

CHRISTIAN, AT EASE!

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Preface

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

This book is edited from the lectures and unpublished notes of R. B. Thieme, Jr.

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A MOMENT-BY-MOMENT REST

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.
(Ps. 37:7a)

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard [garrison] your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:7)

THERE IS A DIVINE PROVISION of *perfect inner peace* for every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. This peace is related to the believer's relationship with Christ. If you have trusted Christ for salvation, you belong to the royal family of God (1 Pet. 2:9). You are in union with Christ (2 Cor. 5:17, 21). You now possess many divine assets guaranteed for all eternity (Eph. 1:3). As a believer you share everything Christ is and everything Christ has (Rom. 8:17).

Yet few Christians take advantage of the blessings God has given them. Many are so busy seeking happiness, so busy hustling around to find satisfaction and fulfillment, that they overlook one of the great principles in the Word of God. There is a place of inner peace, happiness, and strength, a place of stability, power, and impact within the grasp of every Christian. Despite difficult circumstances, despite pressures, testings, or problems, believers can have the “peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension.”

In Scripture, this place of peace is sometimes called “rest” (Heb. 4:1). It is not to be confused with a seventh day of rest (Lev. 19:3, 30) or a sabbatical year (Lev. 25:2, 4). This is a moment-by-moment rest—a place of blessing and power in the middle of the adversities of life. God intended for every believer to trust Him continuously. Yet many believers never utilize the grace provision of God, even though it is available to all.

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ . . . *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. (Eph. 1:3, 18)

If, as a believer in Jesus Christ, you have trusted Him for the *big* thing—salvation (Eph. 2:8–9)—can you now trust Him for the *little* things—your daily needs (Rom. 8:31–32)? Sending His own Son to the cross to bear your sins was the greatest provision God ever made for you (1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 2:2). If He did the *most* for you at the cross, will He stop doing things for you now? If He did the most for you when, as an unbeliever, you were His enemy (Rom. 5:10), it follows that He will supply your needs now that you are His child (Gal. 3:26).

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?
(Rom. 8:32)

Many Christians have heard the erroneous statement, “Just receive Christ as Savior, and all your problems will be solved.” If you have accepted this illusion, you are in for a shock! You have not lived until you have been in a desperate situation, where there is nothing you can say or do, where you are so stunned from the onslaught of catastrophe that you can barely even pray. Sooner or later, God brings every person to the end of his own human resources. Yet Jesus said:

“These things [Bible doctrine] I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take

courage [have confidence]; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

With God there are no hopeless situations. There is hope for everyone. For the unbeliever: *Believe in Jesus Christ*. For the believer: *Learn Bible doctrine*—listen to the teaching of the Word of God. Bible doctrine is the means by which you can stabilize your life and resolve every problem, sorrow, disappointment, and failure.

Are you aware that you cannot become the spiritually mature believer God wants you to be unless your faith is tested along the way? One of the most gracious things God does is to allow difficulties and hardships. In this way, you can learn to lean on Him rather than on your own ways and means.

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)

By *faith* you can claim this promise and others like it and move into this moment-by-moment *rest*. This is the ‘faith-rest’ life.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

If this has been a normal week, you have faced irritations, frustrations, disappointments—possibly

even heartbreaks and disasters. Perhaps you have been depressed or emotionally upset and have hit the ‘panic button’ over some situation. Under such conditions, you have two alternatives: Doubt God’s Word and be totally miserable, or believe God’s Word and enter the faith-rest life.

Human solutions are uncertain at best. Psychological sublimation and compensation provide only temporary answers. On the other hand, God says, Believer, lean on Me! Trust in Me! I have given you My Word—the promises and doctrines in the Bible. First, I want you to *know* them, and then I want you to *believe* them and *apply* them to your problems.

