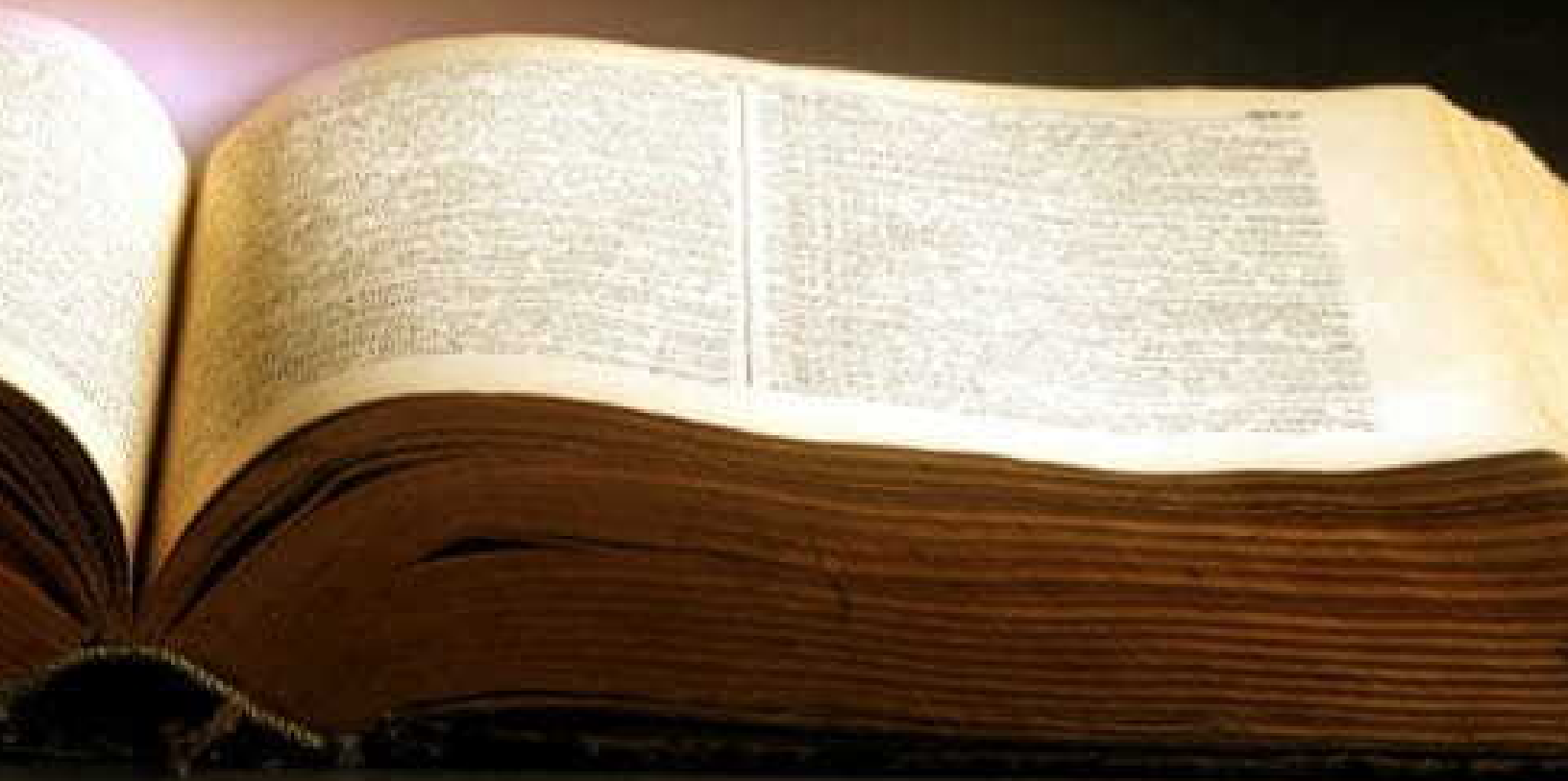


# 5 Spiritual Thoughts for Life's Journey



# About The Author




Pastor Mike Temple leads a congregation in Grand Forks, North Dakota, and has been in his current pastoral position for the past 10 years. Prior to that, he pastored a large district in Southwest North Dakota.

