have gone for twenty long years without speaking to them. Their own mothers! A few words spoken, and a mother and daughter are against each other for years – over just a few little words! Such a rotten, devilish little fox.

## **BITTERNESS ROBS**

You have to watch out for bitterness. It's so easy to let a little root of this sin well up within, even as a Christian. The first thing you know, it is in your heart, and then your mind becomes carnal.

You can never feel good about the one you have bitterness towards. You have no real love for them. You can't say, *I forgive you*, unless you first repent and let God change your heart.

The only way a root of bitterness will come out of a man's heart is through a miracle of God's taking it out.

If bitterness isn't repented of, it will turn the love off and turn the hatred on. It can make you hate the people that you normally would love the most. It can cause children to hate their parents and husbands to hate their wives.

Bitterness and hatred are of the devil – and they're of the flesh, too. They are cultivated in the carnal mind. They will get you nowhere – except deeper and deeper into hot water.

If you have these things in your life, you need to repent: *God, give me love in place of*

*bitterness and hatred. Restore unto me my joy, lest this thing eat at me like a cancer.*

A cancer may start out small: but it can grow and dig deeper and deeper, until finally it eats through something that you can't get along without. I'll tell you, this old cancer of bitterness is every bit as bad as that. Souls are taken out of the faith, driven away from God. They lose their joy over some little bitterness that wells up.

*Hebrews 12:15*

**Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled**

We have to be careful about this, not allowing any little foxes to eat away at our souls. Too often those little foxes we entertain are such little things: only a little variance; just a little strife. We think, *that's all it is, just a little – it doesn't really amount to anything!*

We need to be careful about those little things. They do amount to something, when they get inside our heart and defile us. They rob us of our joy.

We can't afford to let any little foxes enter our lives. We need to send them on their way.

Arguments only lead to grudging feelings. After an argument, you can't walk away and have peace in your heart. It goes over and over in your mind, eating away at your joy.

Do you have a forgiving heart? You'll never go anywhere without a forgiving heart. Realize that, ever since the time you refused to forgive someone of that little sin they committed against you, your sins are also unforgiven.

What if God stopped answering your prayers? What if you were really sick? Would God answer prayer when all that noise is in your life? – when you let all those things bother you?

## **WITHOUT JOY IT'S HARD TO HAVE FAITH**

How can you exercise faith when you have lost your joy? How can you believe God when your mind is in a rut, hearing the same carnal things over and over all day long, and dwelling on them day and night?

If you want to have joy in your heart all day, you will have to have spiritual things on your mind.

God will move to answer prayer for you when you've been thinking on things above. If you try to pray while you're upset, it will be hard to get past the four walls. It will seem like the heavens are brass, like God is miles away.

What should you do in such a case? Take a hold of that little fox, and tell him to get off your shoulder.

You'll never come to a place in this life where all annoyance will be taken away from you. You're not going to have such a heavenly home that there won't be a little upset once in a while – especially while you have children.

Now, some people are upset all day just because they got out of bed on the wrong side. You might even be one of these people! Do you know what you need to do when you wake up grouchy and mean? You need to get right back in bed until you get over it – until you can get out on the right side.

When you get overtired, what happens to you? Do you get irritable? You sure do! You need to use wisdom, and not get overtired to the point where you're going to make the whole family miserable.

There are days when the children can't seem to play together without fighting and jangling. But we don't always realize that they usually just need to take a nap. After a rest, the fight is taken out of them.

Sometimes we get carnal inside. We begin to go by our fleshly, carnal mind. Instead of walking in the Spirit, and keeping the joy of the Lord, we let those little foxes spoil the vine.

Do you get mad and frustrated? Do you grow mean? Do you threaten?

You shouldn't – you can't afford to let anyone rob you of your joy in the Lord. God said to pray for those who despitefully use you. If you are mistreated, then pray for the one who is coming against you.

If you pray *against* those who mistreat you, God might put *you* in the grinder, and grind you up: if this is your attitude then that would end the problem – since the problem is

you.

Realize now that as soon as the little fox that is eating away at you is killed another will come along.

## **KEEP JOY NO MATTER WHAT!**

Get yourself into the place where you don't care how many little foxes may come along. You're going to keep your joy . . . no matter what they try to do to you.

Realize that those little foxes will have a hard time biting at dancing feet. But when you allow some little thing to bog you down, and you just sit there, that thing will continually chew at your ankles and annoy you.

Let's get the joy of the Lord bubbling within our hearts and souls. And let's keep it. Let's not allow anything to distract us or put us down.

Did you know that Satan goes to church? Yes, he is very religious. He goes to all denominations – including Pentecostal.

He goes to church to see what he can do to disturb those who want to worship the Lord. If we allow him to, he can always stir up some little thing to distract us.

A woman told me how her husband began to fight with her when she got saved. It came to the place where he declared, *If you're going to keep going to church, then you're going to support yourself because I won't give you any money.*

Well, she went out to work, supported herself and the children, and kept right on serving the Lord. She wasn't about to lose the victory.

I thank God for a testimony like that. One time, this same woman was hit over the head by her husband – and knocked out! When she came to, she got up still wanting to go on with God: *It doesn't matter if you kill me – I'm still going to serve the Lord! I'm not going to lose my joy for anything.*

Are you that determined? When that big trial comes along, are you going to stand? Isn't that the way it generally goes? When that big mountain stands in the way, you'll go to work on it and really pray – but when that little thing comes along, you forget about praying and get all upset.



We should be determined to keep the joy of the Lord, regardless of what happens.

When some people get into an argument, they can't seem to stop. They refuse to let the other person have the final say. It's so important that they make sure they get that last word in – even if they have to keep it up all night.

But it's more important to have the joy of the Lord than it is to have the last word.