

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a forest. A winding road with double white lines leads from the bottom center towards the horizon, disappearing into a thick fog. Bare tree branches frame the top and sides of the image, and tall, slender tree trunks are visible in the background. The overall mood is mysterious and somber.

# THE BATTLE GROUND WITHIN

By  
James Relf



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## *INTRODUCTION*

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A little background. I have suffered from depression since as far back as I can remember, even into my childhood. I could and use to say it was because of the way that my father treated me. I could have said it was because my parents divorced and I felt abandoned by my mother and hatred for leaving me with a man I despised. I could say it was because I made a lot of very poor decisions and had problems keeping any kind of job.

Either way by the time I escaped home, I thought I had left it all behind, only later to realize you bring all your baggage with you everywhere, whether you like it or not. After I got married to a wonderful woman and had my son the depression started getting worse. I was a new believer and sought YHVH every chance I got but still could find no peace of mind or spirit. Thirty-four years later, still married to the same incredible woman, and still suffering from depression.

Over the years I have tried drugs, doctors, hospitals, phycologists, councilors and anything else I could find to get free of this curse, this thing that has consumed my life or at least up to now most of it. Getting from one day to another and knowing that I am affecting my wife every day, just brings more guilt and pain into the equation. Let me tell you, nothing I tried ever lasted more than a month at best, and then it was like the depression had never even left.

The only true reprieve that I ever experienced in my life was when I was teaching the Bible, whether it was in Australia, Africa, Cairo, or where-ever I happened to be. I have been used by YHVH many times and because of my life experiences and tests from the Father, I have been humbled to the core. So when I spoke to people it was always from the heart and many times through many tears while teaching.

Recently upon returning from my fifth trip to Burundi, Africa, I felt such sorrow that I quickly spiraled once again into another bout of depression. All life was sucked out of my life, every choice I made felt like a bad choice, I could no longer hear my Father for guidance and direction, and the darkness settled in for a long stay. I am not sure what triggered it, except to say I felt that upon returning this time I felt less than fulfilled that I had succeeded and let Him down. (A carry over from my own childhood).

After speaking with a good friend something in me changed and it was like a small light was being aloud to shine inside once again and I started seeing more clearly about my situation, mostly mental condition and what was going on. So, during the next few days I started for the first time in months, pouring over His Word once again, seeking answers. This book is what has come from this journey, and while I am not 100%, I am in a better place. At least for the first time in many, many years can look to the future with some hope and pray that with His Word to guide my steps, I will be able to continue to do His work when He is ready to send me out once again.

I do pray that you find this information and study helpful.

James





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# *1. Spiritual Darkness*

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## **The Dark Room & Depression**

When someone has to deal with depression, many people do not understand what is going on in their minds. Depression can be brought on by many things, childhood memories, bullying, abuse, mental disorders and much more. But what is it like in the mind of those who suffer from this and can we see any remedy for this in scripture?

Well in order to demonstrate what it is like in the mind of someone who suffers from this, picture yourself being blindfolded and brought into a room with no windows and no light coming into the room. Then take off your blindfold once inside and in the room, and you have no idea how big the room is or be able to determine even if there is anything in the room with you.

Initially when you open your eyes you try to see and your pupils will open wide but you still see nothing. Here in lies the issue. When someone is depressed, you can see no way out of the situation or place you are in and there are many emotions that can flood the brain, including but not limited to fear, anxiety, loneliness, stress, over-whelmed, sadness, worthlessness, low or no energy.

When someone is going through depression, they filter their lives through all of these emotions regardless of whether or not it is warranted to every situation in life. So, simple issues can be blown out of proportion in their mind and solving simple problems seem impossible. The cycle can at times prove fatal as some see no solution and seek only death to escape this state of mind.

This article is not about resolving depression but seeing if the cause can be spiritually related and possibly spiritually resolved. While I would like to say that everyone can benefit from this information, there are people who are born with chemical imbalances, or other factors that are related to their condition. What I am speaking of here is what worked for me and I hope in the future to control through what I have found in this article and many more to come, a solution to this problem that has gripped so many people.

The period of the middle ages is often referred to as the dark ages. The dark ages were due to demographic, economic and cultural decline after the fall of the Roman empire. This is nothing compared to what we are experiencing in our time. We are presently living in a period of profound darkness, but this time the darkness is spiritual, and it is getting darker and darker. Darkness is the spiritual force that takes over when the will of YHVH is rejected. This gives the enemy legal right and authority. We are influenced by this darkness around us. We fall into temptation, we turn away from YHVH, our prayers are not effective, we don't hear YHVH's voice and don't know His will. This is what it is like to be left in the dark room with no way out.

As believers, we are called to be lights in this darkness. The question is, are we effective in dispelling darkness or are we helping it along? We cannot do this alone; we need YHVH to help us and we need each other. In order for Him to help us, we need to be able to communicate with Him. We need to have an intimate relationship with Him, to be able to connect to Him, to be in His presence.

We read in 2 Chronicles:

2 Chronicles 7:14

<sup>14</sup> and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

We are to humble ourselves, pray, seek YHVH's face and turn from our wicked ways, then He will hear us, forgive our sin and heal our land. This is how darkness is dispelled.

In this article we are going to focus on prayer and more specifically on spiritual prayer altars. I will confirm this from scripture and show you how we can erect spiritual prayer altars and see how YHVH effects change through prayer. Our assurance is to be in Him.

## Our assurance in YHVH

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YHVH will always be the One affecting change, not us. However, we are called to be lights, so we do have a role to play in dispelling darkness.

Luke 1:37

<sup>37</sup> "For nothing will be impossible with Elohim."

1 John 5:14

<sup>14</sup> This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

YHVH hears our prayers, but sometimes our prayers are hindered.

## Hindered prayers

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As an example of such hindrance we can look at the passage in Daniel 10. Daniel was in Babylon at the time and Babylon was under Persian rule.

Daniel 10:12-13

<sup>12</sup> Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your Elohim, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. <sup>13</sup> "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.



What is described here took place in the spiritual realm. Daniel's prayer was heard, but Gabriel was hindered in bringing an answer for 21 days. Michael, one of the chief princes came to help him. Babylon was ruled by Persia, not only physically, but also spiritually. The prince of the kingdom of Persia is the spiritual authority over that area. This authority was opposing YHVH's authority and therefore the answer to Daniel's prayer was hindered. Daniel persisted in prayer and Gabriel prevailed, with Michael's help in bringing Daniel the answer from YHVH.

We are in a similar situation to Daniel. However, in the case of Daniel, we know He was righteous, he trusted YHVH and prevailed in prayer. Even so, the answer to his prayer was hindered. We live in the nations on defiled land. Can we claim the same righteousness and spiritual authority Daniel had? If not, how much more will our prayers be hindered?

The authority over us physically and spiritually is opposing to YHVH's authority. Wherever people have rejected YHVH, spiritual darkness takes over, this can also be referred to as a closed heaven. Jeremiah explains it well:

Jeremiah 2:5–8

<sup>5</sup> Thus says YHVH, "What injustice did your fathers find in Me, that they went far from Me And walked after emptiness and became empty? <sup>6</sup> "They did not say, 'Where is YHVH Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, Who led us through the wilderness, Through a land of deserts and of pits, Through a land of drought and of deep darkness, Through a land that no one crossed And where no man dwelt?' <sup>7</sup> "I brought you into the fruitful land To eat its fruit and its good things. But you came and defiled My land, And My inheritance you made an abomination. <sup>8</sup> "The priests did not say, 'Where is YHVH?' And those who handle the law did not know Me; The rulers also transgressed against Me, And the prophets prophesied by Baal and walked after things that did not profit.

The land was defiled and the people, nor the priests realized they were far from YHVH. They did not ask "where is YHVH?" This is the problem with living in the nations ruled by darkness. We do not realize the situation we are in. We accept the authority and influence over us as normal. We do not ask "where is YHVH?" Why do we not hear His voice? Why do we not know His will for us? We continue on with our lives, blind and deaf, thinking it's normal.

## This can be different.

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We were given dominion over the earth, not these dark spiritual forces, but we allow them to have dominion over us due to our inaction. John Mulinde writes about spiritual darkness:

Spiritual forces were not given dominion over the earth; man was (Gen 1: 28). Therefore, they do not have the legal authority to control the direction a society goes. But man chooses what spiritual forces he is going to yield to. When man chooses darkness, he is not only inviting darkness to come into the spiritual atmosphere, but also to affect his way of life.<sup>2</sup>

This spiritual darkness can only be dispelled by yielding to YHVH and prayer. We are to follow Daniel's example by living righteously and persisting in prayer. We are to build spiritual prayer altars. Allow us to explain.

# Building an altar

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The principle behind building an altar is illustrated by the passage about the census David took. It is written that David was moved by satan to number the people of Israel. Joab warned him not to do it, but he prevailed. YHVH was displeased about this. David realized what he had done and repented. He asked YHVH to take away his iniquity. YHVH sent Gad, a prophet, to David with three choices of judgment: 3 years of famine, 3 months in the hands of their enemies or three days of the sword of YHVH.

David chose to fall into YHVH's hands – 70,000 people of Israel died because of the plague YHVH sent. Then YHVH sent the angel to destroy Jerusalem, but saw the calamity and relented. As YHVH told the destroying angel to stop, He let David see this destroying angel. Seeing the destroying angel with his drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem was an act of mercy by YHVH. David and the elders with him fell on their faces before YHVH, pleading for mercy for the people.

1 Chronicles 21:15–17

<sup>15</sup> And Elohim sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it; but as he was about to destroy it, YHVH saw and was sorry over the calamity, and said to the destroying angel, "It is enough; now relax your hand." And the angel of YHVH was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. <sup>16</sup> Then David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of YHVH standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, covered with sackcloth, fell on their faces. <sup>17</sup> David said to Elohim, "Is it not I who commanded to count the people? Indeed, I am the one who has sinned and done very wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done? O YHVH my Elohim, please let Your hand be against me and my father's household, but not against Your people that they should be plagued."

The angel then told David through Gad to build an altar to YHVH.

2 Samuel 24:18–19

<sup>18</sup> So Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to YHVH on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." <sup>19</sup> David went up according to the word of Gad, just as YHVH commanded.

David bought this threshing floor and erected an altar there.

1 Chronicles 21:26–28

<sup>26</sup> Then David built an altar to YHVH there and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. **And he called to YHVH He answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering.** <sup>27</sup> YHVH commanded the angel, and he put his sword back in its sheath. <sup>28</sup> At that time, when David saw that YHVH had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he offered sacrifice there.

Building an altar creates an atmosphere of reconciliation with YHVH. YHVH heard David and held back the plague.

2 Samuel 24:25

<sup>25</sup> David built there an altar to YHVH and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. **Thus, YHVH was**

moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel.

The first temple was later built on this site.

YHWH allowed David to see the darkness of the coming judgment. David saw the angel with his outstretched arm against Jerusalem. David fell on his face and pleaded for deliverance. YHWH told him to build an altar to Him and offer sacrifices. When David did that, YHWH was moved by prayer for the land and the plague was held back.

In His great mercy, YHWH also allows us to see the darkness of judgment coming. This should prompt us to create an atmosphere of reconciliation with YHWH. We are to erect an altar to YHWH, a spiritual altar and offer our prayers as sacrifices on it. We are to seek restoration with YHWH and return to Him. He may then relent and stay the judgment against us.

***Consider what is happening in the world. Has YHWH not shown us mercy in revealing to us what is coming? His judgment is at the door. What are we doing about it? Are we seeking reconciliation with YHWH, or do we prefer to go into denial, and continue our lives as normal?***

## Standing in the gap

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When YHWH allows us to see the coming destruction and judgment, He is inviting us, even expecting us to build up the wall and stand in the gap.

Ezekiel 22:30

<sup>30</sup> “I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.

“Building up the wall” is a reference to restoring fellowship and “standing in the gap” refers to intercession – prayer on behalf of. When we pray, we actually battle in the spiritual realm.

John Mulinde writes about prayer altars:

Prayer altars are powerful. They can push back darkness, change the spiritual atmosphere of cities and nations, and bring redemption to elements of society that were eroding. They can bring about the purposes of YHWH and produce tangible fruits of the kingdom of YHWH flowing into the lives of the people of that land. <sup>2</sup>

John Mulinde co-wrote a book with Mark Daniel titled “Prayer Altars: A Strategy That Is Changing Nations.” This book forms the inspiration for most of what is written here. They share lots of testimonies in this book of how change was seen after YHWH’s presence was invited into homes, workplaces and even in the land of Uganda. It is a very inspiring book and worth a read.

**Physical results are only possible after we have won the battle in the spiritual.**

You will only find success in what you are doing in the physical realm after you have won the battle in the spiritual realm.”<sup>2</sup>

What we see around us, physically, is the manifestation of the spiritual atmosphere around us. If darkness reigns, darkness will manifest, if darkness is pushed back, righteousness will be made manifest.

The building of altars to YHVH was done from the beginning. Cain and Abel did it, so did Noah. Abram is a great example of taking possession of the land for YHVH’s kingdom. John Mulinde refers to it as the Abrahamic strategy.

## The Abrahamic strategy

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In Genesis 12:1-3, we read about YHVH calling Abram to go out to the land YHVH has promised to him and his descendants. When YHVH called Abram, He called him to take possession of the land.

Everywhere Abraham went, he built altars to YHVH. The first place Abraham built an altar to YHVH was at Elon Moreh. This place still exists today. When you stand in this place, you have an amazing view of the land of Israel. I can imagine Abraham standing there, with a splendid view of the land of Canaan, hearing YHVH’s voice telling him that He give this land to his offspring. There he built an altar to YHVH.

Genesis 12:6–7

<sup>6</sup> Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. **At that time the Canaanites were in the land.** <sup>7</sup> Then YHVH appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So, he built there an altar to YHVH, who had appeared to him.

Why did he do that? We have highlighted a clue for you. We will explain it further later on.

Genesis 12:8

<sup>8</sup> From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to YHVH and called upon the name of YHVH.

Genesis 13:14–18

<sup>14</sup> YHVH said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, <sup>15</sup>for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. <sup>16</sup> I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. <sup>17</sup> Arise, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.” <sup>18</sup> So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron, and there he built an altar to YHVH.

The land of Canaan was inhabited by people who did not know YHVH. We read in Genesis 12:6 “At the time the Canaanites were in the land.” From this statement we know what can be expected spiritually. The people of the land worshipped other YHVHs, practiced witchcraft and all kinds of other unYHVHly practices. What the people did and worshipped was attracting dark spirits and gave these spirits legal authority over the land. The land of Canaan was

under another spiritual principality. John Mulinde writes in his book about prayer altars:

The Canaanites and Perizzites, living in their pagan ways, were opening a spiritual gateway that was allowing spiritual forces of darkness to flow into the land, affecting all of the people who lived there.<sup>2</sup>

The land was defiled. Defiled land attracts spiritual darkness. Places of sin become gateways for demons, unholy altars. It is the same today. We live on defiled land. Spiritual darkness is all around us. Physical places of sin like houses of prostitution are gateways for demons and we are affected by it.

A thought system in a country can also serve as an unholy altar. In the Netherlands, for example, humanism is practiced, taught and encouraged. By definition humanism is a system of thought that rejects religious beliefs and centers on humans and their values, capacities, and worth. YHWH is not worshipped in this system, the human being is. This is also a spiritual altar for darkness. The more this belief system is embraced and followed, the darker the spiritual atmosphere will become and the more dark practices will be allowed.

The Netherlands is one of only a few countries where prostitution is legalized, they are now lobbying to have Pedophilia recognized as a lifestyle choice. The law regulating euthanasia is being broadened more and more. People who are depressed can have themselves euphonized in order to end their misery. You can see from these examples how the darkness is increasing because it is embraced by society.

These are just two examples of unholy altars. As I said before, when YHWH's way and will is rejected, spiritual darkness rules and we will see it manifest around us.

We live in this corrupted atmosphere; we don't recognize it because we have grown accustomed to it. This darkness affects us, it draws us into a spiritual slumber, blindness and powerlessness. Sound familiar? We have a tendency to accept the darkness and accept it as the norm and allow it to continue as something we can do nothing about. This is wrong!

In building altars, Abraham was contending with this spiritual darkness, preparing the land spiritually for change. These altars drew the presence of YHWH and broke the powers of darkness. They were like beacons in the physical and spiritual realm, showing that the spiritual authority and atmosphere was changing. Abram was taking territory from the forces of darkness and claiming it for the kingdom of YHWH. This is what spiritual warfare is about. We don't exist in a spiritual vacuum; we are affected spiritually by what goes on in our area and the country we live in. There is no neutral ground, it is either part of the kingdom of YHWH or the kingdom of darkness. We are fighting a spiritual battle, fighting for territory. Territory equals influence and if we lose territory, YHWH's kingdom loses influence.