For in the day of trouble He will conceal me
in His tabernacle [promises]; in the secret
place of His tent [doctrine] He will hide me;
He will lift me up on a rock. (Ps. 27:5)

There are hundreds of biblical promises. Some are for time, others for eternity. The promises for eternity reflect the reality of your salvation and solve the problem of fear of death. They also nurture confidence, in view of that future occasion when God *will* fulfill them. God has promised you a body just like that of the Son of God (Phil. 3:21). God has promised that there will be no more sorrow, no more tears, no more pain, no more death—the old things will have passed away (Rev. 21:4). You will live forever in a mansion (John 14:2–3) and will be face-to-face with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

With your eternal future settled, you can now focus on promises designed for temporal problems on earth. These promises are yours to claim in adversity—today, tomorrow, and the next day.

You may be thinking, I never really have problems I can't handle; everything is going pretty well. Well, thank God for it. He gives you times of prosperity in which to prepare for periods of adversity. And if you live long enough, you are certain to face some disastrous situation. Yet even in suffering and pressure, it is possible to possess the same peace and happiness as in prosperity. That is stability!

You can wake up in the morning and say, Father, this is Your day. I am still breathing. I am still alive. What do You have for me today? Thank you, Father, for this period of difficulty. I know it is Your will for me at this time. God permits suffering to test your faith, to discipline you, or to teach you (as nothing else can) the value of knowing His Word.

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

It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn thy statutes. (Ps. 119:71)

I *know*, O Lord, that Thy judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me. (Ps. 119:75, italics added)

To you as a growing believer, adversity is a challenge to increase your knowledge of doctrine so that you will become spiritually mature and able to consistently rely on Him. All the information needed to pass the test resides in the canon of Scripture. Learn it! Then by faith simply claim the truths you have learned. Believe God's promises! In this way you will be strengthened by the very power of God (Heb. 4:11–14).

He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of *the* divine nature [manifesting the virtues of Christ through spiritual maturity]. (2 Pet. 1:4a)

DON'T MISS IT!

Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also [the Exodus generation]; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed [the faith-rest technique] enter that rest. (Heb. 4:1–3a)

Believers are generally commanded not to fear (Isa. 41:10). But here is one exception: The believer should be afraid of failing to enter the faith-rest life. The believer should be afraid of living a life of worry, anxiety, bitterness, jealousy, self-righteousness, pettiness, boredom, irritability—a life that falls short of God’s rest. The believer should fear missing the benefit of what God has provided in His Word. But the promises and doctrines of the Word are profitable only when the believer mixes them with his faith. And before he can *believe* promises, he must *know* them. Before he can *know* promises he must *learn* them. But he cannot learn or claim promises without the filling of the Holy Spirit. Before you can claim promises you must first follow the divine instructions related to fellowship with God.

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

The moment you receive eternal life through faith in Christ, you immediately are filled with the Holy Spirit and ‘in fellowship’ with God. You can never lose your salvation; your *eternal relationship* with God never changes (Gal. 3:26). But the moment you sin as a believer, you lose the filling of the Spirit and your *temporal fellowship* with God. God does not

intend for you to remain in a state of sin, continually out of fellowship. Therefore, He made provision for restoring the Holy Spirit's control, which renews your fellowship with God. You lose the filling of the Holy Spirit every time you sin; you recover it by private confession of your sins to God the Father. We will fail many times, but there is no failure too great for the grace of God. When you fail, name your sins, claim a promise, and live the faith-rest life.

LET THE LORD DO IT

Casting all your anxiety [care] upon Him, because He cares for you. (1 Pet. 5:7)

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)

The Hebrew word for “delight” in Psalm 37:4–5 means “to be occupied with.” When you love someone very much, you think about that person constantly. You are commanded to be occupied with the Lord in the same way. Blessings accrue from concentration on Jesus Christ.

The word “trust” in this passage is literally “keep trusting.” But how do you keep trusting Him under pressure? You tell the Father, I'm in a wretched

situation, a real jam. I know the principle of 1 Peter 5:7. So here it is, Lord: I'm committing my problem to You. I'm trusting You. This is Your problem, Father, You take it. You work it out. The battle is Yours!

