

Don't Act Like a Fool

By Pastor Greg
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Matthew 10:29-30

Bunkertown COB

An atheist was walking through the woods, admiring all the marvels of evolution. "What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!" he said to himself. As he was walking alongside the river, he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him. Turning to look, he saw a 7-foot grizzly bear charge towards him. He ran away as fast as he could. Looking over his shoulder, he saw the grizzly was closing. His heart pounding, he tried to run faster but tripped and fell to the ground. As he rolled over, the bear was right over him, raising its right paw to strike. At that instant the atheist cried, "Oh my God!"

Time stopped. The bear froze. The forest was silent. Even the river stopped moving. As a bright light shone upon the man, a voice came out of the sky, "You deny my existence for all these years, teach others that I don't exist, and even credit creation to a cosmic accident. Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?" The atheist looked directly into the light and said, "I would feel like a hypocrite to become a Christian after all these years, but perhaps you could make the bear a Christian?" "Very well," said the voice. The light went out. The river ran. The sounds of the forest resumed. Then the bear dropped his right paw, brought both of them together, bowed its head, and spoke: "Lord, for this food which I am about to receive, I am truly thankful."

King David once wrote, *"Only fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, and their actions are evil; not one of them does good!"*¹ (Psalm 14:1) Why did David write this? Because things happened in David's life that enabled him to see the hand of God, while those around him could not. Take the incident with Abigail, for example. David easily knew it was God who sent Abigail that day.
³² Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, ³³ and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

*kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand.*²

(1 Samuel 25:32-33)

There are people in this world who see no evidence of God anywhere; not in creation, not in their own lives, and certainly not in the death of good, innocent people (for example, see *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins). But there are others who see the thumbprint of God everywhere. Now even though I have been granted eyes and ears like David (the ability to see and hear God in all of creation), every now and then, God does something that strengthens and deepens that faith. And what happened the other week not only strengthened my faith in God but also acted as a reminder that the God whom we worship is intimately involved in the lives of His people.

The first Tuesday of each month some of the area pastors get together for a prayer breakfast. That morning I had just dropped Andrea off at school and was headed to the church when I remembered the meeting. I really wasn't in the mood to attend that morning, and wasn't sure I could spare the time (my schedule was filled with meetings the whole week). But God continued to nudge me, "You should go", He insisted. Well, I argued with God for a while, but eventually He won. The food was great and the devotions were wonderful. But eventually the conversation started to seem irrelevant to me. We started debating what nation will be the Babylon mentioned in the book of Revelation. Eventually my mind began to wander as I thought about the people I know that have not called Jesus Lord and Savior. Part of me wanted to remind God that I didn't feel like coming in the first place, and yet here we were, talking about something that in my mind really didn't matter. I was just waiting to get my bill so I could leave.

About then, a waitress pops in and tells me that someone in the other room needed to talk with me. A little shocked, I excused myself and stepped out to see who it was. There sat Darwin and Ruth Ann Apple. She had recently received news that a test had shown a few spots, and the doctor had scheduled her for further testing. So I sat down with them and we prayed together for God to give them strength for what may come.

²*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update.* 1995 (1 Sa 25:32-33). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

Here is what I realized that morning. God continually prodded my heart to attend the meeting. He wouldn't take no for an answer. Ruth Ann just happened to stay at the restaurant a little longer than usual, long enough for Darwin to stop in as he was passing by. As he walked in, he headed back to the bathroom to wash his hands. I just happened to pick a seat in the room that faced the doorway to the restrooms. The moment he walked past the doorway, he glanced in just as I glanced up.

First of all, this event really strengthened my faith. I don't believe in chance. I don't believe things just happen. I mean, there were just too many things that needed to happen so the prayer could happen. And for the three of us, we were keenly aware that God had been quite busy that morning so that things would work out according to His plan and His purpose.

Secondly, I was amazed that God cared that much about us. He saw exactly what Darwin and Ruth Ann needed that day, and what I needed as well. And He orchestrated events so the three of us would be reminded how deep is the Father's love for us.

Do you ever feel that God is too busy to notice what you are dealing with? Do you think He doesn't care? Christ reminds us just how valuable we are to the God of Heaven. ²⁹ *What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it.* ³⁰ *And the very hairs on your head are all numbered.* ³¹ *So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.* ³ (Matthew 10:29-30) And what He did that day helped me understand the words of Jesus just a little bit more.

I guess its one thing to say God exists. At least we wouldn't be acting like a fool. But to know He exists and to understand the depth of His love and care is a whole different thing. And every now and then, just when we need it the most, God will let us know, in sometimes subtle ways, the depth of His love and how valuable we are in His eyes. Darwin, Ruth Ann, and I hope this story reminds you that if He would go to such lengths to strengthen our faith, He will do the same for you. And when He does, I hope you realize just how special you are to the Father.

³Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.