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*Grace Notes* categorical doctrine

## **Faith-Rest and a Christian's Mental Stability**

Bible Answers to Fear, Worry, and Depression

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### **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	1
Worry .....	1
Depression.....	2
Suffering .....	4
Bitterness.....	7
Faith Rest .....	10
Mental Attitude .....	18
Peace .....	21
Happiness.....	22
The Much More Care of God.....	24

## Introduction

Do you remember the song "Ship Ahoy"?

"I was drifting along on life's pitiless sea,  
And the angry waves threatened my ruin to be."

The floundering sailor was rescued from drowning by a "ship", which was a metaphor for a condemned sinner being saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His work of atonement on the Cross.

We rejoice in our salvation; yet we find that after we are saved, one of the consistent features of the Christian life is testing. We Christians live in a fallen world, in an imperfect society, among people whose way of life is directed by Satan and their own sin natures. We cannot avoid the friction, conflict, or confrontation that results from this. We face daily disasters, small and great, which are brought on us suddenly by nature, by the ignorance or deliberate actions of other people, or even by our own mistakes and sins.

This testing and affliction often causes us great concern, worry, fear about the future, and can even lead to serious depression, *unless* we have put into practice some of the Bible principles the Father has provided to give us peace, joy, and mental stability in times of stress.

The doctrinal studies in this document have been collected from the Grace Notes topical library, so that you can have in one place some of the Bible information on how to practice Faith-Rest and acquire mental stability through the Word of God.

There are a lot of Bible verses cited in this document. Take the time to read all of them in your Bible, along with the context of each one. This will be very time consuming, but there is no hurry; and each fact you learn (or relearn) will be of great use to you.

## Worry

Worry is a mental attitude in which there is soulish torment or anxiety regarding anything in life. It is a disquieting and painful state of mind involving undue concern over something in life. Worry can become a sin when it is allowed to go on without claiming promises or otherwise turning problems over to the Lord.

Worry always anticipates the worst, and so becomes apprehension or anticipation of danger, misfortune, trouble, or uncertainty. Worry is a state of restlessness and agitation, producing mental disturbance, uneasiness, foreboding, anxiety, and painful uncertainty.

Worry is a destroyer of the soul. If unchecked, it results in mental illness. You get a warning first, often with a physical problem. Worry in the mind causes shock to the body, Proverbs 12:25.

Bad news causes worry, Jer. 49:23ff.

Worry causes hysteria, Luke 10:41. All people have areas in which they are prone to worry.

People cause worry. People are always worried about other people. Worriers have to have an object, 1 Samuel 10:2. You can always find an object if you really want to worry.

Economic disaster is a cause of worry, Jer. 44:16.

Worry leads to backsliding and the sin unto death, Ezek. 4:15-17, 12:18-19, Isa. 57:11.

Sin causes worry. People worry about sin which causes guilt, PS 38:18.

Worry is sometimes a sin, Romans 14:23.

Christians are commanded to stop worrying, Luke 12:29.

Worry does not solve problems, Matt. 6:25-34.

God's plan of grace offsets worry.

Worry distracts from Bible teaching, Matt. 13:22; Luke 8:14.

Therefore, blessing from God includes freedom from worry.

**Jer. 17:7-8, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord."**

This verse teaches the difference between a growing and a mature believer.

Worry is forbidden, Phil 4:6-7.

Ask God in prayer for anything. When you get Bible teaching under your belt you won't worry anyway,

**1 Samuel 17:47;**

**Psalms 55:22;**

**Isaiah 26:3-4;**

**1 Peter 5:7.****Depression**

Every Christian suffers from depression from time to time.

Sometimes depression comes through no fault of our own. There may be severe problems which are imposed by outside circumstances. There may be physical exhaustion and a weakening of physical and emotional strength. There may be serious disturbances or distress in life with a feeling of being trapped or a fear of what might happen. If the depression is not caused by a sin problem, confession is not called for. But the techniques of the Christian way of life are equally useful in combating depression in whatever form it comes.

Sometimes depression is self-induced because it is caused by sin. Mental attitude sins will bring on depression. Failure to exercise Faith-Rest principles or failure to claim promises from the Bible can cause depression. If sin is the problem, the first step to the solution is to confess sin Biblically and use the techniques of Faith-Rest, Occupation with Christ, and the Filling of the Holy Spirit to begin a quick recovery.

Depression may include one or more of the following:

- A feeling of dejection or sadness
- An attitude of self-depreciation
- A reduction in quality or force
- A lowering of vitality or functional activity

The Bible deals extensively with the subject of mental anguish, sorrow, and depression. There are many Bible words used to describe the thoughts and feelings people have when they are depressed. Studying these definitions, and the Bible passages where they are found, is a very important part of the therapy for many kinds of depression. Almost every Bible verse that has a word related to depression also has part of the cure for that condition somewhere in its context.

As you study the following verses, try to determine in each case the reasons for the state of depression and whether it was caused by personal sin (self-induced), was the result of undeserved

suffering, or came from some other source. Then, try to decide on what "cure" is being suggested. In some cases, the cure will show up in the context. In others you will have to decide on a solution from categorical doctrinal principles.

The Bible deals with depression categorically using the following words:

λυπη (**lupei**), meaning "grief, sorrow, distress, suffering, a sad plight". The verb form is λυπεω (**lupeo**), "to cause pain, to grieve, to annoy". In military terminology, the word was used of troops in the sense "to harass; to annoy" the enemy. In the passive voice, where the subject receives the action of the verb, the meaning is "to be sad, to be sorry, to be grieved".

**"And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry." Matt. 17:22,23**

**"And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" Matt. 26:22**

**"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." Matt. 19:22**

**"And he [Jesus] took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." Matt. 26:37,38**

**"... I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." John 16:20**

**"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably." Romans 14:15**

**"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." 2 Cor. 2:4**

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." 1 Thess. 4:13

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through many testings." 1 Peter 1:6

"Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Heb. 12:11

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." 1 Peter 2:19

αδημονια (adeimonia), noun, "in great distress or anguish"

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful...", Matt. 27:38. See also Mark 14:33,34

"For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick." Phil. 2:26

αναγκη (anagkei), noun, "necessity, constraint, natural desire (such as hunger), bodily pain or suffering". When used with θλιψις (thlipsis), signifies a condition of necessity arising from some form of outside compulsion.

[From here on, you look up the verses for yourself. wd]

MATT. 18:7; LUKE 14:18; 21:23; ROM. 13:5; 1 COR. 7:26, 37; 9:16; 2 COR. 6:4; 9:7; 12:10; 1 THESS. 3:7; PHILEMON V. 14; HEB. 7:12,27; 9:16; JUDE V. 3

στενοχωρια (stenochoria), noun, "narrowness of place, a trapped feeling."

ROM. 2:9; 8:35; 2 COR. 6:4; 12:10

συνοχη (sunochai), noun, metaphorically for "anguish or distress" caused by a compressing together or narrowing of the way.

2 Cor. 2:4

Luke 21:25

θλιψις (thlipsis), noun, "pressure, oppression, affliction."

MATT. 13:21; 24:9; MARK 4:17; 13:19,24; JOHN 16:21,33; ACTS 7:10,11; 11:19; 14:22; 20:23; ROM. 2:9; 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; 1 COR. 7:28; 2 COR. 1:4,8; 2:4; 4:17; 6:4; 7:4; 8:2; EPH. 3:13; PHIL. 1:17; 4:14; COL. 1:24; 1 THESS. 1:6; 3:3,7; 2 THESS. 1:4,6; HEB. 10:33; JAMES 1:27; REV. 1:9; 2:9,10,22; 7:14

καταπονεω (kataroneo), verb, "to wear out with toil or suffering"

Acts 7:24 and 2 Peter 2:7

συνεχω (sunechw), verb, "to forcibly hold together; to contain; to constrain; to oppress" Used for holding rowers together on galley ships.

Matt. 4:24, 38; 8:37

Luke 8:45; 19:43; 22:63

Acts 28:8; 7:57; 12:50; 18:5

2 Cor. 5:14

Phil. 1:23

οδυναω (odunao), verb, "to cause pain". In the passive "to feel pain".

Luke 2:48; 16:24

Acts 20:38

θλιβω (thlibo), verb "to press; to distress; to trouble; to gall"

Matt. 7:14

Mark 3:9

2 Cor. 1:6; 4:8; 7:5

1 Thess. 3:4

2 Thess 1:6

1 Tim. 5:10

Heb. 11:37

ταραχη (tarachei), noun, "trouble, disorder, confusion"

Mark 13:8

John 5:4

ταρασσω (tarasso), verb, "to stir up, disturb, trouble; to trouble the mind; to alarm; to frighten; to throw into disorder"

Matt. 2:3; 14:26

Mark 6:50

Luke 1:12; 24:38

1 Peter 3:14

## Suffering

### Introduction

This paper is an outline study to give you a start in thinking about the subject of suffering and to provide a catalogue to the many scripture passages relating to suffering. You would think that such a subject would be dreadful to study, but in the wonderful plan of God, the worst things are always the best things. As you read this article, look up the Bible passages that are indicated and ask the Lord to give you insight into His viewpoint on the issues raised.