He was on the air (from 2003 to 2010), at a number of radio stations with a very popular weekday radio devotional called "The Open Word."

Pastor Mike is also a successful author who has been producing a daily FREE subscription based e-Devotional, [The Open Word](#) for the past 10 years.

To become a FREE subscriber to The Open Word, and receive daily devotionals sent directly to your email inbox, please [click here](#).

A photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is a mix of purple, pink, and orange, with some clouds. The ocean is visible in the distance. In the foreground, there are several footprints in the sand, leading from the bottom towards the water. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

"Our spiritual journey is a daily walk, and God wants to be our travel companion."

Pastor Mike Temple

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# Futile Phobia

Do you have a phobia? Almost everyone I know has at least one, and while I was surfing the web recently, I stumbled upon a phobia list that was quite enlightening, and strangely humorous to me. The list contains some fairly common ones like arachnophobia, the fear of spiders and aviophobia, the fear of flying, but there are literally hundreds of phobias that people experience that I hadn't heard of or even thought could exist. Here are just a few:

**Didaskaleinophobia**, the fear of going to school. (My mother would probably have claimed that I actually suffered from this during my elementary years.)

**Euphobia**, the fear of hearing good news.

**Lachanophobia**, the fear of vegetables.

**Trichophobia**, the fear of hair. Apparently my own head has this phobia, because it has rejected most of the medium brown strands that once covered it.

And my personal favorite: **Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia**, the fear of long words.

It's a fact; as a society we've got fear...plenty of it. Some phobias we consider reasonable and "normal," while others seem strange and rather disturbing. I'm thankful that God isn't afraid of anything! It sure increases my feelings of personal safety to know that no matter what, the Almighty will be there to bring peace to any situation...even scary ones. Look at what the Bible says:

*"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).* If I read that correctly, as long as I stay in close contact with the One who has no fear, I can rely on my Creator's power to dispel it from my life. To me, the results of the equation are fairly simple:

**No God = Know Fear**

**Know God = No Fear**

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# Forgot The Words

When 13-year-old Natalie Gilbert was asked to sing “The Star-Spangled Banner” at a nationally televised NBA Western Conference playoff game, it was a dream come true. But what happened on the day of her performance was more like a nightmare.

On April 25, 2003, Natalie bravely stood alone at mid-court in Portland’s Rose Garden Arena. As she began to belt out the familiar words of the national anthem before a capacity crowd, however, her mind went blank. She forgot the words. Closing her eyes and shaking her head, she appeared on the verge of tears.

At that moment Maurice Cheeks, the head coach of the Trailblazers, walked toward her. Cheeks put his arm around the girl and began singing with her.

“I didn’t even know if I knew all the words, but as many times as I’ve heard the national anthem, I just went over and continued to sing,” Cheeks told CBS SportsLine. “The words started coming back to me and I just tried to help her out.”

As he reminded the girl of the lyrics she’d forgotten, he encouraged the crowd to sing along. They did. Together, they made it all the way through, to “the home of the brave.”

Imagine yourself in a predicament like this, and it begins to really hit home how amazing this gift of support must have felt to this young girl.

*“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up...” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).*

Today, you and I are called upon to encourage and uplift one another. That support may not be as public, or as emotionally charged as this coach’s arm around a fearful 13-year-old girl who couldn’t make it through a song, but it can still have a powerful effect on the life of the one who is receiving it...and on our lives as well.

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# The Junk Drawer

Do you have a “junk drawer?” Almost everyone I know has one, including me. If you don’t know what I’m talking about, please let me explain. This amazing “monster” consists of a drawer (or, in some cases a box or plastic container) that has been set aside for the sole purpose of collecting items that one believes are too good to throw away. Upon current inspection of our “junk drawer,” I found the following items:

- At least 100 pens and pencils of various sizes, shapes, colors, and chew marks
- Useless bits of wire in a variety of colors.
- At least two sets of cheap headphones that do not work
- One half of a clothespin. (I fully expect to find the other half some time soon!)
- One bent and useless screwdriver
- A variety of small nails and screws (most of them unusable because they are bent or stripped.
- Paperclips

Believe me, this is only a partial list. The drawer is so full that I also have employed a medium sized plastic box to handle the “overflow.” I’ve promised myself to tackle it “one of these days,” but right now I’m kind of busy. It’s a job that needs to be done, but it’s not first on my list.