Isaac continued in the same way as Abraham, building and maintaining the altars his father has built.

Genesis 26:24–25

<sup>24</sup> "YHWH appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the Elohim of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, For the sake of My servant Abraham." <sup>25</sup> So he built an altar there and called upon the name of YHWH, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

Jacob too continued building altars to YHWH

Genesis 33:18–20

<sup>18</sup> Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city. <sup>19</sup> He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. <sup>20</sup> Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

Genesis 35:6–7

<sup>6</sup> So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. <sup>7</sup> He built an altar there, and called the place El-bethel, because there Elohim had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother.

This passage in Genesis 35 is very significant. We will return to it in the next section.

The building of altars continued from generation to generation, claiming the land for the kingdom of YHVH. Moses, Joshua, David and many others, built altars for YHVH.

We know from scripture what an altar is. There are detailed instructions in scripture. The question is how do we apply this in our lives. Can we? We first need to define what an altar is.

## What is an altar?

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***An altar is a place of light in the impenetrable darkness of sin, a doorway linking the physical realm to the spiritual realm.*** <sup>2</sup>

In other words, an altar is a gate of heaven.

## A Gate of Heaven

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When Jacob was fleeing from Esau after he cheated him out of his birthright and blessing, he went towards Haran, and spent the night at a place known as Bethel. There he had a dream.

Genesis 28:10–19

<sup>10</sup> Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. <sup>11</sup> He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place. <sup>12</sup> He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of Elohim were ascending and descending on it. <sup>13</sup> And behold, YHVH stood above it and said, "I am YHVH, the Elohim of your father Abraham and the Elohim of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. <sup>14</sup> "Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. <sup>15</sup> "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." <sup>16</sup> Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely



YHVH is in this place, and I did not know it.” <sup>17</sup> He was afraid and said, “**How awesome is this place!** This is none other than the house of Elohim, and this is **the gate of heaven.**” <sup>18</sup> So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top. <sup>19</sup> He called the name of that place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz.

What is interesting about this place is that this is the place where Abraham previously built an altar.

Genesis 12:8

<sup>8</sup> Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to YHVH and called upon the name of YHVH.

The altar Abraham built established a gateway in heaven. YHVH’s presence resided there. This shows us the significance of building a prayer altar. It creates a gateway to heaven.

## Our hearts are altars

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The question is, do we have to build a physical structure like Abraham and all the others did? This is a good question. After Solomon built and inaugurated the temple, he prayed to YHVH. YHVH answered him.

2 Chronicles 7:12–16

<sup>12</sup> Then YHVH appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, “**I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.**” <sup>13</sup> “If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, <sup>14</sup> and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. <sup>15</sup> “**Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.**” <sup>16</sup> “For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

YHVH said He heard Solomon’s prayer and has chosen this place for himself as a house of sacrifice. He said He would be attentive to the prayers offered there. This place was chosen, it had a physical altar where both sacrifices and prayer were offered up to YHVH.

Much later, after Y’shua’s death and resurrection, we read in the epistle to the Corinthians that each of us is a temple of the living Elohim.

2 Corinthians 6:16

<sup>16</sup> Or what agreement has the temple of Elohim with idols? **For we are the temple of the living Elohim; just as Elohim said,** “I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.

We are temples of the Living Elohim, our hearts are. We don’t mean the physical organ that pumps blood, but our inner being, our mind, will and emotions. We need to dedicate and surrender our hearts completely to YHVH and our prayers will be spiritual sacrifices. We are living stones, used to build a spiritual house and our prayers are our sacrifices.

1 Peter 2:5

<sup>5</sup> you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Elohim through Y'shua Messiah.

Hebrews 13:15

<sup>15</sup> Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to Elohim, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

The concept of prayers being sacrifices is not only found in the Apostolic writings. We find in the Tanakh also.

Psalms 141:2

<sup>2</sup> May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

Psalms 119:108

<sup>108</sup> O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O YHVH, And teach me Your ordinances.

Hosea 14:2

<sup>2</sup> Take words with you and return to YHVH. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity And receive us graciously, That we may present the fruit of our lips.

Prayers are sacrifices and their purpose is the same as physical sacrifices. It is about giving thanks, alleviating guilt and restoring fellowship with our heavenly Father. When someone is depressed, they can see no further than themselves and the situation that they are in. So, everything is focused inward which is opposite to what we are supposed to be doing. This is the affect the darkness has on us and why we need to be spending more time in prayer to prevent and push away the darkness.

Today, we are the living sacrifice (Rom 12: 1). Our lives are laid on the altar, surrendered and yielded to YHVH. This is a reasonable act of worship. The offerings we lay at the altar include our soft, yielded, surrendered hearts and wills. We come to the altar to offer our lives and give ourselves in submission to YHVH, creating an opening for the spiritual realm to impact the physical realm. <sup>2</sup>

We also know from scripture that only a perfect animal is acceptable as a sacrifice to YHVH. Through Y'shua's blood that was shed for us, we are acceptable before YHVH. Y'shua's death for our sin satisfied the holiness YHVH requires of us. We need to and can surrender ourselves completely to YHVH on a daily basis.

## A time for prayer

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At the time the temple stood, people used to go there for prayer at the time of the morning and evening sacrifices. Just as there were specific times for the daily sacrifices, so we too must set aside special time for prayer. We must make this a priority. Y'shua, when He was on earth, made time to pray to YHVH.

Mark 1:35

<sup>35</sup> In the early morning, while it was still dark, Y'shua got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

The early believers did the same (Acts 10:9.) If we don't set aside a special time for prayer, it will remain a good intention. Our lives are busy and there will always be something to distract us if we let it or chose to.

This prayer time is not about just spending a certain time in prayer, maybe read the bible or journal, but about building that deep communion with YHVH. **To commune with YHVH is to be in a state of intimate, heightened sensitivity and receptivity towards YHVH. To be in His presence. It is about pushing back the forces of darkness and making contact with YHVH.**

We were created to be in YHVH's presence, sin changed that. However, through Y'shua it is possible to go boldly before YHVH's throne and commune with Him. Through creating the right environment, we can experience YHVH's presence every day.

When we read Psalm 42, we get an idea of how David at times struggled to commune with YHVH. He hungered for that special communion with YHVH.

Psalm 42:1–2

<sup>1</sup> As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O Elohim. <sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for Elohim, for the living Elohim; When shall I come and appear before Elohim?

Psalm 42:7

Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me.

Communion with YHVH is deep calling to deep. It is about our spirit connecting and communing with His Spirit. We need to be dedicated to the time we set aside to commune with YHVH and keep distractions away. Any and every distraction will prevent us from really communing with YHVH on a deep level. We are to press in and really focus on YHVH. First thing in the morning works best for us. Leave your email, social media and other interesting articles till later. Focus on YHVH first, seek His face and wait for Him.

Psalm 27:8

When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, O YHVH, I shall seek."

Psalm 27:14

<sup>14</sup> Wait for YHVH; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for YHVH.

David was in my opinion an expert on prayer. He shows deep insight in communing with YHVH. We can learn much about prayer from the psalms he wrote, for in these psalms he poured out his heart to YHVH.

Not only are we to set aside special time for prayer, we are to keep the fire burning throughout the day.

## Keep the fire burning

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The fire on the altar was to be kept burning ([Lev 6:12](#)). During the day the priests would tend to the altar to make sure this is done. We are to do the same.

The element of tending the fire and not allowing it to go out is very important. It is not so much about saying prayers all day long. It is about having your heart connected, yielded to YHVH, and seeking for the connection to continue throughout the day. You will find things throughout your day that try to shut your heart down, pull you into your flesh, or grieve the Spirit of YHVH. If you tend the altar, then you turn to YHVH through the day, allowing Him to lead you, strengthen you, refocus you, or guide you.

Abiding with YHVH is an entrusting of yourself to Him to be kept inflamed. It is not a work, but a consenting of His work through you.<sup>2</sup>

Abiding with YHVH is to yield ourselves to Him continually. Whenever we become negative or frustrated, we are to turn to Him. This way, we keep the fire burning on the altar of our hearts. We are also to remain in obedience to YHVH. Disobedience to YHVH's instructions will extinguish the fire and attract darkness, not light putting us right back alone and back in the darkness we so desperately want to stay away from.

Romans 8:7–8

<sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to Elohim, for it does not submit to Elohim's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please Elohim.

Being in the flesh means being in sin. When we displease YHVH through disobedience, we will not invite His presence. We will not hear His voice and will not know His will for us.

James 4:7–10

Submit yourselves therefore to Elohim. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to Elohim, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before YHVH, and he will exalt you.

Sin causes spiritual death; this was so from the beginning.

The spiritual force of darkness will blind, hinder, weaken, harden, and exert forces against us to continue to push us further and further away from YHVH and His will. The longer we stay in darkness, the more lost we become, the more we see old patterns of sin and flesh coming in, and the more we see YHVHly desires and ways eroding.<sup>2</sup>

When we sin, we allow this spiritual force of darkness to influence us. It is like suffering a slow spiritual death. Sin originates in our minds, exactly where depressions sets its hold on those who allow it. We are to be vigilant not to allow or agree with thoughts that will lead us to sin.

*The Bible tells us to guard our hearts and our minds ( Phil 4: 7 ). Paul says to renew our minds to truth (Rom 12:2), and Y'shua tells us that if we know the truth, the truth will set us free (John 8: 32). <sup>2</sup>*

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything, worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

When this happens, despite what some people believe, we are not able to commune with YHVH or experience His presence. However, when we cleanse ourselves through repentance and draw near to YHVH in prayer, we will be able to commune with YHVH, hear His voice and know His will for us. His presence will expose the darkness in our lives further and we will be able to cleanse ourselves and those areas and able to draw even closer to Him.

## Conclusion

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Darkness is all around us, spiritual darkness. This darkness influences us every day. The enemy has unholy altars everywhere and these altars form a habitat for dark spiritual powers. Whenever the will and ways of YHVH is rejected, these powers flourish. We can be influenced by these forces if we choose to yield to them. Not doing anything about the situation, means we allow it, which is equal to yielding to it. We are to ask ourselves “where is YHVH? Why don’t I hear His voice?” Could it be because I have so yielded to the darkness around that He doesn’t feel welcome?

We as believers in YHVH can do something about this. I know, YHVH doesn’t need us, but we need Him. So why do we have to do anything? Simple, because YHVH does not force Himself on people, we have to choose Him and then through prayer the world can literally be changed. Where YHVH’s presence dwells, change will be seen. This darkness can be dispelled through giving our hearts wholly to YHVH as prayer altars to Him, inviting His presence into our lives when we offer up the sacrifices of our lips. We can influence other believers to do the same, so creating a network of prayer altars. These altars of prayer, invite YHVH’s presence into our lives, homes, family, workplaces and community and His presence will affect change. His presence shows us the way and it illuminated and exposes the darkness.

The question is how desperate are you for change? How desperate are you to commune with YHVH, to hear His voice? Are we going to wait until all is falling apart around us, or will you take a stand against the darkness around us, by inviting YHVH’s presence into our lives?

As I said at the beginning this is not a cure , at least not a medical cure for depression, but for someone who has spent a great deal of my life allowing that depression to sink its teeth into my life, I can tell you this is the only solution that I have found that actually works. Maybe, just maybe it will work for you as well. My prayers go out to all who are afflicted by this.

## References

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1. All quoted passages are from the New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update. LaHabra,CA:TheLockman Foundation,1995.We have substituted YHVH for LORD and Y’shua for Y’shua
2. Mulinde, John; Daniel, Mark. Prayer Altars: A Strategy That Is Changing Nations (Kindle Locations 948-950). World Trumpet Mission. Kindle Edition.





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## 2. People Pleasing and Biblical Boundaries

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“A People Pleaser is one of the nicest and most helpful people you know. They never say “no.” You can always count on them for a favor. In fact, they spend a great deal of time doing things for other people. They get their work done, help others with their work, make all the plans, and are always there for family members and friends. So far this sounds like a good thing.”<sup>2</sup>

People pleasers are always seen as dependable people. The saying goes “if you want something done, give it to a busy person” This “busy person” is probably a people pleaser who is incapable of saying “no.”

Broken people are inclined to be people pleasers, they tend not to have clear boundaries. They want to be accepted and will therefore always say yes. They are the ones you can always depend on to get things done. They are easily manipulated by other’s pleas or anger. They say yes, but may feel immense resentment while doing what they said they would. This leads to bitterness towards that person and themselves. They feel controlled by other people, but are unable to break this cycle for fear of an outburst of anger or losing a relationship. They are always taken advantage of by others. When they say no they feel selfish and guilty.

Do you recognize this in your life?

People pleasers are good people, having everything over for other people. However, it may be to their own detriment. They are often overextended, overstressed and depressed. They may harbor deep feelings of resentment and bitterness against the people who expect so much from them and they often don’t enjoy what they are doing. They will nevertheless carry on for fear of rejection or failure. Every “well done” or compliment reinforces their lack of boundaries.

This is certainly not living abundantly, living in constant resentment, bitterness and being controlled by others. This practice of people pleasing can also lead to neglect of our family or ourselves. Our children may withdraw from us, not to speak of the example they are getting from us. If we don’t look after ourselves, it may also result in poor health for us. All this can be changed by implementing biblical boundaries. I specifically say biblical boundaries, because without biblical guidance, it may result in selfishness. We need to find a balance and that balance is found in scripture.

### What is a boundary and what is it not?

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A boundary is a property line. It is biblically defined as follows:

**boundary of territory belonging to an individual**, - of field, piece of ground, etc. Gen 23:17 (P) Dt 19:14; 27:17, Jos 24:30 (E) = Ju 2:9 1 Ch 4:10 Pr 15:25; 22:28; 23:10 Ho 5:10. †d. border of stream Nu 22:36. †e. limit to waters of deep ψ 104:9 cf. Je 5:22. †f. a concrete object marking limit, (α) **barrier** in Ezekiel’s temple Ez 40:12 (del. Co) v 12; (β) border of altar Ez 43:13, 17, 20; (γ) surrounding wall of restored Zion Is 54:12 (so Ew Kn Che; De Brd territory, Di

undecided). † 2. **territory (enclosed within boundary)**, a. of land or people Gn 47:21 (J) Ex 7:27 (P) 10:4, 14 (|| ארץ) v 19; 13:7 (all J), Nu 20:16, 17, 21; 21:22 (E; || ארץ) = Ju 11:20, Nu 21:23 (E) Dt 2:4; 19:3 (ג' ארץ) v 8; 28:40 Jos 18:5() (E) Ju 11:22; 19:29 2 S 21:5 1 K 1:3 2 K 10:32 1 Ch 21:12 (|| ארץ) ψ 105:31 (= ארץ in || Ez 8:16, 17) v 33; 147:14 Je 31:17 Ez 11:10, 11 Jo 4:6 Zp 2:8.<sup>3</sup>

Our boundaries define our territory, it defines what we are responsible for. In the case of a physical property, we are legally responsible for what happens on our property. Each of us has a personal boundary. It is like an invisible property line. Our boundary defines who we are, our heart and soul. It defines what is me, what is not me, where I end and the world begins. Knowing what I am to own and take responsibility for gives me freedom. I have control over what I own. I don't own other people, and they don't own me, so I am not to try and control them and are not to be controlled by them. If I am, however, "owned" by others, my options are limited.

YHWH also instructed us about our boundaries. In Proverbs, we are instructed to guard our hearts.

Proverbs 4:23

<sup>23</sup> Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

**We watch over our hearts by setting boundaries. Boundaries protect us physically, emotionally and spiritually.** Our skin is a good example of a boundary, it protects our body from infections and injury. It keeps the good in and the bad out. Words can also be a boundary. **The word "no" is an effective boundary. We need to keep what nurtures us in and what can harm us outside of our boundaries.**

Matthew 7:6

<sup>6</sup> "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

To have boundaries is to know what you can share with others. You won't tell all the detail of your personal life to someone you just met, for example. That may be, "throwing your pearls before swine."

The other extreme is to say nothing, also refusing to confess Y'shua as your Messiah.

Romans 10:9–10

<sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth Y'shua as Lord, and believe in your heart that Elohim raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; <sup>10</sup> for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

8b–10 The thing Israel is to "do" is the word, which is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. That word is not about following rules legalistically but is the word about trust that we emissaries of the Messiah proclaim. What is this "trust"? According to Sha'ul's analysis it consists of two components, trusting (in a narrower sense of the term) and acknowledging publicly; and for these activities one employs, respectively, the heart and the mouth. Only on the basis of such trust can our efforts to obey YHWH's directives (1:5) lead to being made righteous (1:16–17) and to deliverance (or "salvation") from the death penalty which sinners (that is, all people, 3:23) have earned (6:23). 4

*The Greek word for “to acknowledge publicly” is “omologeîn,” usually translated “to confess” but meaning, literally, “to say the same thing”—in this case, to agree with what YHVH has revealed in his word about himself and his Son. The public, open aspect of this agreeing is essential; this can be seen from the contexts elsewhere in the New Testament where the word “omologeîn” is used— Mt 10:32; Lk 12:8; Yn 1:20, 9:22, 12:42; 1 Ti 6:13; 1 Yn 4:2–3, 15; 2 Yn 7. <sup>4</sup>*

1 Peter 3:15

<sup>15</sup> but sanctify Messiah as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

1 John 4:15

<sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Y’shua is the Son of Elohîm, Elohîm abides in him, and he in Elohîm.

