

Cockroach Control

Kole Farney

We found them everywhere. Cockroaches, that is. Cowering in kitchen cabinets, scurrying down the hall, climbing up bedroom walls, and searching through our freshly packed boxes. Gross.

My wife and I had just gathered up our belongings and made the move across town to an updated duplex with more room, fresh paint, and brand new carpet. Little did we know that the place was overrun with a foul insect army! They had been lurking out of sight during our previous visits. However, once we had all of our belongings moved in, the covert-crawlers began to appear in militant droves.



My wife, son, and I slept at a friend's house that night. We stayed there for a whole week actually, frantically looking for a new place to live. Our dreams of living in that neighborhood had vanished and the stress of house hunting had resumed. This small trial was turning out to be largely unpleasant, but God was teaching us. He was reminding us of important things through very unimportant creatures. Here are three lessons from our experience with cockroach control.

1. We are not in control like we think. After spending a lot of time researching places to live and going to see them with my family, I felt pretty confident about our decision. I had done the homework. I had checked the boxes and we were *going* to move to *that* place. That was the plan. That plan was foiled. It seemed like everything was going wrong, but all things were working according to God's good purpose.

We were reminded of James 4:13-14 that says, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit' — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring." God decided to teach us again that we had very little control of the world. The roaches had tainted our mirage of authority.

2. Anxiety in tough situations does not help. Sometimes the knee-jerk reaction to hard situations is to hurry up and worry about them. Panic mode. It is like a switch in our brain gets stuck and our mind can't help but worry. For Christians this anxiety is sinful and develops when we refuse to trust God in any given situation.

Additionally, anxiety is patently unhelpful. It is tiring, stressful, and a waste of time. Has worry ever helped you or extended your life? Jesus asked in Matthew 6:27, "And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" Jesus made sure to question the effectiveness of anxiety among those who were anxious about food and clothing. As I was scrambling to find a different place to live, what I needed most was time and trust. Sadly, I wasted some of my time worrying.

3. The Lord can be trusted with everything. Do you remember the story of the disciples being tossed to and fro by the sea while Jesus slept? Mark tells us that they asked Jesus, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38). The disciples were in dire circumstances in the middle of that frightening storm and they were wondering if Jesus still cared.

Sometimes trials can do that. They make us question whether or not Jesus still cares.

Upon being woken from his sleep, Jesus calmed the wind and the waves and asked the disciples where their faith had been. They were sailing with the Maker of everything, yet they still feared. The disciples responded to the recently calmed waters saying, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mark 4:41) — eventually marveling at his power rather than trembling at their circumstance.

The disciples were not in danger as long as they rode with Jesus. His presence and ability to command the weather meant that they were safe with Him. What about cockroaches? He reigns over them as well. The bugs that creep along the ground are His creation, just as you and I. Our response to the wind and waves in our lives, even the creepy-crawly ones, should be characterized by confidence in the Lord.

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