The battle is the Lord's (1 Sam. 17:47). This principle came from the lips of David as he stood before Goliath. When you as a believer in Jesus Christ face overwhelming odds, when you suffer anxiety, cast your cares on God. This is no longer your fight. The Lord wants you to watch *Him* fight!

You may try to solve your own problem and say, "I just thought of something, Lord; give back that problem!" So you apply your own human solution, and everything falls apart. You become even more miserable and finally resolve to hand your problem back to God. Father, now I remember that only 1 Peter 5:7 will help me. Now I am ready to claim it. I am casting all my cares on You, all my anxieties, all my problems and worries. Here, Father, take them all!

Then you relax, and for a few minutes you have inner peace. But suddenly, you think of another solution: Oh, Lord, give it back! So you spend your time passing problems back and forth, while you remain frustrated and unhappy. God faithfully cares for you through it all, but the "rest" in faith-rest will not be yours unless you entrust your problems to Him, leave them with Him, and move on with the assurance that your life is in His capable hands.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FAITH-REST

For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent [eager] to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through *following* the same example of disobedience [unbelief]. (Heb. 4:10–11)

First of all, faith-rest is a continuous, *habitual faith*, which is often called “perseverance” or patience (Rom. 12:12). Patience does not imply that you should sit around and do nothing. Patience as described in Scripture means to be steadfast in believing God’s Word; to exercise a tenacious faith that continues even when trouble persists; to cling to God’s promises even though you have hit a dead end.

Second, faith-rest is the *absence of works*. This does not mean that you quit your job and become a bum. It means that you let God do your fighting for you. You cease trying to solve your own problems apart from God’s resources; you have a relaxed mental attitude—a peace of mind in the middle of everything that is happening around you.

When every detail regarding creation was provided, the Creator rested—not because He was tired, but because His work was completed (Gen. 2:2). Thus, as a memorial to His grace provision, God declared a “rest.” Originating from the “foundation of the world” (Heb. 4:3), this rest is perpetuated forever.

God has already worked out all problems and now offers a solution for every dilemma. He assures rest to those who claim His promises by faith.

The One who provided these promises is immutable and true; therefore, He is always faithful to keep His Word (Lam. 3:21–24). Because He is also omnipotent, He is “able also to perform” everything He has promised (Rom. 4:21). The mechanics will vary—He will either deliver you *out of* the problem or sustain you *through* the problem “that you may be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

A third characteristic of the faith-rest technique is *prayer*. Every time you use a promise like 1 Peter 5:7—“Casting all your anxiety [care] upon Him, because He cares for you”—you are exercising faith-rest. And that promise is claimed by prayer.

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)

HOW DO YOU FAITH-REST?

There are three steps in faith-rest. These steps form an effective drill to follow when you are so beset with difficulties that you cannot think clearly. Shock or pressure may cause your emotions to rise up in revolt within your soul. This may destroy your concen-

tration and temporarily obliterate the Bible doctrine you have learned. Then the step-by-step approach is essential. But this technique is even beneficial when the situation is not overwhelming. For this method firmly and systematically leads you into the store-room of your soul where your inventory of Bible doctrine is kept.

Step 1. *Claim a promise to stabilize your soul.* Recall a promise from the Word of God. 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 1 of the faith-rest drill is the capsule summary of many related truths. Remember those interconnected doctrines. Your faith-rest becomes more effective as it clings to a larger rock, as it weaves into a thicker rope, as it claims a whole complex of basic Bible doctrines.

You may use the *logistical grace rationale*, which emphasizes God's faithfulness in supplying your

needs. You may 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. Or you may use the *essence of God rationale*, which focuses on the attributes of God's very nature that guaranteed His promises. There are many doctrinal rationales. Every promise is based on one or more of these rationales and they lead to firm conclusions.

