

SPECULATING IN THE DARK

As one who has lived into my sixth decade of life, I've had my share of circumstances that gave rise to horrific speculations in the dark. Lying in bed at night, waiting for elusive sleep (or worse, being awakened in the night), is the environment in which negative imaginings thrive. There insecurities, fears, and doubts loom large, while hopes and helps fade into obscurity. I doubt there are many who don't know what I'm talking about.

In Romans 1:21 Paul says that those who fail to respond to general revelation, that is, who observe the creation but fail to acknowledge the existence, power, and character of God with gratitude, "became futile in their speculations and their foolish hearts were darkened."

The Apostle John wrote, "God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). If God is light, then it is no surprise that rejecting His revelation produces darkness in the heart. In the midst of darkness, it's impossible to know where you're going, what obstacles you may encounter, or what helps may be available to you. All you can do is imagine and feel your way. Those imaginings in the dark are rarely positive or productive. They are futile.

The Latin root of the word speculate means to look. The definition therefore is to meditate or reflect on something. But in the business and investment arenas, to speculate is to invest or enter into some business deal that, while there is potential for great profit, also carries significant risk. Perhaps it is this use that has given the word the negative connotation I have assumed. When I think of speculating (in the daytime), I think of looking for possible solutions to intractable problems or answers to thorny dilemmas. "What about this? What about that? Why don't we try thus and so?" never knowing what the outcome may be.

This is precisely the state of those who are unresponsive to God's revelation of Himself in creation. They don't know where they're going; they are equally unaware of possible obstacles and potential helps. And all they can do is look around in their darkness. What else is left to them except to continually wonder, to continually seek other answers, other means of fulfilling those needs and desires they find within?

It is indeed foolish to accept such great risk, and that without any plausible reason to expect potential profit. It would be like accepting as truth and proceeding to act upon the phantoms that plague us in the night when sickness or hardship are our lot.