

DEALING WITH OUR  
**EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

- In our personal lives
- In our marriage

.....  
*Face the Emotional Problems  
That Defeat You, and WIN.*  
.....

*“God’s Answers for Our Burdens and Perplexities”*

Looking At Emotional Problems We All  
Face In Our Marriage and Home!

This book deals with some of the more difficult problems that Christians face in daily life. You will want to make a thorough study of these chapters. There is *homework* with some of the studies. These will aid you toward personal change and victory. Look up all the verses, and consider how they apply to your life. Do not hurry through the book or read it casually. It does merit your time and serious study.

Warmly in Christ,

*Dr. Ed. Watke Jr.*

***Do you feel like giving up? Are you depressed by constant failures?  
Do you feel it is useless to strive for change?***

***Do you need answers for - - - anger, worry, anxiety, fretting, stress,  
depression, bitterness and other glaring problems from day to day?  
Then here are some God-honoring, biblical answers for YOU!***

## Preface

The needs are great in Christian homes across America. After being in specialized evangelism, the ministry of *Family Life Crusades* for nearly fifteen years, we are aware that the problems many face are becoming greater not lesser.

It seems as though many families are facing irresolvable problems. But God is able! Many of these problems are in the areas of emotional responses which bring their toll and ruin in many homes. It is to this subject that this book is written. We can experience the happy emotions of the heart, but so often people live under the control of the negative, defeating emotions that we frequently experience in life.

We are emotional beings; God made us that way. He created us with emotions so that we might be able to enjoy Him and His creation. After all, God Himself is an emotional being who expresses anger, pleasure, and compassion. Our goal, then, ought not to be to suppress our emotions, but rather to achieve emotional wholeness through finding God's answers for our emotional needs.

If we knew the filling of the Holy Spritz and would walk in obedience to the Word of God we could also have the happy, deep, joyous emotions of the heart. This is God's will for us. Having the fulness of the Spirit we would exhibit the fruit of the Spirit which is described in Galatians 5:23, 24.

If those who read and study this book are helped along the road to spiritual stability, my efforts will be well rewarded. May the Lord use this book to bring the joy and thrill of victory to many individuals and families.

-- Dr. Edward Watke Jr.

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## Introduction

### *Considering our emotions. . .*

Emotions themselves are not evil. In fact, the reason the Psalms mean so much to us is the writers of the psalms wrote about every emotion we will ever experience. We relate to the Psalms because the emotions we experience in life are similar to those the psalmist experienced.

God was not stingy in bestowing the gift of emotions. He was not only generous, but we are rich in emotional responses. They come in infinite combinations of types and intensities. There are the good emotions of the heart produced by the Holy Spirit and godly living. (See Galatians 5:22,23.) And there are the damaging, sinful, defeating emotions that come from sinful practices, failure, guilt, and wrong thinking. Just as we may experience physical pain or pleasure, so we have the capacity to experience emotional pain or pleasure. We can experience the mountain tops of emotional ecstasy and also the devastating emotions that seem to totally overwhelm us. God gives us the ability to feel pain, joy, and a host of other emotions.

Much of what we do or experience in life involves the emotions. Often when we sin the emotions are involved and behind those emotions are sinful thoughts and attitudes. We often manifest sin and failure in our emotional responses. And sin that is unconfessed and unforsaken will effect us emotionally.

It isn't that we should consider our emotions in a negative way. We are so accustomed to hearing the phrase *emotional problems*, that we may think that all our emotions are a bother and we'd be better off without them. But that is not the case. It is just that there are negative emotions we need to consider. We also need to praise God for the healthy, fulfilling and joyous emotions which we experience as well.

### *In what ways do we respond to our emotions?*

*Often, we try to ignore our feelings or emotions.* This seems to be a popular approach taken by some Christian writers who see our emotional make up as a hindrance to our spiritual progress. Emotions ought not be an embarrassment to us or an unwanted part of life. Some would say we should believe facts and ignore our feelings. This would mean we are to deny our feelings. This encourages us to suppress our negative emotions rather than benefit from them. Husbands often develop insensitivity toward their wives because they have heard so often they should not show their emotions. Maybe from the time they were small boys they were told that *men don't cry*. Such men have learned to suppress feelings and now as adults they don't know how to show any emotions of affection and love to their wives.

**I have known angry people who deny their emotions of anger;** they are unable to admit to such feelings, believing that such an admission would be the same as confessing spiritual carnality. Others **deny** their hostility, bitterness, or sorrow. Thinking Christians should not have such feelings or emotions, they insist that they are free from them. The result is deep feelings often smolder beneath the surface of their personalities. Some are at the boiling stage and yet they will not admit their condition.

*There are others who have gone the opposite direction-- **their feelings are the very focus of their lives.*** Our nation has become steeped in sensuality (i.e. the belief we should be motivated by our senses and fulfill all our desires which come from those senses.)

Watch the ads on television and you'll soon learn we have placed a high priority on *feeling just right*. There is a drug for virtually every physical pain, every emotional disturbance. If you feel down, just take some "uppers," if you're emotionally excitable, take "downers." But at all costs, feel good. If you have a sexual urge, fulfill it; if you have anger, express it; if you feel tied down, walk away from your responsibilities. "*It's your life,*" we are told, "*and you are number one, so do as you please.*" The ads tell us we are to surround ourselves with the right things, like, -- the latest styles, a new car, and a home in the right neighborhood. The world says you are to give yourself whatever you desire because you *deserve it*.

Erwin W. Lutzer states: "Much of modern psychology has contributed to this focus of our pleasure-seeking, sensual generation. For one thing, modern man believes he has evolved from lower forms of life, which means he is made up solely of matter -- he has no immaterial substance, such as a soul or a spirit. Therefore, all human feelings are only physical or chemical reactions. The conclusion is that all emotional disorders have a chemical cause. Since nothing can ever be wrong with me spiritually, there can only be physical disorder and these can be cured with drugs." How sad, but how true this is.

If we **follow our feelings** and our sensually focused desires we will fulfill our animal, sinful urges and will bring ruin and chaos to our lives. Emotions, physical senses and desires can be like headstrong steeds . . . you have to keep the reins firmly in hand.

Then there may be times we seek to **insulate ourselves from emotions**. Maybe we have been deeply hurt by someone so we endeavor to stay away from that person or any similar circumstances. Not only our perception, but our evaluations of what we perceive causes our emotions and our reactions which are sometimes so very sinful.

Some people seem to be **emotionally controlled** in many ways. They may be high-strung, anxious, fretful, worrying-type people. Often because of pride we can be controlled by our feelings. The predominate reaction may be manifested in angry outbursts, bitterness, holding grudges, resentments, and unforgiving attitudes.

Behind our sinful actions of anger, bitterness, wrath, envy, jealousy, criticalness, worry, fear, selfishness, self-pity, etc., are not only the thoughts and self-talk involved, but also the emotional responses or feelings that we so easily surrender to or seek to fulfill.

The conflicts marriage partners experience are usually evident in emotional responses. There is the clash of wills, the quarrels, the competition and contentions so many couples live out and thus bring about *hell on earth* in their daily lives. They not only think wrong but then yield to their emotional urges and sensual desires and continue to bring about failure and hurt.

But we can have daily, **God-controlled emotional responses**. When the Christian allows the Holy Spirit to fill and control he will be different. We are to live a supernatural Christian life. We are to be living the kind of life that proves

the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit in the daily nitty-gritty of life. If we allow Him to control He will be the dynamic for the control of our emotions. When the Holy Spirit controls the life of the Christian He will bring healing to our emotional sorrows and failures. (See Ephesians 5:18-21.)

Praise God for the twelve *fruits of the spirit* that we can experience and live in daily life. Not only the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit as given in Galatians 5:23, 24, but also the three fruits given in Ephesians 5:18-21. He will cause us to have a *song in the heart*, ( vs 19), *a thankful heart* (vs 20), *and a submissive spirit* (vs 21).

### ***Considering biblical truth about our emotions.***

1. *God, as our Creator, has endowed us with emotional capacities that are similar to His own since we are created in His image.* When we read the Word of God and search out truth about God's emotions we will find that He was sorry (Gen. 6:6), became weary of hypocrisy (Isa. 1:11-14), and of course manifested anger against sin.

Christ, who is and was God in flesh, expressed sorrow (John 11:35), anger (Mark 3:5), frustration (Luke 9:41), amazement (Luke 7:9), and joy (Heb. 12:2). Christ did not deny His emotions but revealed them and yet without sin.

We need to affirm the fact that emotions are gifts from God. *They do become problems to us when we manifest our emotions in sinful ways.*

2. *Since we are created in God's image we are beings that have physical, spiritual and emotional unity.* With our bodies we relate to our physical environment, with our spirits we have fellowship with God, and with our emotions we can be affected by either the heavenly or earthly relationships. Our souls, given of God, include our capacity of will or volition, thoughts or reasoning and emotions or feelings.

When we consider the impact of emotions in life resulting from our thoughts, decisions and experiences -- they can include terrible guilt, tremendous loss and sorrow, or relief, satisfaction and joy. We can, through salvation and freedom from sin, also have a heart that is clean, free, and lighthearted.

Physical illness affects our emotional equilibrium. And the reverse is also true: our emotions can affect our physical health. Many diseases are considered psychosomatic: the physical ailment is caused by emotional disorders. For example, we cannot live with guilt, anger, or bitterness without it exacting an enormous physical penalty -- it can cause everything from ulcers to backaches.

Doctors tell us that 60-80 percent of the diseases that people experience are emotionally induced illnesses. They are brought about by emotional upsets, or prolonged sin in the life. Dr. S. I. McMillen M. D. says in his book, *None of These Diseases*, that there are fully 51 different physical problems people bring upon themselves because of harbored sin that tears them up emotionally and has a profound impact upon the body.

Emotions have far more impact upon our lives than what we think. ***And often behind these emotions are thoughts that produce the emotional responses.***

3. *God created us with emotions so that our lives might be enriched, not to bring problems that we must endure.* We are not, praise the Lord, cold, calculating, intelligent, and insensitive machines. If there was no sorrow, there would also be no joy. What would life be without anticipation, comfort, laughter, the ecstasy of lovers and the sympathy of friends? Life would be empty and dull without emotions. Our emotions were not given to control us, but so we might be able to enjoy life. We would not be better off if we were free of them.

But we still need to know how to have victory over the control of defeating, negative, sinful, hurtful emotional responses.

4. *God allows our emotions to be what they are so we through our emotional responses can detect what we need to change.* I may recognize that I am depressed, resentful, irritated, discouraged, despondent, or bitter. These very emotions and the thoughts involved should make me aware that there are things I need to change. I need to recognize which sinful thinking and attitudes are helping to produce my sinful emotional responses.

*Our negative emotions such as bitterness, rejection, and anger are to not to be ignored.* In fact, emotional pain may tell us that all is not well with our spiritual life. Emotional stability can be ours only through our relationship to God rather than dependence on any physical or chemical stimuli.

***Briefly then, what should we do with our emotions?***

The answer is to 1) admit to ourselves and to God how we feel (sometimes we should also admit our feelings to others too,) and 2) ask ourselves: Why do I feel the way I do? And even more importantly, 3) find out what the Bible teaches so that we will have divine direction for managing our fluctuating feelings. A study of Psalm 42 and 43 will help you to focus on how emotions can be so changeable and that our thoughts can tremendously impact our emotions.

