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a *Grace Notes* course

## **Doctrines of the Christian Faith**

Doctrine 100

by Warren Doud

Lesson 9 of 10

Divine Guidance  
Edification (Christian Growth)  
Faith Rest

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*Grace Notes*

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Doctrines of the Christian Faith  
Section I - Lesson 9

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## Divine Guidance

by Rev. Mark Perkins, Pastor, Denver Bible Church

Jesus Christ functioned under a system of divine guidance that was both similar to and unique from that used by church age believers.

Some believers in history have attempted to use the unique way in which Christ was led, and therefore ended up with disaster. If you stay with what is just for us as church age believers you will go the right way.

The unique part of divine guidance for Christ was that the Messianic prophecies related to the first advent. Christ knew these prophecies quite well as a part of His expertise on the Old Testament canon of Scripture. When He determined from His store of wisdom that it was time to fulfill a certain prophecy, then He did so with full confidence.

The wise decisions that Christ made in prophecy fulfillment were always kept within the constraint of His perfect character. Christ knew that He would fulfill prophecy; He did not manipulate events so that He would and thus look good. He let the opportunities present themselves within the integrity of the way that He conducted His life, and then He fulfilled them.

We do not have 'personal' prophecies about our lives as Christ did, and therefore we must avoid the Messiah syndrome with reference to divine guidance. Events in the Bible are not types for our lives; Bible verses do not provide direct guidance concerning where we should go or what we should do; there is no kind of 'twilight zone' guidance from the pages of Scripture.

One of the best illustrations of the Messianic guidance which Christ received from Old Testament prophecy is His wilderness temptation. The question is this: How did Christ know to go to the desert at that time? Here is what we do know:

**Matthew 4:1, "Then Jesus was led up into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil"**

The verb is in the passive voice, which indicates that our Lord did not produce the action of the

verb but instead received it. The constantive aorist tense summarizes the past action into one moment of time. The verb itself means to lead from a lower to a higher point. This point can be figurative, as in the case of spiritual maturity, or literal, as in this instance. Christ was going from the low point of the Jordan River (just a few miles from the lowest land elevation on the planet) to the rough wilderness above. This emphatically does not mean snatched away, as some have tried to make the point that the Spirit picked our Lord up and bodily moved Him to the desert. This is translated, 'was led up' The Spirit did the leading and Christ did the following.

A second prepositional phrase puts forth the leadership of the Spirit, who was the direct agent of the leading. It is HUPŌ TOU PNEUMATOS, and translated "by the Spirit.

The last clause of the verse is a purpose clause. The verb is the aorist passive of PEIRAZO, which means to put someone to the test. Depending on the one doing the test, the purpose may be good or bad. This is translated, 'to be tempted by the devil'

In the battle to come, it will be the ministry of God the Holy Spirit versus the temptation of the devil.

This is the first evidence testing done under the conditions of the church age. Christ is our prototype for the fulfillment of God's plan for the church age dispensation. An entirely new and never before tried set of grace assets will be put through its paces over the next forty plus days.

**Mark 1:12, "And immediately the Spirit cast Him out into the desert"**

The major difference here is in the verb that is used to describe the action of the Spirit in getting Christ to the desert.

The verb EKBALLEI is in the present tense, which reveals an action as it happens. It is the dramatic way to present the action typical of Mark's gospel. The verb literally means to cast out. The Spirit 'cast out' Christ into the wilderness. Again we do not yet know how this occurred, only that it did.

**Luke 4:1, "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was being led by means of the Spirit in the desert." The main**

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**change here is the revelation that Christ was led by the Spirit for the duration of His stay in the desert, and that it was from a state of being full from the Spirit that gave the leadership.**

Four words work together to form the foundational statement of the verse. They are translated "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit."

The nominative case of PLEIREIS forms the key part of the description it denotes a state of complete fullness. It can denote thought or emotion, negative or positive, but the idea here refers to the control of the soul.

The verse does not say how, but it does make it clear that Christ is under the control of PNEUMATOS HAGIOU, the Holy Spirit.

The first thing that Jesus does under the control of the Spirit is return from the Jordan, where he had just been baptized. The word for returned is HUPESTREPSEN, which is in the aorist tense. This describes a past action occurring in one moment of time, and thus the translation "He returned".

The second thing is that "He was being led by means of the Spirit."

The verb is the simple verb for the act of leading. It is in the passive voice and so reveals that the subject receives the action of leadership. The imperfect tense indicates that the action took place over a duration of time in the past, and not just at one moment. It is translated, "He was being led."

The preposition EN plus the instrumental case of means shows that the Spirit was the means of the leading.

EN TEI EREMO portrays both location in the desert and the amount of time spent there. It is translated, "in the desert" This tells us that the Spirit not only led Christ to the desert, but also the entire time that He was there.

Analysis of the three.

God the Holy Spirit exerted leadership in getting Christ to the desert to be tested.

Christ is our prototype, and therefore the way in which the Spirit leads Him is the way in which we are led.

The way in which the Spirit leads is fully revealed in the New Testament canon.

Just because all the mechanics are not revealed in these passages about the wilderness temptation does not mean that they are not there. In fact, it is implicit that they are from the mention of the Spirit's leadership.

