

# THE FAITH-REST LIFE

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## *Preface*

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Before you begin your Bible study, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, be sure you have named your sins privately to God the Father.

If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our [known] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [unknown or forgotten sins]. (1 John 1:9)

You will then be in fellowship with God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and ready to learn Bible doctrine from the Word of God.

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in [the filling of the] spirit and [biblical] truth.” (John 4:24)

If you have never personally believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, the issue is not naming your sins. The issue is faith alone in Christ alone.

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey [the command to believe in] the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

**T**HE WORD OF GOD is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)

All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God might be mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16–17)

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)



## THE PRINCIPLE OF THE FAITH-REST LIFE

AT ONE TIME IT WAS CONSIDERED impossible to fly faster than the speed of sound. Scientific progress has made this possible. Man has cracked the sound barrier; he has advanced beyond the point which he thought he could not go. But there is another barrier which poses a problem for the believer, and I like to call it the *faith barrier*. It takes a great deal of speed to crack the sound barrier, but to crack the faith barrier requires not excessive speed but simply standing still. There is no work, no movement involved at all—just believing, or trusting the Lord, and then, to keep on trusting and waiting on Him. This is a wonderful technique provided experientially for every believer.

We should already know that there is a wonderful place positionally for every believer, for everyone who is “in Christ.”

*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:1a)<sup>1</sup>

We know that we are new creatures in Christ. We are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh (Gen. 2:23; cf. Eph. 5:29–30). We are partakers of

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1. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptures in this book are from the King James Version (KJV). Those marked NASB are quoted from the New American Standard Bible; those marked corrected translation are the author's translations representing more literally the original Hebrew and Greek texts. Bracketed commentary clarifies the meaning, reflects exegesis, or correlates the passage with the discussion at hand. Recordings of Bible classes are available from R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, Houston, Texas.

the divine nature. We share the life of Christ which is eternal life. We share the righteousness of Christ which is a perfect righteousness. We share His destiny. We share His heirship. We share His sonship. We share His election. We share His priesthood and many other things. We know we have a perfect position in Jesus Christ. But I wonder if we realize all that God has provided for us experientially?

We are so busy seeking happiness, we are so busy hustling around trying to find something that will bring satisfaction, that we ignore one of the great things in the Word of God—a place of perfect peace! A place of joy or inner happiness! A place of strength! A place of stability! A place of power! A place of impact! No matter what happens, no matter how difficult the circumstances, no matter how great the pressure, adversities, or the problems of life, we can have this “peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). Or, as someone once quipped, “The peace of God which passes all misunderstanding.” So, there is a place of perfect peace, a place of power, a place where our lives can count for Him. Sometimes, the Scripture refers to it as the “sabbath”—not a seventh day, not a sabbatical year, but a moment-by-moment sabbath, a *faith-rest*, in the midst of the great adversities of life. It makes possible perfect inner peace in the presence of outer tribulation. It is described for us in the four passages which we will examine in this study: Exodus 17, Numbers 20, and Hebrews 3 and 4. The first three passages will describe the principles of faith-rest, while Hebrews 4 will analyze the mechanics.

## THE FIRST *MERIBAH* INCIDENT

### *Exodus 17*

In Exodus, chapter 17, we come to a crisis in the history of the children of Israel. They had been delivered from the slavery of Egypt through the shed blood of the Passover lamb, which foreshadowed the substitutionary spiritual death of Christ on the cross.<sup>2</sup> They had passed through the Red Sea by God’s miraculous grace and now faced the

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2. R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Blood of Christ* (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2002). Hereafter, cross-references to my books will cite only author, title, date of publication (in the first reference), and page(s).

vital issue that every believer must face in his or her life. “If I as a believer, as one who has trusted in Christ and is born again, have trusted Christ for the big thing, which is salvation, can I trust Him for the needs, the problems, and the difficulties arising in everyday life? I have trusted Him for the greatest manifestation of His grace. Can I trust Him to graciously meet the problems, the difficulties, and the situations which exist daily in my life? Does the Lord really have answers to these questions?”

During the course of a week the average pastor hears people relate to him various facets of that which we call bad news. Now a man could not stay in the ministry unless he has answers for all of this bad news. If there were no real answers for all the heartaches, the problems, adversities, frustrations, difficulties, and troubles, no pastor could stand it for very long. When everything is going right, people do not come to the pastor. About the only time people seek a pastor when they are happy is when they want to get married. Consequently, a pastor hears very little good news from his congregation. However, if he is a minister who studies the Word, he knows there is a technique which provides answers for every problem, difficulty, and adverse situation in life. This is his consolation, this is his blessing and great joy, that no matter what the situation, he has answers related to Bible doctrine.

However, the mistake so many believers make is that they want a pat yes or no answer to their particular problem. They want the pastor to tell them which way to jump—to say, “Turn ninety degrees to the starboard and three degrees to the port, and your problem is solved.” Yet it is seldom that the pastor can outline a specific diagram which says, “do this and do that.” Before there can be a diagram outlining a certain thing in a certain way, there is a principle which must be followed. This principle is the solution to *any* problem that any believer will ever face. Remember, as you face your problems, the greatest problem in your life has been solved. It was solved at Calvary’s cross.

He [God the Father] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:21, NASB)

Jesus Christ bore all of your sins on the cross, solving the sin problem completely. On the cross His substitutionary sacrifice (1 Pet. 2:24)

removed sin and the penalty of sin as a barrier between you and God (Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:14).<sup>3</sup> When you trusted in the Son of God, your past sins were forgiven and you entered into a relationship with God for eternity as well as time. And, while you may understand the repercussions of your eternal relationship, it is also important to know the repercussions of your temporal relationship with Him. There are certain experiences that belong to you. There is rebound (1 John 1:9), through which you are purified from the sins and wrongdoing you commit after salvation.<sup>4</sup> There is a fellowship that you can have with the Lord in time, in your everyday life. There is a way in which you can honor Him and represent Him. There is a way in which your life can count for Him. It makes no difference who you are or what you are. No matter how discouraged you may be, as long as you are still alive, God has a purpose for your life. God has a reason for your continuance on the face of this earth. He wants you to glorify Him, and He wants you to fulfill your responsibility as an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). You and I face exactly the same issue that the children of Israel faced several thousand years ago. Their problem touched each one of them personally. The Holy Spirit has seen fit to record for us, through the pen of Moses, what to them was an overwhelming situation. Actually, in the light of their great deliverance from Egypt, it was not much of a problem at all.

*Exodus 17:1.* “And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD.” Notice that the Lord *led* them to this place; they were in the Lord’s will when they arrived there, “according to the commandment of the LORD.” Have you ever been deluded by that evangelistic pitch? “Accept Christ, and you will never have trouble again!” Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the opposite is more often the case. Christ said,

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

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3. Thieme, *The Barrier* (2003).

4. Thieme, *Rebound and Keep Moving!* (1993).

When you accept Christ, although you possess eternal life and will live in the presence of God forever in your resurrection body, you *will* have trouble in time. But you will also have the means of stabilizing and meeting every problem and every difficulty with tranquillity. You have not lived as a Christian until you have been in a place where you are helpless, where the brook is dried up (1 Kings 17:7), where there is no human solution, where there is nothing that you can do or say, where you are so numb from the shock of pressure that you cannot even pray! You have not lived until you have been in that place. For sooner or later God brings every believer to the dried-up brook. And every believer must face a set of circumstances where the situation is dark and hopeless, where there is no human solution. That is exactly what God did with the children of Israel.

He has delivered them from the slavery of Egypt, He has led them through the waters of the Red Sea, and they have now moved to the place called Rephidim. Here in the wilderness “there was no water for the people to drink” (verse 1*b*). A great host of people—perhaps as many as two million adults, plus all of their children—and there was not one drop of water! The Hebrew word “wilderness” or “desert” is מִדְבָּר (*midbar*). Wasteland. Dry sand. Led by God to a dry desert place, they faced a serious water problem. Quickly they began to suffer. God permitted this for one purpose. God said to that generation, as He is saying to us as believers today, “Will you trust Me?”

You have trusted Him for salvation. You have believed in Jesus Christ and have received Him as your Lord and Savior.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Rom. 8:32)

This was the greatest thing He ever did for you. It cost God the Father infinitely more to send His Son to the cross to be judged for your sins than anything else He could have done. If He did the most for you at the cross, will He now do less for you as a believer? If He did the most for you when you were His enemy—and we were all His enemies when Christ died for us (Rom. 5:10)—what will He do for you now that you are His son (John 1:12)? Can He do less than He did before? Emphatically not! He will do more. There was only one thing that God required for them to enter into this moment-by-moment

sabbath, the place of perfect peace and stability. Faith! He says, “Will you trust Me?” For this very purpose He has given us promises in writing—promises we can take by faith and use and believe, promises which will stabilize each of us.

In the passage before us, there is an opportunity for a people in a desperate situation to avail themselves of God’s provision, to enter into His perfect rest. I wish I could read in verse 2 words like this: “So the people all knelt down and said, ‘Thank you Lord for giving us this tremendous opportunity to trust You. And, while the outlook is hopeless, we await Your pleasure right here. We trust You for water, and we are simply waiting now to see You work. We remember what Moses said on the other side of the Red Sea, “Stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord,” and we stood there and we watched. Now we stand still again to watch You work.’”

To apply faith-rest like this would be wonderful. But I would not have much of a sermon if that were true. Instead, how often do we hit the panic button when things go wrong? How often do we stay on the wrong side of the faith barrier? How often do we get upset, fall apart, and get disturbed? Yet, if there are any people on the face of the earth who ought to be calm and courageous, exhibiting peace with joy, strength and impact in the midst of adversity, it ought to be every person who knows Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

*Exodus 17:2*. But instead we read, “Wherefore the people did chide.” Since transliteration is used in most of these passages, I am going to change the word “chide” to its Hebrew word, מֵרִיבָה (*meribah*). Hence, the people “*meribahed*.” Today the word chide does not mean much. In the days of Shakespeare and King James, this word would be similar to our modern English word “gripe,” “complain,” or “criticize.” But we will use the word *meribah* for reasons you will understand later.

The people *meribahed* against Moses. They criticized him, they complained to him, they hit the panic button in his presence. They cried, “Give us water that we may drink!” Now what a strange request to Moses. What did they think Moses was going to do? Did they think he would wave a handkerchief in the air and say, “Hocus-pocus, where the handkerchief falls we dig a well”? Did they think that Moses had some supernatural power? The deliverance was of the Lord, and Moses had always said so. When things were going well,

Moses never received any credit. When things were not going well, Moses was always blamed. This follows the pattern of the sin nature. Human nature must have a scapegoat, and the scapegoat is always the leader. Moses is now beginning to bear that extraordinary pressure that he will carry all of his life, the tremendous pressure of leadership. Here we see Moses with broad shoulders.

“And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? [Why do you *meribah* against me?] wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? [that is, why do you tempt the Lord to remove you from this life?]]” (verse 2b). Is the Lord too small for us? Cannot the Lord meet our needs? Who was it that delivered us from the hopeless slavery of Egypt? If the Lord did the most for us there, do you think the Lord, who held back the waters of the Red Sea, could perhaps meet our need of water?

*Exodus 17:3*. “And the people thirsted there for water.” It was a very real thing, a very real problem. The people *meribahed* against Moses and said, “Wherefore *is* this *that* thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?” In a time of crisis there is always the crowd who complains. Yet God never intended for any believer to complain in a time of crisis. God intended for every believer to trust Him, to mix the promises of God with faith, to crack the faith barrier! When we complain and when we criticize in a time of crisis and pressure, we are demonstrating once again our unbelief, our failure to trust Him.

Everything that follows in this passage is strictly a matter of *grace*. Some believers never see the provisions of the grace of God, even though they have appropriated it through faith alone in Christ alone in salvation. It is astounding that God always gives us what we do not deserve, what we cannot earn! God is going to give water to this people, though they have done nothing to deserve or merit it. They have done everything to not deserve it. While everyone was giving Moses, as we might say, “static,” what did this servant of the Lord do?