Then, 4) we need to realize emotional wholeness follows obedience and not vice versa. Many people do not obey God's Word because they think they must feel like it first; that is, they think unless they obey with emotional exhilaration and joy, they are guilty of hypocrisy.

This is not true. Do you think that Christ felt like going to the cross? The thought and anticipation of His death did not give Him emotional pleasure. Yet in the end He experienced the emotional satisfaction and joy of doing the Father's will. His joy followed obedience to the Father's will; it did not precede it. (See Heb. 12:2.)

***Consider further:***

Youth don't expect their parents to be perfect, but they do expect their mom and dad to have a measure of emotional control. Few things are as apt to turn the unsaved away from Christ than Christians who do not control their emotional responses. Emotional upsets on the part of failing Christians turn many away from salvation.

Our emotions are usually involved when we sin whether it is bitterness, fear, wrath, anger, wicked talking, worry, envy, etc. Having victory is very important. Negative, sinful responses that impact our emotional life must be dealt with. In the balance of this book we will deal with some basic things that have an affect on many families.

## 1

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## The Problem of Anger and Hostility!

Most couples expect marriage to be a happy event, for no one gets married to be miserable or unhappy.

Most couples return from their honeymoon deeply in love, and they usually continue that way until they have their first emotional conflict. This *lovers quarrel* does not seem a very serious an event and making up is so much fun. But sooner or later the quarrels usually are more frequent and scars are being made. Their wills clash and each wants his or her own way and the scene becomes more heated. The feelings are deeply hurt, the cleavage takes place between the two of them and their sinful responses begin to bring divisions and a wedge that is felt. *Soon first love is lost and they are far apart.* They have gradually built a wall of hurts between them.

It is said that 80% of us have difficulty with anger and show a predisposition to the problem of anger, and hostility.

### I. Looking At the Anger Problem As It Is!

The Word of God has a lot to say about anger, wrath, bitterness, etc. When we speak of anger we are speaking of its many forms: resentment, attack, malice, revenge, sarcasm, wrath, hostility, irritableness, etc. In fact there are 33 words that define different aspects of anger.

#### Consider some verses from the Word of God:

Prov. 14:16 *"A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil; but the fool rageth and is confident."*

Prov. 14:17 *"He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly, and a man of wicked devices is hated."*

Prov. 15:18 *"A wrathful man stirreth up strife; but he who is slow to anger appeaseth strife."*

Prov. 15:1 *"A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger."*

Prov. 21:19 *"It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman"*

Prov. 22:24 *"Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go."*

Prov. 25:28 *"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."*

Prov. 29:22 *"An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression."*

Prov. 27:4 *"Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous. . ."*

Prov. 28:25 *"He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife . . ."*

Psa. 37:8 *"Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil."*

Eph. 4:26 *"Let all . . . wrath and anger . . . be put away from you."*

Col. 3:8 *"But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice . . ."*

James 1:19, 20 "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath . . . for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

One famous marriage counselor said, privately, that Whenever he was at a loss in diagnosing the cause of marital or personal problems he always looked for anger and was right about 80% of the time.

The problems of anger, wrath, etc., are inter-related, and none of them stand alone. For if one of these is in the life almost always there are other failures that are destructive. Often these things become a *way of life*.

• **Consider a study by Dr. Tim LaHaye,** He states that almost all of us have a very strong disposition toward temper, and its various manifestations.

***Sanquines*** display temper quickly, but then they usually are very quick to get over it and forget it. ***Cholerics*** normally possess a turbulent disposition and can carry a grudge indefinitely. They will quickly burst into anger again when something happens reminding them of the previous event. ***Melancholies*** are rarely people who are quick-tempered, but find it easy to indulge in revenge. They mull things over for a long time and seething inwardly they may or may not explode. They are apt to pent up their feelings which inhibits judgment and wisdom. Setting on the inward boiling pot of wrath, anger, etc., and not telling anyone is not victory.

Few things are more devastating to a marriage than emotions that spoil family fun and family living and the manifestation of the grace of God in the home.

Few things are as apt to destroy children than anger, wrath, revenge, bitterness, etc., on the part of the parents of that home. Home was meant to be a place of peace, love and joy and a haven where the whole family resorts with pleasure. Far too often it is a place of hostility and animosity.

## II. Facing The Anger Problem As It Is!

Uncontrolled anger can result in many serious problems. Along with an angry outburst often we will build many resentments and hostilities. In the end we become bitter and unforgiving people.

• **Anger may produce ruin and devastation in our relationships.** One wife says that she had lost all her love for her husband. By probing it was found that something about her husband had brought hatred toward him. Love and hate cannot co-exist; they despise one another's company. She made a choice to hate and of course love was lost. Her love went out as her wrath and hatred came in. She probably blamed her husband, but hatred was her choice.

• **There are a number of unbiblical ways of dealing with anger.**

1. *You explode in a rage of temper, striking out physically or verbally at people or things.* (This is a disregard of Prov. 16:32; Matt. 7:12; Rom. 14:19; I Cor. 13:4-5; Gal. 5:19-20, 22-23; Col. 3:17.)
2. *You express anger outwardly or ventilate your anger by beating a pillow or some other inanimate object thinking (or speaking) about the person with whom you are angry or bitter.* (This disregards Psa. 19:14; II Cor. 10:5; Phil. 2:3-4; 4:8,9; Col. 3:17.)

3. *You control your temper at work (in front of your boss) and at church (in front of Christian brothers and sisters), but you exercise little or no control at home with your loved ones.* (This is a disregard of Prov. 25:28; Matt 5:13-16, 7:12; Rom. 12:9; 14:13; I Cor. 13:4,5; Gal. 5:19-20, 22-23; Eph. 4: 1-3.)
4. *You often seeth inwardly and become bitter.* (This disregards Psa. 19:14; Prov. 15:18; Phil. 4:8-9; Heb. 12:15.)
5. *You characterize your anger as righteous indignation and your hostility as justifiable instead of examining your anger and hostility.* (This is a disregard of Isa. 5:20-21; 55:7-9; Matt. 7:10-5; Eph. 4:31; Heb.12:15; James 1:19-24; 3:13-18.)

• **Anger may produce many hurtful physical and emotional problems.** Inner anger, expressed or internalized will bring all kinds of unnecessary tragedies. It has caused loss of love, colitis, heart attacks, strokes, impotence, frigidity, emotional breakdowns of all kinds and a host of diseases and troubles.

Singlehandedly, wrath, anger, hostilities, or a caustic spirit can destroy health, love, family, marriage, children, vocations, spiritual power and usability by the Lord.

Many Christians excuse themselves and feel that it is better to express the anger than to suppress it. Then expressing anger often becomes a way of life. We may entrench the habit pattern of angry responses into the subconscious mind. *Then this becomes a way of life.* Every time that you or I do anything, it becomes easier to repeat the next time, and we soon have transformed the thing into a habit.

Anger is first entertained in the thoughts or inner self-talk, and then it is expressed in words, attitudes, emotions, and actions. *Our sinful angry thoughts become actions, then actions continued build a habit of anger. The habit of being anger affects what we live and how we respond to life in general.*

### III. Experiencing Victory Over Anger

Praise God we don't have to continue life being an angry person. We can have victory, moment by moment, over an angry spirit. This victory has already been provided in the person of Christ and is available to the saint of God. It is really up to us to apply the Word of God and to walk in the victory already ours provided by the finished work of Christ on the Cross.

#### Steps or principles we must apply from the Word of God.

- Face the sin of anger, bitterness, etc., as SIN before God. (Eph. 4:30-32; Psa. 51; Col. 3:8-9)
- CONFESS the anger as a sin. (I John 1:7-9; James 5:16; Psa. 32:1-5.)
- Ask God to help you **put away** the thought HABIT or PATTERN of THOUGHT. (I John 5:14, 15) Have fullness of faith as you pray in His will for its removal. Trust God for His part as you do your part.

Pray about this many times a day; take a stand against your problem of anger, wrath, etc.

- Give THANKS for the SOURCE of your irritation. (Eph. 5:19, 20; Phil. 1:6; 4:4-8; Romans 8:28, 29; I Thess. 5:18)
- Repeat these foregoing steps every time you get angry, have feelings of resentment, hostility, are cross or have a mean spirit, etc. You may have to enter into these steps many times a day until you break the habit and practice of your failure.

**The Lord wants us to have a transformed life.** We must “*put off the old man and put on the new man* which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Eph. 4:22-24.) It all depends upon the renewing or transforming of the mind. (See Romans 12:1,2.)

Thought patterns become a part of us, and soon we are living as a constantly angry person. This must be changed. Only by applying the above Scriptures and taking the victory in the power of the Holy Spirit will we change. We must reckon ourselves “*dead to sin and alive unto God.*” (Study Romans 6:6-14.)

I would encourage you to secure and listen to the taped message by Dr. Watke on *Effecting Change!*

### **Conclusions:**

God allows difficulties, trials, and testings for a reason. There never is growth without opposition. God allows us to have problems and opposition so we might grow spiritually. In the physical realm, strength for the athlete comes from opposition to gravity. Think through what gravity makes possible for the weight lifter, the pole vaulter, etc. The very opposition that he faces brings physical development as a result of the struggle. This is also true in the realm of our spiritual life.

Most of our failures are of our own making. When Israel was defeated (Joshua 7) it was not an external thing, it was an internal defeat. Inner collapse and not outer strength of the enemy caused them to fall. Usually we are whipped due to our inner failure. Our greatest enemy is SELF, and the SELF LIFE. We are defeated because we are living out our will and not God's will. The manifestations of the sins of the old flesh, the carnal man, are what we must face and have victory over. (See I Cor. 3:1-10; James 1:12-16; Romans 7.)

Children can grow up with wounded spirits because of the unfairness of parents who exercise discipline when extremely angry. The resulting fracture in the parent-child relationship may widen during the rebellious teen years, and then concerned parents wonder, “What went wrong?”

Uncontrolled anger not only affects others, it can stifle your spiritual growth because it builds a sense of guilt and results in discouragement.

Many times such explosions of anger are merely symptoms of unresolved problems. The explosion is like the tip of the iceberg, revealing only a little of the submerged anger. Such people may be angry at life itself, or they may be angry at their marriage partner, their children, or even God Himself. At the least provocation, their anger flames up uncontrolled. The sense of guilt felt by such

people only fuels further anger. *If we allow such responses we will give place to satan's work in our lives and the end result could be unbelievably horrible!*

**Also apply the following:**

1. Choose to forgive those who have wronged you. Lay down all bitterness. (Eph. 4:31.)
2. Begin each day by resisting Satan, especially the spirit of anger, and focus your mind on the promises of God. *(This must be done BEFORE you encounter those stressful situations in which you are usually angry.)*
3. Accept all your circumstances and the events of life as coming from GOD who loves you and is the designer of what is best for you.
4. Look to the Holy Spirit for His power and work within you. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit's work is *self-control*.
5. If and when you do **lose** control, confess your sin to God and to the person who was the object of your derision and anger. *Do this immediately!*
6. Pray that God will give you wisdom to. . .
  - a. become aware of God's solution at the point of tension when the anger began,
  - b. resist the urge to be angry, resentful, etc., and
  - c. communicate your feelings to the person involved in the **right way** and at the **right time**.