We don't have to look far to see that there is a lot of suffering going on in the world. The media provide us with endless information on the plight of unfortunate people all over the world. We are certainly aware that in America most people don't suffer as do people in third world countries.

But we are also aware that we are members of the human race, and that some disaster, small or great, can come at any time without warning, something that makes us one of the statistics. Auto accident, cancer, tornado, volcano, falling airplanes...in fact we can suffer a lot just worrying about all the things that could happen to us. The Fickle Finger of Fate can zero in at any time with some kind of prime suffering - loss of job, loss of money, house burns down, etc.

### The Whole Human Race Suffers

It is a startling fact that part of God's plan for every human being includes a certain amount of suffering. All people suffer: rich or poor, smart or dumb, American or African, Christian or non-Christian. Suffering of some kind is part of God's Plan of Grace, if you can imagine that.

Suffering can be defined as the removal or reduction (some curtailment or loss) of one or more of the things that make up the good things of life as we know it, things we call details of life. Details of life are any of dozens of features that make up a person's life, things related to his personal life, family life, social life, or community and national life. Things like loved ones, friends, money, cars, health, marriage, sex, job, house, possessions, social life, etc., are all details of life;

and when you lose one of these things that you enjoy, the result is suffering.

We identify two types of happiness in life. The first type is human happiness which is happiness derived from any of the details of life. The other type is divine happiness which is the inner joy produced as part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the life of the advancing believer in the Christian Way of Life.

Human happiness is temporary and *dependent*. It lasts only as long as the thing that provides the happiness. It depends on a detail of life to sustain it.

God's happiness is *independent* of anything in this world; it is possible, the Bible says, "to be content in whatsoever state I am", that is, to have a deep inner happiness and contentment that does not depend on other people, material possessions, or circumstances.

One way of describing suffering is to say that suffering comes from the removal of the human happiness. You can see, then, that if a person possesses God's joy (+H), the loss of human happiness is much more tolerable.

Suffering occurs by several means in human life, both for Christians and unbelievers, including the following:

- Suffering by loss of health - physical pain, illness, accident, loss of function, etc.
- Suffering by privation - the lack of something necessary such as food, shelter, clothing, transportation.
- Suffering from the weather - freezing weather or hot, storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards, as well as earthquakes, volcanoes.
- Suffering from mental anguish - worry, sorrow, anguish, fears, phobias, bitterness, jealousy, not the least of which is "suffering by anticipation".
- Suffering from justice, the long arm of the law, deserved or undeserved.
- Suffering caused by other people. As long as there are two people in the same location...well, you know what I mean.

### What About My Rights?

Many of our cares come from somebody's trampling on our rights, or what we think of as our rights. Don't you feel that you have a right to

- Privacy
- Possessions
- Courteous treatment
- Dignity
- Consideration
- Equal treatment
- A fair share
- Equal opportunity
- etc, etc?

But where does it say that I have any rights at all? Do I have the right to be an American, to be in a good family, to be educated, to have enough food every day, to have a house, to be married to a fine person, to have good children, to have enough money?

It is clear from the Scriptures that we really have no rights whatsoever. The Lord has placed us in an environment with a certain supply of the gifts of His grace, and we didn't earn any of them. Everything we have, and everything we are able to obtain, comes as a result of the Grace of God; we have deserved nothing!

One of the most useful practices in the Christian way of life is to "cast all care" on God, as He invites us to do. You can think of this as the act of turning all your rights over to God, which amounts to a practical reliance on God for total provision, including giving to us those rights which He sees fit.

We suffer needlessly because we demand our rights. We have no rights. We have only our just deserts, "the wages of sin is death", which, by the grace of God, have been taken care of by the work of Christ. We are aware that one of the best things we can teach children is to be thankful for what they have, and to stop fretting about what they don't have. Children complain about things not being fair or not being divided equally, but when these traits show up in adults, it is a sign that more growth in grace is needed.

PHIL. 2:1-8

COL. 3:12-17

These passages indicate that the more relaxed a person is with regard to the details of life, the less he will experience the ill effects of some types of suffering. Often the amount of suffering can be limited through having a relaxed mental attitude toward a person or situation. Even severe privation or emotional trauma caused by the sin or hatred of another person can be reduced remarkably by the use of principles of Faith Rest, forgiveness, by relying on the Father for all provision, by allowing God to protect your reputation, etc.

### General Suffering in the World

An individual will have his allotted portion of suffering as a member of the human race as described above. Many people have no concept of "all things working together for good." Their main goal in life is to reduce his own suffering to a minimum, even if it means making other people suffer to do it.

God intends, as part of His Plan, for suffering to awaken a person to the reality of the existence of God, to motivate positive volition at the point of God consciousness. Whatever the immediate cause of his suffering, the ultimate reason is that of directing his attention to the person of Jesus Christ. Suffering has a tendency to slow people down, to reduce their arrogance, to reduce their self-righteousness, their self-satisfaction, their self-reliance.

Think about it -- where would you be today if everything had always been rosy, and you were unfailingly prosperous in all areas of life? Would you be going to church, taking in the Word, trying to figure out God's answers to life's dilemmas?

What about people who are suffering great deprivation because of locale (Bangladesh or the Sahel), or because of war, or because of cruel ideologies? Are these things part of the grace of God? An important fact is that God knows the spiritual needs of every person in the world, and He knows every person's mental makeup. Only He can decide what combination of blessing and suffering is the best recipe for encouraging a person to become a Christian. He does not force man's volition; but He will allow circumstances to

develop around a person which will direct his attention toward Himself.

### Why Believers Suffer

Christians suffer for many reasons, sometimes through no fault of their own. A Christian will experience a normal amount of suffering as part of human existence. But if a believer stays in fellowship with God and grows in Christ consistently, this type of suffering can be a great blessing and an opportunity to witness to other believers and to the unsaved.

### Suffering that the Christian Can Avoid

To the backslidden Christian who is out of fellowship and already quite miserable, however, suffering never brings blessing, and everything he touches turns to misery. Even the details of life don't make him happy; and he wastes his years in empty living.

ECCL. 2:1-12

A lot of a Christian's suffering can be avoided, however, and God has provided many remedies for reducing the distress a person causes himself.

You can avoid suffering caused by divine discipline.

Heb. 12:1-15

Psalms 38

Chastisement is avoided by staying in fellowship, confessing sin, forsaking sin, laying aside every weight...that is, choosing to obey God.

You can avoid suffering from failure to isolate sin, resulting in "chain sinning". An example is the failure to forgive an offense. This leads to mental attitude sins such as anger, bitterness, desire for revenge, judging. These, in turn, lead to sins of the tongue, maligning, gossip, false accusations. The offended party suffers worse than the original offender. But the whole chain can be broken by forgiving the other party and confessing the sins in the chain.

You can avoid suffering due to a guilt reaction to sin; the maintaining of a guilt complex.

Remember that Christ died for all our sins; He bore the guilt for us. (1 Pet. 3:18; 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21). One may have confessed sin biblically and be in fellowship and still labor under a heavy load

of guilt. But this is unbelief. A guilt complex itself is sinful, because one says by this that the Lord has not forgiven. But, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgression from us."

You can avoid suffering which comes from maintaining a lifestyle like the unsaved. This is a life of callousness in the soul, emptiness, blindness, as shown in Eph. 4:17-32. The cure - Bible teaching every day while maintaining fellowship with God.

You can avoid suffering due to the rejection of authority, such as parental authority, school authority, civil authority, military authority, etc.

READ Judges 19 and 10, Matt. 7:29 to 8:13, Jer. 7, and Prov. 30

You can avoid suffering caused by making decisions outside of the plan of God.

- Don't follow a career that takes you away from the Word.
- Don't reject divine principles of marriage (marrying an unbeliever, getting a divorce, etc.)
- Don't follow any "greener pastures" leading or make changes in your circumstances because you think you will be happier in the new situation.
- Don't raise children by human viewpoint instead of doing it God's way.
- In general, don't reject the Word of God, either through neglect or willful disobedience.

You can avoid suffering from failure to have your armor on.

EPH. 6.

### The Believer's Undeserved Suffering is Intended for Blessing

The following is a list of reasons why believers in fellowship suffer undeservedly in order to bring blessing to themselves or others.

1. Suffering for the glory of God: Book of Job; Isa. 48:9-11
2. Suffering to comfort others: 2 Cor. 1:3-6
3. Suffering to demonstrate the power of God, the provisions of grace: 2 Cor. 12:8-10

4. Suffering from spiritual growing pains; the testing that strengthens faith: Deut. 8:1–10; James 1:1–6; 1 Pet. 1:7,8; Rom. 5:3  
Faster growth means more frequent testing; there is a refining process: Job. 23:10; Isa. 1:18–27; 1 Pet. 1:7
5. Suffering to keep down pride: 2 Cor. 12:6,7; Matt. 26:31–75 (the scattering of the disciples)
6. Suffering to illustrate doctrine (for advanced believers: Book of Hosea)
7. Suffering by association occurs when we have some relationship with someone who is suffering: Rom. 14:7; 1 Cor. 12:26; 1 Chron. 21
8. Suffering to show the fruit of the Spirit and the results of edification: 2 Cor. 4:6–11
9. Suffering to learn the value of doctrine: Psalm 119:65-72
10. Suffering as a witness to Christ: 2 Tim. 2:8–12; John 15:18-21; Acts 5:40-42; 1 Cor. 4:9–16
11. Suffering as a result of exercising a spiritual gift; illustrated by the life of the Apostle Paul
12. Suffering from involvement in spiritual battles, the angelic conflict: Eph. 3:8–13

#### Promises to Believers Who Suffer

Psalm 34:19,20; Isa. 43:2; 2 Cor. 4:17 and 12:9; 1 Peter 5:10

#### Bitterness

Bitterness is one of the most crushing mental problems in a person's life. When a Christian is bitter, there is a loss of close fellowship with the Lord and a hindrance in one's relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.. Bitterness causes a loss of many of the blessings of the normal Christian life, including emotional stability, peace, and joy. And bitterness results in the loss of production of good works (gold, silver, precious stones) which are a major source of blessing and reward in the plan of God.