We are to be wise in what we say or don’t say. This is why we need to have boundaries based on scripture. Scripture gives us the wisdom to discern.

## A boundary is not a wall

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While we are required to be wise in what we share with others, it is important to understand that our boundary is not meant to be a wall. It is not meant to only keep in what is good and out what is bad, but more like a fence with a gate allowing good to enter in and bad to be let out.

**We are to receive truth from YHVH’s word.** YHVH gave us His word as instruction on how to live and how to worship Him. He stands at the door and knocks; it is our choice to let Him in. It is also our choice to allow His word to become part of us, and to live according to it.

Revelation 3:20

<sup>20</sup> ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

We are to read and study His word and allow it to renew us. We are also to receive His salvation, His love, and all the other gifts He freely gives to us. YHVH has given us so much, we need to accept and appropriate it.

**We can also receive from each other.** We can receive love, compassion, friendship, but also instruction from others. YHVH can use people to teach us and we are to be willing to receive from them.

2 Corinthians 6:11–13

<sup>11</sup> Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. <sup>12</sup> You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. <sup>13</sup> Now in a like exchange - I speak as to children - open wide to us also.

**Sin, transgression and iniquity on the other hand,** are to be let out. We are to confess and repent of our sin,

transgression and iniquity- all forms of unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When we are cleansed from unrighteousness, it is removed from us as far as the east is from the west. **We are also to let go of pain.** If we can talk about our pain to a trusted friend, we can “let it out” and be healed.

James 5:16

<sup>16</sup> Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

When we build a wall around ourselves for protection, we not only keep the bad out, we also prevent what is good to enter in while keeping that which is bad for us inside. We can't receive love, compassion, truth or instruction. We also keep all our pain inside of us allowing it to destroy us a little more each day. This is not what YHWH wants for us. He wants us to have a healthy relationship with Him built on a foundation of trust and He wants us to have healthy relationships with others. We were created to interact with one another. As believers, we are all part of the same body. We are nevertheless to guard our hearts against any form of unhealthy relationships. We are taught to bear one another's burdens. This means we are to help one another. Where does this fit into the context of burdens.

## Bearing one another's burdens

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A believer is required to love his neighbor as himself. This love is about helping those in need. We read in Galatians that we are to bear one another's burdens.

Galatians 6:2

<sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Messiah.

We also read in scripture that each is to carry his own load.

Galatians 6:5

<sup>5</sup> For each one will bear his own load.

There seems to be a contradiction here. However, when we look at the meaning of the words translated as burden and load, we find the answer.

Burden in verse 2, is “*baros*” in Greek, meaning a tremendous load.

*983 βάρος (baros), ους (ous), τό (to): n.neu.; ≡ Str 922; TDNT 1.553—1. LN 22.4 hardship, burden (Mt 20:12; Ac 15:28; Gal 6:2; Rev 2:24+); 2. LN 78.23 tremendous, weight, a high point on a scale of extent (2Co 4:17+); 3. LN 65.56 ἐν βάρει εἰμί (en barei eimi), claim importance, formally, I am a burden (1Th 2:7+)<sup>5</sup>*

A “load” on the other hand was translated from the Greek word “*porthion*.” We get the English word portion from this and it means exactly that, our part.

15.208 φορτίον, ου n (derivative of φορτίζω ‘to cause to carry a load,’ 15.207); γόμος, ου m (derivative of γέμω ‘to be laden,’ not occurring in the NT): a relatively heavy object which is carried - ‘load, burden, cargo (as of a ship).’<sup>6</sup>

A burden as in the first scripture, is a tremendous weight, the person who has to carry this may not have the strength, resources or knowledge to carry it, they need help. We are in such a case to deny ourselves and do for them what they cannot do for themselves. These are typically times of crisis or tragedy. A load, on the other hand, is a relatively heavy object, but can be carried by the person. It is our daily responsibilities, our own feelings, attitudes and behaviors.

Each of us is required to carry our own “portion”, but we are to help carry with somebody if their burden is too heavy for them. We can compare it to a boulder versus a knapsack. The knapsack is heavy and difficult to carry, but we can do it, while a boulder is impossible to bear alone. So, if somebody asks you to do something for them, **are you being required to carry their portion for them or help them carry a burden?** Looking at it through this perspective, will help us to determine if somebody is really in need of our help.

Y’shua is our example and He taught us much about boundaries.

## YHVH, Y’shua our perfect example

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To have boundaries is biblical, if you read scripture from the context of boundaries, you will see how our Heavenly Father models boundaries for us. He set boundaries about how He wants to be worshipped, what pleases Him, what displeases Him. YHVH’s boundaries are His commandments. Keeping His commandments results in blessing and breaking them, in curses. When we read about the time Y’shua was on earth, focusing on the context of boundaries, we see how often He set boundaries. He is a perfect example for us. Y’shua was not a people-pleaser, but He was always helping others in need.

At the beginning of His ministry, Y’shua went to John to be baptized by him.

Matthew 3:14–15

<sup>14</sup>But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” <sup>15</sup> But Y’shua answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him.

If Y’shua was a people pleaser, He could have allowed John to convince Him not to do this. He stood His ground while explaining to John why it needs to be done.

After this, Y’shua went into the wilderness to be tested (tempted) by Satan. Here again, Y’shua exercised His boundaries, which were the commandments of YHVH. Every temptation, if given in, would have breached His boundary line. For Y’shua, His primary boundaries were YHVH’s commandments.

Y’shua’s first consideration whether He would do something or not, was spiritual.

We also read the following in Matt 8:18

Matthew 8:18

18 Now when Y'shua saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea.

Y'shua saw the crowd around Him, yet He gave orders to depart. If He didn't have boundaries, He would have felt obliged to stay and teach the people, yet He departed to the other side.

After Y'shua had chosen His disciples, He gave them authority, but also boundaries (Matt 10:5-42).

When the Scribes and Pharisees asked Y'shua for a sign, He answered as follows:

Matthew 12:39

39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;

Y'shua was asked for a sign, He was capable of performing any number of signs, but said no. He wasn't going to perform to gain acceptance from these people.

In between these passages we are highlighting here, we read of all the miracles Y'shua did, how He helped and cared for people. He healed them, delivered them from demonic afflictions, He fed them and taught them. In Y'shua's example, we see balance and also discernment. He knew when the people needed help with a burden too heavy to carry on their own. He also knew when to say no. Let's look at a few more examples.

After Y'shua taught and fed the multitudes, He sent them away and went up to the mountain by Himself to pray (Matt 14:22). He took time for Himself to pray. A people-pleaser would never have done this.

When the Pharisees came to Y'shua complaining that the disciples didn't keep the tradition of washing their hands, He explained to them that it was more important to follow the commandments of YHWH than the traditions of men. They were greatly offended by this. A people pleaser may have been able to find a compromise. Y'shua, however, stood on what was right according to scripture.

After Y'shua told His disciples that He would have to suffer and be killed, Peter rebuked Him saying "this shall never happen to You" Y'shua rebuked him saying, "get behind Me Satan, you are a stumbling block to Me" From this, we see that Y'shua was not prepared to compromise. He said what needed to be said and did what needed to be done.

When He entered the temple and saw those buying and selling in the temple, he chased them out. He didn't compromise in order to please people or to be accepted by Him. He did what was right in YHWH's eyes. He also had immense compassion and love for people and helped them. We can learn much from Him.

In Deuteronomy, YHWH commanded that we are not to move our neighbor's boundary mark.

## Moving your neighbor's boundary

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Deuteronomy 19:14

<sup>14</sup> “You shall not move your neighbor’s boundary mark, which the ancestors have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that YHVH your Elohim gives you to possess.

What do we do when we move our neighbor’s boundary mark? We take a piece of their property; we steal from them. **If we nag or manipulate somebody into doing or giving something, they didn’t want to do or give, we move their boundary mark.** We take something from them. It may be time or a possession or we may have caused them to compromise.

YHVH actually goes further and say the following.

Deuteronomy 27:17

<sup>17</sup> ‘Cursed is he who moves his neighbor’s boundary mark.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

This commandment was given in the context of property, but do consider this. We are to respect another person’s boundaries and learn to set our own. We do not have to perform to be accepted. We will never be accepted by everybody and we can’t keep everybody happy. We will lose ourselves and maybe even our families in the process.

We can use the following steps to evaluate if we are to do something for somebody or not.

## How are we to set our boundaries

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Our first consideration should be spiritual.

## According to YHVH’s Word

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Is what is asked of us in line with Scripture or will it cause us to compromise in any way? There may be exceptions here, like an emergency on the Sabbath causing us to do something we won’t normally do. Y’shua taught according to this:

Luke 14:5

<sup>5</sup> And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?”

Each situation is different and we need to be sensitive and loving when we set our boundaries. What do you do when you are offered food which you know are not permitted according to scripture? Will you decline and possibly cause offense or will you eat it for the sake of love and relationship? We need to handle this in a sensitive way, but without compromising.

We are to live and do according to YHVH’s commandments. He gave us instructions for our own good.

Isaiah 48:17–18

<sup>17</sup> Thus says YHVH, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am YHVH your Elohim, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.” <sup>18</sup> Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments!

Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea;

YHVH teaches us to profit and leads us in the way we should go. If we do this, we will have peace and be blessed. We also know from Scripture that not being obedient brings separation between us and YHVH. Is it really worth the compromise?

Isaiah 59:2

2 but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your Elohim, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

When we compromise, we may be able to gain acceptance from that person for that moment, but will cause separation between us and YHVH. Not worth it, I would say.

In Psalm 16:5-6 it is explained to us how that which is allotted to us by YHVH, our part or property, that which is within our boundaries, is beautiful.

Psalm 16:5–6

5 YHVH is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You support my lot. 6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.

The Hebrew word for “lines” is “hebel” meaning boundary

2474 I. חֶבֶל (*ḥě·běl*): *n.masc.*; ≡ Str 2256; TWOT 592b, 595a—LN 11.12–11.54 *procession, company, i.e., group proceeding in a joyful, somewhat boisterous religious parade (1Sa 10:5, 10 +) 2475 II. חֶבֶל (*ḥě·běl*): *n.masc.*; ≡ Str 2256; TWOT 592b*

1. LN 6.14–6.22 rope, cord, line, i.e., implement used for binding in various contexts (Jos 2:15);
2. LN 1.79–1.81 region, district, i.e., a relatively large area of land (Dt 3:4);
3. LN 57.125–57.141 share, portion, i.e., what is inherited (Dt 32:9; 1Ch 16:18) note: NIV Jos 19:29; Jdg, see also 4676.5, 4699;
4. LN 6.23–6.25 noose, i.e., a trapping device for capturing animals (Job 18:10);
5. LN 6.41–6.51 rigging, i.e., cords and lines used in sail boats (Isa 33:23);
6. LN 80.5–80.7 boundary, i.e., the end or limit of a fixed area (Zep 2:5);
7. LN 6.213–6.214 measuring line (2Sa 8:2; Zec 2:5[EB 2:1]);
8. LN 30.86–30.107 fate, i.e., what is a decision of YHVH, implying a choice (Job 21:17), note: oth see 2476;
9. LN 1.46–1.50 mountain, i.e., an elevated area (Pr 23:34 cj+), note: for MT text, see 2479 5

5709 I. נַחֲלָה (*nă·ḥălā(h)*): *n.fem.*; ≡ Str 5159; TWOT 1342a

1. LN 57.125–57.141 *inheritance, property or land given by one person to a successive*

*generation (Gen 31:34);*

2. LN 63.13–63.20 *part, share, i.e., that which is a part of a whole, as a portion that has been assigned, implying association (2 Sam 20:1)*<sup>5</sup>

That which falls within the boundaries YHWH gave us, is beautiful. We are not constricted by His commandments, on the contrary. It makes our life beautiful.

It goes without saying that the legality of the request is also a consideration.

## A burden or a load

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We can next, evaluate the situation to determine if it is a burden we are helping to carry or somebody's load. If we do for somebody else what they are supposed to do for themselves, we actually don't help them. A good example is always making it too easy for our children. When we do, they don't learn and will later in life always depend on others to carry their load (responsibilities) for them. If we give to a beggar capable of work, we enable him to continue begging, but if we give him work, we help him to see other possibilities. These are just two examples to illustrate to you that we are sometimes not helping when we think we are, while overloading ourselves in the process.

## Capacity

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The next consideration is our capacity. Do we have the time, resources or energy to help. What would be the impact on ourselves, or our family when we say yes? If we are going to neglect ourselves or our family as a result of this, we should reconsider. It is ok to help somebody with a burden, even if it would impact us personally. The nature of a burden is usually a crisis or tragedy, so the help required is intense for a while, but will ease off. What I am talking about is when we regularly or always overcommit ourselves to our and our family's detriment.

When we evaluate each request for help like this, it may help us set proper biblical boundaries. We must learn to say no. It will be difficult in the beginning and people who used to control you, may get angry or sulky, but they will get over it. In the long run, you and they will reap the benefits.

## Conclusion

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Boundaries are invisible property lines. It helps us determine what we are responsible for. We are not responsible for people, but to people. Each of us is responsible for ourselves and is to carry our own load. We are, however, as believers required to help carry the burden of others. That which they are incapable of doing for themselves. Our primary boundaries are defined for us in YHWH's word. YHWH gave us instructions for living and these boundaries help us set our own. We are to study YHWH's word and so learn these boundaries and live accordingly.

We can say *no* if we are asked to do something contrary to YHWH's word. We can also say no when we are asked to carry the normal responsibility of another person. We are to discern when we are asked to carry someone's load or help carry a burden. Finally, we are to consider our own situation before accepting more work or responsibility.

Establishing our boundaries by saying no according to these guidelines will help us in the long run to live happier, more productive lives. We will have enough time for ourselves and our family. We will not overextend ourselves resulting in anxiety and depression and we will be available if somebody is really in need of our help. Pray about this, asking YHVH to help you set boundaries in line with His word. Go and read the gospels again and see how Y'shua established boundaries and learn from Him. He is our perfect example.

May YHVH lead and guide you in this.

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### 3. *Mind control and fear*

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When you watch the news on television, open the newspaper or Facebook or whatever news or social media you choose to read, you are bombarded with bad news, terror and bloodshed. Have you ever considered what the purpose and effect of this is on us if we are exposed to this all the time? I can tell you what it does to me, it creates fear, anxiety and depression in me, mostly depression; it discourages me and undermines my faith, it makes life seem not worth living. It takes a great deal of effort to pull myself out of this state of fear and despair and continue life with joy. I have to constantly remind myself that YHWH is in control and that we are to trust in Him. In many cases I just refuse to watch or participate in any kind of social media or watching tv at all, and to be honest I do not miss any of it. Still, it is almost impossible to get away from it.

Some people will be judgmental and say I feel this way because my faith is not strong enough. They may be right, I may not be the next Abraham, my faith is some days stronger than others. I am just a normal person like everybody else. So, if all this has this effect on me, it might have the same effect on other people and this is the reason for writing this. I am sick and tired of being controlled like this. This has to change!

## Controlling the masses

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Without knowing it, we subject ourselves to this form of mind control every day when we hear and see what is offered through the mainstream media. Case in point, Hamas has gained the sympathy of the world through media manipulation. The worst part is nobody cares now that it has been exposed, because the perception has been created. The fact that they used actors, scenes from films and Photoshop to manipulate the media is ignored by this same media and the people who are controlled by it. They have achieved their goal. This is just one example and there are many more that I could list but it is not about pointing at one individual group, I am just making a point.

Public opinion has been influenced and hate has been incited against Israel.

Modern media have made it possible for us to be “involved” in multiple wars, while at the same time know of every brutal murder, robbery or shooting that has taken place and in every graphic detail. We also know of all the natural disasters and the devastation they leave behind. The question is, do we really have to know so much detail? I don’t understand why it is necessary for people to share photos of beheadings and other forms of bloodshed. What purpose does it serve? What is the agenda behind this? The other question is: how much of this is really true and how much is manipulated?

I am not saying that we are to switch it all off and live an uninformed life, but we have to have some boundaries, balance and discernment. We are to take control of our minds, because I do believe that we are being manipulated by the media and we allow it willingly.