***Personal Project That Will Help You Become An Overcomer!***

Develop a *personal anger chart* listing several occasions when you were angry. Remember anger is a choice! No one can make you angry for we choose to become angry in any given situation.

**There should be five columns, headed as follows:**

<b>Circumstances</b> (when, who?)	<b>Degree of Anger</b> (minor, major)	<b>Reaction</b> (did what?)	<b>Was it Appropriate?</b>	<b>Putting away the Anger!</b>
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List **circumstances** of -- *who, what, when, where* you were angry.  
About the **degree** -- consider how long it lasted, extent of anger.

Considering **reaction** -- describe what you did about your anger or how you responded in the outburst, etc.

**Putting away the anger** -- describe what you did about the anger, how you handled it, and what you did to defuse it, reject it, and have victory over it.

*The project above could be used every time you are facing the anger you allow in your life. It would help you recognize what you are doing with anger and how it effects you and how you respond to events, circumstances, and people around you.*  
***What is your anger doing to other people?***

### ***Questions to Consider:***

1. In what situations do you usually become angry?
2. Imagine a scale starting from *peaceful* progressing through *irritation* and *frustration* on to *anger*. Where are you on this scale most of the time?
3. How do others see you?
4. Reflect on the anger level in the home where you grew up. How has this affected you?
5. What are the characteristics of righteous anger?
6. What is the role of the Holy Spirit and what is your role in developing self-control? (Be specific and practical.)
7. How would you advise a married couple, who regularly fight, to overcome their anger in the short term and also in the long haul?
8. Read Ephesians 4:29-32. Are those you spend time with characterized by positive or negative speech? (If it is negative, how can you help change it?)
9. How can a timid person develop the ability to confront unfairness and an angry spirit in another person?

# 2

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## Facing the Problem of Fear, Worry, and Anxiety!

Next to anger, the most common emotional response to life's hurts, difficulties, failures, unbelief and sin is the problem of FEAR and its many forms. Fear produces much of our worry and anxiety. Fear, worry and anxiety plague many people and affect many families. This three-some will bring a loss of joy, peace, victory, and a loss of the power and blessing of God upon our lives and homes.

Fear was the initial negative emotion found in the Bible after Adam and Eve sinned. (Gen. 3:1-17) For the first time man was afraid of the God who loved him and had created him. FEAR since then has been an emotional destroyer and is usually manifested in worry and anxiety.

Fear brings the same tensions that are brought about by anger. It has the same end effect on the body and can bring about the same 51 emotionally induced illnesses as are brought about by anger. Many physical ailments are brought into life by fear. We live in a high pressured age, and most people are living at much too fast a pace. We see about us the accelerated incidence of worry and the lessening of the sources of security.

### I. Looking at The Problem of Fears, and Worries!

The fearful person becomes a *worry-wart* and the world abounds with them. Many Christians, if honest, will have to admit worry is a way of life for them.

- Fear is usually relegated to a single experience, but easily becomes a way of life.
- Fearful people worry about almost everything, especially anything that is new and different.  
Many even worry about the daily things that are normal and familiar.
- The fearful person is inhibited in his life and is therefore affected socially, spiritually, educationally, vocationally, and in almost every aspect of his life. Some are so prone to fear and worry that they will dream up something if necessary in order to have something to worry about.
- The fear prone person will not allow himself to do what arouses his fears.

I think that Joshua may have been a person easily given to fear and worry. Many verses show that the Lord was seeking to encourage and strengthen him. (Read and study Joshua 1:1-9.)

Christ knew the needs of life could bring concern for the saint of God. It is wonderful that He spoke as He did in Matthew 6:25-33. So why should we be anxious and full of fear and worry? God has not given us the *spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.* (See II Tim. 1:7.)

What about basic temperaments as taught by Dr. Tim LaHaye? (I am not saying that these are necessarily biblical concepts, but they do make us think.)

The *phlegmatics* are usually anxious worriers. *Melancholy* prone people are

fearful of any criticism, injury, insult, and sometimes of fear itself. *Cholerics* are rarely fearful, but usually have a mingling of one of the other temperament traits that can bring about some fears. The *Sanquine* person is not usually afraid, and may be a dare-devil, but is usually insecure. Therefore he loves people because of his or her desire for approval which is a very strong motivator in his life.

Temperament alone does not fully account for a person's fears, worries, and anxieties. Much of this problem is because of our unbelief, and our sin of distrust. Many times it is because of a weak and neglected spiritual life. Temperament only provides a person with a greater disposition toward mental anxiety.

We can add to the above thoughts the results of traumatic childhood experiences and negative thought patterns and several other fear producing factors. With all these you can see the production of a really fearful, worrisome, and anxious person. The environment of many homes may produce a person who lives a life of many fears and daily fretful thoughts.

## II. Facing Some Results of Fears, and Anxieties.

Allowing fear, worry, and anxiety to take over in our lives brings many results in life.

1. Fear, worry, and anxiety stifles conversation and communication in many homes. It hinders our dealing with things we must conquer. We may be far too fearful to face the very elements in life that need to be changed.
2. These three things hamper many parents from insisting on standards and guidelines based on the Word of God for their teens, and younger ones. They may be fearful the child will not love them, or even worse become more difficult. We must stand for truth with love. It is not love alone, but truth with love. Having standards of conduct based on the *"thus saith the Lord"* is not legalism!
3. Fear and worry bring about family squabbles. Since we usually marry opposites, therefore the person who is anger-prone marries the person who is fearful and worry-prone. This brings collisions, clashes, and catastrophes in marriage because the fear inhibitions of the one can produce disagreement and anger in the life of the other. The fears of the one can collide with the anger of the other mate. If the parents are not unusually unselfish people, genuine love is soon tarnished because they allow their fears and anger. Remember this is also a choice, we can't blame someone else!
4. Worry, which often comes from fear, is sometimes a means of escape adopted by the mind in order to prevent the individual from honestly facing reality.
5. Worry is a form of maladjustment, of tensions within the personality, which render the person incapable of executing his work or developing and utilizing his or her potentials. It is a form of fear arising primarily from imaginary causes and is generally more intense than fear arising from real situations.

Anxiety is a form of painful uneasiness of the mind over an impending or anticipated ill. In contrast, concern is the wholesome state of mind when one is

earnestly interested in a given situation. Worry, then, is closely related to an obsession or a persistent and irresistible idea. It is often caused by a deeply rooted guilt complex which acts as a continual irritant. We are usually unaware of this and therefore we may feel helpless to deal with it.

Often worry, fear, and anxiety will lead to a neurosis. A neurosis is an activity of the nervous system or a functional nervous disorder without a demonstratable physical cause. A neurotic is one who is affected, habitually, by nerves.

6. These negative emotions, when they control the person, can produce: depression and dark moods, digestive disorders, loss of appetite, loss of weight, weakness and fatigue, weariness, inability to concentrate, and bodily aches and pains.

### **III. Considering Some Sources of Fear and Worries.**

There are a number of reasons why people get caught up in fears, worry, and anxious care in daily life. We will look at the most prominent reasons.

1. It is the product of longstanding neglect and alienation from fellowship with God as a saint. The neglect of the Word of God, of prayer, and of real vital fellowship will bring these negative, sinful thought processes. Many saved people go to church, carry out the outward form of godliness, but have little real fellowship with the Lord.

2. It shows a life of ignoring and distrust of God, and is the result of the sin of unbelief. (Matt. 6:25-33; Phil. 4:6-9; Heb. 3:12.)

3. It is often the result of being reared in a home that is negative, worrisome, and full of complaining, murmuring, and griping. God hates these sins for which He killed many Israelites. When we doubt God and live like He does not care, He is not pleased. (Exod. 16; Psa. 78:17-41; Heb, chapters 3, 4)

### **IV. Understanding How To Have Victory Over Fear, Worry, and Anxiety.**

There are solutions, Biblical answers to these kinds of responses to life. We don't have to continue in these greivous sins. We don't have to experience the loss of God's blessings upon our homes and our lives.

The unsaved need first of all to come to Christ and accept Him as their personal Savior. The saved should do a number of things. First we need to determine the cause of our worry and fear. Well-defining a problem can enable us to find a solution. Name the causes, and list them on a paper. Then relate these to reality. Fear and worry will not change the facts, and we cannot solve a problem unless we face the facts.

#### **We need to do the following:**

1. Fear, worry, and anxiety must be faced as SIN. If it is not serious to us, we will never desire and seek after victory over such sins. (Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:6;

11:1-3)

2. Then we must CONFESS worry, fear and anxiety as a sin against God. (I John 1:7-9; Psa. 32:1-5)

3. Ask God to help you BREAK this habit pattern in your thought life. Take a stand against fearful thoughts. Recognize your self-talk practices that encourage the habit of these defeating, negative responses to life. You must reject sinful self-talk thought patterns in which you allow fears, worries, etc., to envelope your life. (Psa. 27:1; Isa. 41:10; 40:28-31; Phil. 4:6-8, I John 5:14, 15)

4. Ask for and yield to the Holy Spirit's CONTROL of your life. (Eph. 5:18-21; Luke 11:13; Acts 13:52))

5. Thank God for WHO and WHAT HE IS and WHAT HE CAN SUPPLY in your life as you face these sinful responses to life. (I Thess. 5:18; Phil. 2:13; 4:13; 4:19)

Every time you fall into the sin of fear, worry and/or anxiety you must repeat the above steps until you conquer the problem by His grace.

It means reeducating yourself with workable Biblical principles. This involves replacing the old habit of fear, worry, or anxiety with a new habit of trust. Make a new habit of a practical, daily, hourly walk (moment by moment) with the Lord. We must look to the Holy Spirit and His work of Comforter, Teacher, Infiller, Controller and for His power of our lives.

6. Acknowledge your position and possessions in Christ. (Eph. 1:3-12; 5:15-21; Phil. 1:6; 2:13; 3:13; Heb. 12:2)

7. Acknowledge God's faithfulness and sufficiency. (Psa. 56:13; Isa. 26:3; 41:10; Rom. 8:38, 39; II Cor. 3:4-5; 12:9; Jude 24, 25)

8. Maintain a good conscience. (I Pet. 3:16; I Tim. 4:2)

It would help us immensely if we would begin each day with praise and thanksgiving. Read one of the following portions from the Psalms that will help you break the habits of fear and worry: (Psa. 23; 27; 34:1-10; 37:1-11; 46:1-3; 91:1-16; 105; 145)

Memorize the verses that help you the most to break wrong, sinful habits of worry, fear, and anxiety. And then end each day with praise.

**A Project to Help You!**

*Make a list of things for which you praise the Lord:*

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

*Make a list of things about which you worried, but they never happened:*

- a. \_\_\_\_\_

- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. \_\_\_\_\_

*My list of verses I am going to memorize and make mine in daily life.*

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

# 3

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## The Problem of Selfishness

What a great problem selfishness is, and most of us are not even aware of the extent to which it is evident in our lives. (See Phil. 2:17-21.)