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

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is 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 it as true, but the faith-rest drill brings that doctrinal conclusion 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. You then can turn your attention back to the problem at hand. 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 as you move on in your life. Faith-rest may take

thirty seconds or much longer, depending on numerous factors. You may need to circle back and repeat a stage or start over from the beginning as fear crops up again. Ultimately, faith-rest becomes a continual way of life, for faith-rest is the problem-solving device that makes Bible doctrine become a living reality in your experience.

DEPEND ON THE LORD

One of the most difficult challenges in the Christian life is to depend on the Lord for deliverance without interjecting human solutions. This does *not* mean you simply sit down and give up, or let your mind go blank and attempt to blot out reality. Total dependence means you are to use your mind to trust the Lord constantly: “Stand by and see the salvation [deliverance] of the Lord” (Ex. 14:13*a*). Here is the secret: He gives power to the weary, to the weak. The Bible never says, God helps those who help themselves. *God helps the helpless.*

He gives strength to the weary, and to *him*
who lacks might He increases power. (Isa.
40:29)

You may constantly try to solve your own problems and may repeatedly encounter a stone wall. You may have the bumps on your head to show for it!

What you must do is recognize your total helplessness and begin to depend on Him. “The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent” (Ex. 14:14).

How do you depend on the Lord? First, you need to realize that “depend” can also be understood as “trust” or “faith.” There are several Hebrew words for faith.

1. *Aman*, translated “believed” in Genesis 15:6, is used primarily for salvation. It means “to use God as a prop or as a foundation; to lean on Him.”

2. *Batach*, translated “trust” in Psalms 37:3, 5 and 91:2, was originally used for one wrestler body-slaming another. From this derivative the word came to mean “pick up your troubles and slam them on the Lord.” This is the basic word for faith-rest.

3. *Chasah*, in Psalm 57:1, originally meant “to flee as a rabbit seeking refuge in the cleft of a rock.” Again, it is a word for faith. The psalmist used the analogy for hiding in a cleft of the Rock (Christ Jesus) where nothing can touch you.

4. *Yachal*, found in Job 13:15 and Lamentations 3:21, 24, carries the connotation of trusting while in extreme pain. Even though you are utterly miserable or in the agony of suffering, you can have the confidence of deliverance. Thus, it came to mean “to trust under pressure.”

5. *Qavah*, the strongest word for faith, translated “wait” in Isaiah 40:31, was originally used for mak-

ing rope by weaving a frail, easily broken strand into a strong rope that cannot be broken.

You may be a weak little strand, but when you keep trusting the Lord in spite of all difficulties, in spite of the hopelessness of the situation, you will exchange your frailty for the strength of the Lord.

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)

The result of perpetuating the faith-rest technique in spite of overwhelming odds is an exchange of human strength for divine strength. In other words, when you say, Lord I cannot do it, the Lord always answers, But *I* can! I will give you the strength to endure your problem. I will provide every resource necessary for you to meet this tragedy in your life. You trade in your inadequate human strength for God's all-sufficient power. And the result? You fly! You "mount up with wings like eagles." You do not live 'down in the dumps.' You soar above your problems.

Furthermore, you "will run and not get tired." Notice that the exchange of strength is not designed for sprinters. What is a sprinter? He is one who believes God's promises for a short time, especially

when he is in trouble. But when the problem disappears, so does his faith. On the other hand, divine strength is designed for the long-distance runner who appropriates God's power at a steady pace. The power of God does not fluctuate. It is constant and continuous and does not depend on the ebb and flow of human strength. Divine power in your life depends on trusting the Word of God during the tough times and in prosperity. Do you live by fits and starts? Or do you advance steadily toward spiritual maturity using the supernatural provisions of God?

