

SET, STAND, SEE

- A. Introduction: The New Testament repeatedly tells Christians to not be moved from our faith and trust in God (I Cor 15:58; Col 1:23; etc.) The fact that we have to be admonished to stay steadfast tells us that there are things that can move us if we don't deal with them. Therefore, we are talking about how we can become unmovable no matter what challenges come our way.
1. Faith is being persuaded of things you cannot see or feel because someone reliable has told you about them. Trust is assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something (*Webster's Dictionary*).
 - a. Being moved from faith or trust in God can range from doubting His care and help all the way up to rejecting His existence.
 1. All kinds of things come at us in this world that undermine our confidence in God and make it seem as though God isn't real or that He has forgotten us or doesn't care about us.
 2. If we don't know how to deal with this contrary testimony from our circumstances, it can shake our trust in God.
 - b. God has gifted human beings with free will (tons of lessons for another day). Because we have the God-given power of choice, we can choose not to be moved.
 1. Not being moved is intentional, trusting God is intentional because we can refuse to give into the challenges that seek to undermine our confidence in God.
 2. We can choose: Sink or swim, live or die, I refuse to deny God or doubt His Word to me.
 2. A large part of becoming unmovable involves learning to deal with the emotions and thoughts that arise when we encounter life's hardships. Thoughts and emotions can seem so overwhelming that we believe we have no control over them and we let them move us from a place of trust in God. But we do have control. That's what we want to deal with in this lesson.
- B. Man is a three part being: spirit, soul, and body. We could do an entire series on this topic, but for now, consider these thoughts.
1. Our body is the home of our senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell). Our spirit is the portion of us capable of direct communion with God. Our soul is made up of our mental and emotional faculties.
 - a. When a person acknowledges Jesus as Savior and Lord, their spirit is cleansed and regenerated by the Spirit of God through what the Bible refers to as the new birth. John 3:3,5; Titus 3:5; etc.
 - b. If you have bowed your knee to Jesus Christ and been born again, you are now a literal son or daughter of God by second birth. I John 5:1; John 1:12; etc.
 1. Your regenerated spirit has been and is now indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Your spirit now always wants to do the will of God and has power to do so.
 2. Your soul (mental and emotional faculties) and your body were not directly affected by the new birth and will continue to react and respond as they did before you were born again, unless you exercise your will and bring them under the control of your recreated spirit and the Word of God.
 2. Emotions (joy, sorrow, fear, etc.) are the responses of our soul to what's going on around us.
 - a. Emotions or feelings are involuntary. This means they are not under the direct control of the will. You cannot will yourself to feel or to not feel something. They are stimulated by the information provided by our physical senses.
 - b. Although emotions are a reaction to stimulus that is possibly outside of our direct control, we can control what we do and how we act no matter how we feel.
 1. Eph 4:26--Paul told believers: Be angry but don't sin. In other words, there are things that will stimulate the emotion of anger. But you must not allow that emotion to drive you to sin. (Since God's Law is summed up in two commandments—love God with everything you've got and love your neighbor as yourself—to sin means to step outside of love (lessons for

another day).

2. Ps 56:3--David acknowledged that he felt fear because of the circumstances he was facing. But he made a volitional choice to trust God in the face of fearful circumstances.

c. Emotions not only trigger physical manifestations in the body such as increased heart rate, “hair standing up on the back of your neck” etc., they can trigger thoughts such as “I’ll kill you for this”.

1. You must be aware of what goes on in your mind. We can will or choose to think thoughts. However, random thoughts not initiated by us also go through our minds (sometimes with the help of the devil).

2. We also have established thinking patterns (strongholds) that may or may not be accurate, yet they affect the way we interpret everything we encounter in life. Example: If you were raised with the belief that you’re no good, that perception will affect the way you deal with life.

A. This is lesson for another day. But consider this thought before we move on. One reason the Bible instructs us to renew our mind (Rom 12:2) is so that our can come into agreement with God.