This third *bomb* in the arsenal of marriage problems is basic to all mankind. Selfishness is a real part of the life of most Christians. Since we were born with a wicked sinful nature, selfishness (to one degree or another) plagues us throughout life.

Are you an adult spiritually in your reactions, or are you still a child? Are you a child in your feelings, attitudes and responses to life? Paul wrote about these things in I Corinthians 13:11. Paul said, "*When I was a child, I thought as a child.*" A child is selfish; he thinks superficially, and is interested only in himself. He fails to see things from any viewpoint except his own. Too many Christians are like babies in their responses which is evident through a life of selfishness in the home and church. This brings strife, divisions, and fightings. (See James 4:1-10; II Cor. 1:10.)

Then Paul said, "*When I was a child, I spoke as a child.*" A child wines, complains, and cries in order to have his own selfish way. Do we act like children, or have we matured with victory over selfishness? Are we living to bring blessing to others? Do you act like a child? Do you sulk, pout, fight, and bring such problems into your home? If you do, it is the result of a carnal life.

As Christians we must *go on to perfection* in Christ. We need to leave behind childish, sinful, carnal attitudes that hurt our homes and our churches.

### **Selfishness is one of them!**

It is one of the chief responsibilities of parents to train their children away from selfishness. Every child comes into the world full of SELF; he wants his own way; he wants to have every attention, and he wants it NOW. He is born with *rebellion* in his heart. (See Prov. 15:10; 22:15.) We accept this as normal for a small child, because he is immature. But Paul said, "*When I became a man I put away childish things.*" The child must be trained through years of love and firm discipline. If the child is not trained to say **no** to his selfish attitudes, he or she will be a very poor marriage risk.

### **I. Considering the Issue of Selfishness**

1. Those who are planning toward marriage should look carefully into the *unselfishness quotient* of the potential partner.
2. Selfish people are also prone to anger, and are usually angry when their wills and desires have been thwarted.
3. If your mate is unselfish then his or her fears and anger will be better checked, or better controlled. The person has greater ability to walk in loving responses rather than to live selfishly. Personal control has been enhanced by learning to die to self.

4. The hardest person to love and live with over a period of time is not the person who is unattractive physically, or possessing little *personality*, but the person who is SELFISH. Selfish people are very difficult people whose thoughts are primarily on themselves and their wishes and desires.

5. An ego-centric person thinks of himself first and foremost in everything. Such a person finds it difficult to give and share.

All temperaments have their own tendencies to be selfish, but some are more easily trained out of such. A *sanguine* person is selfish about his person; it is normal for this person to desire to be the center of attention. *Cholerics* often selfishly run *roughshod* over others in their haste and desire to have their own way and fulfill their ambitions. They **use** people to fulfill goals and then possibly will cast them aside after fulfilling their own purposes and ends. *Melancholies* are prone to be self-centered, and evaluate everyone from the standpoint of what is good for themselves. In their drive for perfection, they lose patience with all who do not help them in their quest. *Phlegmatics* are often over-protective of themselves. Often they are afraid they will be hurt or offended, and they are apt to be stingy.

Every Christian must honestly face his own life and his reactions in the daily events of life. Personal goals that are selfish in their outreach and effect must be honestly examined and dealt with.

Selfishness causes many Christians to neglect serving the Lord with faithfulness and consistency.

## II. Honestly Facing the Problem of Selfishness

We need to be honest and face this problem for what it is and the havoc that it brings in our lives and marriages.

True happiness is a result of doing right. Happiness is dependent upon learning to share one's self, time, talents, and possessions with others. This is so very vital for the home and in all its relationships.

Ideally, love overcomes selfishness during the courtship days and often during the honeymoon. But it is not long before selfishness is practiced, unless there is spiritual maturity and victorious living.

In all of our lives we must seek for victory over this *monster* that destroys and brings envy, jealousy, and every kind of evil work. (See James 3:13-18.)

**1. It is seen in money matters between the spouses.** Today this is called the number one problem in matrimonial adjustment. The methods of handling money must be fair, honest, and there must be frugal care given. Above all there is the need of unselfish living and giving to each other!!

**2. Selfishness brings havoc in many areas** of the husband-wife relationships: in the management of children, attitude toward parents, interest in sports, in the use of leisure time, in lovemaking, church going, in giving, and in a host of other areas.

**(Look up and study the following)**

3. God speaks about this in His Word:

- Matt. 5:42 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Matt. 7:12 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 6:38 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Acts 20:35 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I Jh. 3:16, 17 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Rom. 15:1,2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Phil. 2:3,4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I Cor. 10:24 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Rom. 12:9, 10 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 15 (consider the elder brother)

Love is not static, but is a giving of ourselves to others. Love should be an emotional motivator which causes us to give ourselves unselfishly. ( II Cor. 5:1, 15; Rom. 14:7-9)

### **III. Entering Into Victory Over Selfishness**

We can have victory over this destructive monster that brings so much ruin, and heartache and steals away much of the joy and peace we could have in our homes.

Fighting among children, fighting over vacations, arguing and a host of other things brings into focus the sin of selfishness. Almost daily selfishness is at the root of a lot of the turmoil, tension, and anguish many families experience.

1. We must face selfishness as a grievous SIN.  
(Jere. 17:9; James 4:1-4; 17; Eph. 5:28.)
2. Selfishness must be CONFESSED and forsaken.  
(I Jh. 1:7-9; Psa. 51; Psa. 32:1-5; Prov. 28:13.)

- 3 . We must ask God to help us **put away** this HABIT of sinful response. (II Cor. 1:10; I Jh 5:14,15; Phil. 2:13; Eph. 6:10.)
- 4 . THANK GOD for His LOVE flowing through you to make you a more generous person. Work at puttingaway a selfish spirit by deliberately being generous with your time, person, and property or things. (Rom. 5:5; I Cor. 13:1-8; II Cor. 5:14, 15.)
- 5 . Repeat these steps every time you do, say, or think anything that is selfish.

You will have to do battle with your thought life or your self-talk practices. Generally envy, covetousness, jealousy, etc., are first thoughts and then become habits of action.

We must depend upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit to accomplish in our lives *death to self*, and the application of Galatians 2:20 and Romans 6:6-14. His work in our lives must bring us face to face with our sin. And we need to understand that victory is already the *birth-right* of the Christian. Death to the old nature and the renewing of the mind is the experience the Christian must have in daily life. (See Eph. 4:17-26; Rom. 12:2; Phil. 2:5-11.)

There must be a humbling of ourselves, as we put away pride and selfishness, and applying the Word of God. The sacrifices that please the Lord are a broken spirit, for a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. (See Psa. 51:17 and 34:18.)

We must recognize our selfishness for what it really is -- a rejection of God's way for us and a lifting up of ourselves in pride and rebellion against the will of God. (See James 4:6-10.)

## 4

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## The Problem of Infidelity, Unfaithfulness!

In the foregoing three lessons emotions are involved in each one of them in a very definite way. Our lives are made up of emotional responses and we cannot get away from this fact. Often it is in the area of negative, sinful emotional responses that we see destructive and damaging effects in the lives of people.

Now, as we look at unfaithfulness or infidelity, we would note emotions are again involved. We will consider the sensual, emotional appetites that we so easily create. They are built by our desire for the fulfillment of these sinful sexual appetites.

Oh, how often infidelity destroys a marriage. Many are shocked at the number of people who are falling into these grievous sins of immorality who evidently do not think it is serious. Even Christians seem to fall prey to sexual sins as they allow their lower sin natures to dictate and control their lives. There is a looseness and indifference to holiness that abounds and is destroying many, many of the homes of the saints of God. Oh, what shame, and what sorrow results.

Indeed we are living in the last days. It will be more and more like the *days of Sodom and Gomorrah* as we approach the coming of Christ. (Luke 17:26-32; II Tim. 3:1-6). As we await His return in the rapture, it will be more and more like the days of Noah when violence and wickedness covered the earth and even the imaginations of men were evil continually. (See II Peter 2:14.)

God ordained sex and planned it to be holy, sacred, and pure and right. God made them male and female. (See Gen. 1:26,27; 2:18-25.) God planned for the husband and wife relationship and marriage to be blessed, holy, sacred, and *the marriage act* to be holy and blessed of Him. (See Heb. 13:4.)

Since the earliest of times the sinful misuse of man's God-given sex drive has proven to be a major problem. Only God knows the number of families who have been in the throes of many heartaches because of sinful acts in this area of life.

### II. Warnings About This Sin Is Given Many Times in God's Word.

God warns us in many places in His Word about the scarlet sin -- the sin of adultery, fornication and its related sins. There are basically five sexual sins most often mentioned in the Word of God and others, of course not listed as often. Hours could be spent in the study of various portions of the Scriptures that deal with sins of mankind which are called *the works of the flesh!* (See Galatians 5:16-21.)

Sexual sins were a great problem and plague to the Israelite nation. The Corinthian church was beset by such sins. To be a *Corinthian* in Paul's day was to be a person beset by such sins. The very name was synonyms with wicked living in sexual sins. God's Word states that we can expect an increased appetite for immorality in the last days and indeed we see this today.

**1. Consider some warnings from the Proverbs:**

- Prov. 2:10-22
- Prov. 4:20-27
- Prov. 5:1-23
- Prov. 6:20-35
- Prov. 7:1-27

If you will read and meditate on these portions it will be obvious God has a lot to say about sexual sins that bring unbelievably horrible and destructive results.

**2. Consider Warnings from the New Testament:**

- |                          |                    |                       |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| • Eph. 5:3-5             | • Gal. 5:16-21, 24 | • Col. 3:5, 6         |
| • I Thess. 4:3-7         | • I Tim. 4:12      | • II Tim. 2:22; 3:-16 |
| • I Cor. 5:1-13; 6:9-13, | 16-20              | • I Cor. 7:1-9        |
| • I Pet. 2:11; 4:2-4     | • II Pet. 2:14     |                       |

In many of these sections of Scriptures there are five sexual sins mentioned a number of times, they are: *adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, and evil concupiscence*. These have different meanings and we ought to know what God says in these portions.

***We need to consider warnings and admonitions that come from the present circumstances of life.***

We are seeing a tremendous increase of sexual sins on the part of God's people. How sad, indeed, that many of God's people are falling into these terrible sins. Years ago only occasionally did one ever hear of such sin even among the lost. But to see incest, homosexuality, adultery, fornication, etc., among the saved is indeed very sad.

**II. Christians Must Face the Evil of These Sins!**

We have to face these *scarlet sins* for what they are and the impact they have on lives and homes. It cannot but effect every aspect of life -- emotionally, spiritually, socially, and physically.

The Book of Proverbs is very clear about the results that come when someone falls into sexual sins. Solomon wrote to his son many times about sexual sins and the capability of falling. (See again Proverbs. 2:5-19; 5:1-11; 18-23; 6:23-35; 7:1-27.) There are strong statements in these sections of the Word of God, stating that those who go into such sins can *never take ahold of the paths of life again*. They will never be the same again. They can never again, totally, know or walk in the path of life God desired. They have lost some of the purity of mind, and innocence of spirit they once knew. God forgives, but the scars of such sin will be carried for all of life. From such sins no one fully recovers. They cannot return to the state of innocence and purity they had once maintained. Consider what the book of Proverbs teaches us about this matter. How difficult it is to pick up the pieces after these kinds of sins have taken their toll. God's grace is sufficient to put things back together, but immorality leaves such deep scars that only many years of faithfulness can erase the impact upon the life to any great degree.

