

## THE JOY AND PEACE OF THE LORD OR ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

This study looks at the spiritual causes of anxiety, fear, depression, and the multitude of soulish reactions to our circumstances that cause things like dissatisfaction, downheartedness, boredom, frustration, restlessness, nervous symptoms etc. It looks at turning things around by a new spiritual approach to life's circumstances, so that by living in union with the Lord in the power of His overcoming and victorious life, negative reactions are replaced by His joy and His peace that He desires to impart to us. This study focuses on how negative attitudes are formed, and how we may reset our lives in a new positive direction by the setting of our wills.

This study is definitely not opposed to medical treatments that alleviate or overcome symptoms, as it may be beneficial if both medical and spiritual approaches are adopted concurrently. All healings are a blessing from God.

"...I am the Lord who heals you." Ex 15:26.

### THE INFLUENCE OF OUR HEARTS AND MINDS

The following readings show a connection between the state of a person's heart and the illnesses caused by negative and soulish reactions.

**"A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance,  
But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."** Prov 15:13.

**"All the days of the afflicted are evil,  
But he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast."** Prov 15:15.

Spiritually speaking, the heart is the organ of our wills. What we will establishes the spiritual state of our hearts, or even the state of our whole lives. Because we are capable of changing our wills, or setting them in a new direction, we are capable of changing our hearts so that negative soulish reactions are replaced by positive reactions like contentment, satisfaction, thankfulness, acceptance, and even joy.

### DEPRESSION IS FROM SATAN

The following reading from Isaiah reveals part of God's commission to Jesus. It tells us that there is a spirit from Satan that invokes depression.

**"Because the LORD has anointed Me...  
To give them beauty for ashes,  
The oil of joy for mourning,  
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness [alternatively – depression]."** Isa 61:1-3.

Note that a spirit of Satan is involved in depression, and secondly, that God has given us a spirit of praise that overcomes depression. Being a spirit of depression, it can be rejected and cast away by the authority of the name of Jesus, thereby paving the way for a permanent

cure. From a spiritual point of view, this is accomplished by rejecting and putting off all negative self-reactions like introspection, frustration, futility, hopelessness etc. They should be laid on the cross as part of our 'old man,' and declared to be crucified with Jesus Christ. We should then 'put on' the Lord Jesus Christ and draw on the blessings of His indwelling life - particularly His joy and peace.

**“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him....”** Col 3:9-10.

**“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfil its lusts*.”** Rom 13:14.

The above process of casting off the spirit of depression, putting off the 'old man' and putting on Jesus Christ, is strongly resisted by Satan, and must be persisted with until Satan retreats.

**“Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”** James 4:7-8.

As James tells us, after resisting Satan, we must turn to God as little children, abandoning our care into His hands and resting in His love and faithfulness. Relinquishment and spiritual rest are key ingredients to our eventual cure.

And lastly, praise opposes depression because God inhabits the praises of His people. **“But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”** Ps 22:3. K.J.V.

Note in this next reading that it was the praises of His children that precipitated God's action on their behalf.

**“Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.”** 2 Chr 20:22.

## **DRAWING ON THE LIFE OF THE LORD**

Before drawing on the life of Jesus in us, we should be reminded of the fullness and capacity of that life. For instance, it is the very life and fullness of God.

**“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,..”** John 5:26.

In Jesus Christ dwells the fullness of God and the Holy Spirit.

**“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”** Col 2:9-10.

In Revelation, Jesus addressed each of seven churches in Asia, commenting on their spiritual progress. At the end of each letter He presented an encouraging word to a smaller group, whom He called 'overcomers.' This is His word to the overcomers at Ephesus. **“To**

**him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."** Rev 2:7.

Jesus was not talking about salvation because He was presenting this blessing to living people, telling them of the rewards of overcoming here and now in this life. Jesus Christ is the tree of life who dwells within all who believe in His abiding presence. It is by His life in us that we become overcomers.

Paul says that Jesus has become for us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. **"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.'**" 1 Cor 1:30-31. We may add that Jesus has become for us joy, peace, truth, faith, patience, fortitude or inner-strength, perseverance, - all that is necessary to meet our needs.

Jesus used the analogy of the vine and its branches to show us our need to draw on His indwelling life for our sustenance.

**"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me."** John 6:57-58.

When facing anxiety, depression, or any other debilitating symptoms, He wants us to draw on His life, particularly His joy and peace, to overcome. In the following reading it is HIS joy that He wants to impart to us.

**These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."** John 15:11-12.

By faith we can reject anxiety and fear, and draw on the joy of the Lord. The peace of the Lord is our stronghold, and the joy of the Lord is our strength.

**"...Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."** Neh 8:10.

Anxiety and depression can be so debilitating that there may seem to be no end to them, but **"the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."** 1 John 3:8.

When we turn to Him in helplessness, He meets our needs. Often this is with a word of reassurance directed into our spirits, or by quickening a Scripture that applies to our need. Such a 'rhema' word from God has the power to change darkness into light, or depression into gladness of heart.

**"Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad."** Prov 12:25. (a 'rhema' word from God, from the Scriptures, or a word spoken into our spirits, is a personal or subjective word).