*Exodus 17:4–5*. “And Moses cried unto the LORD.” Here is a picture of a great man. Moses did not enter into rebuttal. Moses did not enter into argumentation. Moses did not even try to justify himself. He cried to the Lord for help saying, “What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.”

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people.” This is a most interesting answer. The people are ready to stone Moses, yet the Lord says, “Get out in front of them where you will make a good target.” Now Moses must obey the Lord and go before these people who have their hands filled with rocks, but how is he going to do it? Is he going out there in the courage of his own strength? No, he is going to walk out there like David before the giant. Moses believed the Lord in the crisis! That is why Moses was the leader. The others could criticize, complain, and shout their imprecations, but they did not have that quiet, stable, strong, steady quality as did Moses. He could trust the Lord moment by moment. Moses believed it when He said, “The LORD shall fight for you” (Ex. 14:14a), or as David expressed it, “The battle *is* the LORD’S” (1 Sam. 17:47b). Thus, Moses obeyed his commanding officer and went before the angry mob. Then the Lord added, “And take with thee of the elders of Israel.” In other words, “Moses, since there are others who will share the leadership responsibilities, and who need to learn to trust Me, get them out there so they too can be a target for the rocks of the people.”

“And thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.” This is a special rod. This is a rod of judgment.

*Exodus 17:6.* Now follows a promise from the Lord: “Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock.” This Hebrew word for rock, צֶרֶף (*tsur*), refers to a sharp, jagged rock. Here we see typology, as well as a record of historical truth. Here is a picture of Christ the Rock, being smitten for us on the cross (1 Cor. 10:4). For just as Moses would take the rod in his hand and would strike the jagged rock, so God the Father smote God the Son on the cross for you and me. As a result, from the death of Christ flows the water of salvation.

“Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.” Now notice the obedience of faith: Moses did exactly as the Lord instructed him. “Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah.” Will you please remember the *Meribah*? If I should say to you Texans, “Remember the Alamo” you would know exactly what I mean. Now I say to you as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, “Remember the *Meribah*!” Remember the warning of unbelief, of failure to crack the faith barrier!



## THE SECOND *MERIBAH* INCIDENT

### *Numbers 20*

After forty years of wandering, after the generation of the Exodus had died off, a new generation of the children of Israel came back to the same place where their fathers had been tested with no water. Would they remember the *Meribah*?

*Numbers 20:1*. “Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month . . . And there was no water for the congregation” (verses 1–2a). What had happened during those forty years? The children of Israel had many pressures, problems, and needs. All during that time God had graciously and faithfully provided every logistical need that the Jews had for their wilderness journey. If they needed shoes, and they did, He supplied them. If they needed water, and they did, He supplied it. If they needed knowledge of military science to defeat their enemies, He supplied it. If they needed food, and they did, He supplied it. He also supplied the doctrine necessary to grow spiritually. He met every need that they had for forty years. For forty years the children of Israel had seen nothing but the faithfulness and grace of God!

I want this narrative to be practical to you, even though it happened many centuries ago. Substitute for “no water” whatever your problems are right now. No what? No money? No friends? No happiness? No husband? No wife? What is it? There is a *no something* in everyone’s life, but it has a purpose. God has a reason for it, and He says to you through that *no something* you think you lack, “Will you trust Me? I have given you something that I did not give that generation in the wilderness. I have given you over seven thousand promises for time—and in writing.” When God says it, that settles it.

By the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.  
(1 Pet. 1:23b)

As eternal God, as sovereign, as undiminished deity, as omnipotent and immutable, God does not have the ability to go back on His Word. Have you ever thought of that? He cannot go back on His Word! However, these seven thousand promises can be used only in time.

You will not need them in eternity. There are, however, many promises regarding eternity.

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (Phil. 3:20–21)

And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Rev. 21:4b)

There is also the promise in heaven of a mansion (John 14:2), and of being “at home [face to face] with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8, NASB).

But we are dealing with time, with the ‘no water’ problem, with the situation that you face right now. Every one of us has a problem. Every one of us faces some difficult situation. If you think you have no problems, rest assured, you *will* sooner or later. Even though you may be in a place of prosperity now, you would do well to take heed of God’s warning. Prosperity also has its problems. When things are going smoothly, it is often more difficult to keep your eyes on the Lord than during adversity. Also, we must remember that prosperity does not always last. Adversity is certain at some time in your life. Yet even in suffering and pressure, it is possible to possess the same joy, the same tranquillity and blessing you have had in prosperity. This is the stability which is produced by continuous faith, no matter what the circumstances. Faith must be tested through pressure so that we will mature and so that we will learn to lean on Him. You and I have in writing all that we need to pass the test. We simply claim it by faith. The children of Israel had the chance to crack the faith barrier, to pass the test of faith in Numbers 20, at the same location where the first generation failed.

*Numbers 20:2–3.* “And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people chode [*meribahed*] with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!”

This is a familiar complaint. I have heard it so many times and in so many ways. “Oh, I wish I were dead. Life is so hard! Lord, let me

die. No one has it as rough as I have it.” I have often thought that if there were some way to scare these people into thinking they were going to die in one minute, they would change their attitude in a hurry. It is interesting to observe that people who frequently say this, say it to someone who is having a much more difficult time than they are. Now, listen to the congregation in the wilderness: “Would God that we had died when our brethren died.”

They did not really want to die when their brethren died. Why? Their brethren had died the sin unto death—they died because they had failed the Lord so often and so long that God removed them from this world. It would be like a star quarterback saying to himself, “Oh, I wish the coach would take me out of the game!” He does not really want to be removed from the game. If he has failed, he wants to keep going and rectify his mistakes. Who ever heard of a football player wanting the coach to take him out of the game just because he has made a mistake? He wants to stay in; he wants to keep playing. I do not know why it is, but believers so often get to the point of despair and then say, “I wish I were dead.”

*Numbers 20:4–5.* These people had fallen into this same pattern, and so they said, “Why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place?”

Now they are saying that Moses made them leave Egypt! How many times as a believer have you come to some experience in your life and said, “This is horrible. I never had anything like this as an unbeliever. Before I was a Christian, everything went smoothly.” This is exactly what the Jews said. Remember, this is the second generation of those that left Egypt and who said that the desert “*is* no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates” (verse 5*b*). Do you know what they were longing for? Egypt! And they were saying, as believers who had been delivered from the slavery of Egypt, “Oh, that we were back in Egypt.” They were not thinking of the chains. They were not thinking of the lash of the taskmasters. They were thinking only of the pleasant things. I have heard believers say, “My unbelieving friends were kinder to me than Christians. They were always so sweet. Everything seemed so much better.” Like the Jews, these believers were thinking only of the figs and the vines and the pomegranates.

Every time you get under pressure, do you want to go back to something you had before? It is a very dangerous thing for a Christian who gets under pressure to look back into his unbelieving life, back into the so-called pleasures of the world from which he has been delivered. There are many believers who not only look back, but they are willing to turn back for something they desire. They are willing not to be identified with believers anymore. But they can never change their identification with Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Here was a generation who, instead of trusting the Lord, fell into the same pattern as their fathers. They longed to return to Egypt. This was a psychological sublimation. They wanted to substitute Egypt for the place of testing. It is human nature to want to get away from an unpleasant situation. These Israelites now thought of Egypt as being a pleasant, happy place. "Oh, to go back to Egypt. Oh, the fun we could have in Egypt. There is plenty of water there. Why, there is the Nile river, just full of water." In reality they failed the test because they did not do the first thing that all of us should do in our no water situation.

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. (1 Thess. 5:18)

Let me ask you a frank question. Have you thanked the Lord for that no water problem you have in your life? Do you thank Him every day for it? Do you wake up and say, "Father, this is Your day. I am still breathing and I am still alive because of Your grace. What do You have for me today? And thank you, Father, for the adversity in my life." Then, are you aware that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28)? Do you recognize that you cannot grow into the spiritually mature believer God wants you to be, and that your life cannot count for Him until your faith is tested?

When you attend a football game, do you think the players run out on the field because they happen to be a little bigger than anyone else? I should say not. Their size does not mean a thing. They take the field because they want to compete; they have been prepared to compete. There are hours and hours of push-ups, duck waddles, running, stopping, starting, falling, hitting, charging, and all the rest of it. This is the training and testing period. They start in the heat of August and

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5. Thieme, *The Divine Outline of History: Dispensations and the Church* (1999), 85-93.

they almost die the first few days. They limp over to the sideline nauseated and ill, but then they go back on the practice field. They run weighted down with heavy padding and heavy uniforms. It is agonizing training. During the first few days of football practice there is scarcely a man who does not ask, "Is it worth it?" But if you survive the first few days, your mental attitude gradually changes. The training pays off. You develop coordination and muscular ability, which enables you to go out on the field and play with courage, determination, strength, and skill.

In your own place of practice, where no one else can see it, you are being constantly tested. You live in a generation in which God has to cut ninety-eight percent of the squad because they cannot survive the no water test. This is a weak generation of believers because so little doctrine is known, and so few of the promises in the Word are claimed. They have not cracked the faith barrier. They have not moved into the life which God has provided for them. They spend time 'looking back toward Egypt,' or looking at leadership, criticizing, complaining, and blaming someone else.

*Numbers 20:6.* Now notice the contrast in the attitudes of Moses and Aaron. "And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces." They went to the door of the Tabernacle, inside the outer court. There in this crisis they sought the Lord, "and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them."

*Numbers 20:7-8.* "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod." This is a different rod from that with which he smote the river in Egypt and the rock forty years before, because there is a new analogy here. This is actually Aaron's rod that budded. "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock [עֲלֵךְ, *selā*]." This is a different Hebrew word for rock from that found in Exodus 17:6. This word means an elevated rock, and it is a picture of Christ in resurrection. And you will notice, Moses is to *hold* the rod and *speak* to the rock. Just as Christ is smitten once for sin, now we speak to the resurrected Christ. This is a tremendous illustration of Christ in the First Advent.

So, the Lord said, "Speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out

of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.” Of course, the analogy is the faith-rest life, for this time the water is blessing and strength. Now notice what follows, for this is the failure that kept Moses from leading the people across the Jordan and entering into Canaan. This is why Joshua was chosen to replace Moses.

*Numbers 20:9–10.* “And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.” So far, Moses was obedient. “And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?” This was *not* part of the instructions from the Lord.

God in His grace did not see fit to rebuke Israel by words, but by action. But Moses could not resist the temptation to rebuke them verbally. Moses has had enough. He is fed up. He is tired of the *meribahing*. He is going to make a speech which would have been all right, had God authorized it. There were times when God authorized Moses to call the Israelites stiff-necked rebels, but not here. This time God has a different method of teaching them about grace. He is going to be gracious with Moses.

*Numbers 20:11.* “And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice,” contrary to divine instruction. In the face of such disobedience it is natural to think, “God will never bring water.” Moses and Aaron cannot fetch water out of a rock. But God is gracious, and despite Moses’ disobedience, out comes the water, and the illustration of grace is preserved. Christ was smitten for us once for the water of salvation. Now we speak to the resurrected Rock for the water of blessing. And, notice the adverb: “Water came out *abundantly*, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.”

*Numbers 20:12.* Then the Lord took Moses aside and punished him. But He did it privately. You see, Moses was in the place of leadership, and it was to the Lord he must answer, not the congregation. “And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not.” Though Moses and Aaron were saved, they failed to enter into faith-rest at this moment. They failed to crack the faith barrier.

“Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me [set me apart] in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye

shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”

*Numbers 20:13.* “This *is* the water of Meribah.” Remember the *Meribah*! Remember the warning of unbelief, of failure to crack the faith barrier!

## THE NEW TESTAMENT APPLICATION OF *MERIBAH*

### *Hebrews 3:7–15*

Hebrews 3:7–11 is a quotation of Psalm 95:8–11. “Harden not your heart, as in the provocation” (Ps. 95:8). “Provocation” is an old English word meaning the same as “chide” (Ex. 17:2), or “chode” (Num. 20:3), translated from the Hebrew word *meribah*. The Hebrew says literally, “Harden not your heart as in the *meribah*, as in the day of testing in the wilderness.”

