

When you were young, mom was the go-to manual for everything. Mom taught you how to talk, walk, maybe even how to read and write. Mom helped with homework. Staying up late with you putting together science and art projects. But as you grew older, mom became less of a resource. As a teenager, suddenly mom wasn't so infallible—friends and peers influence our opinions and our decision-making more. Suddenly, mom's advice wasn't good. Maybe, following it made you less popular, less successful, less cool—whatever. Mom was old-fashioned, behind-the-times, unable to see what you saw around you.

Aren't our Christians lives similar? As infant Christians we crave the nourishment of God's Word. We learn to walk and talk in the faith, by imitation. But as we grow in grace and knowledge, we grow more comfortable in the steps we take; we also grow more arrogant. Suddenly, God seems old-fashioned, behind-the-times, as if he is unable to see all that surrounds you.

Elisha and his servant were surrounded by the enemy because they had listened to God. And things looked pretty grim—the Arameans were a powerful and motivated army.

So Elisha's servant asked what to do. Every other time God told Elisha the plans of Aram. Then Elisha would tell the king of Israel, Joram, and they would make some moves to defend Israel. But not this time. The Aramean army had traveled through the night and snuck up on Elisha. There were no more moves to make and the servant was scared because he was confident in the Israelite army, in the counsel of Elisha, in the forces he could see and hear. So, he turned to Elisha.

That question—what shall we do?—is one we struggle with. We constantly analyze our future. But where is real confidence? Our sinful nature wants us to be confident in only what we see.

Do we only trust God to give us the ability to make money, and the rest is up to ourselves? Placing our confidence in our 401k, our résumé, our home's equity, or just the fact we have more than 100 bucks in our checking account.

Or maybe our confidence is in our health. We know God gives us each day, but we feel responsible for making something of our lives. We take care of ourselves, eat right, work out occasionally, do the little things to keep up. Quickly becoming confident in our good health because we've earned it.

Perhaps your confidence isn't in the strength of your bank or your back—but you feel confident because you have a good family, or good friends. You know in your head God gave you your family—because nobody picks family—but you pride yourself that everybody gets along pretty well. You comfort yourself—no matter how bad things might get you always have family, blood is thicker than water. Or maybe your family isn't picture perfect. Maybe you have latched on to close friends, people you know who know the right people.

But maybe none of those things really create a sense of confidence in your heart. After all, the stock market has been tumultuous, there are plenty of people with impressive resumes who can't find a job, no one's sure if the housing market has already hit the bottom yet and how can you really trust anyone else—even family and friends? I mean “to err is human” and when push comes to shove people will generally take care of themselves first.

Maybe that's how you feel. Like you need to take care of yourself, first. It's a pretty American ideal. Pulling yourself up by the bootstraps. Figuring things out, yourself. Using your cunning, your discernment to read people to get ahead, to stay ahead, maybe just to stay afloat. And maybe you think you are giving God praise because you recognize that he gave you these gifts.

But where is your confidence really. Is it in God—in him alone—or is it in the things, the people, the gifts and talents that he has given to you? This may seem like a small thing—but it isn't. The 1st commandment calls upon us to trust in God above all things—even the good and perfect gifts he has blessed us with. This includes our money, our friends, and family, our mind, our health, and all our abilities.

Because our sinful nature is not so thankful when God removes any of those blessings, those abilities—all the things we trusted in more than Him who gave it. When all those things suddenly are gone, or pass away, or aren't like they used to be—we get mad. Real mad. Job's wife mad. Our sinful nature wants to curse God for all the trouble in our lives.

God hasn't used his omniscience to let us in on his plans. We aren't privy to his 'insider' information, and our jealousy turns to anger. Anger at our God when we realize he knows everything and chooses to leave us in the dark for some of it.

Really his omniscience should leave the sinner frightened. Because every time we have a selfish and arrogant thought God knows. Every time we become overly reliant on material things, on others, on ourselves—God knows immediately. We are angry, arrogant, completely blind to his power and his love. Violently thrashing against his will. Futilely making 'secretive' plans, only to have them thwarted time and time again.

Our God did not use his omniscience or his omnipotence, his immense foreknowledge and his unimaginable power to utterly destroy us, but to change our perspective—changing which side of the battle lines we stand on, changing what we see—so that we are not confident in what our eyes see, but instead comforted by what God has revealed to us. Despite our

jealousy and anger about not being in on his plans, he sent his Son to die so we might be included in his plan, the plan of salvation.

We cannot be confident in what we can see—this world will pass away—but we are comforted by what God has revealed to you. Instead of asking—“What shall we do?”—we should be asking—My LORD, my Mighty and Powerful God, what have you done for me?

And as we read Scripture, as the Holy Spirit opens our eyes, curing our spiritual blindness, we see all he has done. Here we hear and see the love of our LORD, who sent his Son to suffer and die on our behalf. As servants given sight we see his power to deliver us from the power of our sins of selfishness, arrogance, and self-reliant pride. No longer are we enslaved to those sinful mentalities. We have been freed, our vision has been restored. We see that our Mighty God used his omnipotence to deliver us from the pit of the grave, the power of the devil.

His powerful hand protects us from spiritual harm. There is no sneak attack against God. Omniscience is a blessing for the child of God. He knows what we will face beforehand. He assures us we can endure any hardship, any temptation with his strength.

We know what God has done for us, what he has promised to do for us as we walk with Him—but was the question of the servant of Elisha, completely off-base? Not for the servant whose eyes have been opened. As we see the power of God surrounding us, serving us, protecting us we ask God—“What shall I do now?”—because everything is so much different. We don’t vainly struggle against the will of God, but we serve his purposes, falling in line as his kingdom advances.

And as our eyes are opened, as we read his Word, it becomes clear he does have things for us to do. He tells us to continue to pray to him—call upon his mercy, his love, his power. See, with faith-filled eyes. Be comforted by what God has revealed to be true in his Scriptures.

And continue to seek his counsel, so that you might be a good and faithful servant. He has given you all those gifts of wealth, success, family, and friends so that you might serve him better. He gives us wealth to support those who preach his Word in places we cannot go. He gives us success so we can witness to others our true success. He gives us family and friends so that we might encourage one another, and all the more as the day approaches.

And with eyes opened wide, ask your Mighty God, your loving LORD of omniscience and omnipotence to continue to humble you. So that you might not be tempted to become reliant on any of your blessings—your finances, your friends, and family, or your mind or any of your abilities. Humbly ask God to continue to humble you so that his immense power might be made perfect in your weakness.

Because our God doesn’t humble us to make himself feel better—he isn’t petty like our sinful nature—but he humbles us to make us better servants. Lifting us up he reveals how we are saved, not based on our own power, but based on his. Everything that happens in your life is a part of you fulfilling your role in the advancement of his kingdom.

When you were young and brash, maybe you didn’t always fully appreciate mom’s advice. But I bet you do now. It took time for you to mature to appreciate it. But spiritually speaking, time wouldn’t have been enough. It took God opening your eyes to appreciate all that he has given you. Praise God that he has chosen to open your eyes, so you might understand all the blessings in your life. He sends his Holy Spirit to open your spiritual eyes, so you don’t place your confidence in what you can see, but so you are comforted by what God has revealed to you. You see his mighty hand at work in your life, in your world, in advancing his kingdom. It is your Mighty God, your loving LORD, who opens your eyes, and enables you to view his love and power which surrounds and protects you. He opened your eyes so you could see the unseen. AMEN.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work with us, to him be glory! Amen. [Ephesians 3.20-21a]