

NEVER DOUBT—
GOD IS ON YOUR SIDE



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Scripture: Matthew 28:20; Romans 8:31;
Psalm 46:1, 5; Philippians 2:5

WHEN you deal with the deepest problems of human beings, as any minister does, you are likely to get some very poignant and moving responses. For example, I have received the following letter from a young woman whom I have never met. She writes from California.

Dear Dr. Peale:

I just want to thank you for what your printed sermons are doing for me and my boyfriend. We are both 17 years old, only we are not like normal 17-year-olds. My boyfriend is facing a one to ten year prison term for several breaking-and-enterings, and I am in California facing the conflict of taking drugs and choosing a life of drug addiction.

Well, when Frank, my boyfriend, was in jail awaiting his sentence he wrote me saying that all of a sudden he had been thinking of God. This sorta shocked me, because before he had been an agnostic. I began sending him religious material to read - and from his letters I noticed a change.

Then I was sent to California to attend college - and for other reasons - and my aunt, with whom I am staying, gave me some of your sermons to read. A Catholic but not a strict one - in fact, I never think of religion - just of God.

'Yell, as it is now, I am faced with continuing my drug taking or not. And I am thoroughly confused - or was tonight. Before, it was so easy to dope up and forget about Frank being in prison, to forget about what I might be turning into. But then I read your sermon called *Start Life New Every Morning*. In it you said, "... and you must face the bad news, because no way of life is sound that isn't realistic." And that really got me.

...It will take time. Frank and I are going to have to be pretty strong in the next five years to get married after Frank gets out of prison and, well, we have no one on our side - except God. I know it'll be hard, but with God Frank and I are sure to win.

Would you pray for Frank and me? Thanks.

And we did pray for them earlier in this service.

This girl suggests that God is on her side - and He is too. He is on everybody's side. He is on your side. A newspaper reporter recently asked me if Jesus were on the side of the hippies. My reply shocked him, I think.

He probably expected another answer. "Of course He is on the side of the hippies and of everybody else." You see, the great fact of human existence is that God loves you. He is for you. He wants you to succeed. He wants the best for you. You are very dear to Him.

I recall the time I preached my first sermon. It was in Berkeley, Rhode Island, a long while ago. The sermon was prepared, but I didn't have it clearly in my mind, so I went to death. My father happened to be in a little anteroom and it was almost time for me to go in to the pulpit. I said to him, "Dad, what will I say to those people out there?"

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"What will you say?" he asked in surprise. "There is only one thing to say. Just tell them that God loves them. 'Yes, I did.' When you get right down to it that is all there is to say, 'God loves you.'"

Here is a girl with a narcotics habit and here is a boy in prison. We say to them, "Never doubt- God is on your side." What is your problem? What are you disturbed about? God loves you. He is on your side. This may seem to be a very simple approach, but we all need this message. I know I need it. Even the most sophisticated people, the most seemingly competent, need it. We all do.

FOR A number of years I have had the privilege, unusual for a minister, of speaking at the national conventions of many of the trade associations in this country. I think I have covered more trade associations than almost anybody. These conventions have run all the way from a national potato-chip association to the National Selected Morticians to the National Germ and Bug Exterminators.

Well, on one occasion I spoke in Kansas City to an organization known as the National Frozen Food Dealers. At most of these conventions there are representatives from the great banking interests of the country who attend because of their financial dealings with the various businesses who are there.

After speaking at this particular convention I got on a plane to go to Chicago and was sitting by the window. A man came in and took the seat beside me. He was a very well set up individual, extremely well groomed. He spoke to me, and we had a little conversation. It was evident that he was a man of considerable erudition and ability. Finally he said, "I was at that convention where you spoke this morning. You didn't give a sermon, but you

certainly did imply that God is a reality." "You know," he said, "I know nothing about God. Is there actually a God? Whether there is or isn't, I personally don't know. I'm inclined to think there has to be some explanation of an orderly universe, but as to this being called God, I just don't know." He continued, "I am rather young. I've come up fast. I've just been put into a position of great responsibility and, frankly, I'm afraid of it. As a boy I was shy and introverted and had an inferiority complex which I still have to fight. I really don't know if I can handle myself in this job. I put on a front, I act as though I know everything, but inwardly, I want to tell you, I'm shaky - I'm scared."

When I turned and glanced at his face it was pathetic to see. "What will I do?" he asked. "How can I get hold of myself?"

For a minute I considered giving him some psycho-

logical and psychiatric advice, but decided I'd give it to him straight, just give him plain, unadulterated religion. I asked, "Why don't you talk to God and Jesus Christ about it?"

"Well," he replied, "I am willing, but I have no sense of reality about that. How do you go about doing it any way?"

