

Part I: Paul Lives in the Cave but Sees the Light; Temporal Pressures Insignificant Compared to Eternal Blessings; Personal Sense of Destiny, 1 Cor 4:17-18

7. The weakening of the physical body has nothing to do with any diminishment of spiritual power available to the advancing believer. Spiritual momentum and motivational virtue is far more powerful than physical strength.
8. Spiritual power is not subject to decay, it can only be ignored by the individual believer. Physical decline and the challenges of temporal life are reduced to insignificance by eternal blessings, the subjects of:

2 Corinthians 4:17 - For momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

9. Paul uses a comparison to illustrate the vast difference between the temporary trials of life as over against the magnificent rewards of eternity. The pressures we face are temporary even if they last a lifetime. They are insignificant by comparison to the eternal glory that awaits us.
10. It is demonstrated that the trials of this life are very light and when we manage them and endure them by application of doctrinal principles we build up a great weight of blessing for eternity.
11. No matter how great the sufferings of this life are, the power of the advancing believer's spiritual life is far greater. A believer who lives in the Light of eternity is able to look forward beyond his present affliction and focus on the blessings of eternity.
12. The advancing believer is not disparaged over his trials since he does not consider temporal realities worthy of inordinate concern. He instead focuses on the invisible realities of eternal glories outside the cave.

2 Corinthians 4:18 - while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

13. The mind of an advanced believer is disciplined. His focus is not on the circumstances of life except as he evaluates them in the Light of eternity. This is the mindset of the believer who has realized his personal sense of destiny:

Personal Sense of Destiny. Eternal security means you can't lose your salvation. You are in the royal family of God and you can never be removed from it. You have eternal life and it will become operational at the moment of physical death. You have an eternal inheritance that diminishes to insignificance the accouterments of this world. Realizing these things results in the believer organizing his life in accordance with God's agenda rather than his own. The desires of God trump your personal desires and put in proper perspective the allurements of the devil's world. Living life in the light of eternity causes the exigencies of this life to be viewed as an opportunity for accelerated advance.

14. We are living in a society in which truth is based on empiricism: one's personal experience or observation. If it can't be seen, heard, felt, smelled, or tasted then it ain't real.
15. All knowledge and all truth must be confirmed by what one experiences, therefore, what a person has not yet experienced is not accepted as true.
16. Thus, the empiricist cannot comprehend the unseen or the invisible and as a result is enslaved to the present. And if the present is uncomfortable then he becomes immediately preoccupied with making changes he assumes will make things better.
17. But to seek an experience under the assumption it will bring happiness is a contradictory attempt at prophecy which is based on faith. And misplaced faith in a frantic search for happiness puts such a person into the second stage of reversionism: a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God.

18. The frantic search is caused by unpleasant circumstances that typically occur in the devil's world. Having rejected doctrine, the empiricist reacts to them.
19. There are two major ways this reaction is manifest: self-righteousness that finds pleasure in blaming others for the circumstance and seeking personal justice which it is assumed will restore lost happiness.
20. On the other hand there is the lascivious type that sublimates his unhappiness with behaviors that solicit sensual pleasures of various kinds: sex, drugs, entertainment, possessions, approbation, social standing, etc.
21. The Christian empiricist often interprets the unhappy circumstances, trials, and problems of life as discipline from God: "I am unhappy and this means that God is getting me for something." No, he has "gotten himself" under the law of volitional responsibility.
22. Such a conclusion insults grace. God forgives sin that is confessed and removes it as an issue. But rather than rebound, the empiricist believer tries to influence God to stop the suffering by engaging in human works.
23. On the other hand, the advancing believer interprets the visible problems of life as temporary inconveniences that God allows in order to challenge his faith and stimulate application under pressure.
24. These trials may be brief or extended, physically painful or mentally stressful, undeserved suffering or ramifications of poor decisions, but the advancing believer views these as temporal speed bumps that are overcome by maintaining confidence in the assurances of the unseen future outside the cave of *cosmos diabolicus*.
25. Paul summarizes the mental attitude in:

Romans 8:18 - For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
26. The cost one must pay by enduring visible suffering in time is much less than the benefits of future blessings in the invisible future of eternity.
27. Therefore, to try and escape pressure, or to fall victim to it, means that you sacrifice eternal rewards. This is not profitable and is a poor investment in your future.
28. Yet those who live in the present desire self-security more than anything. Today we prefer security to freedom, but where there is no freedom there can be no true security.

NOTE: When governments pass laws designed to prevent problems before they occur, then stress is inordinately placed on security rather than freedom.
29. The person who assumes that his own personal experiences establish truth must live in the moment. If "all is well" then he assumes he is secure. If suddenly he is personally injured in some way then security is destroyed and a frantic search for restored security demands an instant fix.
30. When an entire nation is populated by those who demand immediate attention to their desires: comfort, security, good health, and HDTV, a sycophant Congress and a mélange of bureaucracies frantically pass laws and issue regulations that more times than not create more problems than they solve.

Jeremiah 6:13 - "From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit.

v. 14 - They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace.

v. 15 - Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when I punish them," says the Lord.

31. Paul promotes the only real security and that is *eternal* security which, in the arsenal of the advancing believer, enables him to enjoy the marriage of grace and faith: faith in eternal life and its escrow rewards motives grace orientation toward the visible trials of life.
32. We provide the faith and God provides the grace: grace to endure the temporary trials and grace to impute blessings and rewards in both time and eternity.