

“The Strength of Meekness”

1 Thessalonians 3:11; Psalm 37; Matthew 5:5; Proverbs 3:5-6

“Hindrances are not always an evidence that our purposes are wrong.”

Alva J. McClain, First President of Grace Theological Seminary

I. Return to Sender - Praying for Divine Intervention

1. What are your initial thoughts when your personal plans don't work out the way you thought they would? What do you think about God in those moments of disappointment?
2. “The sinful heart wants what it wants.” How do you respond to God, to others, and to yourself when you don't get what you want? When was the last time you really wanted something and you didn't get it? How did you react? What did you think? What did you do in response to your disappointment?
3. How do you respond when there are obstacles and hindrances in the path of your goals? Are you a person who gives up easily? Why or why not? What is the source of your confidence in your goals? Are God's goals your goals? How do you know if your goals have been approved by God, especially if there are clear obstacles to those goals?
4. *“Hindrances are not always an evidence that our purposes are wrong. Too often we purpose to do something that we think is according to Divine will, and when we start to do it, a hindrance comes up (or two or three). Immediately, with unseemingly haste, we decide that this is not God's will for us, and so we abandon it. But our purpose may be exactly according to the Divine will, only perhaps we are trying to carry it out at the wrong time, and the very hindrance that appears as an obstacle in our path may be a Divine testing of our purpose, as well as the assurance that it will be carried out at God's appointed time.”* Romans: The Gospel of God's Grace; Alva J. McClain
5. Read Acts 16:6-7; Romans 1:13; 15:22; 1 Thessalonians 2:18. Had the Apostle Paul been hindered in his plans? By whom? What was the outcome? What do you think his response/attitude was? Do you think Paul would've applied Proverbs 3:5-6 to his situation? How?

II. "Be Cool"

A. *"Now may Himself, our God and Father and Jesus Christ our Lord, direct our way to you."*

1. "Our Father" - emphasizing _____.
2. "Our Lord" - emphasizing _____.
3. Paul switched the usual popular idea about God being the ruler and Christ being the one believers have a personal relationship with.
4. God came down as the intimate, gracious, loving, and forgiving Father, and Jesus ascended to heaven's throne to be the Sovereign Lord.
5. "Himself" is a singular pronoun. "Direct" is a singular verb. "Our God and Father and Jesus our Lord" is a plural subject = Jesus is God.
6. Paul underscores our relationship with the Trinity.
7. The Father and Son are equally Sovereign Deity, and _____ agree in _____ matters.
8. Christians can direct all their prayers to the Father or the Son, or to both: Job 8:5; Psalm 5:2; 143:1; John 16:23-24; Acts 7:59; 1 John 5:14.
9. Romans 8:27, indicates that the Holy Spirit is also in perfect agreement with the Father = The Holy Spirit is God = The Trinity.
10. How does this encourage you about God's will for your plans, and about any obstacles or hindrances to those plans?

B. *"Now may ... direct our way to you."*

1. "direct" = "laying out a straight _____ path with all _____ removed" - Paul knew ONLY God could overcome the satanic hindrances (1 Thessalonians 2:18) to his plans (Genesis 3:15; Matthew 10:1; Luke 11:21-22; Romans 16:20; Colossians 2:15; 1 John 3:8; 4:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:10; 20:10). Paul prayed that God and Jesus would divinely open the way for him to return to the Thessalonians. It was his desire, but only if it was by the will of His Lord and God.
2. Psalm 37 - "Not to Worry - Blessed are the Meek" - How A Believer Should Respond to the Seeming Prosperity of the Wicked, or to Hindrances, Obstacles, or Unrealized Plans.
 - a. *"It is right to say that Psalm 37 is an exposition of the third beatitude, 'blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth' (Matthew 5:5), even though it was written a thousand years before Jesus began His public ministry. It unfolds the character of the meek or trusting person in the face of the apparent prosperity of the wicked."* An Expository Commentary, Psalms Volume 1 by James Montgomery Boice, p. 315.

- b. Describing the _____ of one who _____ in _____ and does not _____ because of evil men, hindrances, obstacles, or unrealized plans or goals.
- c. The theme is clearly “_____” (37:1, 7, 8).
= “do not get _____,” or “don’t get _____.”
or “_____.”

The Psalmist and Jesus say, “Be cool. Don’t worry. Don’t get all worked up. Be ‘meek’ in the face of such obstacles.”

What is “meekness?” It is the _____ of being _____ of _____ . It is _____ - _____ empowered by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 23, 28; Ephesians 5:18).
*Notice that Psalm 37: 1, 7-8; Galatians 5; Ephesians 5 are **commands**; meaning having self-control not to worry is a command of God to us; it is something He expects from us and something He enables us to do; fretting, worry, and anxiety are sinful choices we make; we must practice, develop, and nurture trust in God and in Christ by the Spirit.

- d. How can we do this? We are “fretters” by nature. How can we “be cool” in the face of the prosperity of the wicked, and in the face of hindrances and obstacles to our godly plans and goals?
1. Psalm 37:1-11 gives us a two-pronged strategy:
 - a. _____ in 37:1-8.

“The most important answer is to get our eyes off the wicked and even off ourselves and on the Lord. More than that we are to trust Him and commit our way to Him.” Psalms by J.M. Boice, p. 316.

We are to do five things:

1. “_____ in the LORD” (37:3) = Trust is faith; making a personal commitment to God; He has committed Himself to us and so we must commit ourselves to Him.
2. “_____ in the LORD” (37:4) = Knowing God well enough that He, Himself is our highest delight. He is gracious, merciful, loving, kind, forgiving...utterly delightful! (Ps. 34:8)

3. “_____ your way to the LORD” (37:5) = “to roll one’s way onto God; to dislodge a burden from one’s shoulders and place it on God” – 1 Peter 5:7 – There is no need to worry because God is equal to the task of managing anything that can possibly come into our lives! = “Relax, don’t react.”
 4. “_____ before the LORD” (37:7) = this goes beyond simply sitting quietly; “before the LORD” means to “wait patiently for Him; mere stillness is not enough; what is needed is a quiet waiting upon God; submitting to His timing.
 5. “_____ from _____ against the LORD or against others” (37:8) = it is the mark of a godly person that he/she is able to maintain a _____, _____ of _____ because of trusting God.
- b. _____ in 37:9-11; taking the “long view.”
- As we look ahead, we will see that those who do evil only flourish for a time and then they are thrown down – they are “here today; gone tomorrow” – but the righteous people of God are preserved in the present and rewarded in the future. See Job 42:1-6; Isaiah 46:8-11. We must practice Proverbs 3:5-6.
- c. Consider and emulate Moses’ meekness in Numbers 12 (12:3).
 - d. “I cannot be like that! It’s not my nature to be meek.” You are right! None of us by nature is meek. But as Christians we can learn to be meek like Jesus (Matthew 11:28-29).

III. Applying Meekness to Weakness

- A. When was the last time your plans or goals have been hindered?
- B. How should you respond based upon the Scripture you’ve heard today?
- C. How can you put off fretting and put on delighting in the LORD?
- D. Describe what biblical meekness looks like; and doesn’t look like.
- E. What are some spiritual benefits of your plans/ goals being hindered?
- F. How are trusting in the LORD and committing to the LORD similar/different?