Bitterness is a devastating mental attitude sin, and it triggers a wide range of other sins, such as:

- Hatred

- Cruelty
- Antagonism
- Self-pity
- Unteachableness (implacability)
- Vindictiveness and desires for revenge
- Prideful ambition (arrogance)

Bitterness is neither consistent nor rational. A bitter person is his own worst enemy. It is very difficult to maintain any kind of relationship with a chronically bitter person; and bitterness is a major contributing cause of marital and family problems.

The objective in this short article is to provide Christians with a thorough look at what the Bible says about bitterness, including many Scripture examples, then to offer some direction about how to have victory over bitterness.

There are quite a few companion studies in the Grace Notes library which can help identify the mental attitude sin of bitterness and help deal with it from divine viewpoint.

#### Definition of Bitterness

In English, the concept of mental bitterness comes from the idea of something that has a sharp or unpleasant taste. We speak of something being bitter if it causes grief or is hard to bear; "a bitter defeat", "bitter failure". We also speak of a "bitter loss" when someone's death has caused great grief.

Then, bitterness has come to be used of those things that cause pain or grief, such as "bitter remarks" or the actions of "bitter enemies." We say "he fought to the bitter end", meaning a struggle in the last extremity.

The biblical Greek words for bitterness are PIKROS = "bitter" and PIKRIA = "bitterness", and other derivatives. PIKROS originally meant "sharp", or "pointed". Then it was used more generally for anything that was penetrating to the senses, something that had a pervasive smell or a "shrill" noise. PIKRIA was used for the bitterness of the taste of some plants, and finally found use in speaking of personal experience when something was unpleasant, undesirable, or when something bad was unexpected.

The words PIKROS or PIKRIA are used about 40 times in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament), only rarely to refer to literal bitterness, such as the reference to "bitter" water in Exo. 15:23. Usually it is a reference to men who are (pikroi) "the bitter ones" when they are soured or cruel (Ruth 1:20; Hab. 1:6).

There are seven instances of these words in the New Testament: Matt. 26:75; Luke 22:62; Acts 8:23; Rom. 3:14; Eph. 4:31; James 3:11,14.

So, in the Bible, except when it is obvious that the actual taste of something is meant, PIKRIA refers to intensity of suffering of mind and body, something that is difficult to bear, something that causes animosity and reaction, something that is brought about by hatred or antagonism.

### **Bible Examples of Bitterness**

- Women are bitter because they cannot have children, 1 Sam 1:10.
- A foolish son is bitterness to his mother, Prov. 17:25.
- Divine discipline (chastisement) of the Jewish people caused bitterness. This demonstrates the weakness and failure of the people. Bitterness destroyed the people's spiritual lives. The Jews brought on self-destruction by their bitterness.
- Lam. 1:4; Amos 8:10; Ezek. 27:30; Isa. 33:7; 2 Kings 14:26.
- Slavery causes bitterness, Exo. 1:14.3.
- Suffering causes bitterness to people who do not understand the Bible's problem solving devices and principles, and who do not give number one priority to their relationship with God. Deut. 32:24.
- Ridicule is a source of bitterness, Lam 3:14. The people ridiculed Jeremiah because of their bitterness toward him. When truth is taught, people sometimes react in bitterness.
- Consummate human pride is a cause of bitterness, Acts 8:23.
- Degeneracy is a source of bitterness, Rom. 3:14.
- Cosmic involvement is a source of bitterness, Eph 4:31.

- Husbands and wives are a source of bitterness toward each other, Col 3:19.

### **The Results of Bitterness**

- Bitterness is antisocial. A bitter person is selfish, inconsiderate of others, withdrawn from society, indifferent or adverse to conformity with conventional standards of social behavior. Even strangers avoid bitter people, Prov. 14:10. No one is happy around bitter people.
- Bitterness is a sign of the spiritual life gone wrong, Jer. 2:19.
- A bitter person rejects Bible teaching. James 3:14, "But if you have bitter jealousy and strife, stop being arrogant and lying against the truth."
- Bitterness shows total lack of grace orientation. A bitter person does not understand the Plan of God, let alone how it affects individuals. In Job. 9:17-18, Job's complaint against God. "Why does God let this happen to me", is a statement of bitterness.
- Bitterness accompanies the sin unto death, Job. 21:25.
- Bitterness motivates complaining, Job 7:11, 10:1. People who habitually complain are bitter people; they have no self esteem.
- Bitterness motivates gossip, Psalm 64:3
- Bitterness fragments other people's lives. Heb 12:15, "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God and that no root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by it many be defiled.
- Bitterness is self induced misery, and it produces chain sinning. Bitterness is misery to others in the periphery. But two wrongs never make a right. You cannot build your happiness on someone else's unhappiness.

### **Recovery from Bitterness**

Isa 38:17, "Behold, bitterness became deliverance to me. In Your love You have delivered my soul out of the pit of destruction; for You have cast all my sins behind my back."

Ephesians 1:8 tells us that we have available to us "wisdom and prudence" which are part of God's grace provision for us. Wisdom comes with a thorough understanding of Bible doctrine and the principles of Christian living. Prudence is the practical use of applied Bible truth in making decisions and solving problems in this life.

You can use the following practical methods to deal with bitterness in your life, regardless of the cause.

Many of these topics are discussed in considerably more detail in other Grace Notes articles, but this outline will give you ideas on how you can make specific application of doctrine to help with real world problems.

### **Confession of Sin**

Personal sin leads to bitterness. You must deal with sin on a daily basis by confessing and moving on. If you don't do this, sin becomes a burden which clouds your joy, drains your spiritual energy, and destroys your productivity and vitality. In short, sin is always depressing.

1 John 1:9 states that when you confess your sins, God "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

In privacy, make a list of your mental attitude sins, verbal sins, and behavior sins. Ask the Lord to make you aware of the habits of your own life. Respond immediately to the Holy Spirit when He uses the Word to spotlight your sin. Name the sin to God; then rejoice in forgiveness and cleansing and your renewed fellowship with God. All the promises and provisions of God the Father are now available to you. Make it a spiritual habit to confess sins whenever they show up in your life.

### **The Filling of the Holy Spirit**

When you have unconfessed sin in your life, the Holy Spirit is "grieved" or "quenched". But the Holy Spirit fills you and controls your life when you have no unconfessed sin in your life. This is why confession of sins is so important.

You can trust the Holy Spirit to reveal sin to you when you commit it, or even before. When the Holy Spirit is in control, He produces His fruit (Gal. 5:12). The fruit of the Spirit does not include heaviness, bitterness, discouragement, disillusion,

anguish, sadness, dejection, or loss of productivity. Consider these points:

- Love is free from bitterness.
- Joy pushes bitterness out.
- Bitterness cannot coexist with peace in the soul of the believer filled with the Holy spirit.
- Longsuffering gives the ability to deal with bitterness and other troubles.
- Gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are fruits of righteousness, which is divine good. Divine good takes the place of bitterness.

### **Living in the Word**

By constant study and meditation in the Bible you are constantly reminded of God's viewpoint, of His Plan, of His provision, or His awareness of our spirit of bitterness and what He wants to accomplish in us. Living in the sphere of human viewpoint is a source of bitterness. Living in the Word gradually transplants you to a new sphere, a new environment for your life, in which there is victory over bitterness.

Furthermore, there is a continuous cleansing taking place. See especially Ephesians 5 for how the Lord Jesus uses the Word to cleanse believers.

### **Orientation to Grace**

Bitterness is often caused by people, most of the time by people we cannot escape, or people we love, or people we cannot confront, or people we trust. Grace Orientation includes the ability to look at people and see them as God sees them. It includes the ability to let them live their lives as unto the Lord, and trusting God to make His way clear to them. This technique lets people make mistakes without your judging them. It enables you to accept criticism without hurt or bitterness. It enables you to "esteem others better than yourself", to "do nothing through strife or vainglory."

### **Occupation with Christ**

The technique of Occupation with Christ helps to cure bitterness because it gets your eyes off your spouse, your children, your neighbors, your friends, and yourself. Instead, as you move

through the day, you are thinking about the Lord Jesus Christ, His plan for your life, the Father's provision for each incident in your life, and His provision of wisdom for each decision you must make. Occupation with Christ is a by-product of the Faith-Rest Life. Bitterness is a by-product of occupation with self, with life, with problems.

