

Grace Bible Church
Pastor Teacher
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Tree of Life
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Adversity is inevitable; stress is optional. Stress in the soul destroys the spiritual life of the believer.

We begin this evening with a very special and vital passage that the Apostle Paul describes the human race in detail; beginning in **COL 3:12-17, And so, as those who have been chosen of GOD, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;** [Notice that we are all said to be “chosen or elected,” also we are called saints and beloved or one loved by GOD.] **bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things {put on} love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms {and} hymns {and} spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to GOD. And whatever you do in word or deed, {do} all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to GOD the Father.**

Now, as I mentioned recently, we will be looking at the importance of being positive rather than negative. And, one of the main principles that we all need to realize is to do our best with all our heart and soul to become what we are trying to which is a believer whose life is one of prosperity and blessings.

3JO 1:2, Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.

We also noted how many believers are controlled by fear and stress and yet, ten years from now they may well be laughing at it all in hindsight. Life is a series of negative and positive volitional decisions working together for the believer to become spiritually mature. So, why not laugh or really be relaxed about life rather than be all stressed out knowing that our role is to be one of preparation and freedom to choose correctly.

The apostle Paul stated in **2CO 4:3-12, And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the GOD of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of GOD. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.**

For GOD, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of GOD and not from ourselves; {we are} afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So, death works in us, but life in you.

So, we are to all work together and consider ourselves to be holy Temples of GOD.

We need to know and understand that there are two kinds of pressures in life:

- a. Overt pressure--which in this study will be classified as adversity.
- b. Inner pressure of the soul.

Remember, we will all face the fact that adversity is an outside pressure in life; while stress is an inside pressure of the soul. And we are going to have both as the Apostle Paul said. The key word then “is” preparation. We all need to understand that stress is what we do to ourselves, adversity is what the circumstances of life do to you. Adversity is inevitable; stress is optional.

Stress in the soul destroys the spiritual life of the believer. If the stress continues it will need to be done away with ASAP. GOD has provided everything we need to meet the outside pressures of life. However, we can use our volition to convert outside pressures of adversity into soul stress anytime. In fact, the conversion of adversity into stress always begins with outside pressure.

Adversity on the outside should be handled through the application of Bible doctrine. Stress on the inside is something we do to ourselves. Under the pressure of adversity, the believer can use his volition to open the door of his soul and invite in the pressure which was on the outside. The conversion of adversity into stress comes from a series of bad decisions from a position of weakness. Bad decisions from a position of weakness open up the defense system and allow the pressure to come into the soul creating mental illness, personality dysfunction, and other related problems.

It is when the FLOT line breaks down and the Forward Line of Truth is not operating as it should. FLOT is a military acronym for the Forward Line of Troops. The Church-age believer must know when to use offensive action and when to use defensive action in the Christian way of life. Against Satan and all fallen angels, the divine commands usually call for defensive action.

Offensive action related to the angelic conflict is also related to the execution of the PPOG for the Church, because all angelic creatures, including demons or fallen angels, are watching every Church-age believer putting on the full armor from GOD. Offensive action is related to several categories of the spiritual life.

- a. The evangelism of mankind.
- b. The function of the problem-solving devices.

Understanding and using your very own portfolio of invisible assets is the execution of the PPOG for any problems of adversity. The mandates for defensive action against Satan is found in JAM 4:5-7.

JAM 4:5-10, Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore {it} says, “GOD is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Submit therefore to GOD. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to GOD and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

- 1) Submitting to GOD is part of your offensive action.
- 2) Standing your ground is your defensive action.

This is a command for you to be on the FLOT line.

EPH 6:13, “Therefore, pick up and put on the full armor from GOD, that you may be able to stand your ground in the evil day, even after you have done everything to hold your ground.”

The evil day is any time of demonic or satanic pressure on the believer from the strategies of the devil. The evil day is Satan attacking both the grace of GOD and the judicial decisions of GOD. The evil day is any time the believer's defenses are weakened because of negative volition toward doctrine. The evil day is the breakdown of the defensive system provided by GOD through the rejection of Bible doctrine. The evil day is the temptations from the arrogance complex of sins which duplicate the original sin a Satan in the prehistoric angelic conflict.

The evil day is the believer being overrun by the cosmic system and Christian degeneracy. Direct offensive action against the devil means defeat for the believer; for it is not mandated in the Scripture. All offensive action against Satan and fallen angels must occur as a result of defensive action mandated by GOD. Defensive action is based on the attainment of the three spiritual skills of the Christian way of life: The filling of the Holy Spirit, the cognition of Bible doctrine, and the execution of the PPOG.

The point is that if Bible doctrine is not number one priority in the life, this results in negative volition toward doctrine, and this, in turn, results in distractions from PMA of Bible doctrine. This means failure to understand the mechanics and to put into operation those things which are your defenses.

No instrument of death can even remove the **loser** from this life until GOD permits it; PSA 68:18-19. GOD gives the loser the same chance as the winner. And no believer can be removed until the Lord is ready to take him home; PSA 68:19-20. Only the integrity of GOD can transfer any believer from time into eternity; **PSA 68:20, GOD is to us a GOD of deliverances; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death.** And He does not do that until you have had the same opportunity as all believers to execute the divine plan!