Many red-blooded American males have had the opportunity to cheat on their wives, but love, honor, and duty should cause the rejection of this possibility. We will never receive *brownie points* for being true, but we will spare ourselves a lot of

grief, guilt, and scars upon life that are irreparable. We will spare our children, and spouses (and many others) the results of failure from such sinful living.

Mental attitude lust is the chief problem which brings about such sins. “*As a man thinketh in this heart*”, “*for He knew what was in man*”, “. . . *whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.*” (See Prov. 23:7; John 2:25; Matt. 5:28) The Christian who does not practice mental attitude lust will never commit adultery. The fall into sin is the result of many years of wrong, wicked thinking. Today, we are told, that sexual fantasies are normal, and nothing is wrong with them. This is WRONG; it is sin before God. Sexual fantasies are wicked, lustful thinking will bring its results. (I Thess. 4:7) I think today we have a reduplication of Noah’s day. (Gen. 6:5)

### III. Considering Biblical Truth for Victory.

Praise God there is victory for the Christian. We do not have to fail. We do not have to continue in sexual sins. We can walk in a life of victory.

Here are some steps or principles we need to apply IF we are to have victory:

1. ADMIT and face the fact that all lustful thoughts and adultery are sin. (Matt. 5:28)
2. CONFESS such as sin. Confess and deal with the lustful thoughts. When we begin to see that we are entertaining such thoughts, we must immediately face it as sin. DO something about it. (I Jh. 1:7-9; I Cor. 6:9-20.)
3. ASK GOD to help you deal with your thought pattern. Determine to take a stand against this sin. **Put it to death.** (Col. 3:5.) II Cor. 7:1 says, “*cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness. . .*” Asking in His will, trust the Lord to strengthen you in victory. (I Jh. 5:14,15) (Study my tape on *Effecting Change!*)
4. THANK GOD for HIS VICTORY and concentrate on pure thoughts. (Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:5) Replace evil thoughts with pure thoughts. **Flee evil thoughts!**
5. ASK FOR and expect the control of the Holy Spirit in your life. (Luke 11:13; Eph. 5:18)
6. RECKON YOURSELF DEAD TO SIN, you do not have to obey sin’s power or the lusts of the old nature. We do not have to be under the domination of the sin nature. (Rom. 6:6-14; Gal. 2:20)
7. REPEAT these steps or principles every time you find yourself indulging in lustful thoughts or desires. The goal is to bring the mind under God’s control. (II Cor. 10:5)  
We must see a change in the mind and heart. The mind must be brought under HIS control. There must be a *transformation of the mind.* (Rom. 12:1,2)

**Purity begins in the thought life first of all and effects the life, the home, the total person.**

## 5

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**The Problem of Self-pity!**

We are emotional beings. When we sin, much of our sinning will effect our emotions. Possibly not one sin is ever committed without the emotions being involved.

**Let's consider some facts about our make-up or the way God made us.**

*Every time we face a new set of facts: like, going into the parking lot and finding our car smashed, or the tires slashed, etc., we would respond. We are adults; we would say --*

1. *"I understand." This is our mental, or our intellectual response.*
2. We also *"feel"*. *This is an emotional response.*  
The Bible never uses the word emotions. It speaks of the *reins* and the *bowels*, for they felt the emotions were in the stomach area. And that is where we often feel things.
3. Then, thirdly, we are called upon to *decide*, we make decisions. For the will is involved.
4. And lastly, we may be called upon to make a moral judgment about some things. I must make a judgment, or act, for the conscience is also involved.

If you said, *"My wife is mad at me!"* You would respond to a fact with the mind, with emotions and would need to make a decision of the will about what you should do. And moral judgment would also come into place in the situation. All of the four mentioned aspects are involved in day to day living.

***A mature Christian is one in whom all of these elements of our being are in submission to God, and are under the control of the Holy Spirit:***

1. Our wills are yielded to God;
2. Our judgment is under the leadership of the Holy Spirit; we get our direction from the Word of God;
3. Our feelings are under the control of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit,
4. and our intellect is operating on the basis of the Scriptures, as we yield to the Lord.

***Our minds must function selectively:***

- > selectively as to what is truth, and
- > selectively as to quality, for we are to pass all things through the *filter* of the truth of God's Word.
- > We are only to select certain things that come from the area of TRUTH and GOOD. (See Phil. 2:5-11; 4:8; Col. 3:10-14; II Cor. 10:3-5)

***All data, that we face in life is either:***

DIVINE data . . . **absolute**, the Word of God, or  
HUMAN data . . . **relative** which may be truth, or may be false.  
It must be passed through the *filter* of the Word of God; we are to be alert and check all things against the *"thus saith the Lord."*

*The mind must function selectively and submissively. The end must be **truth** and **love** that controls all things. (See Phil. 2:5-11; I Jh. 3, 4; Col. 3:1-4, 15-16; I Pet. 1:22.)*

*Emotions are reactions to truth . . . they reveal how we are reacting to truth, reality, events, circumstances and people. All we face in life will effect our emotions basically through our thoughts or our self-talk evaluations. (See the book "Why Do I Feel as I Feel and Do as I DO?" by Dr. Watke.)*

If there was a death in the family . . . there would be an intellectual response, an emotional response, and there would be action of the will involved. Judgment would be made for we would act with the will and according to our conscience.

## I. Consider Emotional Responses of Self-pity

### **The Problem Stated:**

Consider HAMAN, Esther 3:1-5

1. Case of self-pity
2. Exalted position can lead to pride. If pride is stepped on, self-pity was the result.
3. What if someone does not recognize him? He thinks he deserves reverence.

### **The Problem Faced:**

HAMAN, Esther 3:5-

1. Only one person did not bow down to him, minor thing; he had a *pity-party*.
2. He was filled with wrath for he was snubbed.
3. Principle: Self pity will lead to hatred of a larger circle than we started with, it never sticks to the one it began with.

When feelings are hurt usually we react to a larger number of people than just to the one who hurt our feelings.

We are not acting like mature Christians when this happens. We are not thinking right, our thoughts and emotions are not under God's control. Our wills and responses are wrong and we will make wrong judgments.

Consider ASAPH; Psa. 73:1-12

1. He looks at the ungodly; he sees their prosperity.
2. He is disturbed that they prosper; their hands are dirty. He thinks, "I am God's and why do they prosper and I suffer?"

ASAPH; Psa. 73:13-

1. "I have washed my hands in vain."
2. "What does it profit to do right?" He is reacting in self-pity.
3. Principle: Self-pity leads to a lack of appreciation of any spiritual blessings.

No blessing is big enough to get the attention of someone who is on a self-pity trip. (Look at Ephesians 1:1-12; look at what you HAVE IN CHRIST.) Anyone walking in self-pity will not notice blessings, his burdens seem greater. This is dangerous, extremely so! *An inflated, swollen ego will only look at itself and how it feels!*

Consider ISRAEL in

captivity: Psa. 137

1. Israel is really sad.
2. They hang harps on the willows. WHY?
3. "We cannot have any song in this condition."
4. "They have wasted us."

ISRAEL Psa. 137

1. Notice drastic results.
2. Principle: Leads to the loss of testimony.
3. Babylon could not hear any song, or message because of Israel's self-pity.
4. They were immobilized because of self-pity.
5. They could not be used by God!

Consider ELIJAH: I Kgs 19

1. He had seen the power of God in action. (Ch. 18)
2. He feels sorry for himself.
3. He forgot God allows trials.
4. He forgot God is the primary mover in our lives.
5. Elijah desired to die.
6. In the end God still blessed, and the angel of the Lord ministered to him.

ELIJAH, I Kgs 19

1. His response to the message was negative, (19:1-3), with self-pity.
2. Principle: Self-pity will lead us to withdrawal.
3. He lost his perspective.
4. This leads to *heroism* of self. He thought, "*I am the only one standing for God.*"
5. His world shrinks; he considers himself alone in his thoughts of self-pity.

After his 40 day trip, God had to minister to Elijah in special ways, in order for him to face what he had done and for the Lord to use him again.

Consider ELDER BROTHER

Luke 15:11-24

1. Events that surround the prodigal brother.

ELDER BROTHER

Luke 15:25-32

1. Has a poor perspective as an elder brother.

2. Prodigal brother leaves home, comes home again, is very repentant.
3. Father rejoices, restores his wayward son, etc.
2. Should have been glad for brother's return.
3. "*Lo, I have served thee these many years. . . you never have given me a fatted calf*" is his lament to his father.

Principle: His self-pity leads to bitterness and also to a lack of compassion. Wrapped up in his own concerns and self-love, he responded as many do in self-pity. They think they have been wronged, and therefore, lose all compassion and interest in others.

### **A summary of the above**

We must face the facts of what happens when we engage in self-pity.

1. Our circle of hatred will grow bigger and bigger.
2. We are going to be so engaged in and introverted with self-pity we cannot appreciate spiritual blessings we have in Christ. We are only interested in the idea that we *have not received our due!* Nothing else seems to matter!
3. We lose our testimony and repeat sad results from sitting around feeling sorry for ourselves.
4. There will be withdrawal and a loss of perspective.
5. We will build bitterness and a loss of compassion.

## **II. Consider a Comparison**

Make a comparison of all of this with the Apostle Paul and Silas as they sat in jail. (Philippi, Acts 16) What a set of circumstances! There were horrible actions against them, and mentally they could have meditated on their being deeply wronged. Feelings could have been high, and they would or could have entertained thoughts of hatred and revenge. There could have been a desire for an action of reprisal and they could have felt they had a right to stand up for themselves.

What did they do? They sang praises and glorified God, and saw the Lord at work in them and through them. They had victory over any self-pity by accepting what God allowed in their lives as His will and plan. Being mature, victorious Christians they responded properly in the area of intellect, emotions, will, and moral judgment.

*We can be set free from responses of self-pity, if we seek to be mature, filled with the Holy Spirit, and allow the Word of God to dwell in us richly. (Col. 3:15-17)*

## **III. Consider What Self-pity Will Bring in Life**

1. Self-pity is demoralizing and destructive. It causes us to live in the past, and enslaves us in the present.

2. It will bring depression for it helps a person to feel, *what is the use?* It opens the door to discouragement and despondency.
3. Self-pity mars our fellowship and relationship with others. Who likes to be with a complaining, bitter, griping person? Such a person is very unattractive; and we avoid their company.
4. Self-pity stops our progress; achievement comes to a standstill. When sitting on the sidelines doing nothing except feeling sorry for oneself, nothing is happening to change the situation.