Look at Hebrews 3:7: “Wherefore as the Holy Ghost [Holy Spirit] saith, To day [a continuous today, as pertinent now as it was then] if ye will hear his voice.” What is His voice today? The promises of the Word of God! Will you hear His voice when He says?

Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isa. 41:10)

Will you hear His voice when He says?

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (1 Pet. 5:7)

Will you hear His voice when He says?

Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. (Ps. 55:22)

Will you hear His voice when He says?

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (Prov. 3:5–6)

Will you hear His voice when He says?

Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass. (Ps. 37:4–5)

When are we going to learn to crack the faith barrier, to move into this place of the moment-by-moment sabbath, into this place of faith-rest?

*Hebrews 3:7b–9*. “If ye will hear his voice [the promises of the Word of God], Harden not [through habitual unbelief and refusal to trust] your hearts [that is, your mind; the volitional part of the soul that exercises faith or unbelief], as in the provocation [*meribah*], in the day of temptation in the wilderness.” What is the third chapter of Hebrews saying to us today? In the past God had a moment-by-moment sabbath for His people. For example,

He [Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he [God] had promised, he was able also to perform. (Rom. 4:20–21)

God gave His people promises. He demonstrated His faithfulness, and then He put them in the place of testing, and said, “Will you trust Me, or will you not?” And they did not! Now, God says to you today, “Are you going to fall into the pattern of failure, or are you going to trust Me? You have trusted Me for the big thing, salvation; will you trust Me for the needs of your life—that no water situation that you face right now? Will you trust Me for that?” Will you hear His warning, “Harden *not* your hearts as in the day of *meribah*, in the day of testing in the wilderness, when your fathers tested me, proved me, and saw my works for forty years” (verse 9)? He was faithful to them for forty years.

*Hebrews 3:10*. “Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err [go astray] in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.” Notice, ignorance of His ways. Not only did they fail to trust Him, to mix the promises of God with faith, but the Holy Spirit says, “They do not even *know* about My moment-by-moment sabbath, even though it exists for them.” Here is something that belonged to them, and they did not claim it. Here is something that belongs to you today, as a believer. Have you claimed it?



*Hebrews 3:11.* “So I swear [the solemn, divine oath] in my wrath [an expression of divine discipline], They shall not enter into my rest.” And, as God promised, most of that generation did not enter His rest, the only exceptions being Caleb and Joshua.

*Hebrews 3:12.* “Take heed, brethren [believers today], lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [it is evil to refuse to believe the promises of God], in departing from the living God [literally, keep standing off from the living God].” It is possible for people to possess eternal salvation, but to stand off from God in time. If you are facing a no water situation today, if you are falling apart, if you are upset, if you are disturbed, what is the matter? You are standing off from God who is waiting to bless you. But He will not bless you until you crack the faith barrier. “Stand still, and watch the deliverance of the Lord” (Ex. 14:13, corrected translation). “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength” (Isa. 40:31). To “wait” means to keep trusting, to trust moment by moment.

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength [exchange their strength for His]; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint. (Isa. 40:31)

What is the strength of the Christian life? It is in standing still. It is in God’s gracious provision of the moment-by-moment sabbath, which is now called “rest” (verse 11). The word “rest” is used synonymously with sabbath, for the Hebrew word שַׁבָּת (*shabbat*), “Sabbath,” means rest. Every phase of Christian experience depends on rebound (1 John 1:9) and understanding and using the faith-rest technique.

*Hebrews 3:13–15.* “But exhort [encourage] one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin [refusing to believe the Word]. For we are made partakers of [partners with] Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end [in other words, if we keep trusting Him, if we mix the promises of God with faith to the end of our troubles or our no water situation]; While it is said, To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the *meribah*.”

When we face a no water situation—a hopeless situation of some kind or another, it seems to be the most difficult thing in the world.

Those of you with a heavy heart may be thinking, “I do not know if I can stand it much longer; I do not know if I can take it.” But when God puts you in the furnace of fire, the furnace of suffering, He wants you to do only one thing—trust Him! Believe His Word! Mix the promises of God with faith! Move into this place of perfect peace, perfect rest, and perfect confidence. That is what Peter meant when he said,

That the trial [testing] of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire [great crisis], might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:7)

“Tried with fire,” is synonymous with a no water situation. As a believer in Jesus Christ, you have your greatest opportunity right now. The darker the outlook, the more difficult the adversity, the greater the problem, the more He is glorified when we keep on trusting Him and crack the faith barrier.

But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*. (Heb. 11:6a)

Remember the *Meribah*!

## THE DEFINITION OF THE FAITH-REST LIFE

### *Hebrews 4:1*

We might title Hebrews 4, “How to be happy though a Christian.” Perhaps you are thinking this is in jest, but it is not. Do you realize that the most difficult state for a Christian to achieve is happiness? Are you aware that the pressures against the believer in Jesus Christ are a thousandfold greater than those of the unbeliever? This does not sound exactly like a sales pitch for Christianity, and this would hardly be the place to give an invitation to accept Christ as Savior. But I think as believers we ought to face the facts. In this world it is harder to be happy as a Christian than to be happy as an unbeliever. It is much easier for an unbeliever to be happy, temporarily, of course, simply because he is free from the tremendous, powerful, insidious pressures that are brought to bear on the believer in Jesus Christ.

Often the greater the capacity for service and the greater the believer can be used, the greater are the pressures against him from all sides—the world, the flesh, and the devil.

When the Air Force cracked the sound barrier in 1947, they overcame one obstacle but created others. Somewhere between twice and three times the speed of sound there is a tremendous heat problem. So, they found a way to insulate the pilot from the heat at such tremendous speeds. Yet the difficulties of cracking the sound barrier are nothing compared to cracking the faith-rest barrier, that is, the moment-by-moment sabbath barrier.

Years ago I had an interesting discussion with a Navy pilot. He related a most amazing experience. While flying a jet, he shot *himself* down. Going into a shallow dive, he fired his gun through the jet squeeze, then steepened his dive so that his speed increased beyond the velocity of the shells he had fired. He not only passed them, but as he began to pull out of the dive, he pulled up into his shells, which hit his plane and knocked him out of the sky. This illustrates very graphically what we have done with speed. We can fire bullets, pass them, catch up with them, and be shot down by them!

But this is nothing compared with what we do to ourselves when we fail to crack the faith barrier! We miss the wonderful and beautiful valley of blessing just over a ridge called faith. The trouble is, the ridge does not look as though there would be any green pastures on the other side. As a result, we who believe in Jesus Christ begin to deviate into all sorts of ideas and activities, missing the perfect resting place God has for each of us.

God has graciously provided salvation for us for all eternity. We *know* that we have the righteousness of God imputed to us and that we possess eternal life. We *know* our sins are forgiven. We are His children and the objects of His infinite, marvelous, matchless love. We *know* that God has a purpose for us by keeping us here. The very fact that we are alive and breathing today means that God has a mission for us today, tomorrow, and the next day. Just as we recognize the reality of our salvation and our temporal existence, we need to recognize that God has not forgotten our special need of happiness, peace, stability, and strength. God not only had us in mind when Jesus Christ took our place and went to the cross and died for our sins, but God had us in mind when He provided this

wonderful moment-by-moment sabbath. All God is asking us to do is to walk over the next ridge by a step of faith.

We came to a ridge called Calvary, and there we accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We approached that cross by faith. We received Jesus Christ, we trusted in Him, we accepted the condition that, “Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16b). Now, God enjoins us to move over the next ridge. If we do not, the world, the flesh, and the devil with their power, pressures, and strategy will neutralize our happiness. We need to realize that as believers we are vulnerable, we can become upset and depressed, we can be destroyed by the activities of our sin nature unless we move over this next ridge. Thus in verse 1 of Hebrews 4 we have the exhortation or warning of failing to reach the goal of the faith-rest life.

*Hebrews 4:1.* “Let us [believers] therefore [in view of the experiences of the Jews in chapter 3] fear.” Generally speaking, believers are commanded not to fear in the Christian way of life (2 Tim. 1:7). Here is the exception. We are to be afraid of *not* entering into the faith-rest life. Without the faith-rest technique we cannot have the perfect happiness and blessing which belongs to every believer in time. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb. 4:1). The promises—those in God’s Word dealing with time rather than eternity—are in danger of being left unclaimed. The promises are left behind in writing and are continually waiting for believers to claim them. By claiming God’s promises we enter into temporal rest. This is the definition of the faith-rest life. We crack the faith barrier. We move over the next ridge.

## THE MECHANICS OF THE FAITH-REST TECHNIQUE

### *Hebrews 4:2–3*

*Hebrews 4:2.* “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with

faith in them that heard *it*.” A parallel is set up between the Exodus generation of believers and believers today. The analogy is obvious. They had promises; we have promises. They failed to claim the promises; we must *not* follow their example. The promises of the Word are only profitable when they are mixed with faith. This involves two principles: *knowing* the promises and *believing* them. The promises can be learned by study and memorization, but they can only be appropriated by faith. Seven thousand sacks of cement in a warehouse are actually no good until they become concrete. To become concrete they must be mixed with water and sand in the right proportions. Before the promises of God for time become concrete, they must be mixed with faith. There is no substitute for claiming the promises of God.

*Hebrews 4:3*. “For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”

God is still saying to us today, “If you have trusted in Christ, if you have received Him as your Lord and Savior, I have many wonderful things for you, but you must stand still to receive them.” If we, as believers, would just stand still for a minute, He could give us blessing, He could provide peace. But we cannot seem to stand still. We always have to be on the move and try to accomplish this place of rest through our own efforts. We are seeking this elusive thing called happiness. We are trying to find something that will give some stimulation, satisfaction, peace, or blessing to self. And the more we move under our own power, the more we reject what God has provided for us. He says, “Stand still so that I can bless you.” If we would first stand still to receive what God has provided, then we could move by grace, and in the right direction and at the right time. Here it is called “rest”—God’s gracious, matchless, endless provision for believers in time. The word “rest” is the same as sabbath, and it is a moment-by-moment sabbath. There is only one way to get into this place, and that is by *faith* mixed with the promises of God.

“We which have believed.” “We” refers to every believer who “believed” the promises after salvation. Notice, it does not say, “we who have worked up an emotional reaction or an emotional experience, or we who have rationalized, or thought our way through, or we who have worked our way through.” We who have *believed* enter into His

rest. It all goes back to the appropriation of grace in the only manner possible—by faith!

Another facet of this valley of rest is that it is located anywhere. It is located in Berachah Church. It is located in any part of Houston, in any part of Texas or in any part of the world. There is a moment-by-moment sabbath that God has provided for us, but we have to walk over the ridge of faith to move into this rest—wherever we are.

Remember that in order to enter into this rest we must claim the promises of the Word by faith. And we, as believers, can enter this rest at any moment we believe the Word. But notice, God has said back in Hebrews 3:19, “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” This refers to that group of Old Testament believers who refused to trust God in the wilderness. I have read and re-read the history of those believers. For forty years God provided everything. He provided the picture of their salvation—their deliverance from Egypt. He provided the way through the Red Sea. He provided the blood of the atoning lamb. He provided guidance for them by day. He provided navigational aids by night in the pillar of fire. He provided a perfect textbook for them concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ through the Tabernacle, the holy days, and the Levitical offerings. He not only provided these great spiritual benefits, but at the same time He provided a seventh day of rest for them. They were to do nothing. They were to be occupied with the Lord. This was to remind them of what He had provided for them every moment. He provided shoes for their feet. He provided clothing, knowledge in time of war, and deliverance from their enemies, problems, and difficulties. For forty years God was faithful day after day.

But here is an astonishing fact. Day after day they turned against the Lord. They complained. They were bitter. They longed for the leeks and garlic and onions and the pomegranates—all the nice things they remembered from Egypt. They forgot His faithfulness, they forgot His provision. As a result, we see forty years of misery. They were believers, yet those people were continually miserable because they would not enter into a moment-by-moment sabbath. They would not trust Him. They would not lean on Him.

