

DISTRACTIONS AND DAGON

Posted on November 2, 2017 by Emily Taylor



You ever have those moments when you laugh so hard at something and then stop and think, "hold up, do I do this too?" This morning I had the pleasure of reading in 1 Samuel 5 with my kids, because [TCA](#) is how we do school. EVERY TIME I read this fantastic little snippet I wonder a couple of things: 1 — What in the world were these people thinking (is this as funny as I think it is?) 2 — Shoot, this dangerous distraction is actually serious and sad, (stop laughing)... I probably do this too.

Here's the story:

The Israelites made some bad choices about going to war with the Philistines without the proper process in place. In fact, they brought the [ark of the Covenant](#) thinking if it was there, surely God would *have* to deliver them a victory. But instead of victory, he allowed the Philistines to overwhelm the Israelites for 2 days. The 2nd of which ended in a tragic event — the Ark was captured by the Philistines, who worshiped their God, Dagon. Then this happened:

"After the Philistines had captured the ark of God... they carried it into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord!" — 1 Samuel 5:1-4

Hold up, they did this for 2 days? They worshiped this god who was unable to keep his

image upright before the ark? They worshiped this god whom they had to help to prop up "back in his place," and this lifeless piece of created material fell again and again. They *worshiped* this god who did nothing to protect them against the plagues they were being tormented with akin to the plagues unleashed in Egypt. Part of me wonders why the Philistines didn't say "*woah, I think we made a mistake, guys. Clearly the God of Israel is more alive and powerful than Dagon. Maybe we should make the switch.*" But instead, they decide to *keep worshiping* Dagon. You guys, this is the same "god" who's temple crumbled under the strength of Samson. He had been proven helpless before. That's when my smile twists into concern and disbelief. Remarkable to me that God chose to reveal his sovereignty and power to a people who were depicted as less than worthy. I mean, he didn't submit Dagon to the ground because he had something to prove. I believe he did it to show even the philistines, that he was God and worthy of worship — and that perhaps he even loved and cared for them too. Perhaps this display was offered so that they might turn to him. **God is a God who pursues and reveals — and all of us are worth it to him.** So sad when God offers his presence and power, and yet so often we still cling to our own worthless idols. It's tragic. **Do we, like the Philistines also protect things that have no power to protect us?**

Woe to him who says to wood, "Come to life!" Or to lifeless stone, "Wake up!" Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold and silver; there is no breath in it." — Habakuk 2:19

Our enemy is good at keeping us from life and truth by executing a couple of strategies: accusation and distraction. Something meant to capture our minds attention and hearts affection other than the one who can offer life. And if we know him already — to keep us from experiencing life at its fullest. You and I are faced with distractions EVERY DAY that have less of a face, less of a spiritual affiliation... and more of our hearts.

It's great to have a clean home. But does it's presentation and maintenance steal what is better?

It's amazing to feel beautiful. But are we placing our confidence in it?

It's fun to have nice things, but does our pursuit of luxury trump our pursuit of lasting wealth?

It's fantastic to get stuff done, but are we prisoners of accomplishment?

It's awesome to be liked, but are we defined by other people's perceptions?

It's nice to get our own way, but are we regarding others with dignity?

"I am God and there is no other," appears 13 times in scripture. MUCH more if you count instances where other verbiage is used making the same point. **God wants more than our acknowledgement, he wants our worship — because he loves us.**

Allow the only one who can offer true life and true hope be the one who has your hearts deepest affections. Let's tear down our distractions and focus on the only one who can give life.