#### IV. Considering How To Have Victory Over Self-pity

1. **CALL IT WHAT IT IS-- SIN!** Call it sin; face it as sin. Sooner or later selfishness and the old nature or the flesh in control will bring us to a state of self-pity. We must see it as SIN. (Rom. 14:23c; I Jh 1:7-9)
2. **CONFESS IT AS SIN!** What else is self-pity except centering on one's miserable self -- seeing every thing that is wrong and nothing that is right. Self-pity is pure selfishness in action. (Psa. 32:1-5; 51; Prov. 28:13)
3. **ASK GOD to help you REPLACE this habit with right thoughts.** Exercise your power to choose something better than self-pity. Exercise your God-given power to choose what you are going to think about. (See Paul's life; Phil. 4:13; Phil. 4:6-8; 4:11-12; 4:19; Eph. 5:19-21; Col. 4:1-3)
4. **Make use of physical exercise.** Sometimes lack of exercise is a part of the problem.
5. **Expect** some heartache, burdens, trials, and difficulties along life's path. (Jh. 16:33; James 1:3, 12; Rom. 5:5-5; I Pet. 5:8-9)
6. **Focus your attention** on WHAT YOU HAVE IN CHRIST, not on what you think you have lost. Be a victor over circumstances, not a victim of circumstances and events. (Rom. 8:37-39)
7. **GIVE YOURSELF TO SERVICE.** Replace the old habits of self-centeredness with losing yourself in the needs of others. (Rom. 12:5-16)
8. **Ask for, and expect the power of the Holy Spirit** as you yield to Him. (Luke 11:13; Eph. 5:18; John 7:37-39; Acts 8:1-8)

Praise God we can have victory over these emotional areas of life that too often defeat us. We do not have to fall prey to self-pity which so often related to envy, jealousy, selfishness, and many other manifestations of the self life.

***There is victory in Jesus . . . Glory!***

# 6

## The Problem of Being Up-Tight!

Being *uptight* or *stressed out* is a major problem among Christians today. We have seldom seen such tension, frustration, and pressures in any age as it is today. At least that is the way it seems to many of us! Most authors who study and write about the stresses of today say it is a bigger problem than at any time since the beginning of this century.

### I. Why Do We Experience Stress, Or Being Up-tight?

Three times in Psalm 37:1-10 God says, "*Fret not thy-self.*" Here is the command of God; here is God's direction for us today. This is for every child of God.

This word, "*fret*" is a peculiar word. It simply means "*do not get in a stew over anything.*" We are not to permit ourselves to be filled with stress about the events and circumstances of life. We should not allow ourselves to *glow like a fire* over something that disturbs us. Stop getting worked up and hot under the collar about situations and things that arise in your life.

To be *envious* (as many Christians are) means to *glow like a fire*. (Psa. 37:1) How easy it is to be envious over the lot of the wicked. God is saying to His people, "*Don't get in a stew about life and it's inequities; don't get all worked up until you are glowing like a fire inside.*"

So often being uptight becomes a way of life. It can be such a part of life it is not even recognized. Then we feel we can't help being that way. If the old nature is in control we will naturally feel that way. The first step to victory is to recognize that we cannot change this in ourselves. It will take the power of the Holy Spirit. It will depend upon our walk in truth, the Word of God, and that we tell ourselves the truth.

The Word of God is very clear about what happens when we walk in the *flesh*. (See Rom. 8:5-8; Gal. 5:16-24; Romans chapter 7; I Cor. 3:1-10.) We must walk in the Spirit if we are to have victory over being *uptight and full of stress* because of the pressures of daily life.

Some may feel if they walk in the Spirit and live the victorious, triumphant life in Christ they won't have trials. Maybe you think if you are a dedicated Christian you should not face trials and difficulties. Maybe Satan has told you a lie, "*You should not have problems since you are seeking to live for Christ.*" The Christian will always experience times of pressure. The Spirit-filled saint of God will probably sense more pressure than the Christian who is defeated. Satan will put the pressure on in order to bring about a fall. Satan endeavors to bring us to defeat through disappointments, discouragements, despondency and depression.

We will experience stress for many and varied reasons. Some of it will be of our making and some because of the world we are living in. We are under a certain amount of pressure in this old world, and this will be true whether a person is

saved or unsaved.

I think that often the saved are under more pressure than the unsaved because:

- we are standing against the pull of the world and its enticements to bring about a sinful life style,
- Satan is doing all he can to nullify our testimony for Christ and to bring failure in our lives.

In contrast the unsaved have no place to go and no one to meet their inner need when they experience stress and pressures. The saint of God has a reservoir of strength. He finds that *God is a very present help in the time of need.* (See Psa. 46; 34; Eph. 6:10.)

For the unsaved the whole world around him seems to crumble, and he will get wound up like a top in emotional stress. This not so for the Christian who finds his sufficiency in Christ alone.

## II. Why Do We Become Up-tight and Stressed?

The Old Testament saint had to face his *fretting*. He practiced fretting and being *up-tight* about many things until it was a habit of his life. Maybe we also are habitually *uptight* in our response to life.

Why do people become uptight, feeling stressed, and pressured by life? I think we find some of the answers in Psalms, chapter 37.

### 1. Because of our view of injustices and inequities in life.

- (Psa. 37:1-2, 7) We get up-tight, stressed over the seeming injustices of life. Life will be full of inequities. We say, "*Well, life is just not fair.*" I agree with you, life is not fair and who said it was or that it need be or should be?

- There will naturally be many things unfair in life. We were not born equal. We will experience many injustices in life. God did not say men were born equal. We are not equal intellectually, physically, emotionally, or in any significant way. God made us the way we are. God allows injustices and the inequities of life.

- We may think we get most of the *raw deals in life*. You may feel that God sends all the injustices and inequities to you, or to your household. You may feel like saying to a friend, "*You could not have any of these problems, for I have them all.*" This will cause you to be up-tight, *wound up like a mainspring, ready to snap.*

- Our view of life depends upon the attitudes of our hearts, and minds. It depends upon our thoughts, or our self-talk for this makes the difference. It all depends upon how we regard God's working in our lives and His rights in His sovereign will and plan for us.

- If you are not careful you will be asking, "*Why me, Lord, why ME?*" As you pity yourself, you will soon be bitter toward God about some things in your life and the blessings will be gone.

### 2. Because of God's seeming inactivity. (Psa. 37:7-10)

- Seemingly, to the Psalmist, God was doing nothing about the sinner and his

way. To him all was going well for the sinner.

- It appeared that God was not at work at all. Did God not care? Did God have his well-being at heart? It did not appear so to the writer of Psalm 37.
- Maybe we don't see God at work doing anything about what we consider our concerns and the things for which we have prayed. We think He is not taking a hand in the situation or affairs of life.
- Our questions, if voiced, might include: *"God, why don't you do something? Have you forgotten me? Don't you care about my needs?"*
- If we compare this to Habakkuk 1:1-4 we might feel as this prophet felt. The prophet doubted that God was at work. He reacted as many of us do today. *"Lord, . . . how long shall I cry. . . and Thou shalt not hear. . ."*
- As you look at life and its injustices do you feel God does not care? Are you ***up-tight and stressed***, thinking that God is not at work?
- When we witness things taking place as they are in the world today, we may feel that God is inactive. We may feel that God does not really care about us! But that is just not true.
- Maybe we think like Mary and Martha. They must have felt Christ did not really care or He would have come quickly when He heard that Lazarus was so ill. *"Lord, if you'd been here."* He was waiting on-purpose. He was waiting until later to do something great in their lives.

### 3. **Because of our ignorance of God's ways.**

- We really don't know how God works. God's way is not man's way; His ways are far above man's ways. (See Isa. 55:8,9.)
- We often misinterpret our heavenly Father; we must see God as He really is. We must understand how God works. Our Father is always at work, it may not seem that way, but He is working. (Consider Rom. 8:28,29.) When you consider Habakkuk 1:6 you see that God was doing something, even though the prophet did not think so. He had doubted that God was at work in the needs and Habakkuk was not happy in what God was doing.
- We must realize our God is working on His own time schedule and not ours. (See Psa. 37:7-10.) God is always on schedule. He will see that His will is fulfilled. Nothing will hold back what God wants to do. He is never late and never early, we are to *wait upon the Lord*. Expect God to act when it is His time. (See Psa. 130:5,6; Isa. 40:28-31.) But we often agonize over the situation; in our uptight state, we get out of God's will.
- Also we get stressed and up-tight (wound up like a clock spring) in our ignorance of God's ways, because God works on a different value scale than we do.

He is more interested in our character than He is in our comfort. His timing in our lives is important to Him. He is waiting for us to learn to *wait upon Him, delighting ourselves in Him*. (See Psa. 37:4,5.)

He is more interested in our Christ likeness than He is in our convenience. He is more interested in our holiness than He is in our happiness. Yes, God works on a different value level.

Paul wrote of seeing things in glory about which he could not speak. (See II Cor. 12:7-12.) God was far more concerned about Paul's yieldedness, consecration and surrender, than his comfort. So when God allowed the *thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet Paul, God allowed it to continue to teach Paul about God's grace and strength in his daily life.*

How do you and I respond to the difficulties in life? How we respond tells us something about our spiritual life and our true spiritual condition. God wants to give us grace to bear all the difficulties and pressures in life in a victorious manner.

God has a reservoir of grace available to meet our every need. God is far more interested in building our character and our walk than He is in our circumstances. In fact, often He does not change our difficult circumstances because He is at work trying to change our character and to bring us to submission and dependence upon Him.

Why should we *burn like a fire, being upset, stressed out, and up-tight?* Why should we be *wound up like a clock main-spring, about ready to snap?*

God is able to meet our needs, if we would apply Psalm 37:4,5. ***When we cannot trace His hand, we can trust His heart.*** God is working for our good and for His glory and to bring about His will. God is at work for our daily good.

We should be drawing from the resources of His power and promises. We should be different than the lost. We expect the unsaved to be *up-tight, wound up tight and ready to snap in anger, bitterness, and hostility.* It is not God's will that we, who are saved, walk in unbelief, getting all worked up, glowing like a fire, and full of frustration. God will give strength and grace. He abhors our lack of faith and personal child-like trust in Him.

### III. How Can We Have Victory Over Being Up-tight and Full of Stress?

God has made provision for our needs in every area of life. In fact, He is our personal victor. There are certain things we must do if we are to overcome sinful responses to the normal pressures of life.

Our attitude to life in general and to God's authority in our life does make a big difference.