Everything in the Christian life, everything in the believer's experience by way of strength, ability, and stability comes through rest—God's gracious provisions. Without rest we have absolutely

nothing in the spiritual life. Without this moment-by-moment sabbath, without trusting Him, we are powerless to appropriate His gracious provision!

I do not know what kind of a week you had, but if it has been a normal week, you have had heartbreaks, problems, difficulties, and trials. Perhaps you have been depressed, disturbed, upset. Many times as we look back over a past week, we can see so much that would break our hearts; then we stop and think of just how wonderful the Lord really is. How gracious He is.

In all these pressures, difficulties, heartaches, and problems there are only two choices as far as we as believers are concerned. Today we can stand at the threshold and choose one or the other. We can choose to believe the Word, or we can choose not to believe and be entirely confused, upset, and afraid until the day we depart from this earth. We can either believe the Word and enter into the faith-rest life, or we can hit the panic button and be miserable!

Unbelievers can have relative and fleeting happiness from dependence upon some person, thing, event, position in life, or some measure of success. But for the one who believes in Jesus Christ, God has provided perfect, permanent happiness through a place of rest, a place which does not depend upon any human factor in life. This place is a complete dependence upon the One who is the source of joy and strength, the Lord Jesus Christ. By dependence upon Him, we are able to help other believers as well as unbelievers. The secret of this whole passage is in one little word in Hebrews 4:3, "rest."

It is impossible for us to fully realize how wonderful God is to us. God does some amazing things for us experientially to try to get us to move into this rest. Just as you would try to herd cattle into a special place in order to feed them, so God tries to herd us into this special place. He permits suffering; He permits testing; He permits us to run around and to bump our heads against a wall. He permits us to hit the panic button. He permits us to get discouraged and upset. He permits us to go through all of these things so that we will wake up and realize there is no rest or peace or satisfaction until we move into this sabbath which He has provided for us, this moment-by-moment rest.

After reading this passage many times, perhaps even more in the original Greek language than in the English, I realized one day that the key to understanding it was found back in verse 7 of Hebrews 3, "To day

if ye will hear his voice.” I was missing the whole point of the passage. I was not listening. Now, how many times have we heard this passage and have not heard a thing? We do not hear this particular word “rest.” It’s here, but we don’t *hear* it! Yet God has given it to us. Just believe the Word. Claim the promises by faith. Move into this moment-by-moment sabbath.

In the center, or eye, of a hurricane there is a spot that is calm and quiet. The trouble with us is that we are all around this central spot. We are in the hurricane being blown this way and that, upside down, feet over head and head over feet. We have no stability; yet God says, “Look! In the eye of the hurricane it is peaceful.” In the midst of all of our troubles and difficulties God says, “Move into the center!” In the eye it is quiet. Consequently, one of the most gracious things God does for us is to give us difficulties and hardships so that we will wake up and realize there is tranquillity in the midst of turmoil. Therefore, we must be right in the very center of His plan for us. He has already told us how. Mix the promises of God with faith!

So, in verse 3 the Lord is saying, “Every time there is any problem or any difficulty or any adverse situation, you face a crisis. You must make a decision! You can do it My way or your way. You can try your own solution, you can go through all the motions and activities of psychological sublimation and compensation.” But do you know why you are still here? To glorify Him, to glorify Christ! “I want you, believer, to lean on Me, to trust Me. And to make it easy I have given you resources.” God says, in effect, “I have given you the Word, the promises from the Bible. First, I want you to know them, and then I want you to claim them.” God wants you to be so stabilized that you can take anything that life has to offer, including two of the most difficult things—prosperity and the approbation of man. Through a stabilized life, He wants us to be a blessing and a help to others, and to cause wonderful, precious souls to come to know Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. He wants us to be living proof that Christ is the answer. But our whole life falls apart unless we move into this one spot called “rest.”

“As he said, As I have sworn in my wrath” (Heb. 4:3). “Wrath” is an anthropopathism, a figure of speech ascribing to God human thoughts and attitudes to reveal and explain divine policy and decisions toward mankind. In His wrath He will not pour out any blessing, unless we wait



on Him. Unless we will stand still and let Him pour it out. The word “if” in verse 3 is deceiving, because the structure of the Greek in this sentence gives the force of an emphatic negative assertion or oath. God is saying literally, “As I have sworn in my wrath, they shall *not* enter into my rest.” Why didn’t they enter into His rest? For one reason only, and that is found in the previous verse—they did not mix the promises of God with faith. They refused to believe the Word. Now God said to that generation, and He says to us today, “Will you believe the Word? Will you lean on Me? Will you stop depending on yourself?”

One of the paradoxes in the Christian life is that God allows us to become completely miserable in order that we might become completely happy. He often must remove every human and material crutch we lean upon before He can bless us. We think, “My answer to happiness is this person,” and we lean on that person. So God kicks that prop out from under us. Then we say, “It is this thing.” And God kicks that prop out from under us. We try this and we try that. But God tells us, “There is only one thing that is necessary, and that is to trust Me and to lean on Me! My love for you will never diminish, despite the numerous human props on which you rely!”

We must not believe for just a second or even a day, but we must trust Him no matter how tough things become, no matter how long it takes. Wait on the Lord! Believe Him! Every time we use our positive volition and say, “I believe,” then God is glorified, the Son is pleased with us, and our lives are changed. Otherwise, we as Christians are the sorriest people in the world.

God did not intend for us to be pitiful people. He made provision for us to stabilize and to move over the next ridge. He did not say we must have materialistic things, or that we must have a relationship, or a person, or an event, or the approbation of men. God says, “You must have rapport with Me!” In Me, “you have been made complete” (Col. 2:10, NASB). Sometimes it becomes necessary for God to remove everything in order for us to understand this principle. He may have to make us so miserable that we will crawl in the dust. God does not want to do that, but He may have to, so that we will learn to trust Him, to lean on Him, to delight in Him.

Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass. (Ps. 37:4–5)

“Trust” actually means, “keep on trusting also in him.” But do you know how we trust Him? “Oh Father, I am in an awful situation. I am as miserable as I can be. I know 1 Peter 5:7, and so Lord, I am committing my problems to you. I am trusting you. The battle is the Lord’s. This is your problem, Father; You take it and work it out. Oh! Wait a minute, I just thought of something. Give the problem back to me, Lord, I am going to try this first.” So you try something, and it falls apart. Then, becoming miserable again, you turn it back over to the Lord, and for a few minutes you have peace. But all of a sudden, a thought—and you say, “Just thought of an answer! Give it back!” And so you spend most of your time passing problems back and forth while chewing your nails and churning inside.

This is exactly why we have the word “wait” in the Bible. Wait always means faith, but it is not trusting for a second, or for five minutes. Wait means *keep* trusting, as we have already noted with Abraham, who

staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but  
was strong in faith, giving glory to God. (Rom. 4:20b)

What does it mean to be “strong in faith”? He kept on trusting; he never stopped trusting, even though all hope of fathering children was dead (Gen. 18:10–11). Here was a member of the human race who was tested repeatedly. Yet all Abraham did was say, “Thank you, Lord, for Your graciousness to me.” He kept right on trusting and God fulfilled the promise of progeny to him. Abraham, through faith, became one of the greatest believers who ever lived.

Along came another man. His name was Elijah. God gave Elijah a job to do. When Elijah finished the job he said, “All right, Lord, pin a medal on me.” But the Lord, wanting to teach Elijah about grace, said, “Oh no, I want you to go down to a creek and watch it dry up” (1 Kings 17:5–7). Elijah complained, “This is not fair, Lord.” So the Lord sent Elijah into a far country to the home of a poor gentile widow. The Lord told Elijah that this poor widow would take care of him. God took a woman who was helpless, without food and in a desperate situation, who was on the verge of suicide, and used her to make Elijah a great believer (1 Kings 17:9–24). Elijah learned to trust the Lord through a gentile woman! God did not take Elijah into the

great courts of the surrounding nations. He did not leave him in the land of Israel. He did not take him down into the temple in Jerusalem. He took him to a helpless person who taught Elijah the lesson of helplessness and the power of waiting and trusting! After two years, God said, "All right, Elijah, you are ready to go back." Then Elijah went back into the Land and led the great revival.

David learned the secret of waiting while tending a flock of sheep. God chose him as a young boy to be the king of Israel, but he had to learn faith-rest. David watched those around him advance; he saw them promoted and showered with favors, but he stood still and waited until God said, "Move." Then God promoted him. But immediately David began to go through the most severe testings of his life. He had to learn to wait and wait some more, to learn to trust the Lord implicitly. Then he moved into that realm of perfect peace, power, and strength. But God had to train him through trial and difficulty.

Now notice the last phrase in Hebrews 4:3: "Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." When the Lord Jesus Christ created the world (Col. 1:16), He also created everything to make the Christian happy. God made special provision for every person who would ever trust in Jesus Christ. He created a valley, a true fountain of youth, the one that Ponce de Leon could not find. It is not located in Florida or in any other geographical location. God created something on the inside of every believer and provided something on the outside, the linking together of which makes for perfect peace and perfect happiness. It is promises from the Word in the soul that produce the faith-rest life! This passage tells us that He has provided for us from the "foundation of the world." And, if He provided it then, it is still in existence, as this passage will show.

I wonder what percentage of Christians go through life and go home to be with the Lord never having found out what this Christian life is all about—never having discovered the moment-by-moment sabbath, the place of rest, peace, and joy which results in stability and strength. Now I want you to understand that regardless of the initial cause of your problems, difficulties, or trials, God is speaking to you through the Word and through the experience of your problems. Though your heart may be broken, your problems difficult, the situation hopeless, He bids you to try the only thing that works: continuous, unceasing trust! Wait on the Lord!

## THE HISTORY OF THE FAITH-REST LIFE

### *Hebrews 4:4–9*

*Hebrews 4:4.* “For he spake in a certain place [Genesis 2:2–3] of the seventh *day* on this wise.” The seventh day, which is Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, is an illustration of the moment-by-moment rest. God says regarding the seventh day, “And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.” Immediately we ask the question, “Why did He rest? Was God tired?” Think of the tremendous amount of work that went into creation and restoration!<sup>6</sup> In Genesis 1:1 God created the universe instantly. Then, in Genesis 1:2–31 He restored the universe in six days. In the first act of restoration God created light and separated it from the darkness. Next, He created the earth’s atmosphere. After separating the land from seas, He created all vegetation. Then, God restored light to all the celestial bodies in all the galaxies billions of light years away. Next, He created every creature beneath the sea and every fowl of the air. Then, God created every animal on the face of the earth and finally, He created man. And you say, “Well, no wonder He rested on the seventh day. I would be worn out too.” But that is not the reason for His rest. Omnipotent God needed no rest; He was neither wearied nor tired from His labors (Isa. 40:28). He rested on the seventh day because His work was complete!

Ceasing from work illustrates grace—undeserved blessing freely bestowed apart from any merit on man’s part. God provided everything necessary to sustain the human race. Man can never add to the perfection of God’s creation. Sabbath is a commemoration of the unmerited benefits of grace to mankind. That is why the Jews were told to sit down on Saturday and do nothing, for it was a memorial that God had provided everything. They were told to stop sowing, planting, and reaping every seventh year and let God provide food from heaven. Why? To remind them that everything was already provided.

If I said to you, “Dinner is served,” and although you were very hungry, you turned your back and said, “No thank you, I am not interested in food,” you would be foolish. Now God says to you, “Dinner is ready and on the table. I have prepared for you in the presence of

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6. Thieme, *Creation, Chaos, and Restoration* (1995).

your enemies a table” (Ps. 23:5, literal translation). Your enemies are the world, the flesh, and the devil. And He has prepared a ten-course dinner for you, starving believer, in the presence of your enemies. The table of food is waiting to be eaten—by faith. Do not be a fool! Believe the Word! Believe the promises! Claim the Word, apply the Word by faith, and then you will enter into what God has for you.