### **The Faith-Rest Life (Trusting God and Enjoying the Peace Which Results)**

Faith-Rest is believing the promises of God and then entering into the "rest" phase of Christian living by claiming and enjoying those promises. Therefore, you must search the Scriptures daily to remind yourself of promises, and to learn new ones. You must know who and what God is so that you will not hesitate to believe that He can do what He has promised to do. Study the attributes of God using verses about the Essence of God. Know Him as He reveals Himself in the Bible. Believe Him when He tells you what He will do for you. Count on it. Let your faith rest on it. Cast your burden on the Lord.

### **Relaxed Mental Attitude**

A relaxed mental attitude is based on knowing God and on having the divine production in the soul that comes with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. A relaxed mental attitude is one of the results of Living in the Word, Walking in Fellowship, practicing the Faith-Rest Life, and being occupied with Christ.

## **Faith Rest**

### **Introduction**

One of the consistent features of the Christian life is testing. We live in a fallen world, in an imperfect society, among people whose way of life is directed by Satan and their own sin natures. We cannot avoid the friction, conflict, or confrontation that results from this. We face daily disasters, small and great, which are brought on us suddenly by nature, by the ignorance or deliberate actions of other people, or even by our own mistakes and sins.

Faith-Rest is God's plan for Christians who are going through testing, who are having problems. Faith-Rest is the means by which Christians can

have JOY, a happiness in this life which does not depend on people, circumstances, or things. Think of it! God promises that you can have the peace and joy of God, in spite of what's happening in your life, in spite of the problems and testing that you are going through.

Your testing may be mild or severe, or anything in between. There are family troubles, money problems, social conflicts, problems on the job...the list is endless. The charge of the elephant, or the charge of the mosquito, will come at any time, and usually without warning.

But you can always depend upon God's immediate and constant provision for you in your time of testing. He knows all about our tests before they occur and has made provisions in advance to meet our needs. (Eph. 1:3,4)

**1 Cor. 10:13, "These has no testing taken you but such as is common to man; but God will, with the testing, also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."**

Hebrews 4 tells us that the wilderness generation didn't find rest because they didn't trust God to keep His promises. There's no reason we (believers of the church age) have to make the same mistake."

Whether the test is small or great, it is allowed by God to measure our faith and our application of the things He has provided for us in this life.

**1 Peter 1:7 "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."**

**1 Peter 5:6,7 "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you."**

### **Definition of Faith-Rest**

**Faith-Rest:** the process of understanding, believing, and applying the doctrines and promises of God's Word in times of testing in the Christian life.

The term "faith-rest", and its definition above, is taken from the Scriptures in Hebrews 4:1,2 "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

(Read Hebrews 3 and 4 before continuing with this study.)

Faith-Rest is designed to be used by the Christian throughout his lifetime, on a daily basis, as a technique for maintaining peace and spiritual balance during difficulties, problems, or disasters in life. Faith-Rest is one of the Christian's most important resources in making rapid progress toward Christian maturity and the production of divine good in the life.

There are two reasons why Christians fail to grow and prosper in the Christian life, and fail to profit from all the blessings, promises, and logistical provisions which God has put in place.

The most common reason for failure to "enter into rest" is a lack of knowledge of God's plan and the assets He has provided for us. Christians who don't know what the Word of God says will never know the promises of God or the provisions He has made for testing.

The other reason for failure is seen in the Children of Israel of the wilderness generation. They heard the teaching but did not mix it with faith, so they did not enter into rest (the promised land).

#### **Examples of Faith-Rest (or lack thereof)**

In this section, there are several examples from the Bible in which the people of God had ample information on which to base their faith in God. Sometimes the people trusted God and prospered. Sometimes the people showed a complete lack of trust in God and fell apart when the tests came.

You will see in these Bible passages that the extent of a believer's spiritual maturity becomes obvious in hard times. It's easy to maintain a facade when things are going well, when there's plenty of money, good health, and little to worry about. All Christians look and behave about the same in good times. But when testing comes, those

who have actually failed to grow in Christ come apart at the seams, and fall back into patterns of worry, blaming other people, and trying to solve their own problems by worldly means.

The examples discussed here are:

- Abraham, who first distrusted, then believed God, Genesis 15
- The Bitter Water Test at Marah, Exodus 15
- The No-Food Test and the First No-Water Test at Meribah, Exodus 16,17
- The "Giant" Test, Numbers 13 and 14
- The Second No-Water Test, Numbers 20

#### **The Example of Abraham - Genesis 14 and 15**

Genesis 14 has the account of Abraham's great victory. After a victory there is a tendency to let down, to be vulnerable, both in the physical and spiritual realms. A football team coming off a win is harder to motivate for the next game. A victorious army tends to become complacent and underestimate the enemy. It is well to remember that Satan keeps charging; and he is especially skilled at counterpunching, at exploiting any temporary weakness. And worry is one of Satan's chief weapons.

**1 Peter 5:8,9 "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walks about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."**

**Gen. 15:1 "After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceedingly great reward."**

Here is God's promise of protection and an outpouring of grace blessings. The Lord has solutions for Abraham based on grace provisions which God had laid up for him from eternity past. That is, God's plan for Abraham is already set up and operational. It is merely a matter of Abraham's remembering God's previous promises and believing them.

God says "Do not worry; do not be frightened." There is only one logical thing for Abraham to do

when the Lord is his shield, strength, and reward - RELAX!

**Deut. 31:6-8** "Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them [the giants in Canaan]; for the Lord your God, he it is who goes with you; he will not fail you, nor forsake you. And Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, 'Be strong and of good courage; for you must go with this people unto the land which the Lord has sworn unto their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is who goes before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you, neither forsake you; fear not, neither be dismayed.'"

**Isa. 41:10-13** "Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; yea, I will help you; yea, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were angered against you shall be ashamed and confounded, they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them, and shall not find them, even them that contended with you; they that war against you shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.'"

Who is the one making these promises? It is the Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe! And every promise of God is backed up by His perfect character and His perfect character. Our thinking about His promises can be related to His divine attributes, for example:

**Sovereignty:** God in His designed Faith/Rest as part of His plan for us.

**Righteousness:** God is perfect goodness, so any trial will be good for us.

**Justice:** Guarantees that His plan for us is fair, that we will always be treated justly.

**Love:** we know that every situation in life is governed by God's love for us.

**Eternal Life:** God is eternal and we have everlasting life with Him through Christ's work on the Cross. God always plans with eternity in view.

**Omniscience:** God knows about my trials or sufferings even before they happen; and He has already planned what to do about them.

**Omnipresence:** God is always present and available to help.

**Omnipotence:** God is all-powerful so He always has the capability to carry out his promises and to provide help in time of need.

**Immutability:** God never changes in His attitude toward us, and all of His characteristics remain the same, forever.

**Truth:** God never lies; therefore what He has promised, He will perform (see Romans 4).

Abraham has had great victory, then he fails. He has started to worry, to cave in. He still feels he has something to complain about. He has no male heir, and if there is no male heir, the inheritance will go to Eliezer.

Gen. 15:2 "And Abram said, 'Lord God, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?'"

Worry is a sin, Rom. 14:23, "...whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Worry is, in fact, equivalent to blasphemy. Worry slanders God by saying that His promises are lies or that God is not able to keep His promises. In other words, the fearful person believes that God cannot or will not keep His promises.

Worry is the opposite of Faith-Rest. And Faith-Rest is the answer to worry.

Abraham has two choices: (1) he can try to solve his own problems by worrying, fretting, planning, being upset and angry, trying to scrounge up answers, trying to work around things, etc., or (2) he can let God solve the problems he cannot handle.

**Gen. 15:3** "And Abram said, 'Behold, you have given me no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is my heir.'"

Abraham blames God for his troubles. Blaming others, especially blaming God, is a sure sign of spiritual deterioration. A mature person takes responsibility for his own actions. It is a trend in modern psychology to find someone or something to blame for troubles, such as parents, the

environment, the community, politicians, employers, etc. But this tendency ignores every divine provision, every blessing, every law, and every principle of suffering.

**Gen. 15:4-6** "And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, 'This shall not be your heir, but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir.' And he brought him forth abroad, and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars, if you can number them.' And he said to him, 'So shall your seed be.' And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness."

Here God restates His promises (of the Abrahamic Covenant) and gives Abraham a dramatic illustration of what He means, by showing him the stars. Finally, Abraham believes God. He has about 15 more years to wait before Isaac is born, but he is able to wait patiently and have inner peace because he has laid his burden on the Lord.

#### **The Bitter Water Test - Exodus 15**

Have you ever had a wonderful Sunday attending church, worshipping the Lord, enjoying the fellowship of believers, everything that make you glad to be a Christian, only to see your whole attitude change at work on Monday as your job seems to throw you into another world?

Read Exodus 14 and 15 of the account of the Israelites escaping from Egypt. They saw God 24 hours a day in the cloud and in the fire. In their terror of the Egyptians they prayed frantically to God to save them, and saw the Red Sea open up, crossed on dry land, and watched the Egyptian army being destroyed as the waters closed back over them.

And what a victory celebration they had. Read the great song of victory they sang. "The Lord is my strength and my song...The Lord is a man of war...Thy right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy...Who is like thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders..." And on and on.

