

## Tree of Life for 05-30-99

In our training as Christian soldiers we should want opposition... yes want it! We want someone who is able to bug us because these people always show us where we are at spiritually and where we are going in relationship to our intention or objective.

Opposition helps keep us in line with our objective. This “friction” is what keeps the soldier sharp and aware. Testing and tribulation make the strong, stronger. The mature believer handles pressure and difficulties as “opportunities”. The weak believer *reacts* to pressure thereby allowing circumstances to neutralize and de-personalize him.

Stress in the soul breaks off from the normal personality of doctrinal orientation through withdrawal by which, garbage in the soul is accumulated around the secondary personality. The split off from divine viewpoint means that the old sin nature takes control. Many try to avoid challenges and pressure in life yet Paul informs us that sufferings have been appointed for the believer’s life, Phi 1:28-29. God has, in His grace, scheduled suffering for us! Some grace gift you may think, but yes, since without suffering where would *application* of that which you believe come into play?

Though suffering is appointed to the believer who is advancing in God’s plan this does not mean that you go out and look for trouble to advance your growth along. For example you must avoid the pressure of reacting to others and then judging others. This will only serve to bring stress into the soul. You need to keep other’s problems out of *your* soul. If you let the adversities of life enter into stress in your soul due to problems with others, you are not maintaining a status of proficiency.

Even when we do fail there is no room for guilt. Reaction to our own failure or the failures of others leads to stress in the soul. There are five stages of reaction to failure:

- 1) Shock or disbelief
- 2) Fear and worry
- 3) Anger reaction to failure
- 4) Shame
- 5) Blame

The principle of *faith-execution* demands the foundation of humility and understanding. Humility is that quality which transfers reality from self-centeredness and arrogance to grace orientation and doctrinal orientation. Humility establishes proficiency in handling the problems in life. Proverbs 24:10 warns us that if we are weak in times of distress it is because our strength is limited by not operating in God’s divine power. When you operate in God’s power you will have the humility and virtue cultivated by truth. On the other hand, human power is riddled with arrogance. Arrogance is the great enemy to the believer’s spiritual life.

In humility we cast all our cares on Him, 1Pe 5-7, which is the trust needed in the faith-rest drill. It is a trust that goes far beyond what mere words claim. In calm waters many claim to trust in God, but when the storm mounts against them, the weak forget what they said they believed in and emote. Fear conceals divine viewpoint from us and destroys the opportunity God has for us in this time of adversity. Fear whispers to us that things are out of control and the weak listen. But faith reassures us that God is always in control, the strong rest and believe.

There is no point in holding to a system of belief which you cannot utilize day in and day out. If you are not willing to deploy the principles which you learn - why bother?! You are wasting your time if when the pressure comes along, “you” seize the reigns and let panic control. Action in the spiritual life must be based on knowledge and application of that knowledge. The things you do not want are what you will attract when you focus on your fears, guilt, resentments and judgments. Your “ego” along with its cast of arrogant and emotional sins is not necessary in knowing God and instituting trust in Him.

True wisdom is in accepting your responsibility now instead of waiting for things to change or correct themselves - proving *you* right. Under testing it is easy, even natural for man to go negative since this is the way of the flesh and of the world. To choose positive or negative is a continual contest and the odds are against you if you do not operate in faith rest and let God handle all the details. This is not so easy since it is natural for man to want to “control” his circumstances as well as those people in his periphery. But the positive believer continues to advance in spite of obstacles and pressures in his life. In fact, he advances because of them! This is not to state that you are using people as such, but that you are using the way you feel toward them to illuminate your spiritual condition.

Those who irritate us expose our sense of self-importance, or rather, *arrogance*. We are called to obedience in spite of opposition. Adversity is never an excuse to pause or to fall back. Advancing is the only direction on the road to spiritual adulthood. Satan’s success is ascertained through his persistence in leading the world astray. We too need to develop persistence against his schemes. Satan paints a bright face on disobedience, conveniently leaving out the consequences. And, God gives us the freedom to make our choice. It is therefore imperative that our decisions be knowledgeable ones based on the accurate word of God.

If you don’t stand for something you will fall for anything. Even if the believer possesses residual doctrine this does not ensure the application of it in times of pressure. The believer must choose to operate in what the word of God has to say. This takes humility. Humility being the virtue needed to honor the word of God. Trusting God will definitely come through for you if you let it. Apart from trust in God you will surely allow the inevitable adversities in life to be converted to inner stress of the soul.

Psalms 31:9 tells us that stress will waste the soul and body away. Psalm 77:2 claims that the one who has stress in the soul cannot find comfort. Stress is simply **reaction** as the means of dealing with pressure. Many react and dwell in their emotions as a form of dealing with pressure. This invites stress into the soul and stress prevents metabolized doctrine from functioning. Spiritual strength is needed in handling adversity and preventing stress in the soul.

If we want to take part in the victory of Jesus Christ we must walk in obedience to God’s plan not only on sunny days, but most of all on very dark and dismal days. Satan takes pleasure in broken relationships marked by betrayal, abuse, bullying, apathy, jealousy, and emotional bondage. He takes pleasure in people who are so driven by hurt, anger, bitterness, and resentment that these emotions become the foundation for their interpersonal dealings. This is where Satan does some of his best work!

The faith-rest drill, from beginning to end, prevents the work of Satan from being fruitful in our lives. Who are we agents for? If self then Satan, if Satan then self, if God then truth and patience and trust in what He promises.

The temptations which are presented in adversity cause us to consider going our own way. And while we are free to choose sin we cannot control the consequences of it. In forgiveness the emotional hold others had over you is released. To reconcile takes two but to forgive only takes one. We are never to make other’s problem our problems. Rarely do we carry pain and not offend others in the process.

It is not our circumstances that need to change but our attitude toward them. If stress is allowed to remain in the soul it builds layer upon layer of scar tissue over the metabolized doctrine causing withdrawal hence garbage in the soul. If you have bitterness in your life you will inevitably have stress in the soul and that leads to pure misery. Such a state keeps us from relying on God and it prevents fellowship with God. Almost all the evil in this world is committed by people who are absolutely certain they know what they are doing! Arrogance is a power, it is a power which destroys the spiritual life. Satan is determined to annihilate your spiritual life through his champion of arrogance. Hence the faith-rest drill is the believer's sanctuary and protection.

God's word should be our delight in time of trouble, Psa 54:7; 46:1. Trouble and pressure serve to strip away the strengths of the old sin nature. This is why God has appointed us unto suffering. Times of adversity, times of seeming chaos and catastrophe when put into its proper perspective should be seen as "the" time to trust in who God is and what His word claims! Are you going to spend the time and effort in studying His word only to cast it away when needed most?

Arrogance, worry, lack of faith and so on cause the conversion of adversity into stress in the soul. Such a believer is taken full advantage of by our enemy, the devil! This is why we are commanded to be on the alert and remain there! Do not put your guard down, do not entertain negative thoughts or bitterness toward another. Given the slightest opportunity, adversity will convert into stress in the soul. Satan will do his very best to aid this process so beware! Trust in who God is and what His word states, do not be anxious for tomorrow! *Faith-rest it.*