Let us go back to the Garden of Eden. Suppose Adam, looking about in his orchard, which God had provided, sees within inches of his head a big, luscious, juicy red apple. He says, “Oh, I wish I had an apple; I am so hungry for an apple, I can taste it. Oh, how I want that apple.” This apple is right in front of his nose. What does Adam have to do? Nothing! God provided it. Adam did not work for it. Neither did he deserve it. All he had to do was to take it. Just like the apple, the faith-rest life is in front of you! You need to take it, to crack the faith barrier, and move into that place of peace.

Just as God provided everything physical and material for man, He also provided everything spiritual. The spiritual life begins at the cross where Jesus Christ died as the substitute for our sins. We must come to the cross and claim its salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. But too many stop at salvation and do not advance and claim the promises He has for us. We have already trusted completely for salvation; why, then, do we not trust Him completely for everything else?

There is a beautiful suspension bridge just downstream from Niagara Falls. The story of how it was built illustrates how to build faith-rest. One day an engineer flew a kite across the falls. When it came down on the other side, he had it anchored so that there was a slender cord stretched from one side of the falls to the other. Now who would ever have dreamed that little cord would become a great suspension bridge? The engineer tied a heavier cord to the little cord and pulled it across, then a heavier cord and another and another, until there was a steel cable across the river. To this was added other cables until finally there was a massive bridge where people can cross and look toward the falls. However, if the engineer had stopped with the slender cord, there would be no bridge. Likewise, if the Christian stops with a little cord of faith, there will be no advance in the spiritual life.

We all start the spiritual life with a slender cord of faith, which is salvation. But then we need to pull the heavier cords across, promises and more promises, adding strength day by day to our Christian life.

This is the faith-rest life, the continual moment-by-moment trusting in Him. If we trust Jesus Christ for our salvation, if we trust Him for the greatest thing He could ever provide for us, if we trust Him for eternal life and the forgiveness of all sins, if we trust Him for the biggest thing, can we not trust Him for the little things—the problems? Can we lean on Him and *only* on Him? Can we wait patiently for Him? Can we claim His Word? That is the issue!

*Hebrews 4:5b–6*. “If they shall enter into my rest [speaking of the Jews in the wilderness]. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.” “It remaineth” means to leave behind, to remain over. This faith-rest life remains open to those who would believe the promises of God. Only two of the Exodus generation entered into the rest, Caleb and Joshua. The majority of the wilderness generation failed to believe the temporal promises of God, and thus did not enter into His rest.

*Hebrews 4:7*. Since the Exodus generation failed, what effect did it have on future generations?

Again, he limiteth [or, literally, he marks out] a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts [quotation from Psalm 95:7–8]. (Heb. 4:7)

In other words, even though they had failed in the day of the Exodus, the faith-rest life was still open in David’s day. “To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” As in the former generation, so in David’s day, the invitation remained open. If they would just believe the promises and the doctrines of God’s Word, they could enter into this same rest.

*Hebrews 4:8*. “For if Jesus [literally, Joshua] had given them [the generation which existed after the Exodus] rest, then would he [God] not afterward have spoken of another day.” “If” introduces a Greek second class condition meaning, “if he had, but he did not.” Since Joshua’s generation did not enter the promise of rest, the Lord spoke of another generation. Joshua’s generation failed to completely conquer the Land, and they failed to enter into rest by claiming the promises and the doctrines given to them. Therefore, that generation stood as a defeated generation as well.

*Hebrews 4:9.* “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” In spite of the failures of various past generations who did not use the faith-rest technique, it continues to exist. The people of God are those who have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The people of God are those who have believed in Him, as the Scripture says,

Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16b)

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:26, NASB)

The people of God have a relationship with God in time. Part of this relationship is the faith-rest life—claiming the promises of His Word, mixing the promises of God with faith, and having the peace of God that passes all understanding. “There remaineth” is in the Greek present tense and thus the rest began in the past and continues into the present for the people of God. Therefore, the faith-rest life is perpetuated right down to this moment and will continue as long as human history continues. There will always exist a provision which means peace and rest, joy, happiness, and blessing, simply by claiming the promises and the doctrines of God’s Word.

For we which have believed do enter into rest. (Heb. 4:3a)

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FAITH-REST LIFE

### *Hebrews 4:10–16*

The brief history in verses 4 through 9 shows that the faith-rest technique started when man was created. God provided for Adam a rest, and while it was interrupted by sin, the rest continues to be perpetuated. Our faith starts at the cross where we obtain eternal rest; then we must claim the promises of God’s Word for the blessings of temporal rest, the by-product and the monopoly of the Christian way of life.

What are the characteristics of the faith-rest technique? How can it be described? What are some of the tests that we have to face in

connection with the technique? Verses 10 through 16 describe these characteristics.

### *THE CHARACTERISTIC OF FAITH*

Faith is a way of thinking that is often called *patience* in the Bible (Rom. 12:12). Patience refers to a habitual faith, a continual trust to keep on believing the promises of God.

For the battle *is* the LORD'S. (1 Sam. 17:47*b*)

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.  
(1 Pet. 5:7)

God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Ps. 46:1)

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:19)

If you keep on claiming the promises and mixing them with your faith, then you enter into this rest.

If you have not realized it, these are times of unrest in the United States of America. The situation is not very promising. But there is an area in which you can have absolute and perfect peace, a peace which will cause you to be ready for the crisis when it comes.

In a crisis we need believers who can stabilize in a hurry, believers who do not fall apart and press the panic button. We need believers who do not have to run and check in with a psychiatrist or psychologist, or seek some other form of sublimation. We need believers who can stand in the crisis and mix the promises of God with faith. We need believers who know "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose" (Rom. 8:28). These will be the believers who will use the faith-rest technique.

Who are the believers in the past who have seen the issues and stood fast? Those who knew and believed God's Word. It will never change. Those who can stand in the crisis hour, whose backbone is straight because it is built upon the doctrine of God's Word, whose thinking is based upon Scripture and divine viewpoint, are not duped by the double talk of people in public life and by the biases of the press. The world, linked by modern communication systems, is rapidly



going mad. The only antidote is divine viewpoint. Who can stand in the crisis and declare the divine viewpoint? Those who live the faith-rest life. Those who continually claim God's promises. Those who claim doctrine and use it.

*Hebrews 4:10.* "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, even as God *did* from his." This is the first characteristic of the faith-rest technique—faith, not works. When you enter into this rest, you let God take up your fight. The battle—the problems, trials, and difficulties that you face—is turned over to the Lord. "For he that is entered." Who "is entered"? The one who has "ceased from his own works." Until you utilize the faith-rest technique, you operate on the energy of the flesh. To the believer who has not entered into the faith-rest life, spirituality is a frantic system of attempting to please God by hustling around the local church, participating in church programs, tithing, fasting, giving up something, 'calling on the brethren,' and a lot of other superficial, hypocritical activities.

Then one day you learn that you can relax spiritually. You enter into faith-rest, where your life is no longer a matter of the energy of the flesh, a phony façade of hypocrisy or religiosity. You become a relaxed and stabilized individual. Even though things around you are falling apart, you have God's Word, you claim God's Word, and from God's Word you have strength. As you study, the Holy Spirit teaches you the Word (John 14:26), with the result that you claim these promises and enter into that place of perfect peace.

"He has ceased from his own [brand of] works." "His own" means your peculiar and individual brand of works, whatever they are. But remember, faith-rest is devoid of any works. The beauty of the faith-rest life is the ability to derive strength from the peace that comes through simply trusting.

#### THE CHARACTERISTIC OF DILIGENCE

*Hebrews 4:11.* "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." The Greek word *σπεύδω* (*speudo*), translated "labour," should more accurately be rendered "diligent" or "eager." The writer is inviting all Christians to join him not in works, but in diligence and eagerness to enter the

faith-rest life. It is just as if the writer has said, “I have entered this faith-rest life; I find it wonderful beyond description. Come on in, the water’s fine.”

The word diligence also implies a mental attitude.<sup>7</sup> We should have a mental attitude of eagerness to enter into this rest. This should be the most important thing in the world to us. Though unsuccessful, Ponce de Leon made a most eager and diligent search for the legendary Fountain of Youth. How much more should we have this same diligence in seeking that which God has provided—the faith-rest life?

Suppose I told you that one hundred feet behind Berachah Church, slightly under the surface of the earth is a miraculous spring, the water of which if drunk will guarantee that you can revert to the age you desire. There would be a lot of people out digging if they were absolutely convinced that what I said was true. Then suppose I added that in order to dig, you must have the correct mental attitude—that of diligence. “Let us be diligent and go seek this fountain that gives us the age we desire.”

I have no doubt that everyone would rush out and start digging. Because of the right mental attitude you do not mind digging; you do not mind getting your clothes dirty. You would not want to dig under ordinary circumstances, but now you are eager to dig because you have a great objective in mind.

This is the connotation of the word “diligence.” It means there is a worthy objective, the faith-rest life. This objective is so wonderful that once you obtain it you will never want to leave it as long as you live. It is the rest which we should be diligent to enter because it is the place of perfect happiness, adjustment, peace, and blessing. The verse continues, “lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” Those in the past failed to enter simply because of unbelief. We must not follow their example.

#### *THE CHARACTERISTIC OF KNOWING THE WORD OF GOD*

Knowing the Word of God is one of the most important characteristics of the faith-rest life. This is living in the Word of God. There can be no faith-rest life apart from *knowing* God’s Word. Faith-rest is not a certain feeling you get, but having the Word as the object of

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7. Thieme, *Mental Attitude Dynamics* (2000).

your faith in the spiritual life. Verse 12 brings into focus this very vital factor in the faith-rest technique.

*Hebrews 4:12.* We have already seen that in order to enter into the faith-rest life it must be by faith and not works, even as salvation is by faith and not works. As is always the case, “to believe,” or “to have faith,” is a transitive verb; it must have a subject and an object. In salvation, the subject of the transitive verb “to believe” is any member of the human race, while the object of the verb is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Savior. For example, in Acts 16:31, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” You believe in Christ in one moment of time with the result that you are saved forever.

But when it comes to the faith-rest technique, this requires a persistent faith, a persevering faith in the Word of God. The subject is the *believer* in the Lord Jesus Christ; the object of the verb “to believe” is the Word of God. The believer must consistently believe the Word.

But you cannot consistently believe the Word until you know the Word and understand it in its various components. For example, you need to understand the Word in its historical context, the dispensations;<sup>8</sup> you need to see it from the viewpoint of doctrine and the promises. All of these things that are found in God’s Word must become the objects of your faith.

For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is a* discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.  
(Heb. 4:12)

There are five characteristics of God’s Word in this verse.

First, the Word of God is “quick” or “alive.” The Greek word ζῶν (*zon*), is a present participle, which means it is “always alive, or living.” It should be translated, “the Word of God is constantly alive or constantly living.” If you want to know what life is, you have to go to the Word of God. If you want to understand what true living is, if you want to get the most out of life, and if you want to live according to the truth, then you must have the Scripture as your guide. The Word of God is living; it is the secret to life in time, as well as in eternity.

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8. Thieme, *The Divine Outline of History*, 1–21.

The second descriptive phrase for the Bible is the word “powerful.” The Word of God is habitually living and powerful. The adjective used for powerful is the Greek word ἐνεργής (*energes*), meaning “active” or operationally powerful; the efficacious power to live the spiritual life. Just as the secret to life is found in God’s Word, so the secret to spiritual dynamics or operational power is also found in God’s Word. Therefore, we must believe the Word of God, apply the Scriptures, promises, and doctrines in order to have divine operational power in our lives.

The third characteristic of God’s Word is that it is “sharper than any two-edged sword.” This word picture is very interesting. The Greek word for “sword” is μάχαιρα (*machaira*); the sword in this context is the classic Roman short sword, one of the greatest inventions of the ancient world. To emphasize the unique aspects of this weapon, I must first describe the other types of swords already in existence in the ancient world.