But ... just three days later, on the march, they came to the Bitter Sea, Marah, and ...

**Exo. 15:24,25** "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He tested them."

As a nation, the Israelites were spiritually immature. They had no spiritual stamina and no real understanding of who the Lord is or what He could do. This is the first of many tests they would fail, tests designed to demonstrate to them how helpless they were without God. As you know, throughout their 40 years wandering in the wilderness, and in spite of daily teaching from Moses, Aaron, and Levites, in spite of witnessing miracle after spectacular miracle, only a small percentage of these people ever learned to rely completely on the Lord.

#### **The No-Food Test and First No-Water Test - Exodus 16,17**

Exodus 16 gives details of the No Food test, also failed by the Israelites, in which they murmured again against Moses, Aaron, and God. In this case God provided manna for them. This chapter is a litany of whining, complaining, and miserable behavior. And chapter 17 continues the story.

There was no water at Rephidim, and the people blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt so that their children and cattle could die of thirst. Their complaining was so vehement that Moses named the place Meribah ("chiding").

Of course, the Lord provided water from the rock, at the same time giving a beautiful picture of the gospel. Remember that God's grace depends on His character, not on our character or faithfulness. The people received what they did not deserve.

#### **The Giants Test - Numbers 13,14**

Numbers 13 describes a reconnaissance patrol which was led by a high ranking officer from each of the 12 tribes. Moses would not commit a force of 2,000,000 people into a land without sending out a patrol. The patrol would spend 40 days in enemy territory before returning to Kadesh-Barnea.

**Num. 13:1,2.** The people received directions from the Lord. Note the promise, "...the land which I give unto the children of Israel..." The Israelites were not being asked to move into the land on "blind faith". There is no such thing as blind faith. Faith is the best eyesight in the world when it is based on the promises of God. Faith is the ability to rest on God's omniscience.

**Num. 13:3-16.** Caleb and Joshua are recognized as two of the great men of history, men who know the wisdom and grace of God and are willing to commit themselves to it. To them, the Word of God was more real than any situation they were to face. They were fully adjusted to their circumstances, whether good or adverse.

**Num. 13:17-20.** Detailed instructions for the reconnaissance. "Be ye of good courage..." One thing necessary for a successful mission, the right mental attitude. The difference between courage and fearfulness is being emphasized here. And the difference is Faith-Rest! Caleb and Joshua believed the promises of God, the other ten did not. Caleb and Joshua had courage, the other ten did not.

When the spies returned, the camp was divided into two groups, a small group of confident, courageous people who believed God, and a large group of fearful people who were shaking in their boots. There were giants in the land, and the majority were afraid of them, in spite of the promises of God.

The Lord is greater than any giant in a Christian's life. "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." The Lord knew in advance that there would be giants in Canaan, and He had prepared everything ahead of time for them to occupy the land. Yet, in spite of having met (and failed) test after test, and having seen God perform many wonderful miracles, they still lacked courage.

**Num. 13:21-27.** This is a complete confirmation of what the Lord said would be the case in the land. And His promises had been repeated time after time. Exo. 3:8,17; 13:5; 33:3.

"Milk and honey" is an idiom for a prosperous land. The only believers who enjoy the provision of God are those who see and appropriate God's provisions by faith. We do not live by sight. We

have provisions for today, food, clothing, shelter. But what God provides for the soul cannot be seen, except by faith. But the eyes of Faith-Rest are greater than natural eyes.

**Num. 13:28-33.** There is no doubt that they are up against a formidable enemy. The Hittites were one of the greatest nations in the ancient world; they discovered iron and were the first to use iron weapons. The Jebusites were very powerful warriors who had not been conquered for several hundred years; their central fortification was a city called Jerusalem. The Amalekites were craft idol and demon worshippers and child sacrificers.

Caleb had seen God handle all of their problems time after time, but he was not able to persuade the rest of the people. They were afraid of the giants.

**Num. 14:16.** This verse explains the whole thing. The Lord could not bring them into the land because (1) their attitude toward God was bad; (2) their attitudes toward people was bad (mental attitude sins); and (3) they were negative toward God and His teaching.

**Num. 14:17,18.** Lack of faith in God affects succeeding generations. Where parents do not teach their children, and set the example for them, the children will follow the worldly ways of their parents. Moses prays to God that somehow He will prevent this.

**Num. 14:19-23.** These verses provide great insight into how God's love and grace can be shown while not compromising His justice and righteousness. He forgives the people for their lack of faith, but He still forbids the majority from entering the promised land.

**Num. 14:24.** Caleb was different. He listened to the Word of God every day, and He maintained an attitude of faith that was in line with the doctrine and promises he had learned. Therefore he had a relaxed mental attitude and a good knowledge of how to function in God's plan.

**Num. 14:25-30.** A description of darkness in the soul. God calls this people an evil congregation and pronounces the sin unto death on the majority of the adult population.

### The Second No-Water Test - Numbers 20

Historically, now, we are near the end of the 40 years wandering occasioned by the sins and unbelief of the previous generation. Most of those who were adults 39 years ago have died in the wilderness. Now their children are adults, and they have apparently learned nothing! For here is a repetition of the "no-water" test, in the same location and virtually under the same circumstances as the first one.

**Num. 20:1.** Miriam died at this time, and she was buried in Kadesh. Her death is representative of those who were removed under the final stage of divine discipline, the sin unto death. Now the new generation faces the issue of Faith-Rest living.

**Num. 20:2.** "There was no water for the congregation..." God will permit tests of all sorts, usually in the form of some disaster, heartache, frustration, or pressure situation which could be classified as a "no-water" situation.

You can handle a "no-water" situation in two ways. You can try to solve it yourself, or you can put it into the Lord's hands. The issue is what takes place in the soul. Resting in God, claiming the promises, requires categorical knowledge of the Word of God and a proper attitude of faith toward the Lord and His teaching.

No hopeless situation is really hopeless when viewed from the divine viewpoint. A believer who has Bible principle applied in his life is going to manifest many things, including a relaxed mental attitude, true happiness and joy, and a reliance on promises.

A no-water situation is never a no-water situation with God. He has provided the "water" for every situation before the world was created. But the promises of God are never superimposed on the believer's life. They are an expression of His love, but God does not force His love upon us.

The believer who does not live in the Word has mental sins, fears, worry, anxiety, bitterness, etc. And this is expressed through murmuring. The believer with doctrine in the soul expresses his own love for God through Faith-Rest.

**Num. 20:3.** "The people chode (meribah) with Moses..." As soon as things go wrong, the sin nature begins to express the darkness in the soul,

bitterness, implacability, fear. This causes the people to murmur against the authority which God has provided and they blame Moses and Aaron for the whole thing.

These people are actually suicidal, an evidence of great inconsistency, extreme emotional swings, and complete disorientation to life.

**Num. 20:4,5.** Note, this "evil place" that the congregation is complaining about is exactly the same place where God had demonstrated His love and grace before, by providing water! The believer who calls Grace "evil" has a badly scarred up soul. They have negative volition to grace and the promises of God. In their self-consciousness they have self-pity. Their mentality is dominated by mental attitude sins of worry, bitterness, vindictiveness. Their emotions are unstable. And in their conscience they have strictly human viewpoint and standards.

They are thinking of the details of life, and they expect the details of life to bring them happiness. Any believer who ignores the Word of God and looks to details of life for provision and happiness has had it! The Word of God points the believer toward God; human viewpoint points him toward Egypt.

When a believer recalls something from his past, something pleasant, instead of recalling the promises of God, he is "looking back at Egypt." A Christian who operates on Grace principles can take Egypt of leave it. He will be confident and happy in any situation, because God is greater than the most hopeless situation.

God demonstrates His love for us through adversity in a way that would be impossible in Heaven. Heaven is perfect environment, with no problems of any kind.

**Hebrews 3:7-9** "Wherefore, as the Holy Spirit says, today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation (meribah: from the Hebrew of Psalm 95:8-11), in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test, proved me, and say my works forty years."

To "harden one's heart" means to have a habitual and willful unbelief in God and His Word.

God was faithful to the people for the whole 40 years of wilderness wandering, yet they failed the "no water" test.

### The Benefits of Faith-Rest

As a Christian grows in grace, he will use Faith-Rest with increasing skill and power, and it will support all of his divine viewpoint thinking and production. Faith-Rest relies entirely on the continuous ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit, therefore the believer will benefit from Faith-Rest only when he is in fellowship, walking in the Spirit [Rom. 14:23].

Faith-Rest was the means of spirituality for believers in the Old Testament. [See Hab. 2:4; Heb. 11; Rom. 4:17-25] One of the principle passages relating to Faith-Rest is Hebrews 3 and 4, particularly the section from 3:6 to 4:16. Please read this passage in your Bible before proceeding.

