



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

"Are you listening to me?" I've been asked that question on more than one occasion during the last 37 years (my "married" era). It seems to come up more frequently over the last couple of decades. *"Are you listening to me?"*

You know how it happens: the sources of input for our one-track minds are multiple, and we always seem to zero in on one and zone out on the others. We call ourselves "multi-taskers," but we are far too self-aggrandizing; researchers have confirmed that when we try to devote our limited cranial capacity to more than one demanding engagement at a time, they all lose. Our functional IQ drops measurably when we spread it across multiple musings...

Watching "the news" brings that to bear these days. While the coifed anchor is telling us about the drama from the live action cam in the hovering helicopter, following the car chase of the guy who tried to use a stolen ATM card to buy a Slurpee at a convenience store, there's a running text across the bottom of the screen that is often the most important factoid of the bunch.

I don't know what you're focused on right now - life in the 21st Century seems to have constant car chases that mean nothing, seizing the scene - but here's a bulletin that is



flowing across the bottom of the screen: Faith is Better than Doubt.

I created that headline, but I didn't create the text that follows. I'm in Northern Ireland right now, and I've been doing Irish newspapers with my morning Starbucks each day. Was the study conducted by the Royal Economic Society in Coventry carried in your daily paper? Here's the subhead: *"It seems that people with religious beliefs are likely to be happier than atheists or agnostics."* Wait a minute: this is the "Royal Economic Society" reporting; not the English Sunday School Teachers Association. They go on: *"A religious faith provides an individual with a fortress against the slings and arrows of life, and helps temper the impact of adverse life events like marriage breakdown, unemployment, stress, personal loss or the rest of the usual brickbats that life throws at you. Moreover, churchgoing and prayer were associated with greater life satisfaction..."*

You'd think these guys were doing public relations for God. With no evident agenda to evangelize anyone, they are coming with dry but profound insight about evidence. As Joe Friday characterized on the old cop show, *Dragnet*: "Just the facts, ma'am, just the facts." The Royal Economic Society is looking at the real condition of real religious people... and observing that they are generally more at peace (my word, not theirs) than those alongside them, experiencing the same nitty-gritties of life... but lacking a faith-based foundation that provides them a firm footing on which to stand.

Jesus said that *"the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full"* (John 10:10). The Thief is always around, and his steal/kill/destroy agenda is unrelenting. In fact, he's working on messing up your life right now, any way he can. Will he succeed?

Not if you're connecting with the power of the One who said that He came to counter-attack the Enemy's destructive ways: He says your life can be better, because of Him.

Better? *How?* Relationally. Physically. Professionally. Intellectually. Politically. Spiritually. Familially. Financially. Pick a category: *the engagement of the Lord Jesus Christ in the practicum of your life will always lead to improvement!*

Does that mean that the Royal Economic Society would find that Christians experience less trouble than lost people? No, it does not. What it does mean is that it doesn't take them (us, really) down when the trouble hits. People of faith go into - and, come out of - trouble with peace. Peace that people without faith don't have.

The two big questions: 1) Are you a person of faith? and, 2) On Whom have you placed that faith? *For the best answer to #2, don't ask the Society; ask the Scriptures...*

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