

Barriers Bible Study

Returning from the chow hall here after dinner recently I noticed a pair of crows facing one another from opposite sides of a tall fence. One bird was standing stoically of the inside of the perimeter fencing and the other was flapping its wings and jumping around on the outside, or "free-side", as if prompting the crow inside to fly out and join it. After a short while the outside bird flew back into the prison yard enclosure and briefly interacted with its non-compliant partner, who apparently was puzzled and effectively paralyzed by the visually encompassing barrier before it. Moments later, the obviously leader of the two took flight once again, this time parallel to the fence initially. With no obstacles immediately confronting its forward momentum now, the second bird finally gave chase to the first. Once they were both above the fence top they turned in tandem to cross it and gracefully flexed, flapped, and fluxed out of view and back into the incomprehensible whole of God's infallible purpose for each of their lives.

When those two magnificent fellow creatures of God's imagination successfully cleared that fence line together, my spirit soared along with 'em and I was free. It was truly awesome to witness the irrefutable unspoken communication taking place, and the triumphant finale was exhilarating. Seeing a couple of birds hop a fence, in itself, would be cool as a fan of nature, but it was the intuitive metaphorical poignancy that made this so significant for me. The following is the message that I perceived beyond the dirt, metal and feathers.

1. We need to stop putting barriers between ourselves and God
2. We need to stop putting barriers between others and God
3. We need to stop putting barriers between one another
4. We need to remove the barriers within ourselves
5. We need to ask God for help with life's barriers
6. There is truly only one barrier
7. This world is either a barrier or a gateway

As my attention was initially drawn to the birds, I was somehow aware of the eventual outcome and the moral of the story that was to unfold. The physical manifestation was so exciting in part because it served as confirmation of what I had already foreknown spiritually. Overwhelmed with

a sense of purpose I immediately began studying the Bible in search of scripture that would objectively communicate this message about life's barriers. The following is the result of that study.

1. We need to stop putting barriers between ourselves and God

a. Anxiety & Fear

Psalm 23, 27, 56, 62, 94, 139, Proverbs 12:25, 29:25, Isaiah 35:4, 41:10-13, 51:6-8, Matthew 6:25-34, 10:26-31, 11:28-30, 16:24-27, John 16:20-33, Romans 8:18, 8:28-39, 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:1, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 4:9-13, 1 John 4:18, Revelation 2:10-11

b. Boasting & Self-Will

Proverbs 3:5-8, 25:14, Matthew 7:21-23, Luke 22:41-42, Romans 1:28-32, 11:16-22, Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Timothy 3:2-4, James 4:13-17

c. Cheating & Stealing

Exodus 20:15, Leviticus 19:11-13, Psalm 51:6, Jeremiah 7:9-11, Mark 7:21-23, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Ephesians 4:28, 1 Thessalonians 4:6, 2 Timothy 3:2-4

d. Envy & Covetousness

Exodus 20:17, Job 5:2, Proverbs 3:31, 14:30, 23:17, 24:1-3, 28:16, Matthew 27:18, Mark 7:21-23, Luke 12:15-21, Romans 1:28-32, 13:13, 1 Corinthians 3:3, 6:9-10, 13:4, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3, 2 Timothy 3:2-4, Titus 3:3, Hebrews 13:5-6, James 3:14-17, 1 Peter 2:1-2

e. Hatred & Malice

Leviticus 19:17-18, Matthew 5:21-26, 5:38-48, 18:21-35,

Mark 7:21-23, John 15:18-19, Romans 1:28-32, 1
Corinthians 5:7-8, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 4:31-32,
Colossians 3:8, 2 Timothy 3:2-4, Titus 3:3, 1 Peter 2:1-2

f. Idols & Other Gods

Exodus 20:3-6, 31:18-32:35, Leviticus 19:4, Deuteronomy
6:4-5, Psalm 96:5, 115:4-8, Isaiah 2:8, 43:10-12, Jeremiah
32:7, John 1:1-3, Romans 1:24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10,
10:7, Galatians 5:19-21, James 2:19, 1 Peter 1:18, 1 John
5:21, Revelation 2:20-23