Following are some principles of the Faith-Rest system:

- Faith-Rest is from God, Who is perfect. No human works or deeds can be added to this perfect divine provision.
- To enter into God's rest, the believer must cease from his deeds (human good) and enter into a rest in which he does no work. The Holy Spirit does the work, Heb. 3:7 to 4:16.
- Faith is required, not works. Faith implies the absence of human merit. The merit for Faith-Rest lies in the object of faith, God the Father and His Word. The doctrines and promises of the Word must be mixed with faith, Heb. 4:1,2.
- Faith-Rest produces a relaxed mental attitude and victory over mental attitude sins, Isa. 26:3,4; Rom. 5:5.
- Faith-Rest is the basis for dynamics in prayer, Mt. 21:22; Mk. 11:25.
- Faith-Rest is a principle of victory in spiritual warfare, Heb. 11:6; 1; Jn. 5:4,5.
- Faith-Rest is a part of the Christian Way of Life in the Church Age, 2 Cor. 5:7.

The extent to which Faith-Rest applies to every aspect of a believer's life can be seen in the more than 7,000 individual promises in the Bible which

can be claimed by the Christian in one way or another. See, for example, 1 Pet. 5:7; Isa. 41:10; Ps. 4:8; 55:22; 56:3.

In order for Faith-Rest to function it is necessary for the Christian to take in the Word of God on a daily basis, so that he learns which promise provisions have been made available. And The Christian continually filled (controlled) by the Holy Spirit through confessing sin Biblically. Use of the Word of God in this manner provides the following benefits:

- Inner rest, the "peace of God that passes all understanding."
- A happiness (+H) that does not depend on people, circumstances, or things.
- A relaxed mental attitude arising out of victory over sins of mental attitude.
- The ability to have genuine personal love toward those close to you and genuine impersonal love toward others.
- The desire to be occupied with Christ and to study God's Word more.
- Divine provision for every need.

The key to the success of the Faith-Rest system lies in the validity of the object of our faith, the Word of God. Therefore, every aspect of the perfect character (essence) of God the Father supports Faith-Rest.

### How to Apply Faith-Rest

The objective of Bible teaching is the presentation of Bible doctrine which the Christian can use in his daily life. People differ in their abilities to retain and recall doctrines and promises when they are needed.

You never know when you will be required to use a particular doctrine, and you may be able to recall only a tiny amount of what you have heard from the Pastor-Teacher in the past. For this reason, you must take in doctrine on a daily basis so that usable doctrine accumulates gradually in small increments, line upon line and precept upon precept.

There must also be continuous repetition of important principles and reinforcement in learning how various Bible principles interrelate.

As you study the Bible you will discover that a divine frame of reference is being built in your soul by which you can receive, understand, and apply further doctrinal teaching. Truth builds upon truth. Isa. 28:10. You will see that God's viewpoint is gradually replacing your human viewpoint on many issues. You are building a set of divine standards by which you will be able to exercise wisdom and discernment and make correct decisions in life.

You will grow in spiritual maturity if you maintain continuous momentum in the Christian Way of Life for an extended period of time. Your personal intake of the Word of God constitutes its own reward as you benefit from living the truth.

In the faith application of the Word of God, you will draw on your accumulated resources of Bible teaching in order to cope with your problems and take control of your own life. The Word of God in your soul makes you self-sustaining, independent of anything in the world system, and able to face life with courage and confidence as you fulfill God's plan for your life.

Faith-Rest, then, is designed by God as a versatile technique for overcoming problems in life. By FAITH you apply doctrine logically from the resources in your soul, meanwhile you are RESTING in the promises of the Word of God.

The steps in the Faith-Rest technique are:

1. Establish fellowship with God (the filling of the Holy Spirit) through Biblical confession of sin.
2. You may then recover a relaxed mental attitude by claiming promises from the Word.
3. As a means of calling up divine viewpoint thinking, concentrate on pertinent doctrines related to the issue at hand.
4. Take control of the situation as you reach doctrinal conclusions.

#### **An Example of Faith Rest - Victory Over Fear**

Because concentration on Bible truth is so important, your mental attitude is a prime target of Satan's attacks against the power of the Word of God. Mental attitude sins and doctrinal thought cannot coexist. Everyone is susceptible to various combinations of events, circumstances, or people

who cause arrogance, bitterness, depression, self-pity, worry, anger - anything to block out God's thoughts.

One of your most potent enemies, for example, is fear. Fear is a mental attitude sin which shuts down thought and closes out divine viewpoint. No matter how much doctrine is resident in your soul, none of it will help if your mind is immobilized by fear.

Note: It is not a sin to be scared, to be afraid of something that is dangerous or which threatens to harm you. Sinful fear, though, is a continuing morbid mental attitude in which you say, in effect, that God cannot or will not protect you in time of danger.

Fear opposes the believer's confidence and courage in the Christian Way of Life, 1 Jn. 4:18. It is not surprising to find that one of the strategies most often used by Satan is that of causing believers to be filled with fear.

To deal with fear, proceed as follows:

**Confess sin** . Fear is a sin. While confession will not conquer fear, it must be the first step. The fear has caught you off guard and you must quickly recover your mental poise and your ability to think and use doctrine. Therefore, confession and restoration to fellowship is the first requirement.

**Claim promises**. Following confession of sin, recover a relaxed mental attitude by claiming promises found throughout the Word of God relating to fear, such as

**Isa. 41:10, "So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."**

**Rom. 8:28, "For we know in fact, that to those who love God, he works all things together for good, to those who are the called ones according to a predetermined plan."**

If you don't remember many good promises, look them up in a concordance, look at a list of promises, or call a friend for some help.

A promise is God's guarantee, a capsule statement of Bible doctrine on which to anchor your mental attitude. A promise expresses the character of God

and provides you with an instant perspective on things and gives you the ability to reduce the most complicated situation to utmost simplicity. Where panic reigned, peace can now be restored.

Note: claiming promises is never an end in itself. It is only the beginning of the application of Faith-Rest. Promises cannot sustain a relaxed mental attitude and they cannot solve complex problems. Promises are used to make possible the most important phase of Faith-Rest, doctrinal thinking.

**Apply doctrine.** Your concentration on doctrine in Bible class and in your studies has brought doctrine into your soul. Now you will apply this doctrine by moving it to the front of your mind to meet the demands of the moment. You will apply a "rationale" to the situation.

A "rationale" is a "reasoned exposition of principles or statements of reasons; a set of reasoned rules or directions." By mentally tracing out the principles related to a crisis, you are re-explaining to yourself the basic concepts of doctrine that apply to the situation. This is necessary because fear and the accompanying emotions have revolted against thought, and you must take conscious and deliberate steps to reinstate the rightful authority in your soul.

You could, for example, think through some conclusions derived from Rom. 8:29,30, "For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers, and those He predestinated, He also called, those He called, He also justified; those He justified He also glorified." Your thought process might go like this ...

First, "God thought about me in eternity past."

Next, "He designed a perfect plan for me in eternity past."

Then, "He chose me for a privileged part in His plan."

Therefore, "God can bless me right now because I possess His righteousness."

Finally, "God will bless me forever in Heaven."

These simple statements are really a set of five basic doctrines which help restore divine viewpoint thinking. By using this system of

concentrating on doctrines which you have already learned, you can immediately recall your place in the overall picture of God's grace. By this faith application of doctrine, you can become stabilized and regain objectivity.

**Take control of the situation.**

**Romans 8:31,32, "What conclusion are we forced to face with these things? Since God is for us, Who is against us? Who did not spare His own unique Son, but delivered Him over on our behalf, how shall He not with Him graciously give us all things."**

These conclusions, stated in these verses as rhetorical questions, enable you to take control of situations which formerly caused fear and anxiety. With objectivity and confidence restored, you can evaluate your circumstances and make the decision or take the action which your own wisdom and discernment dictate as the solution to the problem.

Even if the problem is hopeless, completely beyond your control, you can still cope with it by intelligently trusting the Lord for a solution.

Any Bible doctrine you have stored in your human spirit can be developed into a rationale to meet a test or crisis in your life.

At one time or another you will need every doctrine that you have had an opportunity to learn.

If you find yourself lacking inner resources in time of crisis, it means that you have not prepared yourself in advance for the testing. Testing will come, ready or not.

In using Faith-Rest principles, you are employing the thinking of God and His eternal wisdom as your own guide and counsel.

## **Mental Attitude**

### **Introduction**

As a believer progresses in his Christian life, he experiences many profound changes in his thinking. His standards change gradually but radically; his frame of reference changes; his mental attitude soon becomes very different from what it once was. His previous way of thinking is replaced by the "mind of Christ" - God's viewpoint is becoming his own.

The greatest occupational hazard faced by a Christian is the failure to grow in Christ. Persistent personal sin carried on without repentance and confession keeps the Christian out of fellowship with the Lord and hinders the work of the Holy Spirit in the life.

The normal Christian life is a supernatural life. This life cannot be lived apart from the daily intake of spiritual food, the sustenance which comes with the study of the Bible accompanied by the continuous control and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Inattention to the teaching of the Word of God concerning the mechanics of daily Christian living results in failure to grow in Christ. The believer who will not overcome these problems will not be able to enjoy the benefits and blessings of the Christian life, and he will certainly not be productive as a child of God.

This article reviews several factors relating to the subject of the believer's mental attitude. First, we note several categories of mental attitude sin which are the result of "not thinking Grace". Then we see the methods by which God arranges for human viewpoint thinking to be replaced with divine viewpoint thinking. This study will also show some of the important results in the life of the Christian who develops a godly mental attitude.

