FRESH THYME – Is It All Good? – by Marcy Lytle

Knowledge. It's a good thing, right? We start training and teaching our kids how to talk, the proper way to hold a fork instead of using their fingers, to use the bathroom and wash their hands, and all the things one needs to know to grow up into adulthood. All of that is good. It's necessary.

Knowledge. It's a good thing, right? In school, we are taught that more learning and more achievement and more awards are the best route for a successful life. We place our kids in clubs, we encourage them to go to college, and we are so proud when they land a job using that knowledge they've learned. All of that is good. It's necessary.

Knowledge. It's a good thing, right? We want to know where our kids are and what they are doing at all times, to ensure their safety. We demand to know salaries and benefits and expectations before saying yes to a new position at work. We must know the workings behind our nation's leaders, the origin of viruses, the why's of the universe and how things work, and even the knowledge of what lies ahead…so we can be prepared. All of that is good? Is it necessary?

Of course, we know that knowledge is good and necessary. But is ALL of it good?

I recently read the story again of the 12 spies that went in to check out the land God had already given the people. 10 of those spies came back in fear because of the giants in the land, and only 2 came back with confidence that the land was good for the taking, and the giants could be overcome. Why? It was because God had told them to go and that He would go before them. Knowledge of the giants produced two different outcomes in the twelve that saw them, and fear overtook most.

As I read further, I saw those that were afraid to go into the promised land because of the knowledge that there were giants were called *arrogant.* That word and that description intrigued me, but as I read further what I discovered was this:

They wanted to know just how difficult the next step was going to be so they could fortify themselves and "fill their cabinets" to ensure they could take care of themselves in the battle. And while knowledge (like all the lists above) is a good thing, too much knowledge can bleed over into self-preservation and complete lack of trust in the WORD of God.

Here's what I realized, in my own life. I'd like to know what lies ahead, how long I am going to be on this earth, will my husband and I live to a ripe old age and avoid disease or sickness. Will my kids be successful and avoid tragedy and hardship? In other words, I'd like to see the giants, too. I want to go ahead and scope out what's before us. All for what? What would I do with that knowledge?

Knowledge, just like so many things in life, is awesome. But it's also deadly. Those folks that became fearful and went with the 10 spies' report weren't allowed to proceed to the land flowing with milk and honey. Their fear of the giants, and their knowledge of what was before them, caused them to tremble instead of trust. And that wasn't a good thing, in God's eyes.

I think it's hard to get up daily and walk in the promises of God – his goodness – his mercy – his everlasting love – his guidance and all of those things. And it's hard because there are at least a dozen giants that appear on the horizon daily – news of illness, one that died, another lost her job, still another's son has left his faith, and so on. All of that knowledge we acquire on a daily basis somehow overshadows the word that tells us to march forward and observe the sunrise, give thanks, and be strong and courageous in the knowledge that He is with us.

The bottom line is we'd rather have no giants and step forward loaded up with all the knowledge we've acquired and the fortifications we've made than to have His presence go before us and slay every giant we encounter with one fell swoop of His hand. We are afraid the giants are going to overtake us, and He will leave us lonely, destitute and afraid.

I've been haunted by this story since I read it again, because of my own demand and desire to have knowledge about the future steps that lie before me, because of the report of "giants" in the land.

I don't want to miss out on watching His hand fight and win battles for me, in favor of stumbling and falling as I fight with what's in my own arsenal. My weapons are plastic, and his are iron…I'm sure of that.

Knowledge. It's a good thing, right? It depends on what we really know in our heart of hearts.