The Spirit guides through the recall of Bible Truth.

The Spirit guided Christ through the recall of both the principles of Divine character and Messianic prophecy.

In this case, the Spirit recalled Isaiah 40:3-5, "A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain broad valley. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'"

Christ understood this passage as we do - it reveals the ministry of John the Baptist. Malachi 3:1 corroborates this fact.

And the ministry of John the Baptist was to prepare the way for the Messiah in the desert. From this it would seem obvious the direction that Christ would take upon the completion of His baptism - straight to the desert.

And so Christ obeyed the leadership of the Spirit and entered the desert - not by hocus pocus but by the recall of Messianic prophecy and application.

#### **Divine Guidance and the Essence of God**

In order to remain in the direct will of God you must begin with humility based on the essence of God proper.

In order to remain in the direct will of God you must have spiritual self esteem based on the capabilities of God.

In order to remain in the direct will of God you must make decisions from the nike - the victorious ideology of the Christian way of life. 1 John 5:4: "And this is the victorious ideology that has overcome the cosmic system - our doctrine."

The victorious ideology includes the right mental attitude of Divine Character.

The overall principle of righteousness and justice.

The motivation of personal love for God and virtue love for mankind.

The grace approach to problem solving and flexible proficiency.

The forethought of organization.

The principle of willpower in self control.

The extension of willpower over time in the temperament of faithfulness and dependability.

The communication with integrity.

The victorious ideology includes an understanding of the true goal.

The victorious ideology includes a thorough understanding the field of endeavor.

The victorious ideology includes an understanding of the mechanics which lead to the attainment of the true goal.

Implementation of the victorious ideology in any field of endeavor or matter of guidance will result in your ending up where God wants you - in His direct will.

In other words, make the decision from the best available information.

Recognize the function of the Divine Decree in the presentation of opportunity, but sift opportunity through the filter of Divine Character.

Do not seek to make things happen because of your unhappiness with your life circumstances.

If things are bad and the opportunity arises to move on, then do so. If things are bad and Divine character demands that you move on, then by all means do so.

Do not let circumstances dictate your decisions. Difficult circumstances are a test of your willpower and faithfulness, but not necessarily messages from God. Christ ran into endless difficulty in the execution of His ministry, but He did not use them as an excuse to stop teaching the Word. This is one of the primary reasons that I am still in the ministry.

On the other hand, if circumstances are overwhelming they may prompt you to reconsider your present position through the lens of divine character. You may find violations which force you in another direction. The divine discipline of Paul illustrates this.

Sometimes even when you have all of your ducks in a row with a decision God still overrules. You can bet that He has a greater purpose in mind for you if He does. 1 Thess 2:18 is the perfect illustration.

## Edification (Christian Growth)

### Definition / Etymology

One of the words in the Bible used to describe Christian growth is edification. Edification is the process of spiritual growth in a Christian who is living according to the plan of God and who is fulfilling the command to "grow in grace and in the knowledge" of Jesus Christ.

The Greek word which is translated "edification" is (oikodome), a noun found in a number of New Testament passages:

Rom. 14:19;

2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10

Eph. 4:12,16,19

2 Cor. 14:5,12

In all these passages, edification has two meanings.

- Collectively it refers to the building up of the body of Christ. In Eph. 4:16, you can see that the edification of individuals results in the building up of the church.
- For individual believers, edification refers to the spiritual growth and momentum in the Christian way of life, resulting in the glorification of God.
- When the collective connotation is used, oikodome should be translated "construction, building up," or "building process." When the individual connotation is used, oikodome should be translated "edification."

To grow in Christ, a Christian must be consistent on a daily basis in staying in fellowship with the

Lord through confession of sin, and learning and applying Bible teaching.

Edification is the means of advancement and productivity in the Christian way of life.

Doctrine that is learned must feed both the human spirit and the human soul for capacity for both human and eternal life. Edification of the soul is the result.

Love is the means of reaching maturity and being edified (growing in applied knowledge), 1 Cor. 8

The growth of Christian love is a sign that a person has been learning and applying doctrine. "By their fruit you shall know them..." The fruit of the Spirit is a result of edification.

- Personal love for God the Father is and motivation for the reception of doctrine.
- Impersonal love for all mankind is functional love. For example, it gives one the ability to listen objectively to a pastor-teacher regardless of his personality.
- Occupation with the person of Christ is the ultimate result of love.

#### Synonyms for Edification

- Light. Eph. 5, "...walk as children of light.
- "Christ formed in you" Gal 4:19, connotes edification.
- "The new man," Eph 4; Col 3, refers to edification
- "The perfect man," James 1:4.
- "Imitators of God," Eph 5:

The Importance of the Pastor's Teaching in Edification.

The responsibility of the pastor in edification is found in a number of passages.

**2 Cor. 10:8, For even if I should boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame,**

- The Corinthians wavered so much that Paul really had to get tough with them and throw his rank around.