### **The Sin of Not Thinking Grace**

A Christian decides many times every day whether he will follow God's plan for his life. In decisions great or small he expresses either his dependence on the Lord or his desire to be independent of God's direction. A believer has access to the perfect plan of God for his life, a plan which has certain predetermined divine standards by which every situation can be measured, by which every decisive opportunity can be judged. Many promises and blessings are available for use by the person who orders his life according to the patterns laid out in the Bible.

The person who is not positive to the plan of God, and who would apply his own human standards to life situations, does not operate by divine standards. He becomes involved in a variety of mental attitude sin problems stemming from his original decision to be independent of God. His

life takes on the characteristics of one who does not "think Grace".

Grace is that characteristic of God which is an extension of His love for the human race and which causes Him to provide for every human need for time and eternity. The sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the Cross was the Work which made it possible for God to view every person as free from the guilt of sin and as an object of God's Grace provisions.

Failure to order one's thinking according to Grace involves several aspects of mental attitude sin, including the following :

A SPIRIT OF PRIDE -- this is an exalted feeling based on personal success or position, or based on good training or education, on personal appearance, or on some natural gift or ability. Sinful pride is an inner feeling of self-importance which does not take into account God's provision of every resource and quality which goes into one's human traits and capabilities.

LOVE OF, OR DESIRE FOR, HUMAN APPROBATION AND PRAISE -- this is a secret fondness for being noticed and recognized. It is a love of supremacy, or it is the drawing of attention to oneself by various types of exhibitionism or by spiritual one-upmanship.

SELF WILL -- this is the concept of the stubborn or unteachable nature, or implacability. Self will is a disposition to be argumentative, harsh, bitter, which causes one to be critical in the extreme, or to mind the business of others, or to fail to recognize the rights and privacy of others.

SINFUL REACTION TO SOCIAL PRESSURES -- these are the sins of anger, impatience, touchiness, or of having a sensitive nature. There is often resentment and retaliation when disapproved or contradicted. This area of sin generates jealousy, sour grapes, envy, and the accompanying bitterness, hatred, carrying of grudges, revenge tactics, and so forth.

Magnifying the faults and failings of others while emphasizing one's own virtues.

NEGATIVE DISPOSITION -- this is peevishness, a fretful disposition, one that loves to be coaxed and honored. It is a dishonest, deceitful attitude. It is a disposition that tends toward discouragement

and despondency under pressure along with the attempt to solve one's problems by hysteria and tantrums.

APATHY -- this sin is that of indifference to doctrine and to the Word of God in general. It is indifference to the lost condition of unbelievers or to the carnal condition of other believers.

### **Characteristics of a Believer's Mental Attitude**

The true character of a believer in Jesus Christ is determined by his mental attitude. Prov. 23:7, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he". See also 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:1; Heb. 12:3; Col. 3:1,2; 1 Cor. 2:16; 2 Cor. 10:4,5.

A Christian's mental attitude is not always apparent in his actions, but God always knows perfectly what a person is thinking. Heb. 4:12,13; Prov. 21:2. The following are examples of mental attitude thinking.

Worldliness is a mental attitude. Worldliness is not the doing of something wrong; it is the thinking which takes place independently of God's viewpoint. The remedy to the problem of worldliness is not in turning over a new leaf. It is a change in thinking (repentance) rather than a change in activity. Divine viewpoint must replace human viewpoint before a change in character can be expected. One can have an outward life which appears good, yet be filled with mental attitude sins. Col. 3:2; James 4:4.

Toughness, strength, and determination are mental attitudes. One is not beaten until he gives up mentally.

True Christian inner peace is a mental attitude. It is the relaxed mental state which enables one to enjoy the Christian life regardless of people or outward circumstances. With a good mental attitude, the believer can be joyful, relaxed, and can even enjoy the battle.

Mental stability is the result of thinking from a proper frame of reference, that is, Biblical thinking. The Christian who has mental fear, who is a chronic worrier, who cannot think clearly under pressure, who blames others for his problems, who cannot make correct decisions -- that believer is unstable. His emotions interfere with his thinking. Since emotion always follows

thinking, emotional instability will always follow from incorrect thinking. But God's Plan of Grace leads to rock-solid mental and emotional stability.

### **Man's Ideas vs Divine Viewpoint**

Thinking requires words - vocabulary. Divine thinking requires divine vocabulary. "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Under any kind of spiritual pressure, human vocabulary, or human thinking, is not adequate. Only God's words can give the ability to think correctly under pressure. The Christian's ability to think correctly is based on how much Bible teaching is resident (applied) in the soul of the believer.

The Christian is commanded to have a new mental attitude. Col. 3:1,2; 2 Cor. 10:4,5; 1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5.

The warfare between two viewpoints in the believer's soul must be fought from within, first by knowledge of doctrine, and then by the application of truth to the life. 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 John 1:9.

Every believer has a mind which is capable of looking at life from God's point of view. Rom. 1:18 ff. Mental attitude divine viewpoint is obtained only through Bible study accompanied by the controlling ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Christian who habitually studies the Word learns to concentrate and to think from God's point of view, and thus he becomes stabilized. The "mind of Christ" (the source of God's viewpoint) is made clear in the Bible.

The Christian can be "transformed by the renewing of the mind" through study, knowledge, and application of Bible truth. By this means his decisions and actions are most likely to be in agreement with Bible principle. And this is the only sure sign of Christian maturity and victorious Christian living.

### **The Human Conscience**

The conscience is located in the mind and is the center for the operating standards of the human soul. Titus 1:15. The conscience convicts the Christian of evil or wrongdoing. John 8:9. The conscience establishes standards for both human and divine relationships. Acts 24:16.

The conscience functions on thinking; and the believer in fellowship has a conscience which functions from resident (applied) divine viewpoint. Rom. 2:15; 9:1, as related to applied Bible teaching. The conscience establishes standards for serving God. 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:14. But false operating standards in the conscience produce legalism. 1 Cor. 8:7.

The more the believer uses applied Bible doctrine, the stronger his conscience becomes in using such things as the Law of Liberty and the superseding laws of love and sacrifice. 1 Cor. 10:24-29.

Conscience is the basis for enduring mistreatment and misunderstanding without defending oneself. 1 Pet. 2:19; 3:16. The conscience can be damaged or destroyed with false doctrine and with a callused soul. 1 Tim. 4:1,2.

### **The Mechanics of Replacing Human Viewpoint with Divine Viewpoint**

The Christian life is a supernatural life and cannot be lived without the filling of the Holy Spirit and the daily function of applied Bible teaching. Rom. 8:2; 7:6; Gal. 5:25; Eph. 5:18. All changes must come from within, and the Holy Spirit must originate divine good by applying doctrine to the life.

We begin a change of viewpoint at the moment of salvation. At that time we changed our mental attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 3:19. That was repentance and faith, and it resulted in our regeneration. John 3:16. At that moment many benefits were made available to us, blessings and promises from God which enable us to live in a manner which is both acceptable to the Lord and which also produces great happiness for us. We are given the ability to think those things which will bring honor to the Lord. Eph. 5:18; 4:23; Col. 3:2.

The choice of whether to make use of the divine operating assets is made by the believer every day. The power of our walk with the Lord depends on Bible teaching, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the believer's positive volition. Daily Bible teaching under the controlling ministry of the Holy Spirit builds up divine standards in the human soul and conscience. 1 Tim. 1:5,19; 3:9.

### **The Benefits of Having a Proper Mental Attitude**

With the proper mental attitude, the Christian will have victory, peace, power, and mental stability. Phil. 2:5; 2 Tim. 1:7. The Christian can experience perfect inner peace, even during times of difficulty and suffering. Phil. 4:7. Inner peace comes from what we think. Isa. 26:3. Divine viewpoint brings mental stability and eliminates discouragement, anxiety, instability, fearfulness, and double-mindedness. Stability of mind and character is a mental attitude of strength.

The believer with divine viewpoint has a gracious attitude toward others. He is a mature believer characterized by mental attitude love who is a channel of the Grace of God. Deut. 6:5; 11:13. A mental attitude from divine viewpoint produces confidence based on absolute values and standards. 2 Cor. 5:1,6,8.

### **Mental Attitude and the Believer's Ministry**

The mature believer "thinks Grace", which is the "mind of Christ". Therefore, the Christian's life and personality are characterized by many of the qualities of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 8:29; Gal. 5:22 ff. In every one of these characteristics the Christian has one basic ingredient - correct thinking according to divine viewpoint. 1 Pet. 3:8

Therefore, the mature believer is gentle, compassionate, caring, and has a gracious attitude toward others. These are essential life qualities in any believer who is a good witness for Christ. With these qualities, and with the knowledge of the Word of God being acquired on the way to maturity, the believer cannot help but be an outstanding witness for Christ and a skilful practitioner in the use of his spiritual gifts.

### **Peace**

The word "peace" in the Bible, from the Greek word (**eireinei**), refers to a mental attitude of tranquility based on a relationship with God in the Christian Way of Life. It is a word which describes the result of a person's correct response to God's Grace.

The Bible uses "peace" in two ways. There is personal peace with God which comes when a

person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior. Then, there is the peace of God which is available on a daily basis as the believer participates in the Christian way of life according to the Plan of God.

So, where you find peace mentioned in the Bible it refers either to the reconciliation of a Christian in salvation, as in Eph. 2:14,17, or to the mental attitude found in the believers.

