

Counsel for Times of Trial

There are four Biblical principles that may be of help to you. Study and pray about each of these. These are not "magic" formulas - so the mere knowledge of them will not particularly help. These are truths, given to us by God, so when we know and practice them in the trust of faith and love He can minister to us. There is no other way that God can help us except through His truth. (John 8:32)

1. It is important to understand why our emotions get control of us so easily. Our emotions are a part of our "functions". When God made us in the Garden of Eden He created us as a person with four basic functions, our mind (thoughts), emotions (feelings), will (choices), and body (desires).

In the Garden of Eden these functions were all under our control. In the Fall we lost control of them. Now, even for the Christian who has not learned self-control (Gal. 5:23), these often control us.

Many believers seem to be at the mercy of their thoughts, feelings, weakness of will, or bodily desires. We know what we should do - but somehow we cannot.

It is pleasing to God when we "take charge" of ourselves. Use the handout entitled "Take Charge". Work hard at this. State the affirmation many times. Do not test how well you are doing by appealing to your feelings! You will be surprised how well this works - if you will persevere long enough in doing this by faith.

2. The second principle has to do with the conviction that God is good and what He does is goodness. Satan always seeks to convince us that this is not true. When we doubt this and look for evidence in our daily life - then the enemy can point out many reasons to believe the lie that God is not good. This was the way he led Eve to disobey God. He convinced her by leading her to question why God had "withheld" the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil from her. When she considered the possibility and looked for evidence - apart from God's Word - he had her. We must choose (we do not have to feel) to believe God and His Word. Carefully study this subject. Use your concordance. Memorize a few of these verses. Let me suggest some to you.

Chron. 16:34	Psalm.100:5	Exodus 34:6	Jer. 33:9
Chron. 5:13	Psalm 119:68	Psalm 107:8,9,15	Rom. 2:4
Ezra 3:11	Jer. 33:11	21,31	Eph. 5:9
Psalm 25:8	Nahum 1:7	Isaiah 63:7	II Thess. 1:11
Psalm 86:5			

3. The third principle has to do with the value of faith. This matter of trust is Very important to God. There is nothing more serious that we can do - than to choose to doubt. All other sins seem to grow out of this. Here again the enemy is very active. We know that the worst thing people can do to us - is to choose not to put faith and trust in us - to doubt our word - not to rely upon us. This impugns our very character. When we slowly slid into a way of thinking that causes us to doubt God - we are on very dangerous, ground. Often this happens because of emotional problems, unsettled areas in our pant (which may not be our fault), as well as physical weakness or pressures in our daily life which may be beyond our control. Often God allows us to go through times of testing -- so that we may grow in this important grace of trust (Heb. 11:6). So many of the Biblical saints found this to be the key in their trial - not their guilt - but God's desire for their spiritual growth. Therefore, choose to trust God in spite of feelings, problems, etc. The key is "choice". Faith is not emotional but volitional - it is a matter of "cold turkey" choices to trust God in spite of problems and feelings - simply because He is worthy of trust and He has given us His Word. Work hard at this. Repeat an affirmation of your faith many times.
2. The fourth principle has to do with the truth of James 4:7. When we are going through a trial or have pressures in daily life Satan will often utilize these to break us. He will exaggerate some physical, mental, or emotional problem until it breaks us. Then again we must realize that God may use the Devil as a part of a trial. He did this with Job and Paul and many others. Many times God will allow something to come into our life - simply that, we may learn to recognize it as from Satan and reject it, or learn to live with it by faith.

Therefore, use the principle of James 4:7, end apply it to those areas of your life where you may question what you are to do with them. For example, when you have some physical problem that seems to be too much for you, then make an affirmation of faith that fits the principle of the text. Something like the following:

Heavenly Father, whatever there is of You in this (name the problem), whatever is in this that is in harmony with Your will and the ministry of the Holy Spirit for me - then I accept it and thank You for it.

But whatever is not of You in this (name the problem), whatever is not Your will for me, and whatever there is in this that is not the ministry of the Holy Spirit - then I reject it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and refuse to accept it.

Maintain this attitude of James 4:7. After a time it will become easy for you to do this intuitively. God will give you wisdom to know what is from Him and what is not from Him.

Do not forget that these principles must be learned and practiced by faith and love. Merely reading these paragraphs will not bring the grace of God into your life.

Victor M. Matthews