- The Corinthians were reacting to Paul's authority and so were doing many things detrimental to their spiritual life.
- "Our authority" refers to those with the communication gifts of pastor-teacher as well as apostleship, e.g., Apollos and Timothy. The pastor establishes his authority through the communication of doctrine.
- Paul makes it clear that edification depends upon accepting the authority of a pastor-teacher who communicates doctrinal information.

**2 Cor 13:10, "For this reason, I am writing these things while absent, in order that when I am present, I may not use severity in compatibility with the authority which God has given to me for the purpose of your edification, and not for the purpose of destroying you."**

- No one can learn any subject without accepting the authority of the one who teaches.
- Therefore, the importance of understanding that edification comes through the teaching of a pastor in communicating the mystery doctrine of the Church Age.

**1 Thess. 5:12, "But we request of you, brethren, that you respect those pastor-teachers who work hard among you [studying and teaching], who have command over you in the Lord and give you instruction."**

The road to edification is paved with hundreds and thousands of lessons regarding the plan of God.

**Heb 13:17, "Keep obeying those who themselves are ruling over you, and submit to their authority [by learning Bible doctrine], for these same keep watching for the benefit of your souls as those who have to render an account. Keep obeying them, in order that they may do this accounting with joy, and not with groaning, for this is unprofitable for you."**

- The threefold purpose of the pastor is found in Eph 4:12, "for the purpose of equipping the

saints, for the production of Christian service, for the edification of the body of Christ."

- The "saints" refer to the family of God with emphasis on the baptism of the Spirit.
- "Equipping the saints" refers to God's grace policy and provision for the execution of the His plan.
- "Equipping" is the function of the pastor who, through teaching doctrine, is able to see people grow and become mature, productive Christians.
- All believers are in fulltime Christian service from the moment of their salvation. Christian service is the normal result of spiritual growth but never the means.

**Eph. 4:16, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.**

- Body function depends upon the proper use of joints. Athletic coordination depends upon the proper use of the joints.
- The result of the communication of doctrine is edification in your soul.

#### The Motivation of the Believer in Edification.

There are two categories of motivation: Positive volition and humility

Positive volition is expressed in Rom 14:19.

"Consequently, we run after [pursue] those things related to prosperity and edification."

- Running, not walking, expresses positive volition toward the mystery doctrine of the Church Age, which gives us all the details regarding God's plan, purpose, and will for our lives after salvation.
- This includes the learning, understanding, and application of the mystery doctrine of the Church Age as the means of executing the plan of God.
- Prosperity and edification go together; both are the result of continual positive volition.

- In order for consistent perception of doctrine to occur, it is important to have a mental attitude of humility.

**Rom. 12:2-5, And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

**"For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.**

**"For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function,**

**"so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."**

- The standard of thinking from doctrine includes every aspect of divine viewpoint, orientation to life through enforced and genuine humility, and everything that makes us objective and teachable toward the Word of God.
- "Many members in one body" emphasizes that although we have different spiritual gifts and different personalities, we all belong to one family, the body of Christ.
- Without genuine humility, there is neither objectivity nor teachability. Without objectivity and teachability in life, you will be miserable, whether you are a believer or unbeliever, successful or not. Without objectivity and teachability, there is no edification.

#### Edification: The Key to the Proper Function of the Local Church.

**1 Cor 14:12, "So also you, since you are eager to have the function of spiritual gifts, seek to abound in spiritual gifts that edify the church."**

The Corinthians were all eager to get the gift of tongues because it was spectacular, and then they could assume they were spiritual.

But "Seek to abound" means you should give precedence to those spiritual gifts which result in edification. The primary spiritual gift in this category is the gift of pastor-teacher.

The pre-canon temporary gifts did not edify the church.

**1 Cor 14:26, "When you assemble, let all things be done for edification."**

There are a number of ways in which we worship God, but they must all relate to our spiritual growth. Everything in assembly worship should be done with a view toward the objective, which is edification. The objective is to communicate the Word of God, the purpose of which is to produce edification.

The key to the correct function of the local church is edification. Edification, or the advance to spiritual maturity, is the objective of the Christian way of life.

In the context of 1 Cor. 14, the gift of tongues did not fulfill that purpose. 1 Cor 14:40 concludes that the gift of tongues did not do "all things properly and in an orderly manner."

### The Results of Edification

You begin with a foundation of eternal salvation and a body of teaching, the revealed scriptures, "built upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."

The moment you personally believed in Jesus Christ, a foundation was constructed, comprised of the many things from God. The foundation is Jesus Christ.

The foundation is constructed on the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

**2 Tim 2:19, Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal; the Lord knows those who are His.**

**1 Cor 3:11 No one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

With edification you become spiritually self-sustaining and you function under the privacy of your priesthood to resolve your own problems, including the greatest problems in life.

Problems are resolved in two ways: through the use of the biblical problem solving devices, and through understanding of specific principles in the Word of God.

### Edification Motivates Believers

Edification is the motivation in the function of love in the congregation, through which tolerance provides room for spiritual growth.

