

SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION – ITS CAUSES AND CURE

CHAPTER 7 - FEAR OF THE FUTURE

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

I. TIMOTHY

II. TEMPERAMENT (PERSONALITY)

A. We are all individuals

We are all born different. No two of us are exactly the same; we have our own particular characteristics, our virtues, our failures, our weaknesses and our blemishes. The human person is very delicately and finely balanced. Fundamentally we all have the same general characteristics, but the relative proportions vary tremendously from case to case, and so our temperaments vary and differ.

B. Don't we change when we become Christians?

There is no profounder change in the universe than the change which is described as regeneration; but regeneration—the work of God in the soul by which He implants a principle of divine and spiritual life within us—does not change a man's temperament. Your temperament still remains the same.

1 Corinthians 12:4-5, 14-20

C. Types of differences

i. Paul - I Corinthians 2:3, II Corinthians 7:5

ii. Others?

III. FEAR OF FAILURE

A. Greatness of the task

people who fear the future... are always concerned about the nature of the task confronting the Christian. They have a very high conception of the Christian cause ... These people realize that it is not an easy thing to be a Christian, that it is not just a matter of being converted and then lying on a bed of roses for the rest of your life. No, they see it as a high calling, a fight of faith; they see the exalted character of the life; they see it means following Christ. ...they are aware of the greatness of the task and of the calling. But that in turn tends to depress them because they are equally aware of their own smallness. In other words they have a fear of failure. ...they do not want to let down God and the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church on earth.

B. What if scenarios

I remember a lady telling me: 'Well, yes, I do believe, but I do not know that I can call myself a Christian.' When I said: 'Why can't you?' Her reply was something like this: 'I have been reading about people in the past and people in the present who are being persecuted for Christ's sake, and I have tried to imagine myself having to face that position'. She had a little boy of three at the time and she said: 'You know, if it really became a question of denying my faith or giving up this boy I do not know what I would say; I do not think I would be strong enough; I doubt if I would have the courage to put Christ first at all costs or perhaps to suffer death if necessary'. And she therefore thought she had no right to call herself a Christian.

C. Paul and Timothy

There is no doubt at all that that was the essence of the trouble with Timothy. Paul was in prison and Timothy began to wonder what was going to happen to him. What if Paul were to be put to death? How could he, Timothy, face alone the difficulties that were arising in the Church and the persecution that was beginning to show itself and in which he Timothy himself, might be involved? So Paul had to be quite firm with him: and he tells him that he must not be ashamed of him and his suffering.. Fear of the future was undoubtedly the essence of Timothy's trouble.

IV. HOW TO DEAL WITH IT

A. Legitimate forethought vs paralyzing forethought

i. Matthew 6:34|James 4:14,15| Proverbs 16:3,9; 24:7|Genesis 41:48

B. Reprimand - We do not have a spirit of fear.

The principle, the doctrine here, is that our essential trouble, if we suffer from this particular manifestation of spiritual depression, is our failure to realize what God has given us, and is giving us, in giving us the gift of the Holy Ghost. That was really the trouble with Timothy as it is the trouble with all such Christians. It is a failure to realize what God has done for us, and what God is still doing in us.

C. Reminder

i. Remind yourself who you are

Timothy, you seem to be thinking about yourself and about life and all you have to do as if you were still an ordinary person. But, Timothy, you are not an ordinary person! You are a Christian, you are born again, the Spirit of God is in you. But you are facing all these things as if you are still what you once were, an ordinary person'.

ii. The truth about us < the Truth about HIM

what matters in any of these positions is not what is true of us but what is true of Him.

D. Temperament

i. Who/What's in control?

V. WHAT DO WE HAVE?

i. Spirit of Power: Philippians 2:12-13, Peter

you see it in a man like Peter who was afraid of death, afraid to die. He even denied his Lord because of that fear. He said: I do not know Him, I have had nothing to do with Him. He denied with oaths and cursings his own blessed Lord, his greatest benefactor, in order to save his life. But look at him afterwards in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. The Spirit of power had entered into him and now he is ready to die. He will face the authorities, he will face anybody.

B. Love

i. Cause of the spirit of fear – self love

The spirit of love!' It will deliver you from self-interest, self-concern, and from depression about self, because depression results from self and self-concern.

ii. Love God

Go on to think of the love of the Son in its breadth, its length, its depth, its height; go on to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

iii. Love your neighbor

Cultivate love for the lost and love for the brethren in the same way, and love for the greatest and noblest cause in the world, this blessed, glorious gospel. Work it out for yourselves. This is what the Apostle means by the spirit of power and the spirit of love. If you are consumed by this spirit of love you will forget yourself.

C. Sound Mind

i. Matthew 10:19,20

VI. ILLUSTRATION