The power of God the Holy Spirit combines with the Word of God in the execution of the Christian way of life (Rom. 8:16; Heb. 4:12). As the teacher of the Word, the Holy Spirit is the member of the Godhead who reveals Bible doctrine. The filling of the Spirit and the accumulation of Bible doctrine in the soul make the power of God available in the believer's life. The faith-rest technique is the means of utilizing that power. And when the believer claims this infinite power for every need in his life, he becomes a *Christian at ease*.

Then he "will walk and not become weary." Every believer is weary at times. We all become discouraged. We all 'throw in the towel' from time to time and give up. Walking depicts the believer in fellowship with the Lord (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18). A believer who will "not get tired" is *not* perfect. Rather, he logs a maximum amount of time in fellowship with God.

This believer knows and claims promises like Psalm 55:22.

Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous [the believer in Christ] to be shaken. (Ps. 55:22)

IT PAYS TO WAIT

Isaiah 40 teaches that it pays to *wait for the Lord*—to keep on trusting Him. He is the only One you can keep trusting with the assurance that all your problems will be solved. The One who formulated the solutions to all the exigencies of life has the power to solve them: “For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37). Man is impressed with his scientific progress, his new technologies, his exploration of outer space. But what is man’s achievement compared to the handiwork of the Lord Jesus Christ? Christ put into existence the innumerable stars and galaxies (Ps. 8:3; Col. 1:16–17). Don’t you think He can handle your problem?

Because of who He is and what He can accomplish, you should have peace, power, and stability, even in the most adverse of circumstances. Your faith should be an ever-present, positive, moment-by-moment trust in the power of God to handle your ‘catastrophes.’ The mature Christian believes the promises of God regard-

less of what happens, even to the extent that Job believed when he said, “Though He slay me, I will hope [have confidence] in Him” (Job 13:15a). *That* is waiting on the Lord! That is the moment-by-moment rest. That is the epitome of the faith-rest technique.

It is easy to believe the Lord’s promises when things are going your way. But if your situation is bleak and hopeless, isn’t the same Lord with you in the darkness? Can’t you look through the shadows and see Him in His Word, in the Bible doctrine stored up in your soul? If God—the Lord Jesus Christ—created the vast universe and has never lost track of one single atom; if He knows when a sparrow falls, don’t you think He can solve your problems?

He has a promise or a doctrine for *every* predicament, as well as for every success! Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday and today, *yes* and forever” (Heb. 13:8). He will never change. He will continue to wait for you to trust Him so He can bless you.

Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; how blessed are all those who long for Him. (Isa. 30:18)

Waiting on the Lord is the greatest economy of time. *Keep on believing the Word of God*—no matter what happens, no matter what the difficulties, no matter how adverse your circumstances.

And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)

PROMISES FOR BELIEVERS

Do not be fainthearted. Do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. (Deut. 20:3*b*–4)

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)

I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. (Ps. 16:8)

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord. (Ps. 27:14)

The steps of a man are established by the Lord; and He delights in his way. When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; because the Lord is the One who holds his hand. (Ps. 37:23–24)

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

Guarding the paths of justice, and He preserves the way of His godly ones. (Prov. 2:8)

The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee. (Isa. 26:3)

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)

The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. *They* are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. (Lam. 3:22–23)

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

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)

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us. (Eph. 3:20)

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:13)

And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:19)

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. (2 Tim. 1:7)

DOCTRINAL BIBLE STUDIES

Bible doctrine, the body of teaching drawn from a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, is the standard for spiritual truth. Bible study provides spiritual nourishment for the Christian (Matt. 4:4).

The importance of Bible doctrine cannot be overemphasized (Ps. 138:2). God commands the Christian to be inwardly transformed (Rom. 12:2). This transformation requires a daily renewing of the mind through learning and applying the Word of God (2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 4:23).

For many years doctrinal Bible classes taught by R. B. Thieme, Jr., have provided daily spiritual food for his congregation. Audio recordings of his classes and his books are available at no charge or obligation. A *Doctrinal Bible Studies Catalogue* will be provided upon request.

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