g. Lust & Fornication

Exodus 20:14, Proverbs 5:1-8, Jeremiah 7:8-10, Matthew
5:27-30, 6:22-23, Mark 7:21-23, Romans 1:24-32, 8:3-8, 1
Corinthians 6:9-10, 6:12-20, 10:5-8, Galatians 5:19-21,
Ephesians 5:3-5, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, 2 Timothy 3:2-4,
James 4:1-4, 1 John 2:15-17, Revelation 2:20-23

h. Homosexuality

Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-27, 1:31, 1 Corinthians 6:9-
10, 1 Timothy 1:3-11, 2 Timothy 3:2-4, Titus 3:3

i. Pride & Vanity

Psalm 12:3-4, 34:18, 40:4, 51:16-17, 101:5, Proverbs 8:13,
13:10, 15:25, 16:5, 16:18-19, 28:25, 29:23, Ecclesiastes
7:8, Isaiah 57:15, 66:1-2, Jeremiah 50:31-32, Daniel 4:37,
5:20, Matthew 23:8-12, Mark 7:21-23, Luke 18:9-14,
Romans 1:28-32, Philippians 2:3, 1 Timothy 3:6, 2 Timothy
3:2-4, James 4:5-10, 1 Peter 5:5-10, 1 John 2:15-17

j. Rebelliousness

Proverbs 3:11-12, 29:15, Jeremiah 24:6-7, 29:11-14,

Matthew 12:43-45, 16:24-27, 21:28-31, Luke 15:1-32,
Romans 9:13-23, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 13:11, 2 Corinthians
6:14-7:1, Hebrews 12:1-11, James 1:2-4, 1:12-17, 1 Peter
5:10

k. Selfishness

Matthew 25:31-46, Acts 2:44-45, 4:34-35, 2 Corinthians
8:9-15, Ephesians 4:28, Philippians 2:3-5, 1 John 3:16-18

l. Self-Mutilation

Leviticus 19:28

m. Self-Reproach

Psalms 103:11-13, Proverbs 10:12, Isaiah 43:25, Jeremiah
29:11-14, 31:33-34, Micah 7:18-19, Romans 8:1, 8:14-18,
Philippians 3:7-8, 3:13-14, Hebrews 10:11-18, 1 John 1:9

n. Substance Abuse

Romans 13:12-14, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 10:5-7, Galatians
5:19-21, Ephesians 5:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8, Titus 2:11-
12, 1 Peter 1:13, 4:3-7, 5:8

o. Money & Possessions

Matthew 6:19-21, 19:16-30, 21:12-13, Luke 12:15-21, 1
Timothy 6:6-10

p. Unbelief

Psalms 78:32-33, Matthew 10:32-33, 21:28-31, 24:11-13,
24:36-44, John 1:1-18, 3:16-21, 6:60-64, 10:26-30,
Hebrews 11:6, James 1:6-8, Revelation 3:20-21

2. We need to stop putting barriers between others and God

a. Be truthful

Exodus 20:16, Leviticus 19:11, Joshua 24:14, 1 Samuel 12:24, Job 13:7-9, Psalm 15:1-2, 51:6, 101:5, Proverbs 17:7, 25:18, Jeremiah 7:8-10, 9:3-6, Hosea 4:1, Zechariah 8:16-17, Matthew 5:37, Mark 7:21-23, John 4:23-24, 8:44-47, 18:37-38, Romans 1:28-32, 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, Ephesians 4:14-15, 4:25, 4:29, Colossians 3:8-10, 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12, 1 John 3:18

b. Be trustworthy

Leviticus 19:11-13, Psalm 7:10, 11:2, 15:1-2, 32:10-11, 36:10, 64:10, 97:10-12, 112:4, Proverbs 2:21-22, 10:29, 11:3, 11:6, 14:2, 14:11, 15:21, 20:7, 28:6, 28:10, Ecclesiastes 7:29, Isaiah 26:7, 26:10, Micah 7:2-3, Luke 16:10-12

c. Abstain from hypocrisy

Job 8:13-15, 20:4-5, 27:8, Proverbs 11:9, Isaiah 9:17, Matthew 6:5-6, 7:2-5, 23:1-36, Luke 12:1-3, Romans 2:22-23, 12:9, James 3:17, 1 Peter 2:1-3

d. Encourage rather than condemn

Romans 2:1-3, 14:10-13, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, 2 Timothy 2:24-26, James 4:11-12

