

# Freedom from Frustration

By

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Some think it is impossible in our age. It is part of the strategy of the enemy to demoralize us, to make us think there is no use resisting him, that no one can be calm and serene and free from frustration might as well give in and move with the tide.

If we were going to keep our minds on a multitude of things arrayed against us, we would have a good excuse for ulcers. Many Christians keep a mental list of all these things which are set to destroy them: communism advancing, socialism eroding the character of independence, materialism gaining, crime encouraged by relaxing sentences and restricting law-enforcement agencies and courts, atheism overruling religion in schools, drunkenness and dope addiction growing, literature and education lining up with agnosticism, and etc.

No one person would entertain the idea that he alone can conquer the hosts of Satan. It used to be that the Christian felt that he had the organized units of society on his side. He thought that publishers were interested in elevating the mind, that his representatives in government were there to protect the people's interest and freedom, and that the original establishment of higher education was to prepare men for preaching the Kingdom of God. He felt he could rely on the newspaper to report the unbiased truth and that the church, any church, was at least a refuge for those who believed in Jesus. But one by one he has been betrayed by the organized units of society, and now when he looks around for help in the crisis, he isn't sure who is on his side. Confusion reigns.

On every side he sees enemies seeking to overthrow his faith. Sensing the urgency to somehow put them down he lashes out, only to have his blows glance off without effect. With such overwhelming forces in opposition, he feels that he is called to give more to the fight than he is able to muster. In short, he shatters himself into fragments against the seemingly sovereign force of evil.

He sees evil in the ascendancy. Corrupt movies taunt him from their newspaper ads. He must write to the newspaper and to the motion picture producers. As he considers this, he is attracted to the TV screen where violence, obscenity and blasphemy glare out into his living room. Something must be done about TV. But the news then diverts his attention to corruption in government, increased fighting in Viet Nam and the retreat in the Dominican Republic. Confused, he turns to his neighbor, but sees that the leveling forces of organization and socialization are rolling over him without resistance, crushing his individuality and forcing him into a faceless robot of the machine called society. Like Elijah, he feels that he is left alone. In futility and despair he collapses in frustration, or gives in to the tide of mass opinion and surrenders to the wave of the revolution.

This spirit of helplessness and hopelessness, and the surrender to the enemy is not due to any frontal assault and pointed effort to destroy this particular person. He simply divides his efforts into so many battles on all fronts, with no effect, that he knocks himself out, or loses his bearings because of frustration.

But such helplessness is not inevitable. There is an answer to this dilemma. There is a way to have **FREEDOM FROM FRUSTRATION**.

First the Christian must realize that he is not alone nor is he the ultimate target of the enemy. The warfare is one between God and Satan. It is God whom Satan seeks to overthrow. It is not merely a fight to preserve a way of life which we in the USA would like to preserve. This war was in progress before our country was discovered. Nor is it a mere attempt on the part of some men to gain control over others. The overall pattern of Satan's strategy is aimed at the sovereignty and purpose of God. Eventually this attack will take on a more recognizable form, when the personification of Satan is revealed, he whom the Bible calls "the man of sin", and who "opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God" (2 Thess. 2:3-4). When this will occur, we do not know, but we do know that the warfare is to grow more intense, until Christ finally comes and wins the final victory. Satan may win some battles, but God will win the war. The enlisted soldier does not direct the strategy of the entire campaign nor try to fight the whole war. His task is to be faithful at the post to which he is assigned. It saddens one to see the line weakened and comrade's fall, but this doesn't mean that all is lost. The Christian does not give up in despair just because he can't fight all up and down the entire front. Many Christians would do much more for God and country if they would just be faithful Christians where they are, instead of fretting because they cannot lead the charge against Satan's stronghold.

Second, victory in this fight is a personal matter. We have become so accustomed to seeing things done by the "group" and the "organization" that we fail to see the individual progress as victory. But each decision made in the struggle is personal, and when that decision is made for God and truth, it is a victory. Of course, even when you make the right decision, you may still go down in defeat, from the world's point of view. Do not expect a medal, or to be honored by the chamber of commerce when you go against the organized powers and the social groups. Your victory is so personal that maybe you and God are the only ones who realize it! That was the way it was in the Garden, when Christ said, "Thy will be done." And he died for that decision. But it was still a victory, and I don't have to explain that to a Christian. Just remember that He left "you an example that you should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

The war may be won, and the soldier slain in battle will never know the victory. But in the case of the Christian he wins, when he is "faithful unto death", and he will share in the victory through a resurrection of the dead, his own resurrection to immortality. That's why I say the victory is personal.

Third, the Christian faith is not to be equated with the general “religion” of the day. To do so would be to see the whole concept of Christianity as suddenly reversing itself and leaving us deserted on the field of battle. The majority of so-called Christendom is apostate. This is evident from that which leaders of various churches write and advocate, from the literature they publish and from the absence of any faith that God has a hand in human affairs. Many good people keep hanging on to the form of religion long after the spirit and truth have departed. It is hard indeed to concede that great denominations have finally gone over the brink of apostasy, but if we are realistic, there is nothing to do but face that fact. Humanity is largely in rebellion against God and many churches have joined the rebel cause. As C. S. Lewis has said, we live in “enemy-occupied territory”.

Therefore we need not think that we are called on to defend all that is called “Christian”. Why defend that which has already defected to the enemy? We are not responsible for trying to pull the whole religious machine out of the fire into which it has willfully plunged. Jesus did not order us to “save the world”, nor to “save the church”. Rather the Bible says, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation” (Act 2:40).

This doesn’t mean that we would shirk responsibility to our brethren or that we escape the great commission. Rather it means that we lay aside the weights which frustrate and burden us, burdens which we have no business trying to shoulder so we can be free to fulfill the divine orders. The commission was not to go and save the church, but to go and “preach the gospel”. It is only as the gospel is presented that there can be a church, and if there is a church of Christ’s, it is safe, for He is its Savior. It is ridiculous to think that man is now supposed to “save” the church, when Christ has already saved, sanctified and destined His church to be His eternal possession, and a Kingdom of which there will be no end.

What, then, is our responsibility? The same as ever: to know the truth and walk in its freedom (John 8:32); to arm ourselves with the genuine faith and the word of God, so that we will not be caught off guard in the tide of brainwashing now conditioning men to follow the anti-Christ. We are to be witnesses of the Gospel at every opportunity, and to pray earnestly for those opportunities.

This narrows the field of battle to at least where we can get in a few blows. I don’t say that it is easy, or simple. But it is possible. Fight the enemy at hand, not all over the battleground. Be faithful when the issue arises; and stick to that post, come what may. Be faithful in the little things around you, and the Lord will give you a charge of bigger things. Hold forth the meaning and power of the Gospel. Even now there is someone near who needs to hear it from your lips.

“Therefore stand, having girded your loins with truth...and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:14, 17) God is not about to be overcome. He is our deliverer and our salvation. Let the forces of Satan do their worst; the judgments of God are sure. Remember the word of the apostle Peter, “Insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of His glory, also you may rejoice with exceeding joy” (1 Pet. 4:13), and the words of our Lord:

“In the world ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). If your faith is anchored in His eternal purpose, there is no cause for frustration. He cannot lose.

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