

Equipped to trust God wholeheartedly

I recently underwent surgery on my foot. Nothing terribly serious and, because of this, I was inclined to put off having the operation. After all, I reasoned, if it doesn't really need to be done, why put myself through an unnecessary procedure? However, as things showed no signs of getting better, I was eventually convinced that I had to take action.

I had had a similar operation three years earlier, conducted under local anaesthetic. The difference this time was that my surgeon wanted to work on my foot more extensively and told me this would require a general anaesthetic. That's when I freaked out! A local anaesthetic is one thing, because I'd be conscious of what was going on, but a general anaesthetic is something else - I wouldn't be able to see what was happening! Now, for many people, being unconscious during an operation is much more preferable than being awake. In this case, I didn't feel this way...

The illusion of control

Funny, isn't it? I trusted my surgeon's competence - or at least, I *said* I did - but was initially reluctant to *act* on that trust by wholeheartedly committing myself to him if it meant giving up control, even if that control was illusory rather than real. Let's face it - I could no more direct the operation by being conscious than I could by being unconscious!

There's a striking parallel here with Christian experience. For those of us who are followers of Jesus Christ, we have no problem saying that we trust him. That's okay as long as we think we're in control of the direction in which our lives are going. But then life takes a down-turn and we find ourselves plunged into the dark, not knowing what's going on or why. Where is God in all this, we ask? We can't see him and we tell ourselves that, if only we could see what he is doing, perhaps our difficulties would be more bearable. In effect, what we're saying is like my attitude towards my operation. As long as I can see what the surgeon is doing, that's okay, even if the procedure is unpleasant. Similarly, as long as I can see what God is doing in tough circumstances, then I can trust him...

Living by faith or sight?

Hey, some faulty thinking going on here! I'm mistakenly making myself the reference point - if *I* can see, if *I* know what's going on... But whether or not someone is worth trusting doesn't depend on my perspective, but on the person in whom I place my trust. I'm learning that God is trustworthy - always - even when I can't see him. The Bible talks about living by faith, not by sight.¹ This hits the nail right on the head and challenges my tendency to want to live by sight, not by faith!

Yet, so much of life involves trusting in what we cannot see. For example, during the dark days of winter, there's no sign of the snowdrops and daffodils that I believe will emerge from my garden soil in early spring. But activity is still going on beneath the surface, even though I can't see it. Growth is taking place in the dark! I don't know about you, but I find this a very helpful principle when I think about the times when I can't see what God is doing in my life. Much of his activity is "below the surface" or "behind the scenes" and, as such, is "out of sight". This can present a challenge to our faith, right?

But, as I make a conscious decision to act on 2 Corinthians 5:7, which talks about living by faith, not by sight, I become increasingly convinced that I don't need to see what God is doing in my life to be able to trust him, place my confidence in him, and depend completely on him. How about you? Are you ready to trust him for that situation that perplexes you today?

P.S. The general anaesthetic ended up being no big deal...

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:7