

Calm Within the Storm

Written by: James Travis

Written on: September 21, 2009

If you've ever heard any stories about wise shaolin monks or seen any movies or television shows about such things, you may have heard them speaking of being calm enough to always be aware of everything around you. Today I have something a little different... Before continuing on with this article, I would like you to watch this [video](#).

Now even if you have no interest in the martial arts at all, there is great value in always being calmly aware of all that is around you.

Each of us whether we know it or not, is in the middle of a battle, not one waged with swords and shields or physical weapons of any kind, but a battle of the spirit and the will. The details of this battle have been outlined in a previous article entitled [The Spiritual Battle](#). It is sufficient for our purpose here to simply acknowledge that *we are in a battle*.

The art of being calm

With today's hectic lifestyles and wild schedules, remaining calm and free of stress is truly an art form all its own. Like most things however, we being the humans that we are, tend to overcomplicate the solution. It doesn't necessarily take a big sweeping change in order to cultivate calmness in our lives. What is truly important; what really makes the biggest difference overall, are the little things. For example, when you wake up in the morning, do you just immediately jump into the day rushing to start chopping away at an overcrowded schedule? Or do you take some time in the morning – even as little as a few minutes – to open the shades, take in some morning sunlight, have some prayer time, or read the Bible?

It may seem overly simplistic, but it is completely true that people who take the time to meditate in the morning, in the manner described above, are more productive, less stressed and healthier. The people that skip the morning meditation time for fear of losing too much time, are exactly the opposite; more stressed, less productive throughout the day, and more prone to sickness... Remember that the stress alone can cause all sorts of health issues both minor and serious.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin,

yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.
(Matthew 6:25-34)

The spiritual benefit of calmness

So we already know the physical benefits of remaining calm and reducing stress, and they are indeed valuable. Now let's explore the spiritual benefits of remaining calm.

I am going to share with you an experience that I had in my own life which can best convey this...

There was a time when I was having difficulty determining which path to take, whether to do this or that and I was very anxious and nervous about this decision because the stakes were very high. It is not an exaggeration to say that the outcome of this decision would shape and change the entire course of my life. So I was naturally inquiring quite anxiously of the Lord to guide me in which path to take, and I wasn't receiving any answers, or so I thought at the time.

What I came to realize is that I was so busy asking and begging and pleading for God to give me guidance that I never remained still and quiet long enough to hear His answer.

Much like the young student in the video at the start of this article, he was too anxious, and filled with unrest, that he couldn't accomplish his task and he couldn't see what was so plainly around him at his feet.

The Bible tells us that the voice of God is quiet and small, and we can miss it if we do not first silence our own voices, and the distractions that surround us.

And he said, Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD. And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

*And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.
And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, What are you doing here, Elijah?
(1st Kings 19:11-13)*

Conclusion

I know that things get crazy sometimes, and we tend to get stressed out about them... but as surely as those things happen, I am also certain that the answer – as the Bible says – is to be still and at peace, and listen to the calm whisper of the Lord, the one who can guide us.

In a world where distractions are all around us and everything is vying to grab our attention, the challenge to us all here is to make a point to do the little things to quiet our minds, so that we can all hear the grasshopper at our feet.

Rise to the Challenge!

James