Let’s start off with a definition of mind control:

***Mind control*** (also known as *brainwashing, coercive persuasion, thought control, or thought*

*reform) is a theoretical indoctrination process which results in “an impairment of autonomy, an inability to think independently, and a disruption of beliefs and affiliations. In this context, brainwashing refers to **the involuntary reeducation of basic beliefs and values** “. <sup>[1]</sup> The term has been applied to any tactic, psychological or otherwise, which can be seen as subverting an individual’s sense of control over their own thinking, behavior, emotions or decision making.<sup>2</sup>*

When you read this definition and consider it in the context of modern media, you will be able to make the connection. We are being, systematically, re-educated by what we read and see. Have you ever contemplated the impact this has on us? Just consider how widespread depression is. Suicides, drug and alcohol addiction are on the rise. This is often blamed on how stressful our lives have become, but I wonder how much of this is caused by that which we are confronted with on a daily basis.

You would be surprised to know that the Bible also warns us about this.

## A pupil will be like his teacher

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I believe we become what we put into ourselves. We become like our teacher, the question is who do we choose to teach us and what do they teach us?

*Luke 6:40*

<sup>40</sup> “A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.

If we choose to spend our time reading about everything that is wrong in the world, that is our teacher and we will be influenced by that. We will become depressed, discouraged and negative. We are being programmed to be like this.

## Renewing of the mind

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Scripture also teaches that we are to renew our mind.

*Romans 12:2*

<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of Elohim is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The Greek word for conformed is defined as follows:

*5372 συσχηματίζομαι (syschēmatizomai), συσχηματίζω (syschēmatizō): vb.; ≡ Str 4964—LN 41.29 **shape one’s behavior; (dep.) be conformed to a pattern or mold (Ro 12:2; 1Pe 1:14+)***<sup>3</sup>

Paul is speaking about our minds here. Our minds are not to be shaped according to the world, but transformed, changed by a process of renewing. The question is what do we renew our minds with? What is our input? Is it YHWH’s Word that has the power to strengthen our faith, or is it whatever we find in the media or the internet? We will be changed by that which we see and read and hear.



We will be most affected by that which touches our emotions. We will remember a sad, funny or scary story better than a factual article. The media knows that and uses that. Fear is in most cases, what is used to control people.

## Fear is power to the enemy

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You probably know that when we fear, we give power to the enemy. The physical and/or the spiritual enemy. Do you know that the ISIS terrorists take pictures of what they do to extend their power base which is based on fear. When you re-post their pictures and articles about them, you help them gain more power. They need the publicity to perpetuate their reign of terror and you are aiding them.

It is the same spiritually, when we fear, we give power to Satan. His kingdom and power base are also extended when we fear him or what he can do to us. That is why YHWH instructed us not to fear. The phrase “do not fear” and “fear not” is used many times in the Bible in this context. Not 365 times like a popular teaching states, but lots of times. Enough for us to get the message anyway.

*Isaiah 41:10*

<sup>10</sup> ‘Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your Elohim. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’

We are not to fear, because first of all fear is paralyzing.

## Fear is paralyzing

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In Scripture, we read when people fear their hands become feeble, their hearts melt, their spirit faint and their knees become as water. Here are two verses describing this. The context here is not fear of the enemy, but fear of YHWH’s judgment, but it does explain very well what happens when we fear.

*Isaiah 13:7*

<sup>7</sup> Therefore all hands will fall limp, and every man’s heart will melt.

*Ezekiel 21:7*

<sup>7</sup> “And when they say to you, ‘Why do you groan?’ you shall say, ‘Because of the news that is coming; and every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it comes and it will happen,’ declares YHWH Elohim.”

A soldier who has to fight will not be able to in this state, it is the same with us spiritually. When we fear, we cannot fight and we have to, even if it is just our lack of faith we have to fight. However, when we are paralyzed because of fear, we usually don’t or can’t do anything. What are we to do about this?

# We are to control what we expose ourselves to

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Here is a very profound reference regarding this.

Isaiah 33:14–17

Sinners in Zion are terrified; Trembling has seized the YHVHless

“Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?”

He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity,

He who rejects unjust gain and shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe;

He who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil;

He will dwell on the heights,

His refuge will be the impregnable rock; His bread will be given him,

His water will be sure.

Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; They will behold a far-distant land.

We are to stop our ears from hearing about bloodshed and shut our eyes from looking upon evil. That basically rules out all the mainstream media propaganda. Who has to take action here? Us, it is our choice...

Here is our filter:

*Philippians 4:8*

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

This verse is preceded with this:

*Philippians 4:4–7*

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in YHVH always; again, I will say, rejoice! <sup>5</sup> Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. YHVH is near. <sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to Elohim. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of Elohim, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Y’shua.

This is great instruction! There is more...

## Fear YHVH

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More importantly, we are to fear YHVH only. We are to study His Word and obey Him. When we fear other things and people, we practice idolatry, for fear is all-consuming and it takes us away from YHVH. Our object of fear becomes more important than anything else.

*Isaiah 8:12–14*

<sup>12</sup> “You are not to say, ‘*It is a conspiracy!*’ In regard to all that this people call a conspiracy, and you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of *it*. <sup>13</sup> **“It is YHVH of hosts whom you should regard as holy. and He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread.** <sup>14</sup> “Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, *And* a snare and a trap for the inhabitants

of Jerusalem.

## YHVH, our sanctuary

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Have you noticed in the previous verse that when we fear YHVH, He will become a sanctuary? A sanctuary is a holy place, a refuge and protection.

Ezekiel 11:16

<sup>16</sup> “Therefore say, ‘Thus says YHVH Elohim, “Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone.” ’

When we look the word “*miqdas*” up in the Lexicon, we find that it means holy place or sanctuary, but also that it could mean “asylum”

*(3) an asylum, since temples amongst the Hebrews, as amongst the Greeks, had the right of asylum, Isa. 8:14; Eze. 11:16 (compare 1 Ki. 1:50; 2:28). <sup>4</sup>*

### **Full Definition of ASYLUM**

**1: an inviolable place of refuge and protection, giving shelter to criminals and debtors: sanctuary**

**2: a place of retreat and security: shelter**

**3a: the protection or inviolability afforded by an asylum: refuge<sup>5</sup>**

When you look at the cross references for “sanctuary” in this context, you find the following two verses and when you understand the word asylum, you understand why these are the cross references..

Isaiah 4:6

<sup>6</sup> There will be a shelter to *give* shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain.

Isaiah 25:4–5

<sup>4</sup> For You have been a defense for the helpless, A defense for the needy in his distress, A refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; For the breath of the ruthless is like a *rain* storm *against* a wall. <sup>5</sup> Like heat in drought, you subdue the uproar of aliens; *Like* heat by the shadow of a cloud, the song of the ruthless is silenced.

When we fear YHVH, He becomes our refuge, our protection against anything that may come our way. Is this not enough motivation for us to start making different choices? It is to me...

## Conclusion

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Knowing that we are being manipulated by the mainstream media, and what the effect of this is on us, it should be clear what we can do about this.

We are to fear YHVH only and obey Him. We are to renew our minds with His Word and be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known to YHVH. He will not only help us, if it is His will, but will also give us peace. This is logical for any believer.

We are to control what we expose ourselves to; stop our ears from hearing about bloodshed and shut our eyes from looking upon evil. Not only will we stop the mind control, but we will also not be spreading propaganda.

May this bless you and may the peace of Elohim, which surpasses all comprehension, guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Y'shua.

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## 4. *Thoughts, the battle in our minds*

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What are you thinking right now? What have you been thinking about today? Are you worried, thinking about the challenges you face or thinking about pleasant things, rolling hills and wild flowers perhaps? Our thoughts are important; it shapes who we are and who we become. If you dwell on negative thoughts, you will become negative and so perceived by others. Did you know that your thoughts play a role in your health too?

Do you think that our thoughts can be controlled in any way? We will show you how our thoughts can be used by satan to make war against us on many levels.

Let us start off by looking what we can find in scripture about our thoughts and also examine how and by whom our thoughts can be influenced. We shall start off by defining the word.

How is the word **“thought”** defined in Scripture?

Many different words, translated as thought are used in Scripture. The context of each of these gives us more understanding. Each word gives us another nuance of the word “thought”.

Here are some common Hebrew and Greek words used and an explanation of their meaning based on context. This is not an exhaustive list, just an indication of how many different words are used to define a thought.

THOUGHT(S) [Heb. *maḥšaḥāḇā* (Gen. 6:5; Job 21:27; Ps. 33:11; etc.), *dāḇār*-‘word’ (Dt. 15:9; Ezk. 38:10), *higgāyôn*-‘whispering’ (Lam. 3:62), *ḥešbôn*-‘account, device’ (Eccl. 9:10), *maddā*-‘knowledge’ (Eccl. 10:20), *mezimmā*-‘evil thoughts’ (Ps. 10:4), *‘aštūt* (Job 12:5), *rû* (a)ḥ-‘breath, wind, spirit’ (Prov. 1:23), *rē* (a)-‘will, intention’ (Ps. 139:2, 17), *śē* (a)ḥ (Am. 4:13), *śe’ippîm*-‘disquieting thoughts’ (Job 4:13; 20:2), *śar’appîm*-‘disquieting thoughts’ (Ps. 139:23); Aram *ra’yôn* (Dnl. 2:29f.; 4:19 [MT 16]; 5:6, 10; 7:28); Gk. *dialogismós*-‘opinion, reasoning’ (Mt. 15:19 par; Lk. 2:35; 6:8; 9:47; 1 Cor. 3:20; Jas. 2:4), *logismós*-‘calculation, reasoning’ (Rom. 2:15), *enthýmēsis* (Mt. 9:4; 12:25; He. 4:12), *noēma* (2 Cor. 10:5; 11:3), *dianoēma* (Lk. 11:17), *énnoia* (1 Pet. 4:1)]; AV also THING, DEVICE, SPIRIT (Prov. 1:23), COGITATION (Dnl. 7:28); NEB also **murmur** (Lam. 3:62), **scheme, counsel** (Prov. 1:23), **PURPOSE**, etc.

*The word “think” in Gen. 26:7; Ps. 59:7; Isa. 36:5; and Jer. 22:15 translates no specific Hebrew terms but derives from the respective contexts...*

...In the RSV the usual verb for **“think”** is Gk. *dokéō*. It refers frequently to the thought directed at that which is illusory or deceptive (e.g., Mt. 6:7; 1 Cor. 12:23; Gal. 6:3), and often in contexts in which the standards and suppositions of this world contrast with those of YHWH’s people and kingdom. In the Gospels Y’shua frequently employs the rhetorical, impersonal interrogative Gk. *tí dokeí* (**“What do you think?”**), especially as an introductory formula to short parables and metaphors (e.g., Mt. 18:12; 21:28), to arouse attention. Another common verb is *nomízō*, which is often used of faulty assumptions, as when Y’shua debated with the Pharisees over the Law (Mt.

5:17; cf. 20:10; Acts 8:20; etc.) The only other term to occur with any frequency is *logízomai* and its compound, *dialogízomai*. The former means primarily **“reckon” or “credit”** and is a standard Pauline term for the imputation of YHWH’s righteousness to human beings. In a few contexts, however, it has the less technical sense of **“estimate”** (2

Cor. 11:5; 12:6) or “consider” (Rom. 14:14), and even the somewhat unusual idea of “**reflect**” (e.g., “**think about these things**,” Phil. 4:8). Gk. dialogízomai can mean “**reason**” or “**debate**,” often with oneself, and frequently in contemplating evil (Lk. 12:17).

Other terms for “**think**” include Gk. enthyméomai, which usually carries a negative connotation of evil or foolish thought (Mt. 9:4), hēgéomai, which can mean “**regard**” or “**consider**” (Acts 26:2; 2 Pet. 1:13), and peíthō, normally translated “**persuade**,” e.g., in Agrippa’s famous reply to Paul, “In a short time you think to make me a Christian” (Acts 26:28). Phronéō, a predominantly Pauline term, sometimes refers more to the manner or content rather than the process of thought (1 Cor. 13:11); its compound hyperphronéō appears pejoratively in Rom. 12:3 for inflated self-assessment. In Eph. 3:20 Gk. noéō refers more to the activity of the mind (see UNDERSTAND) and when compounded (pronoéō) means “**think of beforehand**,” though often without emphasis on the temporal prefix, except in the secondary sense of making preparation for something (e.g., “**take thought for what is noble**,” Rom. 12:7). In Acts 15:38 axiōō, “**thought best**,” is literally “**deemed worthy**” or “**fitting**.” Krínō in Acts 26:8 is literally “**judge**” in its neutral sense of “**evaluate**.”<sup>2</sup>

## The power of thoughts

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Do you think it really matters what we think? Our thoughts have power in our lives. Job said the following.

Job 3:25

<sup>25</sup> “For what I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me.

These are sobering words! “What I fear comes upon me and what I dread befalls me.” Fear is something created in our minds based on what we observe with our senses. If you smell or see smoke you fear that there might be a fire. If you hear or read a bad report, you fear the impact on your life or that of your family.

## Fear not!

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YHVH teaches us not to fear, the phrase “fear not” is used more than eighty times in the Bible in this context. We can control this. Every time we fear or dread something we are to go to YHVH and give it to Him.

1 Peter 5:7

<sup>7</sup> casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

A little exercise for you to practice that I found helped me. I have a list of all the giants in my life and every day I take it before YHVH and give it to Him and I trust that His will be done. This has helped me so much. Every time one of these giants come before me during the day, I send them away with the thought that I have given it to YHVH, and He will sort it out in the best way, because He cares for me.

When I speak of giants of course I am not speaking about people that are overly large, but about a state of mind based on Biblical principles. In my next article I will go over this topic in detail.

Also consider this...

Proverbs 17:22

<sup>22</sup> A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.

The word heart can refer to thoughts

4213 לב (lēb): n.masc.; ≡ Str 3820; TWOT 1071a—1. LN 8.9–8.69 heart, i.e., the blood pumping organ of the body (Ps 38:11[EB 10]; Hos 13:8); 2. LN 8.9–8.69 chest, formally, heart, i.e., the thorax cavity of a creature (Job 41:16[EB 24]); 3. LN 26 **heart, mind, soul, spirit, self, i.e., the source of life of the inner person in various aspects, with a focus on feelings, thoughts, volition, and other areas of the inner life** (Isa 57:15; Ecc 2:1)<sup>3</sup>

From this, we can deduce that joyful thoughts could be considered good medicine. You have probably heard that laughter can relieve stress, and we know that stress can harm our health. Once again, what is stress? Stress is nothing but fear. By fearing something, stress is created in our bodies, which cause havoc when we are exposed to it for extended periods of time.

So, from these scriptures, we learn that our thoughts can either have a beneficial or detrimental effect on our lives. I never realized that it was so profound. We are therefore to focus on what we ponder on. We should have control over this; we are to be the gatekeeper of our minds.

Saying this, is there anyone else who can have control over our thoughts?

## Who is in control of our thoughts?

We have seen that our thoughts can have an effect on our lives. Could anyone or anything also have control over our thoughts? Let us see what is taught in Scripture.

Romans 12:2

<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of Elohim is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

From this verse in Romans, we learn that we can be transformed by the renewing of our mind. Quite amazing if you consider this. We have the power to transform our lives by renewing our minds. However, before we go a bit more into that, let us focus on the first part of the verse “do not be conformed to this world” What does this mean?

συσχηματίζω, *correct, remodel*, σ. [τοὺς ὁρισμοὺς] πρὸς τὸ .. ἔχειν ἐπιχείρημα Arist.Top.151b8; τὰ φαντάσματα Plu.2.83c:—*Pass., form oneself after another, to be conformed to his example*, πρὸς τινος *ib.* 100f; τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ Ep.Rom.12.2, cf. 1Ep.Pet.1.14. <sup>4</sup>

To conform means to form oneself after another, to be conformed to an example. Worldly examples are abundant in the world. Just think about television, Facebook, books, even friends. You will be influenced by what and who you spend your time with. If you watch “soapies” on television all day, adultery, lying and cheating would not be so bad in

your estimation, because everybody does that all the time.

We are not to conform to this world, we are therefore to choose, wisely, how we spend our time. Even worldly music can influence us without even realizing it. We may be singing along with a catchy tune, not realizing the song is about satan or some other unYHVHly thing. **Do not be conformed to this world, instead be transformed by the renewing of your mind**... Our mind is renewed when we study and internalize YHVH's word, it is life changing. YHVH's word is our instruction manual for life. His law has not been done away with! His law shows us what is good, acceptable and perfect.

The next quote from Proverbs confirms how we are to be gatekeepers of our own minds.

Proverbs 4:23

<sup>23</sup> Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it *flow* the springs of life.

We have seen how the word "heart" can also relate to our thoughts. Another admonition is to be steadfast in mind. What does this mean?