B. Then our spirit and our mind can work together and dominate our emotions and body. A renewed mind is a mind that sees reality as it truly is according to God. Our mind is renewed by the Word of God as we become regular, systematic readers of the New

Testament.

3. If we are going to remain unmoved from our faith and trust in God in the face of life’s troubles, then we must learn to deal with the emotions and corresponding thoughts and bodily reactions stimulated by what we see.

C. What does this look like in a fallen world? The Bible gives us numerous examples of real people who were in real trouble, but got real help from God. These accounts were specifically written to give us reasons to endure, or to remain unmoved (Rom 15:4). Consider one example. II Chron 20

1. Following the death of King Solomon, civil war broke out in Israel and the nation split in two—a northern kingdom known as Israel and a southern kingdom known as Judah, each with their own king.

a. During the reign of Jehoshaphat, the fourth king of Judah, (873-848 B.C.) three enemy armies joined together to attack Judah (Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites).

b. Word was brought to the king that a vast army from beyond the Dead Sea was marching toward them, and they were already at Engedi (a little more than twenty miles “as the crow flies”).

2. v3--This news stimulated the emotion of fear in Jehoshaphat. But he, and his people, under his direction “sought the Lord for guidance” (NLT).

a. Note that this was a volitional response (a choice), not a reaction driven by emotion. How do we know that the king wasn’t being driven by his emotions? Listen to the prayer he prayed.

1. v6--Jehoshaphat didn’t feed their fears with talk of their problem and the enormity of what they were facing. Instead, he magnified God by talking about His bigness and His power.

2. v7--He didn’t bring up past problems and failures. Instead, He recounted how God had helped them deal with big problems in the past.

b. v8,9--Even though they couldn’t feel God or see His help, Jehoshaphat acknowledged that the Temple that stood in Jerusalem was evidence of God’s abiding presence and promise to help them.

1. Jehoshaphat recalled what King Solomon prayed when the Temple was dedicated in 959 B.C.

2. II Chron 6:20--May you watch over this Temple both day and night, this place where you have said you would put your name; May you always hear the prayers I make toward this place. (NLT)

c. Now, Jehoshaphat was ready to state the problem. v10-12--We don’t know what to do. But our eyes (focus, attention) are on You. We choose to look away from what we see and feel to You, present with us to help us.

1. In the face of challenges we magnify the problems and how we feel about it, and then draw

conclusions based on our misperceptions of reality (our unrenewed mind). By doing this we feed our fears and doubts.