**Rom 15:2, "Let each of us accommodate his neighbor for the good to edification."**

**1 Cor 10:23, "All things are lawful, but all things do not edify."**

**Acts 9:31, "All the church were having prosperity, having been edified, and advancing in occupation with Christ."**

### Faith Rest

#### Introduction

One of the consistent features of the Christian life is testing. We live in a fallen world, in an imperfect society, among people whose way of life is directed by Satan and their own sin natures. We cannot avoid the friction, conflict, or confrontation that results from this. We face daily disasters, small and great, which are brought on us suddenly by nature, by the ignorance or deliberate actions of other people, or even by our own mistakes and sins.

Faith-Rest is God's plan for Christians who are going through testing, who are having problems. Faith-Rest is the means by which Christians can have JOY, a happiness in this life which does not depend on people, circumstances, or things. Think of it! God promises that you can have the peace and joy of God, in spite of what's happening in your life, in spite of the problems and testing that you are going through.

Your testing may be mild or severe, or anything in between. There are family troubles, money problems, social conflicts, problems on the job...the list is endless. The charge of the elephant, or the charge of the mosquito, will come at any time, and usually without warning.

But you can always depend upon God's immediate and constant provision for you in your time of testing. He knows all about our tests before they occur and has made provisions in advance to meet our needs. (Eph. 1:3,4)

**1 Cor. 10:13, "These has no testing taken you but such as is common to man; but God will, with the testing, also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.**

Hebrews 4 tells us that the wilderness generation didn't find rest because they didn't trust God to keep His promises. There's no reason we (believers of the church age) have to make the same mistake."

Whether the test is small or great, it is allowed by God to measure our faith and our application of the things He has provided for us in this life.

**1 Peter 1:7 "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."**

**1 Peter 5:6,7 "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you."**

### Definition of Faith-Rest

Faith-Rest: the process of understanding, believing, and applying the doctrines and promises of God's Word in times of testing in the Christian life.

The term "faith-rest", and its definition above, is taken from the Scriptures in Hebrews 4:1,2 "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. 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."

(Read Hebrews 3 and 4 before continuing with this study.)

Faith-Rest is designed to be used by the Christian throughout his lifetime, on a daily basis, as a technique for maintaining peace and spiritual balance during difficulties, problems, or disasters

in life. Faith-Rest is one of the Christian's most important resources in making rapid progress toward Christian maturity and the production of divine good in the life.

There are two reasons why Christians fail to grow and prosper in the Christian life, and fail to profit from all the blessings, promises, and logistical provisions which God has put in place.

The most common reason for failure to "enter into rest" is a lack of knowledge of God's plan and the assets He has provided for us. Christians who don't know what the Word of God says will never know the promises of God or the provisions He has made for testing.

The other reason for failure is seen in the Children of Israel of the wilderness generation. They heard the teaching but did not mix it with faith, so they did not enter into rest (the promised land).

### Examples of Faith-Rest (or lack thereof)

In this section, there are several examples from the Bible in which the people of God had ample information on which to base their faith in God. Sometimes the people trusted God and prospered. Sometimes the people showed a complete lack of trust in God and fell apart when the tests came.

You will see in these Bible passages that the extent of a believer's spiritual maturity becomes obvious in hard times. It's easy to maintain a facade when things are going well, when there's plenty of money, good health, and little to worry about. All Christians look and behave about the same in good times. But when testing comes, those who have actually failed to grow in Christ come apart at the seams, and fall back into patterns of worry, blaming other people, and trying to solve their own problems by worldly means.

The examples discussed here are:

Abraham, who first distrusted, then believed God, Genesis 15

The Bitter Water Test at Marah, Exodus 15

The No-Food Test and the First No-Water Test at Meribah, Exodus 16,17

The "Giant" Test, Numbers 13 and 14

The Second No-Water Test, Numbers 20

The Example of Abraham - Genesis 14 and 15

Genesis 14 has the account of Abraham's great victory. After a victory there is a tendency to let down, to be vulnerable, both in the physical and spiritual realms. A football team coming off a win is harder to motivate for the next game. A victorious army tends to become complacent and underestimate the enemy. It is well to remember that Satan keeps charging; and he is especially skilled at counterpunching, at exploiting any temporary weakness. And worry is one of Satan's chief weapons.

**1 Peter 5:8,9 "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walks about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."**

**Gen. 15:1 "After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceedingly great reward.'**

Here is God's promise of protection and an outpouring of grace blessings. The Lord has solutions for Abraham based on grace provisions which God had laid up for him from eternity past. That is, God's plan for Abraham is already set up and operational. It is merely a matter of Abraham's remembering God's previous promises and believing them.

God says "Do not worry; do not be frightened." There is only one logical thing for Abraham to do when the Lord is his shield, strength, and reward - RELAX!

**Deut. 31:6-8 "Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them [the giants in Canaan]; for the Lord your God, he it is who goes with you; he will not fail you, nor forsake you. And Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, 'Be strong and of good courage; for you must go with this people unto the land which the Lord has sworn unto their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is who goes before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you, neither forsake you; fear not, neither be dismayed."**

**Isa. 41:10-13 "Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; yea, I will help you; yea, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were angered against you shall be ashamed and confounded, they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them, and shall not find them, even them that contended with you; they that war against you shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought."**

Who is the one making these promises? It is the Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe! And every promise of God is backed up by His perfect character and His perfect character. Our thinking about His promises can be related to His divine attributes, for example:

Sovereignty: God in His designed Faith/Rest as part of His plan for us.