Isaiah 26:2–3

2 "Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter, the one that remains faithful. steadfast of mind you will keep in perfect peace, because He trusts in You. 3 "The The steadfast of mind YHVH will keep in perfect peace. To be steadfast means to uphold or sustain. We have posted the preceding verse for context. The one that remains faithful is the steadfast in mind. He remains faithful in his thoughts. That is where it all begins, in our minds.

## Can satan influence our thoughts?

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According to John 13:2, he can. I think we often underestimate the spiritual influences we are under.

John 13:2

2 During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,

It is also interesting to notice what the consequence was when Judas chose to entertain what satan put into his heart

John 13:27

27 After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore, Y'shua said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

Don't we sometimes entertain toxic thoughts? This is what Judas did, he entertained toxic thoughts that satan tempted him with. Here is another example. How does a man react who is confronted with a woman who is immodestly dressed? Does he turn his eyes away and dismiss the thought or does he look and entertain the thoughts that follow? When that sinful thought is entertained repeatedly, he will eventually fall and commit adultery. That is why pornography almost always leads to adultery and divorce. Y'shua taught that when a man looks at a woman in a



lustful way, it is as if he has committed adultery with her.

When we choose to entertain toxic or sinful thoughts, satan gets his foot in the door, and it leads to us committing the sin.

Now that we know how easily we can be influenced, we need to, also, find out how to counter this.

## How do we control our thoughts?

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We find some very practical instruction in Scripture. Here are five things we can do to help us control our thoughts.

## Take every thought captive

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Whenever we have a toxic thought enter our minds, we are to take it captive. How?

Corinthians 10:3–5

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of Elohim, and *we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah,*

We have a choice as to which thoughts we entertain in our minds. Do we entertain thoughts that are contrary to YHVH'S Word? We are to resist these thoughts and take them captive.

We are to redirect our thoughts whenever toxic thoughts enter our minds. We are in control.

Y'shua gave us an example when he was tempted by satan ([Matt 4:1-10](#)) He did not even consider the temptations, He countered it with Scripture. We are to do the same, counter the toxic thoughts (temptations from satan) with Scripture. If we have an area, we battle with, we can look up scripture that can help us in that area and memorize it in order to have it ready when we need it. Say we battle fear, look up a few verses that will help you to take the fears captive, to counter it. This is war, and the battle is in our minds. YHVH's word is a sword, our weapon against toxic thoughts or temptations from satan.

When we resist satan in this way, he will flee from us.

James 4:7

7 Submit therefore to Elohim. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you; he will otherwise enter in and cause you to sin. Think of each temptation as a test. Make sure you are well prepared for it. The next action we can take, we just mentioned, renewing of our minds.

## Renew your mind

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When we renew our minds with scripture, we have a weapon ready when we need it.

Ephesians 4:22–24

22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of Elohim has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

When we renew our minds, we learn how to live our lives and how to act and react when temptations come. We are in essence training ourselves for battle.

## Set your mind on the things above

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Colossians 3:1–2

1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Messiah, keep seeking the things above, where Messiah is, seated at the right hand of Elohim. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

We are spiritual beings in a physical world and should look at things through spiritual eyes. Sometimes that is just the perspective we need in order to deal with the difficulties we face. Furthermore, this also means we are to focus on what YHWH desires of us. He has redeemed us through our Messiah Y'shua and we belong to Him. We are to live for Him and His Kingdom.

The next action is often underestimated. Our senses influence our thoughts in a profound way; we are, therefore, to ponder on that which builds us up.

## Ponder on this

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We can choose what we dwell on.

Philippians 4:8

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything, worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

To dwell on this is to think or ponder on this. Stay away from things harmful and dysfunctional and ponder these things instead. What is the fruit of pondering on dysfunctional, harmful things like conspiracy theories? Often it is fear, and we have learned that we are not to fear. So, stay away from these things.

## Pray

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Last but not least, we are to pray. King David prayed these words and so could we.

Psalms 139:23–24

23 Search me, O Elohim, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.

Psalm 19:14

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O YHVH, my rock and my Redeemer.

May the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in YHVH's sight.

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## 5. *They say there are giants in the land...*

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This probably sounds like something out of a fable, but it's very real. We all have experience with giants in our lives. Allow me to explain...

We all face trials from time to time. Difficult trials, that overwhelm us with such an intensity that we do not know where to turn to or what to do. These trials may be due to a bad report. You may be facing this right now, even amidst other trials. When you hear this report, your whole world may be crushing down in front of your eyes. These bad reports are like the message the Israelites were confronted with when the spies returned and reported back about the land. They reported of giants and saw themselves as grasshoppers compared to them. The Israelites, having already been stretched a bit by what has happened to them since they left Egypt, now has to face this bad report. It has been more than a year of difficulties and now this. It must have been quite overwhelming to them.

Have you experienced such a situation?

### Our giant

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We are facing such a giant at the moment. We home school our children, because we believe it is our YHWH-given responsibility to do so.

Deuteronomy 6:5–7

"You shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

This is discipleship, being with our children and teaching them about the Creator of heaven and earth. Our belief in YHWH is central and an inseparable part of everything we do and teach our children; He can be seen in history, in mathematics, in geography and in every created little critter. How do we teach these subjects without teaching our children Who made it all? We are to lay the foundation of their tender lives and teach them about YHWH, about what He expects of us and them, about their purpose in life. How do we do that if we give the authority to teach to a secular world? A world with the foundational belief that everything that exists was created by chance; a big bang!

We are responsible to train them up in the way they should go.

Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it.

### Your giant

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You may be facing another giant right now. A giant who scares you and threatens your life, the life of a loved one, your future or the future of your children. This is terrifying, and it is normal to be scared in these situations. Fear is a

natural physiological reaction when we feel threatened in any way.

However, we have the power to choose how we react to that fear. Do we respond to it with terror, anxiety, grumbling or rebellion? How should we respond to this?

YHWH in His greatness provides instruction for us in His word in times like these. We must follow the examples He gave us and live according to that.

1 Corinthians 10:11

11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Let us study the example given to us about a bad report about giants in the land and see what we can learn from this.

## YHWH commanded Moses to send out spies

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When the Israelites came close to the promised land, YHWH commanded them to send men to spy out the land.

Numbers 13:1–3

1 Then YHWH spoke to Moses saying, 2 “Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers’ tribes, everyone a leader among them.” 3 So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of YHWH, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel.

YHWH gave them the instruction to spy out the land. Moses gave them more detailed instructions...

Numbers 13:17–21

17 When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, “Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country. 18 “See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. 19 “How is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? 20 “How is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes. 21 So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, at Lebo-hamath.

Was this perhaps a test to purify His people before they enter the land? YHWH knew what would happen...Consider this, every bad report or trial we face, is a test, a sifting, if you will. Will we endure, will we stand strong in our belief or will we be overcome by fear and unbelief? We shall get back to this later.

## The report

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The spies came back after 40 days. The report started off on a positive note...

Numbers 13:25–27

25 When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days, 26 they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 Thus they told him, and said, “We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.

Then came the “nevertheless” and the report changed to a negative one.

Numbers 13:28–29

28 “Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 “Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.”

Caleb tried to intervene

Numbers 13:30

Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.”

What is happening here; is like the exchange that goes on inside of us when we receive a bad report. Caleb can be likened to the Ruach, who tries to talk reason into us; tries to show us the spiritual, while we just continue to focus on the physical just like the people do here.

Numbers 13:31–33

But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us.” 32 So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. 33 “There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

Then we may react just like the Israelites did...

## The people’s reaction

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The people decided to believe the bad report. They have chosen to forget what YHVH has done for them. They have chosen to focus on the physical threat.

Numbers 14:1–3

1 Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! 3 “Why is YHVH bringing us

into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

Oh, and how badly they wanted to return to where they came from. Notice that they want to do it for the sake of their wives and children. Don't we do the same?

## Joshua and Caleb try to convince them not to rebel

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Then the "Voice of reason" spoke again. Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes and spoke to the people. They urge them not to rebel against YHVH, but to trust in Him.

Numbers 14:5–9

Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. 6 Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 **"If YHVH is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey.** 9 **"Only do not rebel against YHVH; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and YHVH is with us; do not fear them."**

Take note, they say, "*If YHVH is pleased with us*" What pleases YHVH?

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to Elohim must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

If only they had faith in the promises of YHVH. Without faith, it is impossible to please YHVH. Do we have faith? The writer of Hebrews then continues to go through history to show how certain people had faith in the promises of YHVH and we, in hindsight, see how those promises were kept by YHVH. Should that not encourage us to have faith also?

However, the people made the wrong choice and they chose to rebel against YHVH. This was the result...

## YHVH's reaction to their rebellion

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Numbers 14:11–12

11 YHVH said to Moses, "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst? 12 "I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they."



# Moses intercedes for the people

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Moses then interceded for the people.

Numbers 14:17–19

17 “But now, I pray, let the power of YHVH be great, just as You have declared, 18 ‘YHVH is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.’ 19 “Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”

## YHVH relents, He is merciful

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This passage speaks of YHVH’S great mercy, not only towards Israel, but also towards us. YHVH did not kill them by a plague as He wanted to, but relented after Moses interceded for them. Take note, that He also did not deny them entry to the land just based on this one incident of unbelief. He says here they have put Him to the test “these ten times” and have not listened to His voice. This could be a literal ten times, but could also refer to many times.

Numbers 14:20–24

20 So YHVH said, “I have pardoned them according to your word; 21 but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of YHVH. 22 “Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, 23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. 24 “But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.

Why was YHVH so angry? Was it only because of their unbelief? We have seen before that it is impossible to please YHVH without faith. However, although this is a factor, the grumbling and rebellion clenched it for them. This was also not based on this one incident as we have seen. YHVH is very patient with us, but up to a point...when the measure is full, it is full!

## YHVH is also just!

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The spies who brought the bad report were killed with a plague. They led the people astray; they fed the fear without comforting them and pointing them in the right direction. They were the leaders; they were supposed to be the strong ones. Do you understand now that the judgment of leaders would be more severe? This is a reason.

The people who rebelled were taken out during the forty years in the wilderness; they died because of their rebellion.

Joshua and Caleb, on the other hand, stood strong and tried to encourage the people. They were commended and given even greater positions of leadership. They were probably as scared as the other spies were. We don’t know for

sure, but it does not matter, because we know they spoke and acted differently.

All of us will at times be confronted with a bad report, and this may scare us; however, this is where we need to take YHVH's Word and read of all the times He delivered Israel and have faith that He will do the same for us, His children. We are to pray for strength to continue to do His will, remain obedient and not grumble against Him. This is not easy to do; we know from experience, but we must. This is also where it helps a lot to have a support network of YHVHly friends. Friends who will, like Joshua and Caleb, encourage us and help us to get perspective; perspective based on YHVH's Word. We must also choose to listen to them. Israel did not...

## The power of words

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They chose to grumble and rebel. Did you notice that YHVH punished the people according to what they pronounced upon themselves? Words are powerful!

Numbers 14:28–34

<sup>28</sup> “Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says YHVH, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; <sup>29</sup> your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. <sup>30</sup> ‘Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. <sup>31</sup> ‘Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey—I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. <sup>32</sup> ‘But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. <sup>33</sup> ‘Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness. <sup>34</sup> ‘According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you will know My opposition.

Just a reminder, here are their words:

Numbers 14:2–3

<sup>2</sup> All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!” <sup>3</sup> “Why is YHVH bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?”

**They pronounced their own judgment with the words they spoke.** We are to be so careful what we speak especially in times of difficulty. We sometimes speak out of desperation things we should not. We are to remember that the power of life and death is in the tongue.

Proverbs 18:20–21

<sup>20</sup> With the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach will be satisfied; He will be satisfied with the product of his lips. <sup>21</sup> Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

We must be careful with our words. Words have power. The words the Israelites spoke, and the action they chose,

kept them from entering the land. It cost them their lives. Life and death are in the power of the tongue. Remember this always. Let not the words we speak keep us from entering the land. Let us rather speak life, like Joshua and Caleb did and enter the land.

This passage leaves one question. Why did this happen?

We have seen at the beginning of this study that we mentioned that this was a test.

## Passing under the rod, rebels purged from you

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The test has a purpose...

Ezekiel 20:37–38

37 “I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38 and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus, you will know that I am YHVH.

What does it mean to pass under the rod? It does not mean to be afflicted as we have been taught. To pass under the rod means to be counted like a shepherd counts his sheep when they enter the sheepfold. The book of Leviticus and Jeremiah confirms this (Lev 27:32; Jer 33:13) Here is what is written in the Bible Knowledge commentary:

*A shepherd will hold out his rod and force the sheep to pass under it single file for counting (cf. Jer. 33:13). The shepherd would let those sheep that were actually his enter the fold, a place of protection. In this instance the fold was “the bond of the covenant.”<sup>1</sup>*

Those who are His will enter into the sheepfold and those who are not, the rebels, will be purged. This passage in Ezekiel refers to this and similar incidents in the wilderness. This is also a picture of what is to come...

## Conclusion

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I hope that after reading this chapter you are encouraged to not only recognize your own giants, but also see the power that we give them through our own thoughts and words. These two items, words and thoughts are not simple things but mighty weapons that we have to defend not only ourselves first but also the Kingdom. With every chapter that is written, it is giving me more insights that I am hoping will become more than helpful for those whom have suffered as I have over the decades of my life. There is still much to learn.

Every time we are faced with a bad report or a trial, we are to see it as a test. I had forgotten this as the tests and years passed. We are to look at it with spiritual eyes and make sure we pass the test. YHVH teaches us through His Word what we are to do. Please take heed of this. Remember every little detail of this story, make it your own. We all need to learn and do this. It could mean the difference between life and death. Remember three things from this study: Speak life, don't rebel and most importantly trust in YHVH ALWAYS!

Proverbs 3:5–7

<sup>5</sup> Trust in YHVH with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. <sup>7</sup> Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear YHVH and turn away from evil.

May YHVH help us all to do this!

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1. All quoted passages are from the New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update. LaHabra,CA:TheLockman Foundation,1995. We have substituted YHVH for LORD and Y'shua for Y'shua.
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## 6. To have hope...

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Hope is one of the finest responses of which the human spirit is capable. It has kept people alive and buoyant when the conditions of life were almost unbearable. Men of letters have saluted it with language that has become axiomatic, such as “hope springs eternal in the human heart” and “where there is life there is hope.” Scripture speaks similarly: “Anyone who is among the living has hope” (Eccl. 9:4, NIV).<sup>2</sup>

Hopelessness on the other hand is defined as despair or desperation, having no expectation of good, incapable of improvement or not susceptible to remedy.<sup>3</sup> We all experience hopelessness to a certain degree from time to time. Sometimes it motivates us to change, while other times it seems like a deep black pit we are in, and unable to get out of. The question is how do we deal with this? How do we get to the point of change or out of that endless pit? It reminds me of Psalm 23; David wrote about “the valley of the shadow of death.” That is what hopelessness feels like.

Sometimes we face situations that makes us lose hope, and without hope we lose interest in life, we stop living to the full and only exist. When we just exist, we lose our drive, our motivation and our joy. What a tragedy that is. Life is so short, too short to allow ourselves to lose hope. So, when we are in these hopeless times, which seems to be never-ending, where does our hope come from? Where should it come from?

I am going to attempt to show you what I have found and prove that hope and faith are connected and that, even when we think we have no hope, we always have hope in YHVH, the hope of Israel.

Let’s first define hope.

What is hope?

5223 I. מְקוֹה (miq·wě(h)): n.[masc.]; ≡ Str 4723; TWOT 1994c—1. LN 25.59–25.64 **hope, looking forward to**, i.e., **have a confidence in regard to a good and beneficial future** (1Ch 29:15; Ezr 10:2; Jer 50:7+), see also domain LN 30.53–30.55; 2. LN 12.1–12.42 unit: מְקוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל (miq·wě(h) yiś·rā·’ēl) **Hope of Israel**, i.e., **a title of a supernatural being** (Jer 14:8; 17:13+) 1994 קוֹה (qāwâ) I, **wait, look for, hope**.

Derivatives

1994a קו (qaw) line.

1994b קוֹה (qawqāw) might (Isa 18:2,7).

1994c מְקוֹה (miqweh) hope.

1994d תְּקוֹה (tiqwâ) I, cord (Josh 2:18, 21, only).

1994e תְּקוֹה (tiqwâ) II, hope.