In one’s “spiritual junk drawer” hides all of the things that could possibly be useful at a later date and could include some of the following:

- That juicy bit of gossip that can be saved for relational ammunition (if, and when it is needed.)
- Feelings of hatred towards someone who has hurt them in the past.
- The incredible guilt that still looms ...even though they’ve asked forgiveness.
- A spiritual “score-card” that’s looked at from time to time to make sure they’re “on the right track.”

Feel free to apply this little exercise to your personal situation, and add your own “junk” where applicable. Fact is; many people have these (or other) little things that spiritually clutter their lives and affect their relational walk with the Almighty. These little bits of debris keep them from moving forward as they truly desire to do.

**“Create in me a pure heart, oh God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10).**

When we choose to spiritually de-clutter our lives, God is there to replace our worthless items with something of lasting value. It begins with a choice to allow Him to clean out the “junk drawer.”

# Life's Leaky Faucet

Drip! Drip! Drip! I can understand why this sound makes people feel a little edgy. It's three o'clock in the morning and I stumble to the bathroom to see what fixture is causing the annoyance. The culprit is the bath tub faucet that I attempt to tighten and quieten. But it doesn't stop!

The quietness of the house only amplifies each droplet of water that hits the porcelain. I fold up a dry wash cloth and place it under the faucet, but I know it will only bring temporary relief to my ears. As soon as the wash cloth is full of water a puddle will form, and my ears will again be assaulted by this ridiculous "sleep-stealer."

I lie back down and await the inevitable. Drip! Drip! I promise myself that in the morning I will put a permanent "fix" on that noisy tub and I drift in and out of a restless half-sleep throughout the remainder of the night.

When I encounter a night like this, I am reminded that in a similar way there are little spiritual troubles in my life that need to be taken care of. From time to time I recall the small, seemingly unimportant spiritual "drips" that keep my mind from the quiet rest it needs.

I think about those little things that should have been taken care of, but weren't; like the apology I should have made to my child when I spoke crossly to them, or the sincere thanks I should have expressed to my wife for the wonderful job of a dinner well prepared. They're not glaringly obvious during the day when I'm busy, but at night they loudly pronounce their presence like a dripping faucet.

During these times of spiritual un-rest, I'm thankful that God has the ability to quiet the frustrations of a troubled soul.

***"My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest" (Isaiah 32:18).***

Knowing that my Creator will help me take care of unfinished business in the morning when everyone awakens brings spiritual peace to my anxious heart. I can now drift off into untroubled slumber. I've found a permanent "fix."

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# Party Line - The Open Word

When I was six years old, my parents had a telephone installed in our home for the first time. We resided in a very rural area, so a telephone was a luxury that we had never experienced before. Because private telephone lines were expensive, my parents opted for an option that kept us on the same cable as four other families.

The option was called a “party line,” and it was anything but a party! In order to make a phone call, the line had to be clear of other callers, and there was only one way that we knew of to check; pick up the receiver and listen in. If we heard talking, we simply hung up, waited a few minutes, and checked again.

It was the common practice of many people in those days to listen in on the telephone conversations of other neighbors, and thus learn more about their lives. It started many rumors in our area, and on more than one occasion I can recall a neighbor sharing a juicy tidbit that they had heard on the “party-line” while listening in, and whoever chose to listen, got an “ear full!”

Party lines are a thing of the past, but sadly, the issue of gossip is not. We have choices to make when it comes to sharing and receiving tales about other’s lives, and the scriptures call us to choose wisely.

***“Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies” (Psalm 34:13, NIV).***

***“The gossip of bad people gets them in trouble, the conversation of good people keeps them out of it” (Proverbs 12:13, Message/Remix).***

God calls us to choose to speak only good words about others, and when we encounter someone who is trashing another person’s character, motives, or qualities, we have the same option of doing what we did when we were on the party line; “disconnecting” and choosing not to listen. With God’s help, we can maintain a “private line.”

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