Righteousness: God is perfect goodness, so any trial will be good for us.

Justice: Guarantees that His plan for us is fair, that we will always be treated justly.

Love: we know that every situation in life is governed by God's love for us.

Eternal Life: God is eternal and we have everlasting life with Him through Christ's work on the Cross. God always plans with eternity in view.

Omniscience: God knows about my trials or sufferings even before they happen; and He has already planned what to do about them.

Omnipresence: God is always present and available to help.

Omnipotence: God is all-powerful so He always has the capability to carry out his promises and to provide help in time of need.

Immutability: God never changes in His attitude toward us, and all of His characteristics remain the same, forever.

Truth: God never lies; therefore what He has promised, He will perform (see Romans 4).

Abraham has had great victory, then he fails. He has started to worry, to cave in. He still feels he

has something to complain about. He has no male heir, and if there is no male heir, the inheritance will go to Eliezer.

**Gen. 15:2 "And Abram said, 'Lord God, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?'"**

Worry is often a sin, Rom. 14:23, "...whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Worry is, in fact, equivalent to blasphemy. Worry slanders God by saying that His promises are lies or that God is not able to keep His promises. In other words, the fearful person believes that God can not or will not keep His promises.

Worry is the opposite of Faith-Rest. And Faith-Rest is the answer to worry.

Abraham has two choices: (1) he can try to solve his own problems by worrying, fretting, planning, being upset and angry, trying to scrounge up answers, trying to work around things, etc., or (2) he can let God solve the problems he cannot handle.

Gen. 15:3 "And Abram said, 'Behold, you have given me no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is my heir.'"

Abraham blames God for his troubles. Blaming others, especially blaming God, is a sure sign of spiritual deterioration. A mature person takes responsibility for his own actions. It is a trend in modern psychology to find someone or something to blame for troubles, such as parents, the environment, the community, politicians, employers, etc. But this tendency ignores every divine provision, every blessing, every law, and every principle of suffering.

**Gen. 15:4-6 "And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, 'This shall not be your heir, but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir.' And he brought him forth abroad, and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars, if you can number them.' And he said to him, 'So shall your seed be.' And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness."**

Here God restates His promises (of the Abrahamic Covenant) and gives Abraham a dramatic illustration of what He means, by showing him

the stars. Finally, Abraham believes God. He has about 15 more years to wait before Isaac is born, but he is able to wait patiently and have inner peace because he has laid his burden on the Lord.

### The Bitter Water Test - Exodus 15

Have you ever had a wonderful Sunday attending church, worshipping the Lord, enjoying the fellowship of believers, everything that make you glad to be a Christian, only to see your whole attitude change at work on Monday as your job seems to throw you into another world?

Read Exodus 14 and 15 of the account of the Israelites escaping from Egypt. They saw God 24 hours a day in the cloud and in the fire. In their terror of the Egyptians they prayed frantically to God to save them, and saw the Red Sea open up, crossed on dry land, and watched the Egyptian army being destroyed as the waters closed back over them.

And what a victory celebration they had. Read the great song of victory they sang. "The Lord is my strength and my song...The Lord is a man of war...Thy right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy...Who is like thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders..." And on and on.

But ... just three days later, on the march, they came to the Bitter Sea, Marah, and ...

Exo. 15:24,25 "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He tested them."

As a nation, the Israelites were spiritually immature. They had no spiritual stamina and no real understanding of who the Lord is or what He could do. This is the first of many tests they would fail, tests designed to demonstrate to them how helpless they were without God. As you know, throughout their 40 years wandering in the wilderness, and in spite of daily teaching from Moses, Aaron, and Levites, in spite of witnessing miracle after spectacular miracle, only a small

percentage of these people ever learned to rely completely on the Lord.

### The No-Food Test and First No-Water Test - Exodus 16,17

Exodus 16 gives details of the No Food test, also failed by the Israelites, in which they murmured again against Moses, Aaron, and God. In this case God provided manna for them. This chapter is a litany of whining, complaining, and miserable behavior. And chapter 17 continues the story.

There was no water at Rephidim, and the people blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt so that their children and cattle could die of thirst. Their complaining was so vehement that Moses named the place Meribah ("chiding").

Of course, the Lord provided water from the rock, at the same time giving a beautiful picture of the gospel. Remember that God's grace depends on His character, not on our character or faithfulness. The people received what they did not deserve.

### The Giants Test - Numbers 13,14

Numbers 13 describes a reconnaissance patrol which was led by a high ranking officer from each of the 12 tribes. Moses would not commit a force of 2,000,000 people into a land without sending out a patrol. The patrol would spend 40 days in enemy territory before returning to Kadesh-Barnea.

Num. 13:1,2. The people received directions from the Lord. Note the promise, "...the land which I give unto the children of Israel..." The Israelites were not being asked to move into the land on "blind faith". There is no such thing as blind faith. Faith is the best eyesight in the world when it is based on the promises of God. Faith is the ability to rest on God's omniscience.