This root means **to wait or to look for with eager expectation**. It is used for the wicked who make an attempt to destroy the life of the righteous (Ps 56:6 [H 7]; 119:95). **Waiting with steadfast endurance** is a great expression of faith. It means enduring patiently in confident hope that YHVH will decisively act for the salvation of his

people (Gen 49:18). **Waiting involves the very essence of a person's being, his soul (nepeš; Ps 130:5).** Those who wait in true faith are renewed in strength so that they can continue to serve the YHWH while looking for his saving work (Isa 40:31). There will come a time when all that YHWH has promised will be realized and fulfilled (Isa 49:23; Ps 37:9). In the meantime, the believer survives by means of his integrity and uprightness as he trusts in YHWH's grace and power (Ps 25:21). His faith is strengthened through His tests, and his character is further developed (Ps 27:14). <sup>5</sup>

The Theological wordbook of the Old Testament defines hope as follows:

**Hope is one of the finest responses of which the human spirit is capable.** It has kept people alive and buoyant when the conditions of life were almost unbearable. Men of letters have saluted it with language that has become axiomatic, such as "hope springs eternal in the human heart" and "where there is life there is hope." Scripture speaks similarly: "Anyone who is among the living has hope" (Eccl. 9:4, NIV).

**Hope is also a mark of human limitation.** Granted that it owes much to the promises of YHWH, yet those promises are especially welcome because of our lack of knowledge of the future and our inability to effect radical change.

**Hope is a testimony to man's humility in the face of his finiteness.** It amounts to a protest against any assumption that the present contains the ideal situation for mankind.

We may assume that hope has no place in the being of YHWH. True, Paul can refer to Him as the YHWH of hope (Rom. 15:13), but probably only in the sense that He is the one who inspires hope in His people, unless we are to suppose that Paul is suggesting that YHWH Himself lives in an aura of anticipation, pondering His plans for the future.

It is hardly adequate to define hope as expectation, for someone could expect judgment and on that account be utterly without hope. Expectation must be yoked with confidence and desire in order to qualify as hope. Frequently in our culture the familiar "I hope so" is really only an admission of a thinly veiled pessimism.<sup>2</sup>

To hope is to wait and look.

*Hope is sometimes expressed by other terms, especially "wait" and "look." For the Hebrew, waiting on YHWH was not primarily a matter of spending time but was rather an attitude of trust and expectation. It could bring the reward of exchanging one's own weakness for divine strength (Isa. 40:31). YHWH is represented as one who works for those who wait for Him (Isa. 64:4).<sup>4</sup>*

Hope being one of the finest responses of which the human spirit is capable, is also the mark of human limitation. We don't have knowledge of the future and can't always affect the required change. That makes us lose hope. Sometimes all we can do is hope for a good outcome. To really have hope is to have an eager expectation yoked with confidence and desire. That confidence is faith. Hope and faith are connected. You really can't have hope without faith.

An atheist, for example, don't really have hope, because their hope is grounded in themselves, other people or circumstances. It is the same for us if we think we have hope without having faith in the One who can affect a change.

Let's see if we can prove it from Scripture.

## The faith and hope connection

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The author of Hebrews defines faith as the confidence of things hoped for. This is a stunning definition and shows us the faith-hope connection.

Hebrews 11:1

1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

The Lexham English Bible translates this as follows:

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the realization of what is hoped for, the proof of things not seen. 6

The word assurance or realization could also be translated as follows:

5712 ὑπόστασις (hypostasis), εως (eōs), ἡ (hē): n.fem.; ≡ Str 5287; TDNT 8.572—1. LN 58.1 **substance, nature, essence** (Heb 1:3+); 2. LN 31.84 **trust, confidence, being sure** (2Co 9:4; 11:17; Heb 3:14; 11:1+)4

Without confidence in what we hope for, hope is just thinly veiled pessimism. Here is a practical illustration of the connection. A few years ago, before my father died, I regularly visited him bringing him meals and to do some errands for him. We all knew that he was not going to last much longer and so I took the opportunity to speak with him about his salvation. Right at the very end he asked me to pray with him and I was honored to do this with him. After we completed praying and asking for forgiveness, he still continually asked me if he had salvation. I told him over and over that he needed to believe that Y'shua died for his sins and that he would have eternal life if he believed in Him.

He always answered with "*I hope so.*" Somehow it never seemed to be enough for him. It was so sad to see. I don't think that he just could bring himself to believe in the hope that he had. Even though it happened I even now writing this down, I am not sure what happened or will happen when the time comes. I suppose this is where I get it from as well.

Hope is real when we have confidence in the One Who controls the outcome. When we have that, we can rejoice in hope, abound in hope and exult in hope.

Romans 12:12

rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

While we rejoice in hope, we are to persevere in tribulation, devoted to prayer. Perseverance and prayer is important. YHVH will give us hope by the power of His Set Apart Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Now may the Elohim of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will **abound in hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:2

2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we **exult in hope** of the glory of Elohim.

Exult can also be translated as boast. That is how sure we are of the hope we have. We are to boast in hope of the glory of YHVH, for it is He who controls the outcome.

## YHVH is in control

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YHVH is in control, He created EVERYTHING; He can use whatever He wishes for His purposes.

Isaiah 54:16

16 “Behold, I Myself have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and brings out a weapon for its work; And I have created the destroyer to ruin.

YHVH is the King of the Universe, the Creator of all. He has created satan also, and uses him to do His will. Just think about the book of Job. Satan acted after YHVH gave him permission to. Satan is used to test Job’s faith to the ultimate.

Another Scripture that confirms this is in Isaiah 45:

Isaiah 45:6–7

6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am YHVH, and there is no other, 7The **One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am YHVH who does all these.**

YHVH created both light and darkness. Light and darkness has the following associative meanings depending on context.

“*Or*” in Hebrew is light

240 II. **אֵר** (’ôr): n.masc.; ≡ Str 216; TWOT 52a—1. LN 14.36–14.52 light, i.e., that which is contrasted to darkness (Ge 1:3), note: in some contexts with the associative meaning of guidance, health, life, prosperity, enlightened judgment, and other positive things;<sup>4</sup>

“*Hosek*” in Hebrew is darkness

3125 **חֹשֶׁךְ** (*hō-šěḵ*): n.masc.; ≡ Str 2822; TWOT 769a—1. LN 14.53–14.62 darkness, the dark, i.e., the lack of light in a space (Ge 1:4; Ex 10:21), note: there are many associative meanings to “darkness,” including terror, ignorance, sadness, confusion, evil;<sup>4</sup>



YHVH causes well-being and creates calamity. He does this by many means. I have done a study on this previously, if you would like to learn more you can read **“Who makes the earth quake?”**

This said, does this mean that YHVH created sin? No, but He gave man free will and sin basically is a wrong choice. A choice contrary to YHVH’s way or instructions. So, because man has free will, he has the ability to sin.

We also read in Scripture that YHVH can do whatever He pleases.

Psalm 115:3

3 But our Elohim is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

Psalm 135:6

6 Whatever YHVH pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

We also know from Scripture that YHVH will not act contrary to His nature. YHVH is sovereign.

Daniel 4:35

35 “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’

## Y’shua calms the storm

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A good example of this principle is seen in the narrative about Y’shua calming the storm. If YHVH is in control of everything, like we know He is, He created that storm. Y’shua, when He calms that storm, not only tests and teaches His disciples, He also shows His sovereignty and authority.

Mark 4:37–41

37 And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. 38 Y’shua Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. 40 And He said to them, “Why are you afraid? How is it that you have no faith?” 41 They became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

YHVH is in control and sovereign, we should therefore be hoping in Him. For in Him lies our salvation and our future. YHVH, our Heavenly Father gave us many promises and He is true to His promises. We can hope in Him.

## Our hope in Him

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YHVH has a plan for each one of us, plans for our welfare and not for calamity, plans to give us a future and a hope. This is the key to having hope, because when we know that we are here on earth because YHVH purposed it to be so, we already have hope. It is for us to pursue to know and fulfill that purpose YHVH has for us.

Jeremiah 29:11

11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares YHVH, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

**In Him there is hope for our future, no matter what goes on in the world.**

Jeremiah 31:17

17 "There is hope for your future," declares YHVH, "And your children will return to their own territory.

**We are to wait for YHVH, have our hope steadfast in Him.**

Psalms 130:5–8

5 I wait for YHVH, my soul does wait, And in His word do I hope. 6 My soul waits for YHVH More than the watchmen for the morning; Indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning. 7 O Israel, hope in YHVH; For with YHVH there is lovingkindness, And with Him is abundant redemption. 8 And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

**When we hope in Him, we will not be put to shame.**

Isaiah 49:23

23 "Kings will be your guardians, And their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth and lick the dust of your feet; And you will know that I am YHVH; Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame.

**The evildoers will have a different outcome, but we who wait for YHVH will inherit the land.**

Psalms 37:9

9 For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for YHVH, they will inherit the land.

This sounds so easy, to hope in YHVH. But, how are we to do this? We have already seen that we are to have faith while we hope and to such an extent that we rejoice in our hope, and exult in it. What else? How do we conduct ourselves while we hope?

## How are we to hope in YHVH?

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We have already learned that we are to have confidence in our hope. When we have faith in the One who controls the outcome of what we hope for, we will be able to rejoice as if it has already happened. He will give us the power to do so through His Spirit.

We are also to walk in integrity and uprightness while we wait.

## Walk in integrity and uprightness

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Psalms 25:21

21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, For I wait for You.

That means we are to walk in obedience. That is what YHVH requires of us. To learn more about what YHVH requires of us, you will read in the next chapter What does YHVH require of us? This is confirmed in Isaiah:

Isaiah 64:4–5

4 For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, nor has the eye seen a YHVH besides You, who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him. 5 You meet him who rejoices in doing righteousness, who remembers You in Your ways. Behold, You were angry, for we sinned, We continued in them a long time; And shall we be saved?

We are to do YHVH's ways, not ours. That means doing righteousness.

## Be strong and take courage

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We are also to be strong and to take courage while we wait. That means we are to be steadfast in our belief that YHVH will help us. We are to be positive and assured that whatever His outcome is, would be best for us.

Psalms 27:14

14 Wait for YHVH; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for YHVH.

Psalms 31:24

24 Be strong and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in YHVH.

*"Be strong"* is defined as follows:

599 מָצַח ('ā-mēš): v.; ≡ Str 553; TWOT 117—1. LN 87.19–87.57 (qal) *be strong, i.e., have high status* (Ge 25:23); 2. LN 39.52–39.61 (qal) **be victorious, have a victory, i.e., conquer another** (2Ch 13:18); 3. LN 88.223–88.226 (piel) *harden, be obstinate, i.e., have a stubborn, self-willed heart that will not change behavior or belief* (Dt 2:30; 15:7; 2Ch 36:13+); 4. LN 23.188–23.196 (piel) *let grow, i.e., have a plant grow and increase* (Isa 44:14); 5. LN 76 (qal) *be strong; (piel) marshal force, muster strength, strengthen, i.e., focus one's strength for a great exertion* (Am 2:14); 6. LN 25.156–25.166 (qal) *be courageous* (Dt 31:6); (piel) *strengthen, support, make bold, i.e., cause one to have or show courage* (Dt 3:28); (hif) *strengthen* (Ps 27:14); 7. LN 45 (piel) *reinforce, strengthen, i.e., make a wall strong* (2Ch 24:13); 8. LN 23.129–23.141 (piel) *strengthen, steady, i.e., support a physically weak object* (Job 4:4); 9. LN 85.32–85.54 (piel) *establish, i.e., place or put in a certain place* (Pr 8:28); 10. LN 68.63–68.78 (hitp) **determine, persist, i.e., do something extensively or intensely** (Ru 1:18; 1Ki 12:18; 2Ch 10:18+); 11. LN 39.1–39.12 unit: (hitp)

לֹא מָצַח ('ā-mēš 'āl) 2 *oppose, formally, persist against*,<sup>4</sup>

## When we get depressed...

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Even when we have hope, we may sometimes get depressed...

Hope may sometimes suffer partial eclipse or alternate with depression. The psalmist admits to being in low spirits, but this very condition prods him to hope in YHVH (Ps. 42:11 [MT 12]).<sup>2</sup>

Psalms 42:11

11 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in Elohim, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my Elohim.

This verse is very profound! **Notice how David talks to his soul here.** This is something we should do too, speak truth to ourselves. Proclaim YHVH's promises to remind us of it.

You may not know this but we can relate this principal to modern psychology, where in it is applied as existential analysis. Very simplistically defined it is thinking about what we are thinking. As with every great "discovery," we find its foundation in Scripture as we have seen here. I am not trying to promote this form of psychology, but will show you in a future article how we can benefit from doing what David did especially when dealing with depression and anxiety.

## Conclusion

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Hope is something we all aspire to have, yet sometimes we lose hope. The purpose of this article is to help us get back on track when all seem hopeless. Our hope should be in YHVH, as He is in control of everything and He will do according to His will. It may not always be in line with our plans, but His plans are far better. This is the foundation of our hope and this teamed with faith will make us invincible. We will be able to overcome anything that comes across our path.

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## 7. What does YHVH require of us?

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Every one of us is in a relationship with another person, a person dear to us. It may be a mother, a father, a husband/wife or a child. It can be a brother or sister or a dear friend; the point is: if you love someone dearly, you want to please him/her. How much more are we not to want to please our Father in Heaven. If we love Him, we surely want to do what He requires of us. The question is: do we know what He requires of us? Do we really know? Is it even a priority in our lives, or do we worship Him out of mere routine, or because it is expected of us?

What does YHVH require of us? The essence of what YHVH requires of us is summed up in [Deuteronomy 10:12-13](#).

Deuteronomy 10:12–13

12 “Now, Israel, what does YHVH your Elohim require from you, but to fear YHVH your Elohim, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve YHVH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep YHVH’s commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?

Let’s look at this in more detail. YHVH requires us to:

- fear Him,
- walk in all His ways
- love Him and serve Him with all our heart and soul and
- keep His commandments and His statutes

We will now look at each of these in a bit more detail. What does it mean to fear YHVH?

### Fear YHVH!

One of the major problems in the community of believers, and I include Christian and Messianic, is that there is no or very little fear of YHVH. Before we continue, let us first agree on the meaning of the Biblical term “the fear of YHVH.” The fear of YHVH is not the same as fearing a spider on your wall. To fear YHVH is to have reverence and respect for Him. To fear Him is to live your life in such a way that you do not do anything contrary to His Word, in order not to disappoint Him. The Dictionary of Biblical languages explains this fear well.

### There are different facets of fear of YHVH

These different meanings are derived from the contextual use of the Hebrew word “yirah” or fear in the Bible. We can derive four facets of our fear of YHVH.

3711 יָרָא (yir·’ā(h)): *n.fem.*; ≡ Str 3374; TWOT 907b—1. LN 87.4–87.18

- **reverence**, fear, i.e., a state of piety and respect toward a superior (Ex 20:20; Pr 1:7); 2. LN 25.251–25.269
- **fear, terror**, i.e., a state of great anxiety and alarm (Dt 2:25; Ps 55:6[EB 5]; Jnh 1:10, 16); 3. LN 53.53–53.64
- **worship**, i.e., the act. or speech of showing profound reverence toward a superior, which may include ritual action (Ps 5:8[EB 7]; Job 4:6; 15:4; 22:4); 4. LN 25.206–25.222 **awesomeness**, i.e., that which causes wonder and astonishment (Eze 1:18), note: for MT text in 2Ch 26:5, see 8011<sup>1</sup>

Let us go into a bit more detail for each of these to see how we find it in Scripture.

## Reverence

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We can glean much from this. Firstly, YHWH tests us in order to see if we indeed fear Him. Consider Job. In [Job 1:1](#), we read that Job feared YHWH. The accuser said that Job was righteous only because he is prosperous. YHWH allowed Satan to test Job, but in these severe trials, Job continued to fear YHWH ([Job 1:22](#)).

Our true nature is exposed when we face difficulties. I do think the test is more for us, for YHWH knows our hearts. He knew Job feared Him before he was tested, He also knew Job would stand through this trial.

Secondly, YHWH tests us in order for us to fear Him. When we are tested, we are reminded that He is in control, and that we are to fear Him.

Exodus 20:20

20 Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid; for Elohim has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin.”

Think about all the trials the Israelites went through, the bitter water at Marah, the lack of food, the collecting of manna, the Sabbath commandment and many more. Did they pass the test every time? Do we? They did not, and we do not, but every time they were tested, served as a reminder for them, as for us, that we (them and us) are to fear YHWH.

## Fear of punishment

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What happens when we sin? We experience fear of punishment. This is a healthy fear to have. It is like a child fearing punishment after trespassing their parents’ command. It reminded me of the fear the people experienced when Ananias and Sapphira were punished for their sin of lying ([Acts 5:11](#)).

What YHWH does not want us to have is a fear of others. We are not to fear people and what they can do to us ([Is 51:7](#)). We are only to fear YHWH.

# Worship

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To fear YHVH is to worship Him. YHVH wants us to worship Him, but He wants us to worship Him according to His instructions, not like the heathen do ([Deut 12:30-31](#)) and not according to our own ways. Remember what happened to Nadab and Abihu...

Leviticus 10:1–2

1 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before YHVH, which He had not commanded them. 2 And fire came out from the presence of YHVH and consumed them, and they died before YHVH.

