

# LIVING IN CHRIST DAY BY DAY

## *Spiritual Insight into Opportunities & Opposition*

### *Keeping Faith When Life Beats You Up*

2 Corinthians 4:7—5:10

**Introduction:** There are two times in life when we are exposed to peculiar kinds of spiritual danger: when we are enjoying prosperity free of troubles and when we are beat up by circumstances and weary with problems. Paul tells the Philippians that he has learned how to be abased and how to abound and in everything to be content in Christ (Phil 4:11-13). It is a good lesson for us as well.

In 2 Corinthians 4 & 5 Paul writes about three kinds of troubling times he has endured:

- mental and emotional pressures (4:8-10)
- physical danger and risk to life itself (4:11-12)
- sheer physical exhaustion and weariness (5:2)

How do we keep faith and press on when life beats you down?

#### **I. We need to recognize contributing and complicating factors and give ourselves time to recover.**

- A. Stress is unavoidable in life, but it should be minimized as much as possible when we are already stressed out.
- B. Rest is restorative and allows healing and should be maximized to the extent that it is possible (Elijah, David—Ps 23, Jesus in the boat—Matt 8:24-25) Psalm 127:2, Pro. 3:24
- C. We need fellowship and spiritually minded companions, even though our inclination may be to withdraw (Hebrews 10:24-26)

#### **II. We need to recognize the heightened risk of spiritual danger and always be on guard:**

**I Peter 5:6-10**

- A. One of the most spiritually vulnerable times of life is when we are tired, stressed, and feel overwhelmed with problems
- B. Our tendency is to focus on the difficulties because they demand our attention; we must make a conscious and deliberate choice to focus on Christ and His blessings
- C. Our tendency is to find someone to blame for our difficulties: another person, our own self, God—this leads to further isolation, false guilt, bitterness and further exposes us to temptation and attack
- D. We are most prone to fail at our weakest point—temptation is never stronger
  1. Abraham—tells lies to avoid risk
  2. Moses—anger management problems
  3. Elijah—spiritual and emotional depression (glass half/empty prophet)
  4. David—sexual lust
  5. Peter—cowardly betrayal to save his own skin

#### **III. God encourages us to take specific action when life has gotten us down**

- A. Bring all of our anxieties to Him in prayer—Phil 4:7-8, Romans 8:26-28, I Pet 5:7
- B. Bring to Him the sacrifice of praise—Hebrews 13:15
  1. Worship Him and fix our attention upon Him
  2. Choose to be thankful—1 Thess 5:18, Phil 4:6
- C. Do not withdraw from the work of ministry (entirely)—Hebrews 13:16
  1. Jesus at the well
  2. Paul on Malta

**Conclusion:** Life's stresses and difficulties are unavoidable. Sickness, death, grief, and various kinds of loss are common to all human beings. Of all the people in the world, however, believing followers of Jesus Christ who know the real meaning of life and its eternal destiny have a special armor that enables them to withstand all the onslaught of life and the devil and the grace to use it.

#### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will 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, so 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, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.  
(2Co 4:7-11 NAU)

In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.  
(Rom 8:26-28 NAU)

See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

19 Do not quench the Spirit;  
20 do not despise prophetic utterances.  
(1Th 5:15-20 NAU)