Num. 13:3-16. Caleb and Joshua are recognized as two of the great men of history, men who know the wisdom and grace of God and are willing to commit themselves to it. To them, the Word of God was more real than any situation they were to face. They were fully adjusted to their circumstances, whether good or adverse.

Num. 13:17-20. Detailed instructions for the reconnaissance. "Be ye of good courage..." One

thing necessary for a successful mission, the right mental attitude. The difference between courage and fearfulness is being emphasized here. And the difference is Faith-Rest! Caleb and Joshua believed the promises of God, the other ten did not. Caleb and Joshua had courage, the other ten did not.

When the spies returned, the camp was divided into two groups, a small group of confident, courageous people who believed God, and a large group of fearful people who were shaking in their boots. There were giants in the land, and the majority were afraid of them, in spite of the promises of God.

The Lord is greater than any giant in a Christian's life. "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." The Lord knew in advance that there would be giants in Canaan, and He had prepared everything ahead of time for them to occupy the land. Yet, in spite of having met (and failed) test after test, and having seen God perform many wonderful miracles, they still lacked courage.

Num. 13:21-27. This is a complete confirmation of what the Lord said would be the case in the land. And His promises had been repeated time after time. Exo. 3:8,17; 13:5; 33:3.

"Milk and honey" is an idiom for a prosperous land. The only believers who enjoy the provision of God are those who see and appropriate God's provisions by faith. We do not live by sight. We have provisions for today, food, clothing, shelter. But what God provides for the soul cannot be seen, except by faith. But the eyes of Faith-Rest are greater than natural eyes.

Num. 13:28-33. There is no doubt that they are up against a formidable enemy. The Hittites were one of the greatest nations in the ancient world; they discovered iron and were the first to use iron weapons. The Jebusites were very powerful warriors who had not been conquered for several hundred years; their central fortification was a city called Jerusalem. The Amalekites were craft idol and demon worshippers and child sacrificers.

Caleb had seen God handle all of their problems time after time, but he was not able to persuade the rest of the people. They were afraid of the giants.

Num. 14:16. This verse explains the whole thing. The Lord could not bring them into the land because (1) their attitude toward God was bad; (2) their attitudes toward people was bad (mental attitude sins); and (3) they were negative toward God and His teaching.

Num. 14:17,18. Lack of faith in God affects succeeding generations. Where parents do not teach their children, and set the example for them, the children will follow the worldly ways of their parents. Moses prays to God that somehow He will prevent this.

Num. 14:19-23. These verses provide great insight into how God's love and grace can be shown while not compromising His justice and righteousness. He forgives the people for their lack of faith, but He still forbids the majority from entering the promised land.

Num. 14:24. Caleb was different. He listened to the Word of God every day, and He maintained an attitude of faith that was in line with the doctrine and promises he had learned. Therefore he had a relaxed mental attitude and a good knowledge of how to function in God's plan.

Num. 14:25-30. A description of darkness in the soul. God calls this people an evil congregation and pronounces the sin unto death on the majority of the adult population.

### **The Second No-Water Test - Numbers 20**

Historically, now, we are near the end of the 40 years wandering occasioned by the sins and unbelief of the previous generation. Most of those who were adults 39 years ago have died in the wilderness. Now their children are adults, and they have apparently learned nothing! For here is a repetition of the "no-water" test, in the same location and virtually under the same circumstances as the first one.

Num. 20:1. Miriam died at this time, and she was buried in Kadesh. Her death is representative of those who were removed under the final stage of divine discipline, the sin unto death. Now the new generation faces the issue of Faith-Rest living.

Num. 20:2. "There was no water for the congregation..." God will permit tests of all sorts, usually in the form of some disaster, heartache,

frustration, or pressure situation which could be classified as a "no-water" situation.

You can handle a "no-water" situation in two ways. You can try to solve it yourself, or you can put it into the Lord's hands. The issue is what takes place in the soul. Resting in God, claiming the promises, requires categorical knowledge of the Word of God and a proper attitude of faith toward the Lord and His teaching.

No hopeless situation is really hopeless when viewed from the divine viewpoint. A believer who has Bible principle applied in his life is going to manifest many things, including a relaxed mental attitude, true happiness and joy, and a reliance on promises.

A no-water situation is never a no-water situation with God. He has provided the "water" for every situation before the world was created. But the promises of God are never superimposed on the believer's life. They are an expression of His love, but God does not force His love upon us.

The believer who does not live in the Word has mental sins, fears, worry, anxiety, bitterness, etc. And this is expressed through murmuring. The believer with doctrine in the soul expresses his own love for God through Faith-Rest.

Num. 20:3. "The people chode (meribah) with Moses..." As soon as things go wrong, the sin nature begins to express the darkness in the soul, bitterness, implacability, fear. This causes the people to murmur against the authority which God has provided and they blame Moses and Aaron for the whole thing.

These people are actually suicidal, an evidence of great inconsistency, extreme emotional swings, and complete disorientation to life.