One of the swords which was very impressive was called the ρομφαία (*romphaia*). A broad sword, usually five to six feet long with one sharp edge and a large double handle, it was first used by the Thracians. It was not worn in a scabbard, but carried over the shoulder, or sometimes by two men. When the barbarians used this sword, they would have to rear back, as it were, then come through with one mighty swing to the right or left. This always left the swordsman off balance and vulnerable to counterattack.

When the Romans first advanced on the barbarians, carrying only short *machairas*, the barbarians with their great *romphaias* looked down the hill at the advancing Romans and had a great big laugh. But the Romans had the last laugh.

Another sword in the ancient world was the ξίφος (*xiphos*), which featured only a sharp point. The edges were useless in fighting. The only way the enemy could be defeated with the *xiphos* was with a straight forward thrust. If the enemy rolled, bobbed, pitched, ducked, or managed to get out of the way of the thrust, the *xiphos* swordsman was also left vulnerable to counterattack.

The ακινάκης (*akinakes*), invented in Persia, was not a combat sword. It had a dull point, dull edges, and was more ornamental than useful. Its handle was usually studded with precious stones, and therein lay its value. Finally, there was the δόλων (*dolon*), a sword which was

hidden or disguised in some object, such as a staff or a cane, and again it had only one sharp point.

In comparison with these swords, the *machaira* referred to here was short, which meant that anyone could handle it. One did not have to be a physical giant, for it was light and maneuverable. Second, the *machaira* never left the user off balance or vulnerable. He could thrust, parry, or slash to the left or right without having to regain his balance. The secret to this *machaira* was that it not only had a very sharp point, but both edges were also sharp, a feature that the other swords did not have. Some had one sharp edge or one sharp point, but the *machaira* had it all. As a result the Roman soldiers easily defeated the barbarians with the *machaira*. It was one of the most revolutionary weapons of the ancient world.

Why was the double-edged *machaira* used to describe the Word of God? The *romphaia* has but one sharp edge. The Bible does not consist of a point here and a point there, but every bit of the Scripture is valuable. Likewise, the *xiphos* with its little sharp point on the end of a blade was not an accurate picture of the Word of God. The ornate *akinakes* was not used, for the Bible is not simply beautiful literature. Neither was the *dolon* used, for the Bible is not hidden in its meaning. But the Bible is called here the *machaira* because every part of this sword had a purpose.

Every jot and tittle of God's Word is valuable and important. Every jot and tittle of God's Word is usable to us as Christians. The Christian who uses God's Word is never off balance. The Christian who uses God's Word is stabilized, which is one of the characteristics of the faith-rest life.

One doctrine of the Word of God that can resolve every problem when applied to a situation is the doctrine of divine essence.

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.  
(Heb. 13:8)

This verse reveals an aspect of God's essence: His immutability. When we focus on this attribute of God's nature, we understand God is always faithful; He never changes; He never lets us down. When this divine attribute is applied to a problem, we realize He is always faithful to His promises. This leads to a firm conclusion that He never lets us down, a rationale for mental stability and tranquillity.

The fourth characteristic of the Word in verse 12 is that the Bible is “piercing,” διικνέομαι (*diikneomai*). It penetrates; it is a sword that cuts deep. Sooner or later the Bible is going to cut you to the quick. Let me put it this way, the Word of God hits all of us hard! “Piercing,” in the Greek present tense indicates that it keeps on piercing. Because piercing is also in the middle voice, we understand that when God’s Word pierces or penetrates, it benefits us. This is the only time you can get slashed by a sword and benefit from it.

The Word penetrates into the immaterial part of man, or the inner being, and lodges there, as indicated in the next phrase: “piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit.” The Bible is the only book that recognizes that the immaterial part of regenerate man has two parts, a soul and a human spirit. The Bible continually penetrates into the immaterial part of man.

You could stab someone with a knife or sword and penetrate the material part of man, his body. But suppose I handed you a sword and said, “Go out and stab a soul.” You could not do it. Where is it? Where do you start? Would you stab the brain? or the throat? Where is the soul—in some part of the torso? We don’t know where it is, but it is there! It is impossible for any sword, or bullet, or anything else to penetrate the immaterial part of man. Even if you should riddle the body with machine gun bullets, you could never touch the soul. That is what this word means. Nothing else in the world can do it, only the Word of God can pierce the soul and the spirit.

Do you ever think about using the Word of God? Are there people who in some way disturb you, people who upset you, or someone who has it in for you? If you use God’s Word, it can change your attitude. It penetrates your soul, changes your life, and provides peace and calm.

The next phrase suggests a medical analogy, “piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, [even as] the joints and the marrow.” A surgeon, with an understanding of physiology, can take a knife or a surgical instrument and make an incision successfully in order to heal a patient. Just as cutting is necessary to perform a successful operation, so the Bible makes an incision in order to heal the soul and the spirit. The final characteristic of the Word goes on to develop how it does this.

The Bible is a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” A discernor is a judge, someone who judges a case between two people.

He is a critic, a critical judge, and that is what the Bible does for us. The Bible constantly critiques us and we should be thankful for its judgment. It points out the error of our ways so that we can recover through rebound, get in fellowship, and use the resources God has provided.

Notice how the Bible judges. The Bible is a judge of our thoughts. People cannot judge our thoughts. Although they can sometimes guess what we are thinking, no one can consistently tell what anyone else is thinking. But the Bible is always a judge of exactly what we think.

The Bible is a judge or critic of “thoughts and intents.” The word “intents” means motivation. Thus the Bible judges the thoughts and motivations of the heart, or the inner life, or the mind. If you are envious of someone, if you are jealous, if you are arrogant, if you are vain, if your motives are false, the Bible judges these motives. When we acknowledge these sinful thoughts and motives, the operation is performed, the sin is cut out (1 John 1:9), and fellowship is restored.

### *THE CHARACTERISTIC OF DIVINE INSPECTION*

For even as the Bible judges our thoughts and motives, God Himself is the One who reads our thoughts. How would you like to have everything you have thought today projected above your head on the ceiling? Suppose I had a button that when pushed, caused all your thoughts to appear above you. Thank goodness this could never happen! But God knows what we think every second, and this thinking is the object of divine inspection.

*Hebrews 4:13.* “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight [in God’s sight]: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” The phrase “with whom we have to do” is literally from the Greek, “with whom we have to give an account.” The Lord Jesus Christ is going to take an account from us, and for this reason we are under constant examination. He knows what we are thinking all of the time. That is why His Word is a judge of our thoughts. So faith-rest involves continuous judgment of our thought pattern by God’s Word. Why our thoughts? Why the inner part of man? Because the faith-rest technique is not something we do on the outside, it is something we do in our mind. The faith-rest technique is designed to give us perfect happiness and stabilize our thinking in every circumstance of life.

### THE CHARACTERISTIC OF WITNESSING

Faith-rest involves witnessing for Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup> Witnessing is the responsibility of every Christian, not just of pastors, assistant pastors, evangelists, Sunday School teachers, and deacons. If you are a Christian, you are a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. If you live the faith-rest life, it will be noticed by others. You will continually be presented with opportunities to speak a word, or more than a word, for the Lord Jesus Christ. With stabilized thinking and tranquillity of soul, you will be confident and relaxed in your presentation of the Gospel.

*Hebrews 4:14*. "Seeing then that we have [we keep on having] a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens [perfect tense, He is passed into heaven in the past, with the result that He remains there], Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession." "Hold fast" is κρατέω (*krateo*) which means to cling tenaciously. In the Greek present tense it literally means "let us keep on clinging tenaciously with all of our might to our profession," which is witnessing. The mood of the verb is subjunctive, by which the writer is inviting all of his readers to make the decision to join him in witnessing for Jesus Christ.

### THE CHARACTERISTIC OF TESTING

Faith-rest involves constant testing. Most of you know that muscles are built by weight lifting, and remain strong and useful by continual training. The muscles bear weight in order to train them, in order to keep them in a constant state of power and strength. It is the same way with the faith-rest life: It must be tested to become strong. Many of the problems, trials, and adversities that come our way have no human solution and are designed to test our strength in the faith-rest life. Do we stay in the faith-rest life or not? Do we continue to trust the Lord? Do we continue to depend upon Him? Do we continue to claim the promises of God's Word? Do we rest in Him? Do we trust His Word? Do we claim His promises? That is why God continually permits testing in our life. We have things which are beyond us, things which have no obvious solution. We must claim His promises, live in His Word, believe and use the things He has provided for us. Therefore, you can expect periodic testing as long as you live.

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9. Thieme, *Witnessing* (1992).



Sooner or later every Christian will face some kind of a crisis. The roof will fall in, the rug will be pulled out from under you, and your whole world will seemingly collapse—a crisis test to see if you will stay calm, claim the promises, and continue to live in the Word. And the big issue in that crisis is this: Do I believe God's Word? Will I claim God's Word or will I fall apart? Will I get upset? Will I be afraid? Will I become destabilized in some manner? Will I live in 'panic palace'? Or will I continue to claim those promises which are pertinent to the situation?

All things work together for good. (Rom. 8:28a)

For the battle *is* the LORD'S. (1 Sam. 17:47b)

Stand still, and see the salvation [watch the deliverance] of the LORD. (Ex. 14:13b)

Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee. (Isa. 41:10a)

For with God nothing shall be impossible. (Luke 1:37)

*Hebrews 4:15*. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tested like as *we are, yet* without sin." Our high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, pioneered the way before us. He was tested in every way that we are tested, and more. Yet never once did He sin or lose His faith-rest life. The Lord has traveled the road of testing, has experienced the testing that can happen to us, and as 1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us, "[He has provided] a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it [or bear up under it]."

#### THE CHARACTERISTIC OF PRAYER

*Hebrews 4:16*. "Let us therefore come [προσερχομαι, *proserchomai*] boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." The phrase "let us" tells us we have come to the final hortatory subjunctive in this passage. The hortatory subjunctive implies that the writer of the epistle is inviting his readers, all believers, to join him in something. He says, "Let us all get together at the throne of grace. Join me in prayer." We should also note that this verb, *proserchomai*, is in the middle voice, meaning that the subject is benefitted. Therefore, prayer benefits us. We, as believers in Jesus

Christ, are the subject and we are benefitted by coming to God in prayer. The verb is in the present tense. We are to keep on coming constantly to the throne of grace. In other words this phrase actually says, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). This means to enter consistently into the presence of the Lord through prayer.

The word "boldly" means literally, "with boldness." We as believers, using the faith-rest technique, can come boldly to the throne of grace. How does this work?

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer,  
believing, ye shall receive. (Matt. 21:22)

This phrase "with boldness" means to come with confidence. We can come with the utmost confidence to the throne of grace. We have mixed the promises of God with faith.

You will notice that prayer is a throne of grace: We do not earn it, we do not deserve it, we do not have the right, humanly speaking, to come to the throne of grace. But because of God's grace this is now possible. Then the purpose for prayer is stated in this verse. It begins with the word "that," which introduces a purpose clause. "That we may obtain," the verb λαμβάνω (*lambano*) in the aorist tense, means that "in a point of time we may obtain mercy." The subjunctive mood means the obtaining of this mercy is potential. It is available for the asking.

"That we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Mercy is "grace in action." When God pours out His grace on us, it is divine mercy. Surely, we recognize by now that every moment in life is a time of need, and those needs can be met by going to the throne of grace. At this point prayer and the faith-rest technique coincide to form a basis of power for fulfilling the faith-rest life.

The filling of the Holy Spirit, or spirituality, maintained by rebound, is the source of power in the Christian life. The faith-rest technique is the result of utilizing that power. Perhaps right now you have a need or some kind of a situation which has been disturbing you. Then go to God in prayer. The faith-rest technique is used with prayer. "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." As you go to God in prayer, you claim 1 Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." This is the faith-rest life.