2. Num 13:28,29;31-33--That's what Israel did at the border of Canaan. When they saw obstacles (warlike tribes, walled cities, and giants) they fed their fear (a natural response of the soul to something big and dangerous) by talking about what they could see and then drawing conclusions about their situation without taking God's promise to help them into account.
3. God spoke to them through a Levite who began to prophesy: II Chron 20:15--Don't be afraid or dismayed because of what you see. Afraid means to fear. Dismayed means to be shattered or break down by confusion or fear.
 - a. Note, the Lord didn't say: Don't *feel* fear. He said don't *be* afraid. In other words: Don't falter or fall apart. Exercise your will. Don't let emotions determine your view of reality or actions.
 1. The battle is mine, not yours You won't need to fight. God said: I will do what you cannot. God then instructed them to set themselves, stand still, and see His salvation. Set means to place something so as to stay. Stand means fast, firm, still. See means with your eyes.
 2. In other words, don't be moved by what you see or feel. Don't let thoughts that contradict My Word determine your view of reality. Choose to trust Me.
 - b. v17--Then the Lord repeated: Fear not nor be dismayed, because I am with you. Go out to meet the enemy tomorrow, for I am with you.
 1. v18--Jehoshaphat and all Judah fell down before the Lord and worshiped Him. To worship means to acknowledging that there is someone bigger than yourself, who deserves honor, reverence and praise.
 2. Then they praised the Lord. Once you acknowledge that there's someone bigger than you who is worthy of honor, it leads to praise. There are several Hebrew words that are translated praise. This one is *halal* which means to shine, to show, or to make a boast. Jehoshaphat and his people began to boast about God.
 - c. Because the battle would not take place until morning, Jehoshaphat and Judah had to go through the night with only God's Word. They had to continue to believe.
 1. It's reasonable to presume that the devil would have come to try steal the Word through thoughts of doubt and discouragement.
 2. They had to choose to keep their focus on God and His Word to them, despite the challenges.
4. v20--The next morning, as they prepared to go up to the battlefield, Jehoshaphat exhorted them: Believe in the Lord your God and you shall be established. Believe his prophets and you will prosper.
 - a. Believe and established are the same word in Hebrew. It has the idea of receiving something as trustworthy, something you can depend on.
 1. The idea is: You can trust God. So do it. To prosper means to push forward or be successful at your endeavor.
 2. Trust in the Lord your God and you will be found firm (Basic); hold firmly to your faith in the Lord and you will be upheld (NEB).
 - b. As they got closer to the enemy, the enemy looked bigger and the danger increased. To keep their focus on God, to help them look away from the distractions of sight, emotions, and contrary thoughts, Jehoshaphat turned to praise. v21--The king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the Lord and praising him for his holy splendor (NLT); he appointed singers to sing to the Lord and praise Him in their holy [priestly] garments (Amp).
 1. v21--The first time the word praise is used in the verse it's *halal* in the Hebrew. The second time it's *yadah*. *yadah* means to acknowledge, to praise, to give thanks. The main idea is to acknowledge what is right about God in praise and thanksgiving.
 2. v21--As they went out before the army saying, Give thanks to the Lord , for His mercy and loving-kindness endure forever (Amp)
 3. v22--Praise is a form of the word *halal*. It means a song of praise and connotes genuine

appreciation for the great actions or the character of the object.

d. v22-27--The result? God kept His Word to Judah and Jehoshaphat and they won an amazing victory without firing a shot. Remember, this was recorded in Scripture in part to encourage us to be steadfast and unmovable no matter what we encounter.

D. Conclusion: We haven't said everything we need to say, but consider these thoughts as we close.

1. Praise to God in the face of sight, emotions, and thoughts held these people in place and helped them keep their focus on Almighty God and His promise to help them.
 - a. They didn't deny what they saw or what they felt. They acknowledged God who is bigger than all of it and Who is faithful to keep His Word.
 - b. They had to exercise their will and make a choice to acknowledge God. They had to set themselves and stand their ground. Then they saw and felt.
2. Just as we have examples in Scripture that are intended to encourage us, these people had the help of the Bible. They had the account of Israel at the border of Canaan, but they also had the example of David who was a master at keeping his focus on God in the face of fear.
 - a. Ps 56:3,4--David wrote this psalm while he was being pursued by King Saul who wanted to kill him. David had enemies lying about him as they pursued him. Fearful circumstances surrounded him. He felt fear. Yet he chose to praise God.
 1. He specifically said: I will praise (note the volitional exercise of his will) God's Word. Praise is the Hebrew word *halal* which means to shine, show, or make a boast.
 2. In the face of fear David acknowledged and boasted in God's faithful promises to him.
 - b. Ps 42:5--In another of his "on the run" psalms, David admitted that he was feeling despondent (cast down) and agitated (disquieted). Yet he realized that he didn't have to let his feeling dictate reality to him.
 1. What we see and feel is not the complete picture of reality. Reality is everything as God sees it. The way things really are is the way God says they are.
 2. Therefore, David told his emotions, I choose to hope in God. I will praise (*yadah*) Him. Remember what *yadah* means. The main idea is to acknowledge what is right about God in praise and thanksgiving.
 3. David said he would praise God "for the help of his countenance". In the Hebrew this phrase literally means: His presence is salvation. Wait patiently upon God; for I shall yet give Him thanks; My present Salvation and my God (Spurrel); lit: his presence is salvation
3. In the face of trouble, we can and we must choose to stand against our emotions and the thoughts they generate. Acknowledging what is right about God in praise and thanksgiving helps us do. Praise helps us get control over our mind and emotions. Lots more next week!