Num. 20:4,5. Note, this "evil place" that the congregation is complaining about is exactly the same place where God had demonstrated His love and grace before, by providing water! The believer who calls Grace "evil" has a badly scarred up soul. They have negative volition to grace and the promises of God. In their self-consciousness they have self-pity. Their mentality is dominated by mental attitude sins of worry, bitterness, vindictiveness. Their emotions are unstable. And

in their conscience they have strictly human viewpoint and standards.

They are thinking of the details of life, and they expect the details of life to bring them happiness. Any believer who ignores the Word of God and looks to details of life for provision and happiness has had it! The Word of God points the believer toward God; human viewpoint points him toward Egypt.

When a believer recalls something from his past, something pleasant, instead of recalling he promises of God, he is "looking back at Egypt." A Christian who operates on Grace principles can take Egypt of leave it. He will be confident and happy in any situation, because God is greater than the most hopeless situation.

God demonstrates His love for us through adversity in a way that would be impossible in Heaven. Heaven is perfect environment, with no problems of any kind.

Hebrews 3:7-9 "Wherefore, as the Holy Spirit says, today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation (meribah: from the Hebrew of Psalm 95:8-11), in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test, I proved me, and say my works forty years."

To "harden one's heart" means to have a habitual and willful unbelief in God and His Word.

God was faithful to the people for the whole 40 years of wilderness wandering, yet they failed the "no water" test.

### The Benefits of Faith-Rest

As a Christian grows in grace, he will use Faith-Rest with increasing skill and power, and it will support all of his divine viewpoint thinking and production. Faith-Rest relies entirely on the continuous ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit, therefore the believer will benefit from Faith-Rest only when he is in fellowship, walking in the Spirit [Rom. 14:23].

Faith-Rest was the means of spirituality for believers in the Old Testament. [See Hab. 2:4; Heb. 11; Rom. 4:17-25] One of the principle passages relating to Faith-Rest is Hebrews 3 and 4,

particularly the section from 3:6 to 4:16. Please read this passage in your Bible before proceeding.

Following are some principles of the Faith-Rest system:

Faith-Rest is from God, Who is perfect. No human works or deeds can be added to this perfect divine provision.

To enter into God's rest, the believer must cease from his deeds (human good) and enter into a rest in which he does no work. The Holy Spirit does the work, Heb. 3:7 to 4:16.

Faith is required, not works. Faith implies the absence of human merit. The merit for Faith-Rest lies in the object of faith, God the Father and His Word. The doctrines and promises of the Word must be mixed with faith, Heb. 4:1,2.

Faith-Rest produces a relaxed mental attitude and victory over mental attitude sins, Isa. 26:3,4; Rom. 5:5.

Faith-Rest is the basis for dynamics in prayer, Mt. 21:22; Mk. 11:25.

Faith-Rest is a principle of victory in spiritual warfare, Heb. 11:6; 1; Jn. 5:4,5.

Faith-Rest is a part of the Christian Way of Life in the Church Age, 2 Cor. 5:7.

The extent to which Faith-Rest applies to every aspect of a believer's life can be seen in the more than 7,000 individual promises in the Bible which can be claimed by the Christian in one way or another. See, for example, 1 Pet. 5:7; Isa. 41:10; Ps. 4:8; 55:22; 56:3.

In order for Faith-Rest to function it is necessary for the Christian to take in the Word of God on a daily basis, so that he learns which promise provisions have been made available. And The Christian continually filled (controlled) by the Holy Spirit through confessing sin Biblically. Use of the Word of God in this manner provides the following benefits:

Inner rest, the "peace of God that passes all understanding."

A happiness (+H) that does not depend on people, circumstances, or things.

A relaxed mental attitude arising out of victory over sins of mental attitude.

The ability to have genuine personal love toward those close to you and genuine impersonal love toward others.

The desire to be occupied with Christ and to study God's Word more.

Divine provision for every need.

The key to the success of the Faith-Rest system lies in the validity of the object of our faith, the Word of God. Therefore, every aspect of the perfect character (essence) of God the Father supports Faith-Rest.

### How to Apply Faith-Rest

The objective of Bible teaching is the presentation of Bible doctrine which the Christian can use in his daily life. People differ in their abilities to retain and recall doctrines and promises when they are needed.

You never know when you will be required to use a particular doctrine, and you may be able to recall only a tiny amount of what you have heard from the Pastor-Teacher in the past. For this reason, you must take in doctrine on a daily basis so that usable doctrine accumulates gradually in small increments, line upon line and precept upon precept.

There must also be continuous repetition of important principles and reinforcement in learning how various Bible principles interrelate.

As you study the Bible you will discover that a divine frame of reference is being built in your soul by which you can receive, understand, and apply further doctrinal teaching. Truth builds upon truth. Isa. 28:10. You will see that God's viewpoint is gradually replacing your human viewpoint on many issues. You are building a set of divine standards by which you will be able to exercise wisdom and discernment and make correct decisions in life.

You will grow in spiritual maturity if you maintain continuous momentum in the Christian Way of Life for an extended period of time. Your personal intake of the Word of God constitutes its own reward as you benefits from living the truth.

In the faith application of the Word of God, you will draw on your accumulated resources of Bible teaching in order to cope with your problems and take control of your own life. The Word of God in your soul makes you self-sustaining, independent of anything in the world system, and able to face life with courage and confidence as you fulfills God's plan for your life.