## THE DYNAMICS OF WAITING

### *Isaiah 40*

The great principle of Isaiah 40 is found in verse 29. “He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength.” Isaiah was facing a very discouraged nation. The Israelites were about to become the recipients of heavy judgment. They were about to go into captivity. The picture was bleak. The believers of Isaiah’s day were sitting on the panic button and inviting others to join them, just as it happens among believers today. They were singing the blues, discouraged, and despondent. In short they lacked spiritual strength and fainted, an experience which occurs frequently among believers in our age. Believers do not seem to be able to trust very long when it comes to the problems, adversities, and disheartening circumstances of life.

The objective of the Word of God in this passage is to show you that you do not have to be despondent. You do not have to go through life singing the blues. You do not have to live *on* your emotions and *by* your emotions—up one moment and down the next. Nor do you have to flit from place to place trying to find some hyper-spiritual experience to turn your world right side up. God does not give out hyper-emotional experiences to anyone.

Isaiah faced two extremes! On the one hand, he faced the extreme of believers who were discouraged and on the other, those who always had some ultrareligious way of trying to solve their problems—those who tried to agonize themselves into being more ‘spiritual’ than anyone else. And so we have this wonderful passage which introduces the dynamics of waiting. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, “waiting on the Lord” is a principle that belongs to *you*!

First of all, we find we have an experience in common—fainting. We have it today as they had it in Isaiah’s day (Heb. 12:3). How many of you are now fainting? If you are, stand by, because you can still hear the Word of God! I know that many of you are bearing tremendous and serious problems. I know that many of you are completely frustrated by the human viewpoint of life. I know that many of you are discouraged and many of you have become despondent and have almost given up.

Others of you, recognizing this despondency, are trying to do something about it in your own strength. You are not going to be beaten down. You are seeking or perhaps have found some form of sublimation. You have found a little happiness in life: it might be anything from a bottle to some type of intellectual stimulation to compensate for discouragement and despondency.

Let us wade through all of this confusion—the turmoil inside of you, the problems in your life, that down-in-the-mouth attitude which so easily besets your thinking. Of course, I recognize that after all these years of sitting in front of me in Bible class, many of you have become excellent ‘poker players.’ You can sit there and look at me with a straight face, with that “who me?” look. Or perhaps you can exhibit the ‘sanctified’ look, that “this does not concern me at all because I am above all that.” Now let’s face it. There are times when we faint. This is true of me. This is true of you. There are times when we throw in the towel, when we give up, when we are discouraged. Yet, we are holding the greatest hand in the world, the promises of God, the techniques of the Bible, the doctrines of Scripture—we have all of these wonderful assets. So we read in verse 29 something which belongs to us by way of application, even as it belonged to believing Israel in Isaiah’s day—“He giveth power to the faint.”

When God gives power, it is divine power. God’s own power! Not human power or human ability which is flawed! When the Jews had their backs to the wall at the Red Sea and were facing certain annihilation by Pharaoh, God gave power to the helpless. Moses said,

“Stand still, and see the salvation [watch the deliverance] of the LORD.” (Ex. 14:13*b*)

When we are helpless, cannot fight, cannot struggle, cannot solve our problems, stand aside and watch the Lord solve them. There is a principle I must emphasize to you. It comes from the lips of David as he stood before Goliath and said,

“For the battle *is* the LORD’S.” (1 Sam. 17:47*b*)

If you have trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, it is not your fight anymore—it is the Lord’s battle. Therefore, it is ludicrous and the epitome of stupidity for a believer to try to fight the battle when the Lord is already fighting for you! The Lord says for you to

stand aside and watch Him fight, or as Isaiah puts it in 40:31, “wait upon the LORD.” Keep your thinking occupied with Him. The hardest thing in the Christian life is to do nothing!

How many times have I talked to you personally? I have listened to the difficulties which befell you, and I have told you what the answer was: Do nothing! But by doing nothing I do not mean simply to sit down and contemplate infinity. I do not mean to let your mind go blank. Nor do I mean to cease from all the normal functions and activities of life, to become a professional loser. By doing nothing I mean to let go of the problem and trust it to the Lord. Wait on Him. “He giveth power to the faint,” to the helpless. God does not help those who help themselves. God helps the helpless! “The battle *is* the LORD’S!” Therefore, since you as a believer belong to Him, since you are helpless, and since you have tried to solve your own problems and have run into a stone wall, you have to learn to depend on Him.

God can never help you until you recognize that you are helpless. Nor can He help you until you recognize that you cannot solve your problems. Either you will detour around the realities of life by escapism or sublimation, or you will sit down and worry until you become the most miserable of creatures. But God gives power to the faint, and to them who have *no* might, He increases their strength.

We live in a do-it-yourself generation. But you cannot save yourself. You are saved by grace through faith. Even after salvation, you cannot help yourself. The filling of the Spirit does not come by something you do. You cannot function without the power of the Holy Spirit. Nothing in the Christian life is generated by your own effort.

I have a fine automobile, which I like very much. I am what is known as a satisfied customer. But in spite of all of the wonderful gadgets, and all of the advantages of this automobile, there is one very definite disadvantage. It must have fuel to run. So every so often, I have to refuel the automobile. All automobiles, whether they are large or small, old or new, run on the same principle. They all have to have fuel.

Likewise in the spiritual realm it does not make any difference whether you are a big or little person, old or young, at the moment of regeneration God has given you spiritual fuel, God the Holy Spirit! This is wonderful news! If you have come to the end of yourself, if you have come to the place where you realize the situation is hopeless and you are helpless to cope, then you are in a position to recognize

that only God can help you. When you begin to realize this through the pressures of experience, or by a much easier method, by believing the Word of God, you are in a position to have the very power of God in your life. He gives power to the helpless.

In verse 30 we see an illustration from athletics. “Even the youths [athletes] shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall.” No matter how well an athlete is trained, no matter how strong he is, there are times when he faints and when he falls.

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint. (Isa. 40:31)

Even though we faint, grow weary and fall, there is hope, there is a promise. This is the spiritual principle, which we must understand. How do you wait on the Lord? Let us look more closely at the word “wait,” which could be translated “trust” or “faith.”

There are actually five or six Hebrew words for faith. One Hebrew word translated “faith,” found in Genesis 15:6, is the word אָמַן (*aman*). It means to use God as a prop, to use God as a foundation, to lean on Him. The Hebrew word בָּטַח (*batach*), translated “faith” or “trust” in Psalm 37:3, was originally used of two grappling wrestlers when one of them picks the other up and slams him to the ground. Eventually, this word came to mean “pick up your troubles and problems and slam them on the Lord,” or “trust.” Another word, יָחַל (*yachal*), found in Job 13:15, means to “trust” in extreme pain. Even though you are utterly and totally miserable, you are confident of deliverance. The word חָסָה (*chasah*), used in Psalm 57:1, means “flee as a bunny,” as a rabbit would flee from a large, vicious animal. The rabbit does not stop to fight with a snarling, snapping predator hot on his trail. He knows who would win, so he flees. But his enemy is too much for him, and he is about to faint. Suddenly, he discovers a rock with a cleft in it. So the little bunny hops into the cleft, retreats as far as possible, and is safe. This word, “to flee as a rabbit in the cleft of a rock,” is a word for faith. It means to hide in the cleft of The Rock, Christ Jesus, where nothing can touch you.

But the Holy Spirit does not use any of these words in Isaiah 40:31. He uses קָוָה (*kavah*), translated “wait,” although this translation does

not convey the whole idea. The word was originally used for making rope. First there is just a little strand, which is easy to break. But as this little strand is woven in with other strands it becomes a rope which cannot be broken. Hence, this word meant to be a strand twisted into a great rope and therefore made strong. It came to mean "trust." Even though they are weak, those who "wait" or keep on trusting the Lord become like a powerful rope which nothing can break. It is interesting to note that in the Old Testament every time you find the word "faith" or the word "trust," it is one of these five Hebrew words, but in every passage there is a little different emphasis. In verse 31, "wait" is trusting the Lord in spite of all difficulties, in spite of the hopelessness of the situation. Those who wait keep on using the faith-rest technique.

Now what is going to happen to them? The word "renew" is a poor translation. It should be translated literally, "They who keep on trusting the Lord shall *exchange* their strength." God is not talking about human strength. This is about divine strength. The idea is not renewing strength as your physical strength is renewed, but exchanging human strength for divine strength. You turn in your human strength, which at best is very weak, and get back divine strength. When you say, "Lord, I cannot do it," the Lord answers, "I will solve the problem; I will give you the strength; I will provide everything necessary for you to meet this difficult problem in your life." But, I want you to notice, there is no exchange of human strength for divine strength until there is a constant trusting of the Lord. This is not a verse for sprinters.

I wonder, how many of you are sprinters? Are you the kind of believer who, on an emotional whim, vows that you are going to do great things for God? So you move out, all a rosy glow, to conquer the world! Then the emotion ebbs away, as it always does, and what does it leave? An empty shell. You were all fired up emotionally, but when the emotion fades, which was your motivation, your impetus is gone. You were depending on emotion rather than thinking doctrine. Please do not think that I am condemning emotions. But do not depend upon your emotions. You must depend upon the Holy Spirit and upon the Word. Depend upon the things that are real, those things which will keep you steadily moving in the Christian life.

What is a sprinter? A sprinter is one who runs a short race, expending tremendous energy in the process. By analogy he believes for a short

time while his emotions are aroused, but when his emotions ebb away, he stops believing, he stops moving. But this verse says, "The power of God does not come in fits and starts; it does not come in spurts and stops." The power of God is a steady, continuous energy that is not dependent upon emotionalism, rationalism, or anything else. It depends upon believing the Word of God and habitually waiting on the Lord! Believe the Word of God no matter how tough things get and no matter how prosperous things are. I want you to ask yourself some questions. Do you believe the Word of God when things are tough? Do you keep on believing the Word of God, or do you have to be aroused emotionally? Do you have to be stirred and fired up? Do you move by fits and starts, or do you move continuously—steady, stable, powerful, producing divine good for the Lord?

"They that wait upon the Lord shall exchange their strength." They turn in their old miserable, puny, human strength for marvelous, wonderful divine strength. What is the result? They fly—"they shall mount up with wings as eagles; and they shall run and not be weary." They keep on moving; they do not run out of fuel. Nothing can stop them! "They keep on walking," the Hebrew says, "and do not faint." This is a wonderful life! This is the result of waiting on the Lord. No matter how bleak the picture is, no matter how dark the situation, or how great the adversity, you keep on trusting Him! The fortieth chapter of Isaiah is a passage which says, in effect, "It pays to wait on the Lord; it pays to keep on trusting Him. He is the only one whom you can keep trusting and know that everything will work out."

Now, look back at verse 12, where we will see how it pays to wait on Him.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,  
and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended  
the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the  
mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? (Isa. 40:12)

It pays to wait on the Lord because He has the *power* to execute the impossible. This verse indicates something of His omnipotence, for "measuring the waters in the hollow of his hand" speaks of great power. God, the Lord Jesus Christ, can measure all of the waters, all of the seas in the world in the palm of His hand. But, more than that,



He meted out the heavens with His little finger. The word “span” means little finger.

A cluster of stars called the Andromeda Nebulae gives us some idea of the vastness of our universe. Man talks about his fantastic achievements in outer space; he is awed by such things as a walk on the moon. Man uses the principle of gravity and a rocket to launch a vehicle into space. How far out in space is it? It is just a drop in the bucket when compared to the vastness of God’s universe! Step out one night and look at the Andromeda Nebulae, the light of which left there one million, six hundred thousand years ago, traveling at the speed of light, six trillion miles a year. And yet the Andromeda Nebulae is merely a very close group of stars. Beyond the Andromeda Nebulae are millions and billions and trillions of stars, and they have been there for a long time. Yet, with His little finger, Jesus Christ created the whole thing (John 1:3, 10; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2).

If the Lord can move His little finger and put into existence billions and trillions of stars and millions of galaxies billions of light years apart, do you think He can handle your problems? Do you suppose He can meet the needs of your life? What is the point of verse 12? It pays to wait on Him. It pays to keep on trusting Him. Why? Because He is all powerful; He can take care of your problems; He can handle your situation.