**2 Tim. 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."**

### **Peace With God - Peace in Salvation**

Peace with God is never available apart from Grace. The Cross of Christ is the focal point of Grace and is the source of Peace. Jesus Christ is our eternal Peace.

**Romans 5:1 "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

Grace removed the Barrier and made peace between man and God. So, when the unbeliever responds to Grace by faith, the result is Peace.

Ephesians 2:14-18 provides a good illustration of how God made it possible for anyone to have peace with God, with special emphasis on the fact that such different types as Jews and Gentiles have been provided for.

Verse 14 deals with peace as a product of reconciliation. Verse 15 explains that the "enmity" between God and man, that which we call the Barrier, was "abolished" once and for all. Verses 16 to 18 explain that the enmity has been slain for both Jews and Gentiles so that now those who were near to God, the Jews, and those who were far off, non-Jews, have been brought into union with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### **Peace in the Christian Way of Life**

In our lifetime we can experience Peace on a daily basis. When the believer responds by faith to Grace, God provides many blessings which can result in great inner happiness.

**Isaiah 26:3,4 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the**

**Lord forever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."**

In the Christian Way of life, peace comes through fellowship with God and daily growth, advancement in spiritual things which brings stability, a relaxed mental attitude, orientation to the plan of God, occupation with Christ, and the ability to employ faith-rest principles in all areas of life.

READ Philippians 4:6-9

Peace, or tranquility, precedes the enjoyment of prosperity. It is part of the preparation for prosperity. One must have Peace to have the capacity for prosperity. God may hold prosperity back until there is the capacity to enjoy it.

**Acts 9:31 "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied."**

READ Jeremiah 29:1-7

Any loss of peace is followed by adjustment to the plan of God (confession and restoration to fellowship), faith-rest, and relaxed mental attitude, and Peace in the new situation.

The man or woman who receive grace and peace from the Lord is in perfect position for spiritual production, and reproduction.

READ James 3:13-18.

### **Happiness**

Philemon 7, "Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints."

This phrase demands some of our attention, for Paul is in prison, he is chained, his physical movements are confined, his recreation is very limited, his pleasures are denied; in these circumstances, how can Paul make the statement that he is not just happy, but that 'he has much happiness?'

Happiness is the situation of well-being or general prosperity of mankind. It encompasses the circumstances of life and relationships. And happiness can run the gamut from tranquility to intense ecstasies, and the term often used in

Scripture to describe happiness is "blessedness." Blessedness relates happiness to God and His Plan of grace.

Happiness has many different relative facets:

1. Happiness related to prosperity is described in Psalm 128: 1-4, "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord."
2. I Peter 3:14 declares that believers may be happy even in suffering, "But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."
3. Proverbs 3:13 says that true happiness is found through knowing God's Word, "Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding."
4. Proverbs 14:21 states that happiness may be gained from treating others with kindness and grace, "He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy."
5. Romans 14:22 says that a clear conscience produces a type of happiness, "So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves."
6. Proverbs 29:18 states that happiness comes from obeying the laws of the land and that lawlessness and spiritual apostasy accompany each other, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law."
7. Psalm 144:13-15 states that happiness comes from living in a free and prosperous nation.

To fully understand the concept of happiness, we must understand the happiness of God. For God's happiness is unique in the sense that God's happiness is absolute, perfect and unlimited. In other words, because God is perfect He has perfect happiness. And as God is eternal, so is His happiness; God's happiness never ends and has

never been diminished in the least and cannot be changed.

And since God is perfect this means that He is perfect Righteousness; thus God's perfect happiness is directly connected to one simple fact: God is never wrong, has never been wrong, and never will be wrong. This makes God happy. Additionally, since God is perfect He is also perfect Justice; this means God is never inequitable, unfair or unjust. This makes God happy. Inasmuch as God is perfect, His love is perfect; this means that God loves the other members of the Godhead with a perfect love and that He loves Himself with a perfect love and that He loves His creatures with a perfect love; this ability to love perfectly, without bounds or mitigation, makes God happy. And because God is Omnipotent, this gives Him an unlimited capacity to be happy. In His Omniscience God's very genius adds comprehension and sharpness to His happiness; in other words, God knows that He is happy.

Finally, in His Sovereignty, in His Reign, in His Supremacy, God has determined that He will share His perfect happiness with mankind, for Psalm 43:4 says, "Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God." And Psalm 97:12 tells how God shares his happiness with mankind, "Rejoice in the Lord, you who are righteous [perfect Righteousness given to mankind at the point of salvation], and praise his holy name." And Habakkuk 3:18 states that once the believer has God's perfect Righteousness given to him/her, then the believer may be given anything and everything by God, for God gives to His perfect Righteousness (in the believer) from His perfect Righteousness (in Himself).

The fact that God has determined to give His happiness to mankind and found a way to do it is called grace. And God's instrument of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ; thus true happiness begins at the point of belief in Christ. This is where happiness begins. From there, the more the believer knows about God and Christ, the greater the believer's capacity for happiness becomes. Thus through spiritual growth the believer's happiness may become as the happiness of God:

without limit, without dependence on circumstances, or events, or people, or any exterior influence. And John 13:17 declares that once spiritual maturity is attained, the believer shares God's perfect happiness, "Now that you know these things (God's Word), you will be blessed (intense happiness) if you do them."

In other words, God's Word is the source of the believer's happiness, according to John 17:13, "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them."

And sharing God's perfect happiness should be the estate of every believer, according to Philippians 4:4 and I Peter 1:8, which say, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy." And once the believer shares the perfect happiness of God, the believer's happiness cannot be diminished by: circumstances, things, or people, according to Philippians 4:11,12; Hebrews 13:5,6, and Hebrews 12:2,3, which say, "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'" "Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Thus, even though mankind inhabits an imperfect world, mankind can have the perfect happiness of God. And according to I Corinthians 11:24,25, Philippians 1:3, and Song of Songs 3:1, 4:6, and 8:6, the sharing of God's happiness increases the believer's ability to love others and God. Jude 24 asserts that the happiness experienced by the believer in heaven is more intense than that on earth; this degree of intensity is related to the locale, heaven, and not to any limitations on the sharing of God's perfect happiness.

Isaiah 35:1,2 declares that in the future Millennial Reign of Christ happiness will be ubiquitous.

And according to the following verses, II Samuel 1:19,20, Ecclesiastes 9:9, 11:8,9, and Proverbs 23:24,25, the happiness derived from the 'world,' sin, evil, and 'pleasure' is temporary and inadequate. For "the aesthetic age seeks satisfaction through the senses, physical beauty, erotic excitement, through success in any of its guises." And true inner happiness cannot be found through the senses or celebrity.

Ultimately, the truly happy person, the believer who shares the perfect happiness of God, provides happiness for, and is a 'ministry of refreshment to,' other believers and unbelievers. This concept is found in Philippians 2:28,29, Romans 16:32, II Corinthians 7:13, and our verse, Philemon 7, which says, "For I have come to have much happiness and encouragement by your love (for Christ) because the tender affections of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother."

Paul's use of the term "brother," ADELPHOS, indicates that Philemon is not only a fellow-believer, a member of the royal priest/family of God along with Paul, but that Paul is about to discuss a 'family' matter.

The Greek term for "refreshed" is ANAPAUSO; and this concept was briefly discussed in the above dissertation on Happiness. However, the idea commands more attention and more detail, as 'refreshment' is an attribute of those believers that have attained spiritual maturity. Thus we might say that the 'ministry of refreshment' is the realization and function of the spiritually mature.

Paul calls Philemon a 'refreshment.' This means that Philemon is a vivifying and soothing personality to all that interrelate with him. Spiritually and soulfully, Philemon provides refreshment to others. He is a pleasure to be with and around; others seek out his company so that they might be restored by his calm faith in God, by his virtue-love toward others, by his real compassion, and by his doctrinal-perspective toward life.

### **The Much More Care of God**

There is a great deal more to salvation than eternal life. There is a depth of experience here on earth

that is unbelievable to anyone who does not live through it. It is the "much more" provision concept of personal happiness and prosperity during life on earth for the believer who is occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Rom. 5:6-10 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.**

**For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.**

**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.**

**Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.**

**For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.**

**Matt. 6:25-34 "For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing?"**

**"Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"**

**"And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span?"**

**"And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,**

**yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these.**

**"But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is**

**thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith?"**

**"Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?'"**

**"For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**

**"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.**

**"Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

#### **We are objects of God's love**

**Eph. 2:4, But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith He loved us...."**

**Eph. 5:2, And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has given Himself for us...**

**1 John 4:10, Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us..."**

#### **We are objects of His grace**

**Eph. 2:8,9, By grace you are saved...**

**1 Peter 1:5, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

**Titus 2:11,12, For the grace of God that brings salvation to all men has appeared, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world....**

#### **We are objects of His power**

**Phil. 2:13 For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.**

#### **We are objects of His faithfulness**

**Phil. 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.**

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**We are objects of His peace**

John 14:27 **Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives peace, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**

**We are objects of His consolation**

2 Thess. 2:16,17 **Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope**

**through grace, Comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.**

**We are objects of Christ's intercession**

Heb. 7:25 **Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.**

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