e. Strengthen instead of weakening

Luke 22:32, Romans 14:21, Galatians 5:13-15, 1 John 3:14-18

3. We need to stop putting barriers between one another

a. Regard and treat one another equally

Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 1:17, 16:19, 1 Samuel 16:7, Psalm 82:2-4, Proverbs 18:5, Malachi 2:7-10, John 7:24, Acts 10:34-35, Romans 2:11, 1 Timothy 5:21, James 2:1-13, James 3:17, 1 Peter 1:17

b. Speak kindly to one another

Proverbs 8:13, Ecclesiastes 3:7, Matthew 12:36-37, 15:1-20, Ephesians 4:29, Colossians 3:8, 4:6, James 1:19, 1:26, 2:12-13, 3:1-12

c. Help one another

i. The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

ii. Welcoming and helping strangers

Leviticus 19:33-34, Hebrews 13:2-3

iii. Faith without works is dead

James 1:22-25, 2:14-17, 2:26, 1 John 3:15-18, Revelation 3:15-19

iv. Jesus is our example

John 13:12-15, 1 Peter 2:21-25

d. Love one another

i. Love

1 Corinthians 13

ii. God is love

1 John 4:7-21

iii. Love is fearless

1 John 4:18

iv. The greatest love

John 3:16, 15:12-13, Luke 23:33-46

v. Love your neighbor as yourself

Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 19:16-19, Mark 12:28-31, Luke 10:25-37, John 13:31-35, Romans 12:10, 13:8-10, Galatians 5:13-15, Colossians 3:12-14, 1 Peter 4:8-9, 1 John 3:14-16

vi. Love your enemies

Matthew 5:38-48, Luke 6:27-36, Romans 12:17-21, 1 Peter 3:13-18

vii. We are forgiven to the extent that we love

Luke 6:27-36

e. Forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive...

i. Encourage rather than condemn

*(see section 2-d)

ii. We must forgive others to be forgiven ourselves

Matthew 6:12, 6:14-15, 18:21-35, Mark 11:25-26, Luke 6:37-38, 11:4, 17:3-4, Ephesians 4:31-32

iii. Do not delay in reconciling with others

Matthew 5:23-26

iv. Seventy Times Seven

Matthew 18:21-22

v. Jesus forgave those who were crucifying Him

Luke 23:34

4. We need to remove the barriers within ourselves

a. A new heart and spirit

Psalm 51:10, Ezekiel 11:18-21, 18:31-32

b. The restoration of our soul

Psalm 19:7, 23:3

c. The renewing of our mind

Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:17-24, 2 Timothy 1:7

d. Putting to death the deeds of the body (physical)

Romans 8:13

e. Loving God with our entire being

Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27

5. We need to ask God for help with life's barriers

a. Faith

i. The evidence of things not seen

Hebrews 11:1-3

ii. Saved through faith

Romans 8:24-25, Ephesians 2:8

iii. All things not of faith are sin

Romans 14:22-23

iv. Living by faith

Psalm 31, 62, 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:10

v. Unwavering and persistent faith

Matthew 15:21-29, James 1:2-8

vi. Discipleship/Ultimate faith

Revelation 13:10

vii. Historical examples of faith

Hebrews 11

viii. All things hidden will be revealed

Matthew 10:26, Luke 12:2-3, 1 Corinthians 4:5, Hebrews 4:12-13

ix. God will avenge His children

Isaiah 35:4, Romans 12:17-19

x. God's righteousness will never cease

Psalm 90, Isaiah 40:6-8, 51:7-8, 1 Peter 1:22-25

xi. All things work together for good for those who love God

Romans 8:28

b. Prayer

i. Acknowledge God in every part of our lives

Proverbs 3:5-7

ii. Pray continuously

Romans 12:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:17

iii. Prayer answered through faith and obedience

2 Chronicles 7:14, John 15:7, 15:16, James 5:16, 1 John 3:21-22

iv. Unrighteous prayers are not answered

James 4:3

v. Where two or more are gathered in Jesus' name

Matthew 18:18-20

vi. Ask, seek, knock

Matthew 7:7-11

vii. The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:5-13, Luke 11:1-4

c. Repentance

Matthew 3:1-12, Mark 1:1-8, 2:16-17, Luke 13:1-5, 15:1-7, Acts 2:38-42, 3:19, 11:18, 17:29-31, Romans 2:1-11, 2 Timothy 2:24-26, Hebrews 5:11-6:6, 2 Peter 3:8-10, Revelation 2:5, 3:19-21