## **OUR MINDS ARE A BATTLEFIELD**

The state of our hearts is determined by the setting of our wills - whether we walk after the Spirit in union with the Lord in His will, or cater to the desires of the flesh and the mind, which is the area most vulnerable to Satan's attacks. Satan interferes with our minds by directing our thoughts inwards, where they focus on fleshly desires or negative things like

frustrations, things we don't want to do or can't do, bodily symptoms, failures, apprehension about our futures - things that cause anxiety, fear, despondency, and depression. On the other hand, God is wanting us to turn away from self and introspection, and put our trust and dependence on Him.

A small child has its mind orientated towards satisfying self-desire, and cries when it is deprived of what it wants. But by the application of wise discipline, it learns to accept the will of its parents, and it learns to accept things it would rather not do. Gradually it is taught to see the needs of others, and to live in harmony with them. Even from a worldly point of view, self-centredness and introspection are destructive to our peace and well-being. As Christians, God desires us to forsake carnal self, laying it on the cross to be put to death by the Spirit. In particular, He wants us to reject and put off a carnal mind, and put on the mind of Christ, which is a sound mind that is not focused inwards, but one that is centred on the Lord.

**“You will keep *him* in perfect peace, whose mind *is* stayed on You, because he trusts in You.”** Isa 26:3.

**“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”** 2 Tim 1:7.

**“For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”** 1 Cor 2:16. [if by faith we put off our carnal minds and put on the mind of Christ].

When fears, anxieties and negative thoughts beset us, God wants us to abandon self-centeredness and introspection, and turn to Him with the trust of a little child, surrendering all into His hands. Jesus said, **“Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”** Matt 11:27-30. Taking the Lord's yoke upon us means that we share the load with Him, trusting in His strength to overcome rather than our own.

**“You will keep him in perfect peace,  
Whose mind is stayed on You,  
BECAUSE HE TRUSTS IN YOU.”** Isa 26:3.

## **THE LOVE OF GOD BANISHES FEAR**

This passage from the apostle John shows us some of the aspects of the love of God.

**“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”...**

**“No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him... “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.” 1 Jn 4:7-19.**

When we examine these Scriptures, these facts are brought to light.

1. God is love. That is an attribute of His nature that cannot change.
2. His love for us was demonstrated when He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross to bring about our salvation.
3. If we love God, and abide in love, God abides in us, and we in Him.
4. God reveals Himself to those who love Him.
5. The love that God has for us overcomes all fear, because we know that He is watching over us and keeping us as a loving father cares for his children. The love of God overcomes fear because it is the essence of God’s nature that is naturally opposed to fear engendered by Satan.
6. It is imperative that we love one another, for it is love that distinguishes us as Christians.
7. The test of love is in its self-sacrificing nature, putting the needs of others before our own. If God so loved us that He presented His own Son to be a sacrificial offering for our salvation, we should be convicted to lay our self-life on the cross so that Christ may reign in us and express His love through us.

## **ACCEPTANCE AND RELINQUISHMENT ARE IMPORTANT KEYS IN OVERCOMING**

Jesus was not a super being on earth. He experienced our human frailty, and the Scriptures reveal His anxiety and anguish as He faced the horror and agony of the cross. Obviously He would have known about the brutality of the Roman crucifixion, and Old Testament prophecies that foretold that He would be beaten beyond recognition, (Isa 52:14), mocked, rejected, and His body fixed to the cross by crude iron nails through His hands and feet. These segments from Psalm 22 are an example.

**“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? *Why are You* so far from helping Me, *And from* the words of My groaning? ...**

**All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;**

**I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaw...**

**The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look *and* stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.**

Jesus faced a prolonged agonising death isolated from His disciples and His Father. He knew that, because He was to represent the sin of mankind on the cross, God, could not be associated with the sin He represented. His acute suffering was portrayed in His prayer to His Father in the garden of Gethsemane.

**"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death."** Matt 26:38.

**"Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me;"** Mark 14:36.

But when Jesus prayed a prayer of acceptance, resignation, and relinquishment, God sent forth an angel to strengthen Him so that He could endure the coming ordeal.

**"...nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.**" Luke 22:42-43. Through His trial and crucifixion, His composure and dignity were compelling - even to the thief and the centurion who were convicted of His divinity.

### **TRIALS ARE SOMETIMES ALLOWED BY GOD IN ORDER TO PERFECT US**

In a refining work of holiness, it may require the power of our carnal fleshly nature to be broken through suffering, and our healing may be delayed until God's work is accomplished. If this is happening and we are open to the Spirit's guidance, He will show us that this is part of God's working, and reveal the things He wants us to address. At such times we should bear with patience, and let patience and endurance bear the fruit of righteousness.

**'My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.'** James 1:2-4.

**"Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."** Heb 12:11.

We are God's children, and He does not want us to live in misery, bowed down and defeated by Satan's attacks. While He was on earth, Jesus was confronted by continual attacks from Satan and those under his control. He overcame all things by drawing on the power of God's indwelling Spirit. Now God wants us to learn to be overcomers through His Spirit, and the life of Jesus implanted within us.