"Let me give you a few statements," I offered. "I will write them out. Keep them in your pocket and gradually transfer them from your pocket to your mind. When you get them in your mind, they will give you a real feeling that God is on your side. And when that happens, you will know that He will help you to accept any responsibility which comes to you."

I WROTE out and gave him four short sentences that will convince anybody who works with them that God is on his side.

First: "I am with you alway." (Matthew 28 :20) I said, "He is, too."

Second: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31) Only I told him to use "me" instead of the word "us."

Third: "God shall help ... and that right early." (Psalm 46 :5) I have always been interested in that "right early." It means God will help you and He won't wait. He won't fool around. He will give you help right now and as you need it.

Fourth: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1)

The man sat there looking these over. Then he asked, "Do you believe in God? Do you *really* believe in God?"

"I *really*, wholeheartedly, one-hundred-percent believe in God!" I answered.

"How do you *know*?"

"Because I talk to Him every day," I said, "and I feel His presence." Then I advised him, "Try stepping out of your intellectualizing and put your faith in faith. You'll find out for yourself that it's real."

I tell you this story because only recently I met the same man again and he quoted verbatim those four texts and said, "As I filled my mind with these thoughts I discovered that God is a reality and that He is for me. He made me feel confident in my job. He even took me beyond that and gave me great pleasure and happiness in it. I'm not afraid any more - not afraid of my inabilities, not afraid of myself - because I don't doubt any more. God is for me."

When you live close to God and have a definite partner onship with Him, it does something to you mentally. It

stimulates your mind. It is a fact that most human minds are fairly sluggish. Know mine is. I've always had a feeling that there was more creativity in my mind than ever came out, but I was never quite able to get it out. But the mentality of a person is sharpened by God. The more he lives with God, the more he gets illuminations, illuminations like when you are in a black landscape on a stormy night and all of a sudden there is a flash of lightning and you see everything sharply revealed. Illuminations of that kind come mentally to the individual who lives with God. We are told in the Scriptures: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." That is a curious exhortation, to have in you the same kind of mind as is in Christ Jesus: the ability to perceive, to understand, to see the road clearly marked before you, to have an absolutely clear guidance. It is amazing what can happen to the mind of the individual who has a close association with God.

I recall on one occasion checking into a hotel and being asked to see the hotel manager without delay. The desk clerk said they would send my bags up to my room and would I please go right in to the manager. I found him in his office wrestling with a problem. He said, "I need your help with a very difficult business problem."

"Why do you need my help?" I asked. "I know nothing about the hotel business."

"I know," he said, "but I read in the Bible that where two or three are gathered in His name He will be in the midst of them. I was here all by myself and saw on our reservation sheet that you were coming. I thought maybe you would join me so there would be two." Which I thought

was an interesting approach.

"Now," he continued, "I want to tell you all about my problem..." Which he proceeded to do for about thirty minutes. It was an involved financial and personnel problem peculiar to the hotel business. I followed him rather bewilderedly through the maze of his description. Then he said, "Now we are going to pray about it. That is why I want you here. We are going to empty our minds. That is the way I pray - I empty my mind so that God can put the right ideas into it."

"But why do you need me?" I asked.

"Two empty minds are better than one," he replied smiling. "Besides, I believe in the fellowship of the two or three."

So we sat there emptying our minds - which didn't take long, I assure you! After a long silence the manager said, "Amen!" Then he looked at me and asked, "What did you get?"

"To tell you the truth," answered, "a thought did come to me about one little point that you mentioned. I told him what it was. 'You know something?' I said. 'I don't know a thing about it and I could be way off, but it came to me that that was slightly shady.'"

He looked at me in astonishment and exclaimed, "That is the nugget of the whole thing! I've been trying to tell myself on that point that it's okay for me to do it, and that it's accepted, that I could get away with it, - but it bothered me. Now you come in here, knowing nothing about this business, you empty your mind and God puts it into your mind to tell me not to do that very thing. So," he said, "thank you - I've got my answer. It is shady. I'm not going to do it."

He didn't do it. And a long time afterwards he told

me that if he had done that seemingly innocuous thing it would have ruined him, whereas the plan he arrived at without doing it brought the matter to a very successful conclusion. Now, it wasn't that I did anything to solve the problem. I had no competence in the matter. I was just another human being - just, as the man said, another "empty mind." But God's simplification of the human mind is one way in which He is on your side.

God also teaches us that nothing is too good to be true.

We are told that we are supposed to become little children:

that is one of the sharp, keen essences of the Christian

faith. To a little child the world is his oyster, everything is

wonderful, every morning is Christmas morning.

the greatest things are going to come to him every day

and he believes wonderful stories because he believes that

nothing is too good to be true. God is so wonderful! He

is so profligate in His blessings to us, in His gifts to us,

in all the things He wants to do for us! But we inhibit Him

and frustrate Him because we won't believe that great

things are going to happen.