d. Forgiveness

i. We are forgiven by repentance and confession

1 John 1:8-10

ii. We are forgiven by God's grace, not our own will-power or good works

Romans 3:23-24, Ephesians 1:7, 2:1-10

iii. Those who walk with Christ are no longer condemned

Romans 8:1

*(see section 3-e for more on forgiveness)

e. Fellowship

Leviticus 26:12-13, Psalm 1, Acts 2:38-47, 1 Corinthians 1:4-9, 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, 13:14, 1 John 1:1-7

6. There is truly only one barrier

a. Titles

i. Abaddon

Revelation 9:11

ii. Accuser

Revelation 12:10

iii. Adversary

1 Peter 5:8

iv. Angel of the Bottomless Pit

Revelation 9:11

v. Apollyon

Revelation 9:11

vi. Beelzebub

Matthew 12:24

vii. Belial

2 Corinthians 6:15

viii. Devil

Matthew 4:1, 13:39, 25:41, Luke 4:2, 18:12, John 6:70, 8:44, 13:2, Acts 10:38, 13:10, Ephesians 4:27, 6:11, 1 Timothy 3:6, 2 Timothy 2:26, Hebrews 2:14, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8, 1 John 3:8, Jude 9, Revelation 2:10, 12:9, 12:12, 20:2, 20:10

ix. Evil One

Matthew 6:13, Luke 11:4

x. Father of Lies

John 8:44

xi. God of this Age

2 Corinthians 4:4

xii. Lucifer

Isaiah 14:12

xiii. Murderer

John 8:44

xiv. Prince of the Power of the Air

Ephesians 2:2

xv. Prince/Ruler of this World

John 14:30

xvi. Satan

1 Chronicles 21:1, Job 1:6-12, 2:1-7, Zechariah 3:2, Matthew 4:10, 16:23, Mark 1:13, 2:23, Luke 10:18, 22:3, 22:31, Acts 5:3, Romans 16:20, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 2

Corinthians 11:14, 12:7, 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 1 Timothy 1:20, Revelation 2:9, 2:13, 2:24, 12:9, 20:7

xvii. Serpent

Genesis 3:1-6

xviii. Serpent of Old

Revelation 20:2

xix. Wicked One

Matthew 13:9

b. Origins

Isaiah 14:12-20, Revelation 12:7-9

c. Crimes against God and humanity

- i. Tempted Eve and Adam into eating from The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, defying God, and throwing mankind into sin and the torment of being separated from our loving creator

Genesis 3

- ii. Tempted Jesus to betray God

Matthew 4:1-11

- iii. Entered Judas Iscariot and tempted him into betraying Jesus, leading to Jesus' crucifixion

Luke 22:3, John 13:27

- iv. Deceived and entraps all of mankind

2 Corinthians 11:3-15

- v. Works through the weak and wicked to defy God and torment us all
Acts 13:8-10, Ephesians 2:2
- vi. Accuses us ceaselessly before God, wishing to damn us
Job 1:1-2:7, Revelation 12:10
- d. Defeated by Jesus overcoming sin in the flesh
Genesis 3:15, Luke 23:33-46, John 16:32-33, Romans 8:1-4, Revelation 12:10-12, 20:7-10
- e. Resisting Temptation
Matthew 4:11, 16:21-27, 24:1-44, Luke 22:31-34, 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, Ephesians 6:10-18, James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:6-10, 1 John 2:9-17

7. This world is either a barrier or a gateway

- a. The two foundations
Matthew 7:24-27
- b. Reaping what we sow
Psalm 62:12, Hosea 4:9, Matthew 12:36-37, 16:27, Romans 2:6, 14:12, Galatians 6:3-10, 1 Peter 1:17, Revelation 20:12-13, 22:11-16
- c. The wheat and the tares
Matthew 13:24-30, 13:36-43
- d. The rich man and Lazarus
Luke 16:19-31

e. The judgment of the nations

Matthew 25:31-46

f. The Book of Life

Revelation 3:5, 3:21, 20:11-15, 21:27