Faith-Rest, then, is designed by God as a versatile technique for overcoming problems in life. By FAITH you apply doctrine logically from the resources in your soul, meanwhile you are RESTING in the promises of the Word of God.

The steps in the Faith-Rest technique are:

1. Establish fellowship with God (the filling of the Holy Spirit) through Biblical confession of sin.
2. You may then recover a relaxed mental attitude by claiming promises from the Word.
3. As a means of calling up divine viewpoint thinking, concentrate on pertinent doctrines related to the issue at hand.
4. Take control of the situation as you reach doctrinal conclusions.

### An Example of Faith Rest - Victory Over Fear

Because concentration on Bible truth is so important, your mental attitude is a prime target of Satan's attacks against the power of the Word of God. Mental attitude sins and doctrinal thought cannot coexist. Everyone is susceptible to various combinations of events, circumstances, or people who cause arrogance, bitterness, depression, self-pity, worry, anger - anything to block out God's thoughts.

One of your most potent enemies, for example, is fear. Fear is a mental attitude sin which shuts down thought and closes out divine viewpoint. No matter how much doctrine is resident in your soul, none of it will help if your mind is immobilized by fear.

Note: It is not a sin to be scared, to be afraid of something that is dangerous or which threatens to harm you. Sinful fear, though, is a continuing morbid mental attitude in which you say, in effect, that God cannot or will not protect you in time of danger.

Fear opposes the believer's confidence and courage in the Christian Way of Life, 1 Jn. 4:18. It is not surprising to find that one of the strategies most often used by Satan is that of causing believers to be filled with fear.

To deal with fear, proceed as follows:

Confess sin. Fear is a sin. While confession will not conquer fear, it must be the first step. The fear has caught you off guard and you must quickly recover your mental poise and your ability to think and use doctrine. Therefore, confession and restoration to fellowship is the first requirement.

Claim promises. Following confession of sin, recover a relaxed mental attitude by claiming promises found throughout the Word of God relating to fear, such as

**Isa. 41:10, "So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."**

**Rom. 8:28, "For we know in fact, that to those who love God, he works all things together for good, to those who are the called ones according to a predetermined plan."**

If you don't remember many good promises, look them up in a concordance, look at a list of promises, or call a friend for some help.

A promise is God's guarantee, a capsule statement of Bible doctrine on which to anchor your mental attitude. A promise expresses the character of God and provides you with an instant perspective on things and gives you the ability to reduce the most complicated situation to utmost simplicity. Where panic reigned, peace can now be restored.

Note: claiming promises is never an end in itself. It is only the beginning of the application of Faith-Rest. Promises cannot sustain a relaxed mental attitude and they cannot solve complex problems. Promises are used to make possible the most important phase of Faith-Rest, doctrinal thinking.

Apply doctrine. Your concentration on doctrine in Bible class and in your studies has brought doctrine into your soul. Now you will apply this doctrine by moving it to the front of your mind to meet the demands of the moment. You will apply a "rationale" to the situation.

A "rationale" is a "reasoned exposition of principles or statements of reasons; a set of reasoned rules or directions." By mentally tracing out the principles related to a crisis, you are re-explaining to yourself the basic concepts of doctrine that apply to the situation. This is necessary because fear and the accompanying emotions have revolted against thought, and you must take conscious and deliberate steps to reinstate the rightful authority in your soul.

You could, for example, think through some conclusions derived from Rom. 8:29,30, "For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers, and those He predestinated, He also called, those He called, He also justified; those He justified He also glorified." Your thought process might go like this ...

First, "God thought about me in eternity past."

Next, "He designed a perfect plan for me in eternity past."

Then, "He chose me for a privileged part in His plan."

Therefore, "God can bless me right now because I possess His righteousness."

Finally, "God will bless me forever in Heaven."

These simple statements are really a set of five basic doctrines which help restore divine viewpoint thinking. By using this system of concentrating on doctrines which you have already learned, you can immediately recall your place in the overall picture of God's grace. By this faith application of doctrine, you can become stabilized and regain objectivity.

Take control of the situation.

**Romans 8:31,32, "What conclusion are we forced to face with these things? Since God is for us, Who is against us? Who did not spare His own unique Son, but delivered Him over on our behalf, how shall He not with Him graciously give us all things."**

These conclusions, stated in these verses as rhetorical questions, enable you to take control of situations which formerly caused fear and anxiety. With objectivity and confidence restored, you can

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evaluate your circumstances and make the decision or take the action which your own wisdom and discernment dictate as the solution to the problem.

Even if the problem is hopeless, completely beyond your control, you can still cope with it by intelligently trusting the Lord for a solution.

Any Bible doctrine you have stored in your human spirit can be developed into a rationale to meet a test or crisis in your life.

At one time or another you will need every doctrine that you have had an opportunity to learn.

If you find yourself lacking inner resources in time of crisis, it means that you have not prepared yourself in advance for the testing. Testing will come, ready or not.

In using Faith-Rest principles, you are employing the thinking of God and His eternal wisdom as your own guide and counsel.