

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE MIND: FACING THE MONSTERS THAT COME CALLING DAY AND NIGHT

Introduction

(Revised 8/26/05)

It was a dark and stormy night. I had already gone to bed for the evening. But with the storm outside, I could not sleep. There were too many unknown noises that frightened sleep out of my thoughts.

Thunder shook the house and lightning shattered the darkness. It sounded like a bomb had gone off right overhead. There were burglars trying to break in. I saw a snake slithering across the floor. A T-Rex dinosaur was looking in through my window. Who knows what monsters lurked in the closet or under my bed?

OK, OK. I'll admit that I was a seven-year-old with an active imagination. Every shadow became a hideous figure and every unknown branch scraping at the window became someone trying to break into the house.

Fortunately, my dad was on monster patrol. All I had to do was call out his name, "Dad," and he would tell the monsters that no one was home and they should take the night off. If they didn't, they would have to deal with him.

While I am far removed from being seven years old, I am still occasionally haunted by monsters at night. My problem is that they have taken on more specific shapes and forms. Instead of being unknown fears sparked by an overactive imagination, they now prey upon my deepest fears and worries.

They creep up to my bed and whisper in my ear, “Who do you think you are teaching that class? Couldn’t they find someone who was qualified? You’re not adequate.”

When that one leaves, another slithers in from the closet and takes its place by my side. “If people knew the mistakes you’ve made, you’d be laughed right out of the office. You’re a failure waiting to happen.”

Still another one starts his shift at three in the morning. “How are you going to provide for your family? How will you pay for your children’s college education? What about the rumor that pink slips are coming on Friday? Do you think you’re safe?”

Waiting in line for his turn is the monster that accuses, “How can you call yourself a Christian? You keep giving in to the same temptation every time. How come you’re so weak?”

Since I’m no longer seven, I can’t wrap myself in my security blanket to help me go to sleep at night. Where can I find a source of security that will send the monsters packing and let me rest peacefully? Where can I find answers to the problems and worries that plague my waking thoughts and drive sleep from my eyes?

The premise of this book is that each of us has many cares, concerns, and worries that fill our thoughts and drain away our emotional reserves. Some are light and easily reasoned away. Others feel like a weight on our shoulders. Still other anxieties come calling at 3:00 am. They are the ones that keep us awake at night and drive away the refreshing and restful sleep that we so desperately crave.

The purpose of this book is to examine the nature of 10 of the deep-seated worries and fears that the average person struggles with. More importantly, however, we will

discover how the Bible addresses the issues and anxieties that we struggle with the most. Consequently, the focus will be on observing how God meets us at our point of need in order to calm our worries and soothe our fears.

As you read, you will see that chapters 1-10 examine the various fears and worries we all struggle with. Chapter 11 provides a statement of trust and confidence that is enjoyed by the one who understands that God is their source of security. Each chapter also provides a series of questions to help you think through how to apply the principles to your life, in essence providing you with a nightlight.

One of the recurring themes of my life is that God can be trusted. As you read through the following pages, I hope that you will see that that theme has been discovered and reinforced through times of personal loss and struggle. But through it all, God has calmed my heart and taken each one of my burdens and worries. Through my own journey, I have discovered that Scripture provides a message of hope for those who are in the midst of struggle.

My prayer is that you will come to that same realization. Pleasant dreams.