What is it you would like to have happen in your life?

Do you still have dreams? Do you still have high hopes?

Do you continue to have high expectations? Or do you

subconsciously or even consciously tell yourself such things

aren't going to happen any more? "Might as well face

life realistically," perhaps you say. Or, "These wonderful

things will not come to pass." You should never get to the

point where you believe that.

No expectation is too great when you know that God is

on your side. So formulate it, make it sharp and precise

and distinct, that great idea in your mind, and believe it

will come to pass, for God is on your side.

A MAN was telling me about a business associate in England. He had never met this man but did business with him through the mail. In one of his business letters one day the Englishman enclosed a card. My friend in New York got it. All the card said on the face of it was, "Expect a miracle." And on the back, "God is on your side." He looked at the card: "Expect a miracle." He turned it over: "God is on your side." He was about to throw it in the wastebasket as some kind of crankish aberration; but he was having a hard time, things were going against him. He was being frustrated over and over again. It rather intrigued him: "Expect a miracle." "God is on your side." He put the card in his wallet.

Every time he had to get a credit card from his wallet to buy gasoline or something else this card would fall out. "Expect a miracle." "God is on your side." The thing began to get into his consciousness. It led him to think about God. He began to send up little prayers. People became more important to him. There he started taking a new positive attitude toward the problems which had baffled and frustrated and defeated him. He actually came to a point where his whole outlook changed. And finally he went around expecting a miracle.

There is a deep psychology in human nature that you get what you expect. What you see coming to you, will come. What thoughts you send out will return in kind. It is a law. If you expect little things, you are going to get little things. If you expect medium things, you will get medium things. If you expect defeat, you will get defeat. If you expect sickness, it will come to you. If you expect inability, you will have inability. Why? Because, as John Burroughs once said, "My own shall come to me."

So my friend began to expect a miracle. Nothing hap-

pened for a while and then little miracles began to happen, strange, exciting little miracles. Later on they grew into big miracles, unexplained happenings, intuitions about how to solve problems, success when none seemed possible. Maybe we all should make a card for ourselves: "Expect a miracle." "God is on your side." But far better than having this message on a card is having it in your mind, in your consciousness, in your heart. Look, life is great. Life is difficult and painful. It is full of all kinds of disappointments and sorrows, lots of trouble. But it is also full of wonders. And if you expect wonderful things, wonderful things will happen. When God is on your side you can expect a miracle.

Finally, God being on your side gives a wonderful sustaining power when the blows of life come. How far you have escaped some of the hardships of life, thank God for it. But it will not last forever. No ship ever had fair sailing one year after year. Soon or late storms come.

A plane I was on not long ago was flying through absolutely fair skies and the visibility was excellent. The seat belt sign had been turned off and the pilot had announced: "I anticipate a smooth flight from here to our destination. Just then the plane began to toss around like a cork in a stormy sea. The pilot explained, "Strange thing about these upper levels of the sky. You can never be sure when crosswinds will come. So put on your seat belts; we have crosswinds." I knew we had crosswinds without being told, and so did the rest of the passengers. Absolutely serene skies, but crosswinds!

These will come to anyone. But when you know that God is on your side, you can ride them out. You can meet any difficulty.

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this message which comes to us from Thy Holy Word, that we are not alone. You did not create us and then set us off to shift for ourselves, but You are with us always, even unto the end of the world. For this we give Thee thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



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WHAT'S
YOUR
TROUBLE?

In this helpful booklet are brief and practical suggestions by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale on how to approach and resolve some of the problems of our times. The advice has been drawn from tried and tested principles evolved over the years at the counseling clinic of the American Foundation of Religion and Psychiatry, of which Dr. Peale is president.

Here are the subjects covered:

<i>I Am A Worrier</i>	<i>There Is An Alcoholic In Our Family</i>
<i>After Happy Years We Are Drifting</i>	<i>I Find It Difficult To Adjust To</i>
<i>Apart</i>	<i>Retirement</i>
<i>I Have Been Warned I Must Slow Up —</i>	<i>A Loved One Has Died</i>
<i>Or Else</i>	<i>Our Son Is Keeping Company With</i>
<i>Things Irritate Me</i>	<i>Someone We Disapprove</i>
<i>I Am So Tense</i>	<i>An Older Person Is Living With Us —</i>
<i>We Are Worried About Money</i>	<i>How Can We All Be Happy</i>
<i>Resentment Is My Problem</i>	<i>My Children Are Not Doing Well In</i>
	<i>School</i>

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