# Awesomeness

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To see YHVH's wonders and His creation produces fear in us for Him. This fear is a knowing of His magnificence, His majesty. It causes wonder and astonishment in us. This is what the early assembly experienced, a sense of awe.

Acts 2:43

43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

Psalms 33:8

8 Let all the earth fear YHVH; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

Now that we have delved a bit deeper into each facet, ask yourself: do I fear YHVH like this? Search your heart to see if you indeed fear Him. I know; I am going to!

# Walk in all His ways

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The next requirement, according to the passage in Deuteronomy, YHVH has for us is to walk in His ways. What are YHVH's ways? How are we to walk in His ways?

Psalms 86:11

11 Teach me Your way, O YHVH; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.

Psalms 128:1

1 How blessed is everyone who fears YHVH, Who walks in His ways.

Psalms 119:3

They also do no unrighteousness; They walk in His ways.

To walk in YHVH's ways is to keep His commandments! His will is revealed to us through His Word. He wants us to be obedient to Him. He will not tell us to do anything contrary to His Word. People sometimes claim to have heard from YHVH, but quite often, what they heard is contrary to His Word. Would He do that? Would He give you an instruction or confirmation contrary to His Word?

A nice way of testing the logic is to use an extreme example. We know YHWH commanded “do not commit adultery” but if you really like another person’s spouse, could you ask YHWH if it is OK, and He will allow it?

Never!

It is interesting to note that we can’t claim to know Him, without keeping the commandments. The one who claims that is called a liar!

1 John 2:4–6

The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of Elohim has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

## Love Him and serve Him with all our heart and soul

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The third requirement is to love and serve Him with all our heart and soul.

Deuteronomy 6:5

“You shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

What does it mean to love YHWH with your heart and your soul? The answer is found in the book of Kings.

1 Kings 8:61

61 “Let your heart therefore be wholly devoted to YHWH our Elohim, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as at this day.”

Y’shua also taught this!

Matthew 22:37–40

37 And He said to him, “ ‘You shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 “This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 “The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

Y’shua was giving a summary of the commandments here. YHWH gave us commandments on how to love Him and on how to love our neighbor. When you read the first five books of the Bible (Old Testament), you will see that it is so. Y’shua was not making a new commandment here; He was reaffirming what was given previously. Y’shua kept the commandments perfectly, and He didn’t change or annul any ([Matt 5:17-19](#)), He was without sin, and we know that sin is breaking the commandments.

John 14:31

31but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.



# To keep His commandments and His statutes

The last requirement from our passage in Deuteronomy is to keep YHVH's commandments. The word keep is often used in relation with the commandments. It is the Hebrew word "samar". 'Samar' means to keep, to guard, to observe, to care for and to obey with diligence and in detail.

9068 שָׁמַר (šā·mār): v.; ≡ Str 8104; TWOT 2414 -

1. LN 13.1–13.47 (qal) **keep**, i.e., cause a state or condition to remain (Job 2:6; Ps 17:4); (qal pass.) be kept, set aside (1Sa 9:24+); (hitp) keep oneself (2Sa 22:24; Ps 18:24[EB 23]+);
2. LN 37.119–37.126 (qal) **guard, watch**, i.e., limit access and movement of persons or objects in and out of an area, implying protection to or from the object being guarded (Ge 3:24); (qal pass.) be secured (2Sa 23:5; Ecc 5:12[EB 13]+), note: for qal act. ptcp. as noun, see 9070.5;
3. LN 36.12–36.30 (qal) **observe, keep**, i.e., **obey a command with diligence and in detail** (Lev 19:30); (hitp) observe for oneself (Mic 6:16+);
4. LN 27.55–27.60 (qal) be careful, beware, pay attention, make sure, watch oneself, guard oneself, i.e., learn or remember information and take care to watch for dangers (Dt 5:32); (nif) be careful (Ex 23:21);
5. LN 35.36–35.46 (qal) **care for, tend, keep**, attend to, take care of an object, implying concern for the objects cared for (Hos 12:13[EB 12]),<sup>1</sup>

When you do a search on the word "samar" together with the word "commandments," you find them used together 249 times. Some of these refer to specific commandments, but eighty-six of these references pertain to the obeying of YHVH's commandments. When you do a similar search in the Apostolic Scriptures, you get comparable results.

Can we know this and still deny the importance of keeping YHVH's commandments?

Have you noticed how closely related all the above are? To fear YHVH is to keep His commandments, to walk in His ways is to keep His commandments, to love and serve Him is to keep His commandments! YHVH wants total devotion and obedience to Him. He is a jealous Elohim, not wanting to share His beloved with another. Another passage in Deuteronomy states it beautifully!

Deuteronomy 13:4

4 "You shall follow YHVH your Elohim and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

The beauty of all this is that not only do we please our Father when we are obedient to Him, but it also results in blessing for us.

Deuteronomy 11:22–24

22 "For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love YHVH your Elohim, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him, 23 then YHVH will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. 24 "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon,

and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea.

Deuteronomy 30:19–20

19 “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, 20 by loving YHVH your Elohim, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which YHVH swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

The choice is ours. Can we still rebelliously refuse to be obedient?

Can we, knowingly, still follow the ways of man to worship YHVH on the first day of the week, while He instructed us to worship Him on the seventh day, the Sabbath? Can we continue to murder innocent babies through abortion knowing that He instructed us not to murder? Even if we do not participate in this, do we sanction it by keeping quiet. Do we boldly proclaim His truth or do we fear what others can do to us? We can certainly take a leaf out of the book of Jonathan Cahn, who boldly proclaimed YHVH’s truth at the inauguration breakfast of the President of the United States.

## What else does YHVH require from us?

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These four requirements are not all YHVH wants from us. There is more! What an absolute delight! Please do not stop reading yet, the best is yet to come!

Hosea 6:6

6 For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of Elohim rather than burnt offerings.

## Devotion

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The Hebrew word “*hesed*” is translated as loyalty.

2876 II. חֶסֶד (*ḥě·sěḏ*): *n.masc.*; ≡ Str 2617; TWOT 698a—

1. LN 25.33–25.58 **loyal love, unfailing kindness, devotion**, *i.e., a love or affection that is steadfast based on a prior relationship* (Ex 34:6, 7);
2. LN 79.9–79.17 **glory**, *i.e., lovely appearance* (Isa 40:6);
3. LN 88.66–88.74 **favor**, *i.e., the giving benefits* (Est 2:9), *note: for another interp in Ps 52:3[EB 1], see 2875<sup>1</sup>*

What does YHVH require, when He said through Hosea that He delighted in “*hesed*” rather than sacrifice? We can understand this loyalty or devotion in two ways. Firstly, a mutual covenantal faithfulness and secondly, loving kindness. These are inter-weaved in this word; YHVH wants us to be fully devoted to Him, to know Him and to love Him. This is where the difference between religious adherence and scriptural obedience comes in. Allow me to explain the difference.

The **first is done out of obligation the second out of love**. Religious adherence is also done in order to be seen by

others. That is what the Pharisees did, their tzitzit were longer than anybody else's, and they prayed in order to be heard. Is this to be our motivation for being obedient or are we to do it out of love?

Y'shua quoted Hosea 6:6 twice, once in the context of the keeping of the Sabbath (Matt 12:7) and the other time in the context of associating with sinners (Matt 9:16). In both cases, we see the Pharisees being so stuck on being "correct" that people were disregarded. We see a lack of loving kindness, only religious adherence. Things haven't changed much in the believing community!

Not only did YHWH say He wants devotion, but He wants us to know Him. This is what I meant with the best is yet to come.

## Relationship

I was amazed to see that this phrase "knowledge of Elohim" in Hosea, refers to a relationship with YHWH. YHWH wants to have a relationship with us! While this is no new revelation, to me this was a treasure I discovered. We often read the same verse and then one day when you read it again, you decide to look up the meaning of a word and wow, what a revelation!

Hosea 6:6

6 For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of Elohim rather than burnt offerings.

So, these two things, devotion and relationship, are a higher priority to YHWH than "sacrifice" or religious adherence. Please do not misunderstand, I am not saying the keeping of the commandments is not important. We have seen that YHWH requires obedience from us, but as I said before, He wants us to obey Him out of love, not out of routine. He wants obedience, not religious adherence! Let us study this in more detail!

This "knowledge" spoken of is the Hebrew word "da at"

1981 I. דָּאֵת (dā·'ăṭ): *n.fem. and masc. [oth qal inf.cs. of 3359];* ≡ Str 1847; TWOT 848c—

1. LN 28.1–28.16 *understanding, wisdom, i.e., a knowledge with focus on moral qualities and its application (Ge 2:9; Pr 2:5), see also domain LN 32.24–32.41;*

2. LN 28.1–28.16 *skillful, i.e., knowledge applied to a craft (Ex 31:3);*

3. LN 34.1–34.21 **knowledge, i.e., information of a person, with a strong implication of relationship to that person** (Pr 2:5; 9:10; Hos 4:1), note: in Pr 29:7+ for another interp, see 1982; in Isa 53:11+ for another interp, see 1983;

4. LN 30.56–30.74 unit: בֶּלִי דָּאֵת (b- belî dā·'ăṭ) *unintentionally, formally, without knowledge, i.e., to act in a manner that has no forethought (Dt 4:42);*

5. LN 32.42–32.61 unit: דָּת רֵוַח (dā·'ăṭ rūaḥ) *foolish notion, vain thought, formally, knowledge of wind (Job 15:2);*

6. LN 25.33–25.58 concern, i.e., a caring about the lot or situation of someone, as a kind of compassion (Pr 29:7)<sup>1</sup>

Prior to this use, we find YHVH telling Israel through the prophet Hosea what He has against them.

Hosea 4:1

1 Listen to the word of YHVH, O sons of Israel, For YHVH has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of Elohim in the land.

This knowledge referred to here, is also the word “da at.” I do believe it goes even deeper than this.

YHVH considered Abraham, Moses and David as friends. What an honor to be called a friend of YHVH. We can study their lives to see how we are to live to gain friendship with YHVH.

Exodus 33:11

11 Thus YHVH used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

James 2:23

23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed Elohim, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of Elohim.

David was also a friend of YHVH. YHVH called him a man after His own heart, a Hebrew idiom meaning **“someone who has the same tastes and preferences”**

Acts 13:22

22 “After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.’

**“A man after my heart” is an idiom**

I have always found the phrase “a man after my own heart” very endearing. It expresses a fond kinship in a charming way.

However, there are (at least) two meanings of the word after that would make sense in this phrase.

One is after in the sense of in imitation of someone, in other words, “your heart takes after or resembles my own.”

The other is in the sense of following or pursuant, as in “you are attempting to win my affection.”<sup>2</sup> We also find a clue in Acts 13:22: “who will do all My will.” David was a man after YHVH own heart for he will do YHVH’s will. In Psalm 25 we find another clue.

Psalm 25:14

14 The secret of YHVH is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant.

The word “secret” is the Hebrew word “sod” which means confiding, a state of intimacy and trust and intimate fellowship

6051 סֹד (sôd): n.[masc.]; ≡ Str 5475; TWOT 1471a—

1. LN 28.68–28.83 *confiding, confidence, i.e., the act. or state of intimacy and trust, with a focus of reliance on secrecy to maintain that discretion* (Ps 25:14; Pr 3:32; 11:13; 20:19; 25:9+);
2. LN 11.55–11.89 *council, assembly, i.e., a socio-political group that advises as well as governs or rules* (Ge 49:6; Job 15:8; Ps 89:8[EB 7]; 111:1; Jer 23:18, 22; Eze 13:9+);
3. LN 11.1–11.11 *group, i.e., a gathering of persons for any purpose* (Jer 6:11; 15:17+);
4. LN 33.294–33.298 *counsel, i.e., the giving of advice about a plan of action* (Pr 15:22+);
5. LN 30.56–30.74 *plan, i.e., a purposed plan of action, implying thought and purpose* (Am 3:7+);
6. LN 30.56–30.74 *conspiracy, i.e., to engage in joint planning, implying harm toward another* (Ps 64:3[EB 2]; 83:4[EB 3]+);
7. LN 34.1–34.21 **intimate fellowship, i.e., a very close, personal association with another or a group** (Job 29:4; Ps 55:15[EB 14]+);
8. LN 34.1–34.21 *unit: סֹדֵם (mōt sôd) friend, formally, men of confidence, i.e., one who is trustworthy in a relationship and worthy of confiding in* (Job 19:19+)<sup>1</sup>

This is how this word “sod” is translated in the Complete Jewish Bible

Psalms 25:14

14 YHVH **relates intimately** with those who fear him; he makes them know his covenant.

and in the ESV it is translated as friendship

Psalms 25:14

14 The **friendship** of YHVH is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant.

Could we be friends with our Creator, just like Moses and Abraham and David? This is what Y’shua said!

John 15:14

14 “You are My friends if you do what I command you.

To be called a friend of YHVH is certainly the most honorable of honors. Should we not aspire to such an honor? It is possible. Fear YHVH, keep His commandments and do His will. Spend time with our Heavenly Father in prayer and study. He wants to reveal Himself to you and He wants to have a relationship with you; He wants to be your friend.

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2. <http://english.stackexchange.com/questions/40591/how-to-understand-after-in-a-man-after-my-own-heart>



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## 8. Finding meaning

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Finding meaning, is probably one of the most sought-after objectives in life. Many books have been written about this subject, yet it remains unreachable to most and the question is often asked why this is. The reason may be that we seek for answers in the wrong place. We often search for meaning by worldly means instead of seeking the true Source of meaning.

We have learned in a previous chapter, To have hope, that meaning and hope are connected. Without meaning or purpose, we can't have hope as it is our purpose that fuels our hope. You have probably, like me, experienced how hopelessness causes depression and how depression is like a deep pit filled with quicksand. The more we try to get out, the deeper we sink into doubt and despair. It is almost as if we treasure those depressing thoughts in our minds and that makes it impossible to get out of. We play the negative scenarios over and over in our brains and sink deeper and deeper in despair. We have to stop this before we can get out of this pit.

This is easier said than done, but not impossible. We first have to understand the purpose of our lives. Then when we know what our purpose is, we need to learn to speak truth to ourselves. In this study, we will search Scripture to find our purpose and in a follow-up article we will look at how to speak truth to ourselves. That is where hope and purpose come together as we learn how to apply all this in our lives. By reading through this chapter and those that follow, I will "hope" that you can see that the principle we discuss here is life changing and has helped many people out of depression and anxiety. So, take your time and read through them as many times as necessary to take it all in.

First things first, let's find our purpose

### Finding our purpose

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What does it really mean to have purpose?

To have a purpose is to have a design for our lives, intent, meaning, a plan, a destination, a goal, aspirations, direction, a mission, an objective, a function or a target. 2

These synonyms give us a deeper understanding of what purpose is. In order for us to live a full life, we have to know what our purpose is, even if we just know a part of it. Purpose is what drives us and gives us hope.

A popular misconception is that to have a purpose it to define it for ourselves based on what we think it should be. Hereafter, we are to set goals in order to achieve this purpose. This strategy forms an important part of the secular business world. Whenever you attend a management workshop or conferences, you will be taught to create a vision for yourself and then to set goals in order to achieve this vision. This strategy is also often applied to personal life. However, we who have employed this technique will know that it is not lasting. It tends to fizzle out after a while, we lose focus. It takes much effort to keep on track and once the initial inspiration wears off, we go back to where we have been before.

So, how do we find a lasting purpose in our lives. I think we need help. This help is best found in Scripture as YHWH's Word is our handbook for life.

## YHVH's purposes

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Nothing is random. YHVH is the Creator of all and He knows the end from the beginning. That means He has planned everything from eternity to eternity. Each of us were created by YHVH, and is here on earth to accomplish something. YHVH does not make mistakes. So, if we want to find our purpose, it should be in line with YHVH's purpose. We will thus need to find out what His purpose is in order to find out where we fit into His plan. He has purposed it; He will certainly do it.

Isaiah 46:10

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

We will first look at different facets of YHVH's purposes. We will loosely use the layout from the Dictionary of Bible Themes.

## YHVH's purpose prevails

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YHVH's purpose will prevail, no matter what.

Jeremiah 4:28

28 "For this the earth shall mourn and the heavens above be dark, because I have spoken, I have purposed, and I will not change My mind, nor will I turn from it."

Jeremiah 23:20

20 "The anger of YHVH will not turn back until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; In the last days you will clearly understand it.

## YHVH's purpose cannot be thwarted by evil powers

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Revelation 17:17

17 "For Elohim has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of Elohim will be fulfilled.

The implication is that evil is subject to YHVH's control and operates within the determined limits of his sovereign purpose<sup>3</sup>

## YHVH's purpose prevails in people's lives and circumstances

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It is futile to think our plans can prevail if it is not in line with YHVH's plan.



Proverbs 16:9

9 The mind of man plans his way, But YHVH directs his steps.

Proverbs 19:21

21 Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of YHVH will stand.