*Isaiah 40:13.* “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD [God the Holy Spirit], or *being* his counselor hath taught him?” The Lord has revealed the way to wait on Him. God the Holy Spirit, the Revealer, is the mentor-teacher of the Word of God (John 14:26). And not only has He the power to solve our problems and meet our needs, He teaches us the way in which we can apply this power. Through the faith-rest technique, the moment-by-moment sabbath, we claim this infinite power for every need in our life.

*Isaiah 40:14.* “With whom took he counsel, and *who* instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?” No one! Why? Because He is omniscient! Therefore, to wait upon the Lord is to wait upon the One who always knows best. This is why you do *nothing!* But by doing nothing, I do not mean to set up an experiential vacuum in your life. What I do mean is to have a moment-by-moment faith.

You believe His promises regardless of what happens. You believe just as Job believed,

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. (Job 13:15a)

This is waiting on the Lord. This is the moment-by-moment sabbath, and this is the faith-rest technique carried out to the maximum.

It is easy to trust the Lord when everything is going right. It is easy to trust the Lord when you have been stirred up emotionally. But, do you trust the Lord when the picture is bleak? If you get to the place where you think you do, then take heed, for God is going to test that position! God will say, "Do you really trust Me? Do you really believe My Word?" And just as you begin to think you do, and the situation is clearing, God will say, "Now, I am really going to make this situation look hopeless and bleak. Will you still believe Me?"

If the situation around you is absolutely dark and hopeless, is the same Lord on the other side of the darkness? Can you look through the darkness and see Him? Can you look through the darkness and the hopelessness of your situation and see His Word? Has He changed on the other side of your adverse circumstances? No!

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.  
(Heb. 13:8)

The Lord will never change. Therefore, He is just as faithful today as He was the day before, as He was in Isaiah's day, as He was in Moses' day, and He will continue forever. So, He will continue to tap His foot just waiting to bless you (Isa. 30:18). He is waiting for us to trust Him. He is waiting for us to wait on Him, so that He no longer has to wait to bless us. He puts up the hopeless picture for us where everything is bleak and despairing, yet on the other side of the picture is the same faithful Lord. He says, "Trust Me through this! Trust Me in the midst of this! Believe Me! Believe My Word!" As long as you refuse to believe Him, the situation will continue to be bad. There will be no peace or stability until you learn to trust Him. Waiting upon the Lord is the greatest economy of time.

*Isaiah 40:15.* "Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." Have you ever looked at the nations of the

world? Ruling them would be quite a chore for us. But ruling all of the nations in the world is no more a burden than carrying a drop of water in a bucket for the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet instead of waiting on the Lord, our tendency is to try this or that, or to move somewhere to escape the hopeless situation, or to demand a solution right now! But the more we *do*, the more we tangle up the situation. It pays to wait upon the One whose decisions are wiser than our decisions. The less we try and the more we trust, the quicker God can bring the solution.

*Isaiah 40:16.* “And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.” When Israel worshiped the Lord, they needed wood to burn. In that day the sacrifice was the burnt offering. But they could burn all the wood and sacrifice all the animals for a burnt offering, and it still would not be sufficient to express the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is so awesome that there is nothing in human life to express it, not even burning the forests, nor offering all the animals.

*Isaiah 40:17.* He goes on to say, “All nations before him *are* as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.” Why? He has just said in verse 15, “Behold, the nations *are* as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.” He can pick up an island without even moving His finger, and He did just that in 1883 with Krakatoa.

*Isaiah 40:18.* “To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?” Who can compare with the Lord? The question is rhetorical, for no one can compare with Him! Since no one can compare with the Lord, why trust anyone else but the Lord and what He has given to us—His Word? But here is what these people had been doing. They created beautiful images overlaid with gold and had the gall to compare them to the Lord.

*Isaiah 40:19.* “The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.” He makes an idol; he calls it god. Who made that idol? Man made it! What he makes with his hands, he calls god. If man fashions something with his hands and calls it god, what is man worshiping? He is worshiping himself. In the last half of the verse there is a beautiful twist of sarcasm: “and he casteth silver chains.” Balancing

these idols of gold was a great problem. Almost every great idol in the ancient world had some kind of support system to keep it from falling over. Yet, Israel called this idol god and placed their trust in it!

What are *you* waiting on? What are *you* trusting in? You have your idols today: money, some person, some thing, some desire? What are you leaning on? You may laugh at these Israelites because they made a god that could not even hold itself up. But how many times have you trusted in something that is just as foolish? If you are trusting in your money, if you are trusting in some person, if you are trusting in some situation, you are just as stupid as the people who said, "This is god," and then had to chain it to the wall to keep it from falling flat.

*Isaiah 40:20.* "He that *is* so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree *that* will not rot." After a while people ran out of gold and found a new idol. They searched the forest for a piece of wood that would not rot. Then they put their trust in that piece of wood. But there was no idol, no god fashioned with their own hands, that would help their situation. Likewise, what you and I, as believers, lean on cannot solve problems any more than an idol of wood or gold.

"He seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, *that* shall not be moved" (verse 20*b*). The literal translation is, "a graven image that shall not fall over." If they made an image out of wood that would not fall over, they had to make it so that the bottom was heavier than the top. This required a "cunning workman." Therefore, after he skillfully constructed the idol, what happened? Everyone bowed before it and said, "I trust you, O idol . . . 'O Zeus,' 'O Aphrodite,' 'O Athene.' Now, help me with my problem. If my problem is one of love, I form a beautiful woman and call her Aphrodite. If my problem is wisdom, I make another figure and call this one Athene. If my problem is the need of power, I fashion a man and call him Zeus. I got a skilled workman to build them all so that they would not fall flat on their faces." Now, this is clever! It is about as sensible as any believer today who trusts anything besides the Word of God. Anything else you are trusting for your security, blessing, or anything else in life is fruitless. I wonder how many people in the world today worship that which they have made with their own hands?

What is this passage saying to you and me? Wait on the Lord! Keep trusting the Lord! How do you do that today? You must *know* the promises of His Word, then *believe* them. A step-by-step approach

is essential. There are three steps in faith-rest that form an effective drill to follow when you are so beset with difficulties that you cannot think clearly.

- Step 1. *Claim a promise to stabilize your soul.* Recall a promise from the Word of God.<sup>10</sup> Think of what the promise means. Realize that from the divine viewpoint your situation is *not* hopeless. God is still in control and, as always, He has you in His powerful, loving hands. This realization quiets your fears and enables you to use the Bible doctrine you know.
- Step 2. *Use the promise in a doctrinal rationale.* A rationale is an underlying reason, justification, or explanation. Every biblical promise is backed by a doctrine or series of doctrines. Using a doctrinal rationale is a logical process of moving toward a biblical conclusion. The promise you use in step one of the faith-rest drill is the capsule summary of many related truths. Your faith-rest becomes more effective as it weaves together the many rationales of Bible doctrine.<sup>11</sup>

You may use the *essence of God rationale*, which focuses on the attributes of God's very nature that guaranteed His promises.<sup>12</sup> Or you may use other rationales such as the *logistical grace rationale* emphasizing God's faithfulness in supplying your needs. You may also use the *plan of God rationale*, which shows you your place in the eternal purpose of God and recounts the assets He has given you to fulfill your spiritual destiny on earth.<sup>13</sup> In fact, there are many doctrinal rationales and every promise is based on one or more of these rationales.

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10. See Appendix for a list of basic Bible promises.

11. Thieme, *Christian Suffering* (2002).

12. Thieme, *The Integrity of God* (2005), Appendix B.

13. Thieme, *Freedom through Military Victory* (2003), 69–83; *The Plan of God* (2003); *The Divine Outline of History*.

- Step 3. *Reach doctrinal conclusions.* Doctrinal rationales lead to doctrinal conclusions. One of the greatest conclusions is found in Romans 8:31.

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31)

When you move through the faith-rest drill you come to the point where you actually believe this conclusion, rather than merely repeat it by rote. You may always accept the doctrinal conclusion as true, but the faith-rest drill brings it alive so you find courage, rest, and comfort in its truth.

After using the three stages of faith-rest, your mind is stabilized; you know the ground you stand on. Now you can see how your little problem fits into the big picture of God's faithfulness. Now you can genuinely rest, relax, and trust in Him for solutions and you move on with your life. Faith-rest may take thirty seconds or much longer, depending on numerous factors. You may need to repeat a stage or start over from the beginning as doubts creep in and disturb your confidence and rest. Ultimately, faith-rest becomes a continual way of life that makes Bible doctrine become a living reality in every experience.<sup>14</sup>

*Isaiah 40:25–26.* “To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*.” There is nothing equal to the Holy One, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. Just look up toward heaven; look at the vast expanse of the universe. Jesus Christ created all these things! It is He “that bringeth out their host by number.” He created all these millions of galaxies and He knows their number. He calls them all by name. This is His omniscience. “By the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth,” or literally, “not one of these stars is missing.” That is amazing! Billions and quadrillions and infinite numbers of light years away there are stars which are hundreds and thousands of times larger than the earth, and they are still there. He has not lost track of one yet.

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14. Thieme, *Christian, at Ease!* (1993).

Now if the Lord Jesus Christ created this vast expanse of the universe, if these billions and trillions of large stars and galaxies move around at rapid rates of speed and not one is missing, if God, the Lord Jesus, can keep track of all of this vast universe, He can also keep track of your problems. Not one sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge (Matt. 10:29, 31). God, who created and maintains this tremendous universe, is concerned about you and me. He stands ready to solve your problems and mine. If He does not lose track of a star, then you can be sure He will not forget you. He demands only one thing from you as His child—wait on Him! Keep on believing the Word of God, no matter what happens, no matter what the difficulties, no matter how adverse the circumstances.

But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*. (Heb. 11:6a)

For we walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Cor. 5:7)





## *Appendix*

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### BIBLE PROMISES

“Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today.” (Ex. 14:13*b*, NASB)

“Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.” (Deut. 31:6, NASB)

“And the LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear, or be dismayed.” (Deut. 31:8, NASB)

In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For Thou alone, O LORD, dost make me to dwell in safety. (Ps. 4:8, NASB)

As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the LORD is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. (Ps. 18:30, NASB)

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. (Ps. 23:1, NASB)

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance. (Ps. 33:12)

Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. (Ps. 37:4–5, NASB)

Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. (Ps. 55:22, NASB)

When I am afraid, I will put my trust in Thee. (Ps. 56:3, NASB)

In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? (Ps. 56:11, NASB)

For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting, And His faithfulness to all generations. (Ps. 100:5, NASB)

The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. (Ps. 145:18, NASB)

How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the LORD his God. (Ps. 146:5)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. (Prov. 3:5–6, NASB)

Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength. (Isa. 26:3–4)

He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. (Isa. 40:29)

Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up *with* wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary. (Isa. 40:31, NASB)

“Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (Isa. 41:10, NASB)

“It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.” (Isa. 65:24, NASB)

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (Jer. 33:3, NASB)

*It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.* (Lam. 3:22–23)

“The righteous will live by his faith.” (Hab. 2:4b, NASB)

“For I,” declares the LORD, “will be a wall of fire around her.” (Zech. 2:5, NASB)

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28, NASB)

“And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.” (Matt. 21:22, NASB)

“For nothing will be impossible with God.” (Luke 1:37, NASB)

“If you abide in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31b–32, NASB)

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. (John 10:28)

“The Holy Spirit . . . will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” (John 14:26b, NASB)

If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? (Rom. 8:31b, NASB)

Your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:5*b*, NASB)

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Cor. 10:13, NASB)

For we walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Cor. 5:7, NASB)

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Eph. 2:8–9, NASB)

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think. (Eph. 3:20*a*, NASB)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6–7, NASB)

I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:11*b*–13, NASB)

In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thess. 5:18, NASB)

Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:16, NASB)

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU." (Heb. 13:5, NASB)

Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today, *yes* and forever. (Heb. 13:8, NASB)

He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of *the* divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:4*b*, NASB)

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. (1 John 5:4, NASB)

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Rev. 21:4)



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## NOTES

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