#### 1. We must obey God's positive command to trust Him.

- Trust the Lord fully -- Psa. 37:3
- Trust HIM with all the heart -- Psa. 37:5
- Commit thy way unto Him -- Psa 32:8; 37:5
- Ask for wisdom, do not doubt -- James 1:5-8

#### 2. We must obey God's commands on how to receive trials in life.

- Rejoice in the Lord always, evermore -- Phil. 4:4;  
I Thess. 5:16, 18; Phil. 4:6-8
- Rejoice in tribulation -- James 1:2; Rom. 5:3

- Be patient -- James 5:7,8; I Pet. 5:10
- Endure -- James 1:12; I Cor. 10:13
- Give thanks in everything -- I Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20
- Give thanks for answers when bringing anxiety to God -- Phil. 4:6,7
- Don't fear; don't be dismayed -- Josh. 21:9; Isa. 41:10; Isa. 26:3

**3. We must obey God's commands on HOW to THINK.**

- Think positively -- Phil. 4:8
- Study His Word -- II Tim. 2:15
- Cast not away confidence -- Heb. 10:35
- Cast your cares on Him -- I Pet. 5:7; Heb. 13: 5,6
- Don't be cast down; He will help YOU -- Psalms 42:5
- Commit your works to Him, the thought will be established -- Prov. 16:3
- Don't waver and get *up-tight* or *wound up* for He knows the beginning from the end -- James 1:1-12; Phil. 1:6; 2:13

**4. We must recognize God's continual faithfulness.**

- God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of love, power, and a sound mind. -- II Tim. 1:7
- God provides the way of escape. -- Psalms 42:5
- God has always helped in the past, wait on Him; He will bring it to pass. -- Psalms 37:4,5; 27:1, 14
- Depend upon the Holy Spirit to give you victory. -- Luke 11:13; Eph. 5:18; Rom. 8:26-29

It is not in man to direct his own steps. We can fully trust God to work out His will in our lives as we yield to Him. He is the primary mover in our lives. Allow Him to work out His will in you. **Recognize that God must do it all. Believe and trust Him fully.** (See II Tim. 2:13; Prov. 16:9; Prov. 3:5,6.)

## 7

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## The Problem of Depression and Discouragement!

### Recognizing the Problem

Depression is a prolonged feeling of sadness, of discouragement and an inability to *get on top of things*. It is probably the most common emotional problem people face today. The following symptoms may be present when a person is depressed:

Physical:

Insomnia, loss of appetite, loss of weight, loss of interest in sex, complaints about the body, lack of energy.

Thinking patterns:

Difficulty concentrating, poor memory, trouble making decisions, excessive self-criticism, thoughts of death or suicide.

Emotions:

Despair, guilt, irritability, crying, fear, gloomy outlook (sometimes masked by such opposite behavior as giddiness, inappropriate laughter, or pronounced quietness and sweetness.)

Activity:

Slowing of most activity, withdrawal from social contact, or the desire to withdraw, deterioration of work and personal appearance. Risk of suicide is strong for the extremely depressed person, as is the risk of mental or emotional breakdown.

### I. Look At A Biblical Perspective

Discouragement can be caused by circumstances beyond a person's control: dead-end job, marital difficulties, criticism from friends and family, etc. It can also arise from the sense of failure or inadequacy, which could be caused by seemingly insignificant factors in a person's life. These factors can gradually multiply into a grave problem in the person's life.

Often discouragement and depression are rooted in sin, as seen in Psalm 38:3-8; 32:1-5. With a prolonged feeling of sadness can come a growing distrust of God. There may be guilt from blaming God for the events, circumstances, and people with whom we have to do, and with whom we may be bitter as well. Often this is further seen in further resentments and self-pity.

In Psalm 42 and 43 possibly the chief reason for the psalmist's discouragement and depression was a lack of communion with God. When we neglect our fellowship with the Lord or fail to have a *quiet time with the Lord*, we probably will also be discouraged, despondent, and depressed.

In depression, David felt crushed (See Psa. 44:25; 35:1-7.) He lies prostrate in the dust. In Psalm 42:7 the writer feels like a pawn in the hands of forces beyond his control. In Psalm 42:10, he speaks as though he had been wounded in his bones. (See Psa. 42:10-12.)

All of these factors can lead to guilt, inactivity, doubting, complaining, and worrying, so that the person may feel as though he's in an inescapable pit. Many admirable biblical characters experienced discouragement but the Bible gives evidence that hope in God's mercy and steadfast love provides deliverance from depression.

## II. What Are Further Causes of Depression?

1. Lack of adequate rest.  
I Kings 19:3-4
2. Lack of proper diet.  
I King 19: 6-7
3. Frustration and anger at God or others.  
Gen. 4:6; Num. 11:11; I King 19:10, 14
4. Excessive stress. Matt. 26:37-38
  - a person fails to delegate: Num. 11:14
  - a person fails to trust God: I King 19:1-4
5. Feeling sorry for oneself because of circumstances. Num. 11:11-14;  
Psa. 77:3; Jonah 4:1-4
6. Disobedience to God's revealed will.  
Gen. 4:6; II Sam. 12:1-18; Psa. 51:1-12;  
Jonah 4:1-4
7. Personal expectations of others or of God that are not realized.
  - Jonah didn't want Nineveh to repent.  
Jonah 4:1-4
  - Elijah wanted people to turn to God.  
I Kings 19: 10-14
  - Moses wanted Israelites to turn to God.  
Num. 11:10-14
8. Fear of what might happen. I King 19:3
9. Loneliness. I King 19:4

## III. What Are Examples of Depression in Scripture?

1. Cain's depression was caused by disobedience to God's revealed will.  
Gen. 4:6-7
2. Moses' depression was caused by excessive stress. Num. 11:11-15
3. Elijah's depression was caused by personal high expectations, fatigue, lack of food, fear of Jezebel and loneliness. I King 19
4. David's depression was caused by his adultery. II Sam. 12:1-17; Psa. 32:1-5
5. Jonah's depression was caused by circumstances that did not go as he desired, and disobedience to God's will for his life. Jonah 4:3
6. Christ's depression was caused by excessive stress prior to the crucifixion.  
Matt. 26:37-38

#### IV. What Are the Characteristics of a Depressed Person?

1. Complaining about his circumstances.  
Num. 11:14; Psa. 38:4; 77:3
2. Desire to be alone. I King 19:3-4
3. Seeing no meaning or purpose in his life. I King. 19:4
4. Loss of joy. Psa. 51:8, 12
5. Sense of problems being overwhelming. Psa. 77:3-4
6. Continual focus on one's problems even into the night with loss of sleep.  
Psa. 77:6
7. Questioning of God's goodness. Psa. 77:7-9
8. Anger and jealousy. I Kings 19:10, 14; Jonah 4:1-4
9. Facial expression of despondency. Psa. 38:6; Matt. 26:37-38
10. Physical exhaustion. Psa. 38:10
11. Imagined exaggerated calamities that may come upon him.  
I Kings 19:10, 14, 18; Psa. 38:11-12

#### V. What Is the Biblical Solution to Depression?

1. Proper eating habits. I Kings 19:5-7
2. Proper rest. I Kings 19:4-7
3. Sharing your inner feelings with another concerned person and with God.  
I Kings 19:9-10, 21; Matt. 26:37-38
4. Resolve unnecessary stress by delegating position or work to others.  
Num. 11:10-25
5. Determine areas of responsibility that have been neglected and begin to focus on them. I Kings 19:15-18
6. Confess all known sin, if sin is the cause. Gen. 4:5-7; Ps. 51:1-4; 8-12
7. Focus and meditate on God's goodness and greatness and share it with others. Psa. 42:5; 77:2, 11-15

A typical believer will face difficult situations as Paul faced, but will not allow them to destroy his outlook on life or his effectiveness. II Cor. 4:8-9

**Paul was:** Troubled..... but ..... not crushed  
Perplexed..... but ..... not despairing  
Persecuted..... but ..... not forsaken  
Struck down....but ..... not destroyed

#### VI. Brief, But Positive Answers!

1. God cares and is concerned for YOU. Isa. 41:10
2. Biblical confession of sin and failure will relieve a lot of depression.  
Psa. 32:1-5; 103:1-5
3. Total trust in the Lord's providential will and plan for life is so important.  
Phil. 2:13; 4:13; II Tim. 1:7; Rom. 12:3; 8:28-29, 37; Eph. 6:10
4. Christ's YOKE for our lives is not only easy, but HE CARRIES it with us.  
Matt. 11:28-30
5. We must in everything give thanks, for this is HIS will and the way of rest and peace. I Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6-8

## ***VII. Finding Answers For the Problem of Depression and Discouragement!***

### **Project I**

1. What did David ask from the Lord according to Psalm 51:10-12?

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2. In what way did David thoroughly deal with his sin according to Psalm 51:1-4?

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3. Why would unconfessed sin bring depression and discouragement to the Christian?

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4. What did David say about physical results in his life when he had *kept silence about his sin?* (Psa. 32:1-5)

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5. What does Romans 8:28 really mean to you?

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Do you really believe that all the things that happen to us are a result of God working for our good if we love God and are willing to fit into His plans?

6. What is Christ like according to Matt. 11:28-30?

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7. What does Christ invite us to do in Matt.11:28-30 that would make a difference in how we handle stresses and difficulties of life?

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8. What does it mean that His yoke is easy and His burden is light?

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9. What is God's will for us according to: I Thess. 5:18

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Eph. 5:20 \_\_\_\_\_

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Phil. 4:6,7 \_\_\_\_\_

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## Project II

Often we are discouraged, despondent, and find ourselves depressed because of our self-talk practices or in other words, our inner thoughts and evaluations about life in general.

We may become very depressed because of what we say to ourselves about the **circumstances** of our lives, the **events** we may face and also the **people** who are a part of them.

1. What were (or are) your thoughts when you feel depression begin in your inner life?

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2. What were your evaluations or your self-talk considerations about those very things at the center of your depression?

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3. Do you have thoughts about anger, or feelings of bitterness? Are you aware these continued thoughts will bring depression? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you willing to say **NO** to such inner thought meditations? \_\_\_\_\_ You may need to scream "**STOP**" inside your own heart and mind in order to quit the self-talk thoughts that help to build your discouragement and depression.

4. Do you have feelings of inadequacy and failure? Christ is your **sufficiency**. You must allow HIM to meet your inner heart need. It could be your negative self-talk or deep criticalness of yourself is helping to produce your problem.

**What should your thoughts be instead?**

Based on I Pet. 5:8? \_\_\_\_\_

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According to Psa. 37:4,5? \_\_\_\_\_

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According to Isa. 40:28-31? \_\_\_\_\_

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According to Isa. 40:10? \_\_\_\_\_

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According to Psa. 27:14? \_\_\_\_\_

According to Heb. 13:5,6? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Project III

#### **Memorize:**

Romans 8:28, 29

Romans 8:31

Phil. 4:19

I Thess. 5:18

Matt. 11:28-30

Heb. 4:14-16

#### **Consider Christ!**

*Christ is touched with the feelings of our personal infirmities! (Heb. 4:14-16) This means that He is deeply moved at our sufferings. He knows all about suffering. When He went to the cross, He suffered every kind of pain ---- emotionally, physically, and even spiritually! He suffered more than any human could ever suffer.*

*He knows all about everything you have gone through that has helped to build your discouragement, hurt, despair, and depression. He is moved inwardly by your heart cry and need. You can rest assured you can't suffer anything that He hasn't already suffered. So He urges you to come **boldly to the throne of grace to find help in the time of your need.***

***He wants to be your solace, strength, and support.***

*We also have the Holy Spirit who abides within the saved and is there to comfort, encourage, strengthen, anoint, and support. Allow Him to minister to your life.*

#### **Answers We Find In Psalm 42, 43!**

We can break the problem of depression if we will do as the Word of God bids us.

##### **1. We need to have a thirst after God.** Psalms 42:1,2

We must recognize our need to walk with the Lord. (See Psalm 37:4,5.) The word *panteth* describes a deer during severe drought, in Palestine, panting after water as a matter of survival. Our God is not dead. He is a living God who offers *living water* for the soul. In the Lord is an inexhaustible, eternal supply of satisfaction for the souls of His own. (See John 4:14; Psalm 37:6,7.)