Don't try to be perfect; just be a believer who operates in virtue and integrity. If you want to succeed in your life, remember this important principle that your past does not have to determine your future. Because you failed yesterday; or all day today; or a moment ago; or for the last six months; the last sixteen years; or the last fifty years of life, doesn't mean anything...All that matters is: What are you going to do, right now?

All growth starts at the end of your comfort zone, especially if you are ready and prepared to handle what the Lord is about to do to pull some of you through. Your story is what you want it to become not what you have to be. You are responsible for your very own story and you can rewrite it if you want to, and make any changes you desire to, only remember you must take responsibility for any changes that you make. Remember what the Lord told Moses to tell the people.

DEU 30:15-20, “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity. In that I command you today to love the Lord your GOD, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that

the Lord your GOD may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other GODs and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So, choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your GOD, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them. “

We all need to realize that we must take responsibility for our own decisions and that we all need to learn how to focus on any changes we need to make. Focus on where you want to go, not on what you fear. Be the person you wish to become – today – don't put it off until tomorrow. Use the perfect prototype that GOD left us to follow, The LORD Jesus Christ.

His prototype or example is found in passages 1PE 2:13-25, Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of GOD that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. {Act} as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but {use it} as bondslaves of GOD. Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear GOD, honor the king. Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this {finds} favor, if for the sake of conscience toward GOD a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer {for it} you patiently endure it, this {finds} favor with GOD. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting {Himself} to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

You've got to be positive and have a positive attitude if you want the Lord to direct your life all we must do is take control of our consistent actions. The issue now is taken responsibility for your very own decisions, whether they were good decisions or bad decisions, it doesn't matter, now's the time to make new decisions to better your life. It's up to you! So, do not blame others. You may not have made some bad decisions during the past two months, so what! Pick up the pieces and go on. Live like it's a brand-new decision that needs some brand-new answers.

One of the most important decisions that all of us need to make is not what we do once in a while that shapes our lives, but what we do consistently. It's not what's happening to you now or what has happened in your past that determines who you are becoming, it's how you can handle those things that you are becoming now as you respond to the different tragic disasters that have come your way. It's your decisions about what to focus on now, and what things mean to you now, and what you're going to do about them that will determine your ultimate destiny.

Every day, stand guard at the door of your mind, and you alone decide what thoughts and beliefs you let into your life. For they will shape whether you feel rich or poor, cursed or blessed. The great principle behind this type of thinking is that, It is in your moments of decisions that your destiny is shaped. In order to take our lives to the next level, we must realize that the same pattern of thinking that has gotten us to where we are now, will not get us to where we want to go for our future.”

It is your decisions, and not your conditions, that determine your destiny. The real joy in life comes from finding your true purpose and aligning it with what you do every single day. It's simple, so try not to confuse the situation.

2CO 10:3-7, For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. {We are} destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of GOD, and {we are} taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

You see, in life, lots of people know what to do, but few people actually do what they know. The principle: Knowing is not enough! You must take action.

Second principle: Whatever happens, you must take responsibility.

Third Principle: Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.

Fourth Principle: It's not the events of our lives that shape us, but our beliefs as to what those events mean and if they will change our life.

Fifth Principle: The only thing keeping most individuals from what they want is their story about why they couldn't achieve what they desired.

Sixth Principle: Yesterday does not equal tomorrow. Forget the past and move towards your goals.

Again, and I cannot stress enough, Your destiny is determined by your decisions. Goals with positive volition are like magnets, they'll draw or attract the things that make them come true. No one ever achieved a goal by being interested in its achievement, the goal must be committed to the glorification of our Lord, both the goal and the results of that goal. I believe life is constantly testing us for our level of commitment, and life's greatest rewards are reserved for those who demonstrate a never-ending commitment to act until they achieve. This level of resolve can move mountains, but it must be constant and consistent. As simplistic as this may sound, it is still the common denominator separating those who live their dreams from those who live in regret. People are always trying in some way to be perfect, that's why they don't start anything.

Do you know that perfection is one of the lowest standards in the world? Because if you're trying to be perfect, you know you can't be. So, what you really have is a standard you can never achieve. What you should want to be is outstanding, not perfect. The most important thing you can do to achieve your goals or desires is to make sure that as soon as you set them, you immediately begin to create momentum to keep on going. Why? Because you want it to become a part of your lifestyle. It's not about the goal, It's about growing to become the person that can accomplish that goal. What would you choose if the Lord gave you the choice, to accomplish a goal that you have or to become the type of person who can accomplish those goals?

PHI 3:7-15, But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but

rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from {the} Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which {comes} from GOD on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained {it}, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of {it} yet; but one thing {I do}: forgetting what {lies} behind and reaching forward to what {lies} ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of GOD in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, GOD will reveal that also to you;

So, Why live an ordinary life, when you can live an extraordinary one. The most successful people in the world are people who were rejected more than anybody else. Nothing can drag you down if you're not holding on to it. Only those who have learned the power of sincere and selfless contribution experience life's deepest joy: true fulfillment.