##### **2. We need to pour out our souls to God.** Psalm 42:4

It is good to *pour out our souls!* Even though we may feel crushed and broken, God will meet our need. From the depths of our depression and discouragement we are urged to cry out to Him in our need. Maybe God is working godly sorrow unto repentance about something we need to change in our lives. (See II Corinthians 7:8-11.)

**3. We need to examine our own soul.** Psa. 42:5, 11; 43:5

Three times the Psalmist asked the same question. It is good to face our depression and find the answer as to why we are so discouraged, depressed or despondent. God wants to teach us through our fears, sorrows and burdens. Put your trust fully and totally in the Lord and His hand and care.

**4. We must remember the Lord.** Psa. 42:6; 44:1-8; 42:8

- a. Remember the Lord, not things.
- b. Remember the power of God, not the trials.
- c. Remember the hand of God on your behalf, not your failures.
- d. Remember the works and blessings from God. Psa. 111
- e. Remember He is a God of comfort. II Cor. 1:3,4
- f. Remember He is as close as a prayer! Psa. 43:1-5; 34:1-16
- g. Remember He is ***Elohim, the God of all Power!***  
Jer. 32:17, 19, 21-23, 27; 33:3

## 8

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## The Problem of Resentment and Bitterness!

### I. Recognizing the Problem

Everyone of us, at some time or another, feels that we has been wronged by another person. At that point we will either forgive or become bitter and resentful. Bitterness will steal our inner peace and even cause physical illness. It will destroy our fellowship with God and cause our closest human relationships to suffer.

Bitterness is often the overflow of resentments we have allowed to develop. Doubtless, bitterness can be the result of resentment. We should easily recognize a bitter and resentful spirit in ourselves.

#### What we often do:

1. We hold on to resentments;
2. then, we dwell on them until they become as mountains in our minds;
3. we meditate upon what others have done to us,
4. and gradually produce a hateful, bitter spirit.

### II. God Warns Us All About Bitterness.

1. The husband is especially exhorted not to allow bitterness toward his wife. (See Col. 3:19.) I think this takes place as the husband allows his heart to become hardened toward his wife and her needs. A man ought to easily recognize that he is allowing bitterness to *dwell* in his mind.
2. Another way we are warned about bitterness is God's admonition that we are to **put away bitterness**. It is number one in the list. (See Eph. 4:30-32 and Col. 3:8.)
3. Bitterness will produce a development of failure in the lives of many others around us. It is like a serious, dreaded plant that can destroy a farmer's crop. We can entertain bitterness until it becomes **a root of bitterness within us** which defiles many others. God gives us a tremendous warning in Heb. 12:15-16.

### III. What Are Elements of Bitterness?

We will look at some of the elements in the process as people become bitter.

1. *Bitterness involves judging and condemning.* The bitter person feels he has a right to judge. He may feel the seriousness of the hurt gives him the right to condemn. Rarely does such a person look at his own heart meditation, but rather at the hurts someone has caused. He sets himself up for a bitter spirit.
2. *Bitterness is a continuation and a deepening of anger.* A person may experience anger and get over it. He may forgive, get rid of the anger, and

put it away before the sun goes down. (See Eph. 4:26, 27.)

But the bitter person builds and builds the anger as he meditates on all that was done against him. Gradually he produces a hateful, and bitter spirit.

3. *Bitterness is like a plant that continues to grow and will produce its own fruit.*  
The bitterness within may be hidden for a while, but the roots continue to grow. Such a bitter spirit brings forth fruit in the lives of other people. A bitter mother or father will produce bitterness in the child's life as well as in one another's heart.

#### IV. Why Do People Become Bitter?

There are a number of reasons. We will examine the most likely and probably the most frequent reasons.

1. *We are hurt and may become bitter because of many unfulfilled expectations.*  
Life is made up of many expectations! We entertain expectations in every area of life from the time we are children.

##### **We have expectations in:**

- ***our marriage.*** We come to the wedding day with certain preconceived expectations. A husband and wife will view marriage differently with varying expectations about what they feel their marriage will give them.  
We might even feel like saying, "I am a grand canyon of needs, hope you fill all of them for that is **why** I am marrying you!"
- ***our lot in life.*** We expect life to bring certain things to us and if it doesn't we can easily become resentful and bitter.
- ***our employment.*** We expect certain things from our boss and those with whom we work. If these are not fulfilled we can soon entertain a bitter spirit.
- ***our friendships.*** Naturally we expect certain things from our friends. These are inner-conceived expectations that we hold on to. If our friend fails we can become very resentful and even sabotage our friendship.

##### **Our expectations can become so out-of-kilter, and so unreasonable.**

Maybe we are not even aware of what mentally we are demanding of life and from others. I think unfulfilled expectations is the number one reason why people become bitter.

We can become greatly obsessed with what we feel others ought to do for us and what life ought to bring us. We don't even see God at work or even consider His great unconditional love and grace which is at our disposal at all times.

2. *We may become bitter as we try to balance guilt and blame.* It seems to be a natural thing for us to try and balance our own guilt and blame with the other person's blame whom we feel is a problem to us.  
Maybe we feel that we can straighten out the other person if we put on the pressure. So, we readily remind them of their guilt and continue blame-placing, thinking we can secure our ends.
3. *We become bitter in our attempt to get revenge.* The actions and attitudes of our partner, our spouse, our children, and those around us are designed of God to teach us and to help us to see ourselves.

Too often we allow the failures of others to become the “*fan to fan the flames of our bitterness.*” We are already bitter people on the inside and our actions only cause us to bring it to the surface of our lives.

### **Marriage is God’s Divine Curriculum!**

Marriage is a divine curriculum that extends through out our lives. There are many books in this curriculum. We should not expect perfection from ourselves or from others as we experience the Divine curriculum of home life.

4. *We become bitter when we take up offenses.* As we pick up the offense, meditate on it, and build the thoughts and feelings that surround it, we quickly build a bitter spirit. This can become such a part of our lives that it takes place daily, in potentially many different ways and for many different reasons.

## **V. What Does Bitterness Produce?**

Bitterness will produce many serious things in our lives and in the lives of others around us.

1. *Bitterness will bring us to depression.* Often a bitter person becomes very depressed. The very impact of a bitter spirit will naturally bring about a deep depression in the life of the person who has allowed such a spirit in his life. I have met many people who wonder why they are so depressed and when helped to examine their thoughts (or self-talk practices) and attitudes, they came to realize they are also very resentful and bitter about many things.
2. *Bitterness will cause insensitivity.* (See Col. 3:19.) The bitter person also soon loses his sensitivity to others, especially those toward whom he entertain the bitter feelings. Such a person becomes very insensitive to all the significant people in his life -- wife, teens, friends, workers around him, etc. Bitter people become very indifferent to the hurts, needs, feelings, desires, etc., of others.
3. *Bitterness will also produce ingratitude and a very unthankful spirit.* It won’t make any difference to the bitter people how much others around them may seek to please them. Nothing can be done good enough or when they want it. No one can please the bitter person -- *NO ONE!* Such a person is unthankful for meals, for clothes washed, for anything done for them. Ingratitude and unthankfulness becomes a way of life. In bitterness, people set themselves up for moral failure and many other sins.
4. *The bitter person will manifest much tension and usually sense a lot of rejection and will give rejection to others.* This rejection has come into his life because he isolated himself from others by his bitter spirit. Others seek to leave him alone so they won’t be hurt. Much of the rejection is brought on himself. King Saul manifested all of these elements in his life because of his bitter spirit toward David. He had a lot of mental and emotional illness during his time of bitterness toward David. In the process he also felt that God had abandoned him.

5. *A bitter person will also have distrust toward others.*

King Saul is another example of total distrust, even of his own son, Jonathan.

The bitter person can come to the place of manifesting distrust of almost everyone else in life. He may feel everybody is out to get him or to hurt him. He doesn't trust anyone.

6. *Self-rejection can take place in the life of the bitter person.* Many a bitter person hates himself. He may hate his lot in life, and life itself. He may come to the place of hating himself for the trap he feels he is in and, seemingly, there is no way out. This trap is one of his own making and yet, usually, the bitter person does not want to face that fact.

7. *The bitter person actually becomes ill from the result of his bitter spirit.* (See Psa. 32:1-5.) Bitterness brings its own emotionally induced illnesses just as unresolved, unconfessed, and unforsaken sin brings these problems in the life of the saint of God.

A medical doctor wrote the book, "*None of These Diseases!*" in which he states there are over 50 emotionally induced illnesses known to man. These include such things as ulcers, colitis, heart attacks, etc.

## VI. What Can We Do to Resolve Bitterness?

If the one who is bitter and resentful has never trusted Christ as Savior, that is where he needs to begin. Those who know they are forgiven are then able to forgive others. Often at the root of our bitterness is unforgiveness toward those around us. If you are unsaved, you need to come to Christ and receive Him as your Lord and Savior. Invite the Person of Christ into your life and trust Him for the forgiveness of your sins as you confess them and repent concerning your sins.

1. *If you are saved, confess the sin of bitterness and resentment.* There must be a thorough confession. You must recognize what is behind your bitterness and how you developed it. (See I John 1:7,9; James 5:16.)

2. *See GOD'S HAND through the offense and through the offender.* God is at work in your life. He is trying to bring maturity, dependency toward Him, submission and obedience in your life. You need to be aware that God is using the offense and the offender to bring good results in your life. Joseph could have been bitter over what his brothers did to him. He did not become bitter, but he knew that God was at work. (See Gen. 50:20.)

3. *Thank God for the offense.* (See James 1:2,3, Phil. 4:6-8; Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 5:20; I Thess. 5:18.)

4. *Fully forgive the offender!* Forgiveness is an **act**, or action whereby you release the offender from the offense. **You set the person free** from whatever you resented and allowed to bring bitterness in your life. Forgiveness is also a **change in attitude**, whereby you cease being resentful. (See Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:13.)

5. Restore love by acts of investment in the life of the one who has offended you.  
(I Cor. 13:1-8; John 13:34, 35; Rom. 12:20.)

### Consider the Following

1. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong.

This is what I Corinthians 13:5 teaches; how do you respond in comparison? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. How are others effected by your resentment and bitterness? Do you SEE what you are going? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. If you allow the Holy Spirit to rule and reign in your life, what will He produce according to Galatians 5:22,23? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What does James 3:14 teach us? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the counsel of Psalms 37:1? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. List some things from Galatians 5:24-26, you should do, that will make a difference.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

7. What are we to “lay aside” according to I Peter 2:1? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is malice? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What does God say about “hate” in I John 2:9? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. How serious is hatred, anger, and sinful actions according to Matthew 5:22? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We must recognize our bitterness and **confess** it as sin. Then we must **face** it as a sin that will bring ruin and failure in our lives. **Don't blame God.** Don't expect

God to **zap** you with a little righteousness to get rid of it.

**Straighten out your walk, your thought life, and allow the Holy Spirit to control your life.**

We can have victory over depression, despondency, and despair. Praise GOD, for **Victory in Christ** belongs to us. (See Rom. 8:37.)

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