Proverbs 20:24

24 Man's steps are ordained by YHVH, how then can man understand his way?

It would be easier to submit our will and plans to YHVH's purposes instead of always making our own plans which often don't succeed. We should seek His will in everything, or we will be disappointed.

## YHVH's purpose is fulfilled through His choice of individuals

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Ephesians 1:11

11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

*YHVH's choice of individuals does not invalidate their free will to do or not to do anything, nor remove their answerability to YHVH for their actions. See also Ge 18:19; Ro 11:5; 1Co 1:1; Eph 1:4-5; 2Th 2:13<sup>3</sup>*

Joseph's brothers were afraid he would avenge himself on them for what they have done to him after their father died.

This is what he said to them:

Genesis 50:20

20 "As for you, you meant evil against me, but Elohim meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

YHVH used Joseph and his brothers to fulfill His purpose.

Proverbs 16:4

4 YHVH has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.

## YHVH's purpose is founded on divine wisdom

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Romans 11:33

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of Elohim! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

*See also Eph 3:10-11 and Ps 104:24<sup>3</sup>*

## YHVH's purpose is determined from eternity

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2 Timothy 1:9

9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Messiah Y'shua from all eternity,

Isaiah 25:1

1 O YHVH, You are my Elohim; I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; For You have worked wonders, plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness.

Isaiah 46:10

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

Matthew 25:34

34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

*See also 2Ki 19:25; Eph 1:4; Tit 1:2; 1Pe 1:20<sup>3</sup>*

## YHVH's purpose is for His own glory

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Romans 9:17

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."

Ezekiel 36:22

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says YHVH Elohim, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

## YHVH reveals His purpose to His people

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Amos 3:7

7 Surely YHVH Elohim does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.

Ephesians 1:9

9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

*See also Ge 18:17; 2Sa 7:20-21; 1Co 2:9-10<sup>3</sup>*

# The fullness of YHVH's purpose is beyond our understanding

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Even though we can get a glimpse of YHVH's purpose, we can't comprehend it fully.

Romans 11:33

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of Elohim! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

*See also Dt 29:29; 1Co 2:9-10; Eph 1:9; 3:4-5<sup>3</sup>*

## YHVH's purpose is good and loving

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Romans 8:28

28 And we know that Elohim causes all things to work together for good to those who love Elohim, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Jeremiah 29:11

11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares YHVH, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'

*See also Ro 12:2; Eph 1:4-5; 2Ti 1:9<sup>3</sup>*

## YHVH's purpose is revealed through Y'shua Messiah

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YHVH has one amazing eternal plan, redemption.

Ephesians 3:11

11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Messiah Y'shua our Master,

**This plan centers on Y'shua's redemptive death, it was prophesied**

Isaiah 53:10–11

10 But YHVH was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of YHVH will prosper in His hand.

11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.

**And was fulfilled!**

1 Peter 1:18–21

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of

life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Messiah. 20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21 who through Him are believers in Elohim, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in Elohim.

1 John 4:10

10 In this is love, not that we loved Elohim, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

It is YHVH's purpose to redeem the world through the cross Mt 26:18,45 Y'shua Messiah often speaks of his appointed "hour". In John's Gospel in particular his "hour" refers to the cross. Y'shua Messiah refuses to allow anything except the cross to be the climax of his ministry (Jn 12:27). pp Mk 14:41; Jn 7:6-8; 12:23; 13:1; 17:13

John 12:27

27 "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose, I came to this hour.

## It is YHVH's purpose to exalt & establish Y'shua as Master

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Hebrews 1:8

8 But of the Son He says, "Your throne, O Elohim, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.

*See also Eph 1:9-10; Ac 2:36; Php 2:8-11; Col 1:18<sup>3</sup>*

*Y'shua Messiah submits to YHVH's purpose Jn 6:38 See also Mt 26:39-42 pp Mk 14:35-36 pp Lk 22:42; Jn 4:34; 5:30; Heb 5:7-8; 10:7*

## YHVH's ultimate purpose is to save

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When YHVH created man, He had fellowship with them out of their own free will.

Genesis 3:8

8 They heard the sound of YHVH Elohim walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of YHVH Elohim among the trees of the garden.

From this verse, we also see that they are hiding from YHVH because of their disobedience. Sin brought distance between YHVH and man. Later, YHVH in Leviticus it is written:

Leviticus 26:12

12 'I will also walk among you and be your Elohim, and you shall be My people.

From this, we see that YHVH still wants a relationship with man. Repentance through the sacrificial system serve to bring man closer to YHVH. YHVH, furthermore, had an eternal plan of salvation and that was Y'shua. In the fullness of time, He sent Y'shua to sacrifice His life for us so we can be restored back to Him through Y'shua. Y'shua took the penalty for sin, which is death, and overcame death. We can now, with boldness, come before YHVH, in Y'shua and have fellowship with Him. We will also not be affected by the second death, which is eternal separation from YHVH, but have eternal life.

Galatians 1:3–5

3 Grace to you and peace from Elohim our Father and the master Y'shua Messiah, 4 who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our Elohim and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.

1 Timothy 2:3–4

3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of Elohim our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9

9 YHVH is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

**Why did YHVH do this? He did it out of love because He is love.**

John 3:16

16 "For YHVH so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 6:40

40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

## YHVH wills that people submit to His purposes

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When we believe in YHVH, we become like His children. The role of a father is to raise his children in the best way possible. In order to do this, he has rules that his children must obey. These rules are for the protection and well-being of the children. It is the same with our Heavenly Father, He also requires obedience from us. He gave us instructions for living out of love for us, and blessing will come forth out of our obeying His instructions.

**We are to, totally, submit ourselves to YHVH's will**

James 4:15

15 Instead, you ought to say, "If YHVH wills, we will live and also do this or that."

Psalms 40:8

8 I delight to do Your will, O my Elohim; Your Law is within my heart."

Psalms 143:10

10 Teach me to do Your will, For You are my Elohim; Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Matthew 6:10

10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

We have learned that YHVH's plans will prevail. We can't stop it, neither can any form of evil. He is in control. His purpose is to save, He is love and He is patient. He only wants the best for us. We also know that to do according to His will is to our benefit. From this, we can conclude that we as believers in YHVH have only one choice and that is to do His will.

Knowing this makes it easier to figure out what our purpose is.

## Our purpose

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Our purpose, as children of the Heavenly Father, is to do His will in accordance with His Word. That is our first priority. That should be the foundation and focus of our lives, to obey Him and to live our lives to glorify Him. His will is never contrary to His Word, so you can always test what you think YHVH said or revealed to you against His Word. The next step in finding our purpose is to go back to basics.

## Back to basics

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We need to consider what YHVH has given us. If YHVH has given you a husband or wife, you are to be a good wife or husband. If YHVH has given you children, your purpose is to be a good parent and to raise your children for YHVH's kingdom.

Consider Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. Her purpose was to be a good wife for Zechariah in order to create a good home environment and to be a good mother to John and to raise him for YHVH's kingdom. She may not have thought it special at the time, but she definitely fulfilled her purpose without knowing how glorious the result would be.

It is the same for each of us. We all form part of YHVH's glorious plan, and must do what He has given us to do. We are not to think it less than what was given to others, but do our very best with what YHVH has given us. We are to be happy in our activities, for who knows what the outcome would be.

Ecclesiastes 3:22

22 I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?

We can be likened to the engine of a car, each and every part is necessary in order for the car to function optimally.

The analogy of the body is also very good. Every person is like a body part with his or her special function. We will be judged as to how well we fulfilled that function.

2 Corinthians 5:5–10

5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is Elohim, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. 6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from YHVH— 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight— 8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with YHVH. 9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Our ambition should be to be pleasing to YHVH, we will be judged according to what we have done. Paul also said in this verse that we are to be of good courage while living it.

To be of good courage means the following:

*2509 θαρρέω (tharreō): vb. [see also 2510]; ≡ Str 2292; TDNT 3.25—LN 25.156 **have courage, have confidence, be bold** (2Co 5:6, 8; 7:16; 10:1, 2; Heb 13:6+)⁴*

We are to be confident or bold in living out our purpose as part of YHVH's eternal plan and strive to do it to the best of our ability.

1 Corinthians 10:31

<sup>31</sup> Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of Elohim.

Colossians 3:23–24

<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for YHVH rather than for men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from YHVH you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Master Messiah whom you serve.

YHVH will help us, He gave us His Spirit to guide us in all our ways. We are to listen and do. He will give us the strength.

Philippians 4:13

<sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Mark 9:23

<sup>23</sup> And Y'shua said to him, “‘If You can?’ All things are possible to him who believes.”

## Conclusion

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In the previous chapter, “To have hope”, I wrote about how to find hope. We have also learned that having a purpose fuels hope. In this chapter, we have specifically looked at having a purpose, or having meaning. We

determined that we can find our purpose by looking at YHWH's purpose. Once we choose to follow Him, we are in Him and therefore it makes sense that our purpose in life should fall in line with His.

Every human being forms a part of His plan. Our choices play a role in this. We can either choose to follow Him and do His will by obeying Him or we can be counted with the wicked who were created for the day of evil. When we make our purpose about ourselves then we tend to fall away and that life has no purpose that is real or meaningful. I know I have found this out the hard way and why I am writing these articles.

YHWH planned everything from the foundation of the world. The day He started creating, He already had this glorious plan in mind, every intricate detail of it. Each of us is in this detail, having a role to play. We are to take this to heart and do what YHWH has given us to do with our whole heart as if we are doing it for Him. If you are a parent, then raise your children for His Kingdom, if you are a spouse, then be a great one. Do everything you do to the best of your ability to give glory to our King. In doing this, we might just inspire or influence somebody to choose YHWH and live their life for YHWH. How glorious would that be. May we strive to inspire through our love for and obedience to our Heavenly Father.

Proverbs 16:3

3 Commit your works to YHWH and your plans will be established.

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1. All quoted passages are from the New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update. LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995. We have substituted YHWH for LORD, and Y'shua for Y'shu'a.
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## 9. *Speak truth to yourself*

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Depression and anxiety are part of many people's lives. It may be hidden behind a smile, anger or even behind a facade of perfectionism, but it is there. Even if you don't experience it yourself, you may know somebody who does. There are many reasons for this, for each person it is different. We live in a broken world full of broken relationships and hardship and we often are so entangled in this that we fail to see the beauty that still exists around us.

Coming to know the truth is one such reason to feel "*what is the use of all this, why bother.*" It can all seem so overwhelming. Some seek for freedom from their despair by taking anti-depressants, alcohol or drugs. All this just makes the problem worse, as these can't fill the despair and emptiness. We need a different solution.

I have written about having hope and about what our purpose in life is. Hope and purpose form the foundation of what we will discuss here. In this article, we will focus on the first step of what we should be doing to establish hope and purpose in our lives. Our objective is to be free from anxiety and depression; to live a life driven by purpose that will inspire others to want to be part of YHWH's Kingdom.

In both having hope and finding meaning, one thing stands out. We have to be convinced in our hearts and minds; we have to have faith. We have to know without any doubt where our hope comes from and how to battle hopelessness when it comes. We have to know and understand our purpose in order for it to be a part of us. This is what this article is about, how do we get ourselves to really believe what we have learned. How do we convert the theoretical to the practical? You can have the most brilliant solution to a problem, but if you fail to implement it properly, it will remain just words on paper or good intentions. We want to help you put it into practice.

The solution is to speak truth to ourselves and our next article will be about how to form habits in order to properly implement this solution.

We will now look at this solution.

### Renewing of our minds

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Speaking truth to ourselves is how we re-wire our minds to believe YHWH's truth. We have within us the ability to be transformed. In Romans 12, Paul describes what we should be doing.

Romans 12:2

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of Elohim is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We also learn from Scripture that we don't have to do it alone, we have help from YHWH through His Spirit.

John 14:26

26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

YHWH gave us His Word and His Word is truth. So, if we want to speak truth to ourselves, we are to speak YHWH’s Word. That is what renewing of the mind is all about.

This wasn’t Paul’s idea; we already find this principle in the book of Psalms.

We have seen in the previous article about having hope, how the author of Psalm 42 spoke to himself when he was in a desperate situation. This is a beautiful Psalm and I am sure you have also felt this way.

We shall now look in more detail at this psalm in order to learn how we can apply this in our own lives.

Psalm 42:1–111 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O Elohim. 2 My soul thirsts for Elohim, for the living Elohim; When shall I come and appear before Elohim? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all day long, “Where is your Elohim?” 4 These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of Elohim, With the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. 5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in Elohim, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence. 6 O my Elohim, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore, I remember You from the land of the Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. 7 Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me. 8 YHWH will command His lovingkindness in the daytime; And His song will be with me in the night, A prayer to the Elohim of my life. 9 I will say to Elohim my rock, “Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” 10 As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, while they say to me all day long, “Where is your Elohim?” 11 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in Elohim, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my Elohim.

Notice what the author says “these things I remember and I pour out my soul within me.” He then continues with “Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me?” He is doing self-analysis, he is deep in thought, thinking about his situation, pouring his soul out within himself. He asks himself why he is thinking what he is thinking and then proceed to speak truth to himself “Hope in Elohim, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence.” So, before we can renew our minds, we need to understand what we are thinking.

This forms the basis of speaking truth to ourselves. First, we are to analyze what we are thinking and when we do this, we may very often find that we are repeating lies which the enemy told us about ourselves or the situation. We need to counter these lies with the truth, YHWH’s truth. Before we elaborate on this, we will look at another example of speaking truth to ourselves from Scripture.

Psalm 4 gives us another example.

Psalm 4:4

4 Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

The word translated as tremble can have the following meanings 8074 רָגַז (rā·gāz): v.; ≡ Str 7264; TWOT 2112—1. LN 16 (qal) **quake, shake, tremble**, i.e., make a non-linear motion of a normally stable object (1Sa 14:15; 2Sa 22:8; Ps 18:8[EB 7]; 77:17[EB 16], 19[EB 18]; 99:1; Pr 30:21; Isa 5:25; Joel 2:10+); (hif) cause to shake, make tremble (Job 9:6; Isa 13:13; 14:16; 23:11; Hab 3:16b+), note: **in some contexts this may refer to fear or anxiety**; 2. LN 25.223–25.250 (qal) **be in anguish, i.e., be in an emotional distress or turbulence**, as a figurative extension of shaking an object (Ex 15:14; Dt 2:25; 2Sa 7:10; 19:1[EB 18:33]; 1Ch 17:9; Isa 14:9; 28:21; 32:10, 11; 64:1[EB 2]; Joel 2:1; Am 8:8; Mic 7:17; Hab 3:7+); (hif) agitate, cause a disturbance (1Sa 28:15; Jer 50:34+), note: in context the response to this agitation may be **anger or displeasure**; 3. LN 88.171–88.191 (qal) **be angry**, i.e., be in a state of intense displeasure, as a figurative extension of shaking or trembling as a bodily response to being in an angry state (Ge 45:24; Ps 4:5[EB 4]; Pr 29:9; Eze 16:43+); (hif) provoke to anger (Job 12:6+); (hitp) enrage oneself (2Ki 19:27, 28; Isa 37:28, 29+); 4. LN 25.206–25.222 (qal) **be astonished, i.e., feel a state of unexpected wonder and surprise** (Jer 33:9+); 5. LN 16 (qal) pound, beat, i.e., the non-linear motion of the heart, as a figurative extension of an object shaking or trembling (Hab 3:16a+)<sup>2</sup>

So, this Hebrew word “ragaz” can refer to a number of emotional states. Let’s analyze what is said here. King David wrote this; he first permits the emotion and then adds not to sin. Then he admonishes the reader to meditate on it and to be still.

The word meditate can also be translated as “*speak*”

606 I. אָמַר (’ā·mār): v.; ≡ Str 559; TWOT 118—1. LN 33.69–33.108 (qal) *say, tell, claim, i.e., **speak or talk**, usually with a focus on the content to follow (Ge 3:1); (qal pass.) be said (Mic 2:7); (nif) be said, be told, be spoken to (Ge 10:9; Da 8:26)*<sup>2</sup>

The word “heart” can also be translated as soul

4222 לֵב (lē·bāḇ): n.masc.; ≡ Str 3824; TWOT 1071a—1. LN 26 **heart, mind, soul, spirit, self**, i.e., the source of the life of the inner person in various aspects, with a focus on feelings, thoughts, volition, and other areas of inner life (Dt 2:30)<sup>2</sup>

Once again, we see the concept of speaking to your soul as we have seen in Psalm 42.

We need to work through issues in our minds. Most of the time, we either distract ourselves with Facebook, television or the internet, or we repeat the lies we have always believed and replay it over and over in our minds. This way we don’t really work through issues. That may be one reason why so many people are depressed and remain depressed.

It is important, though, when we do this self-analysis, to do it in a constructive manner, or we would just make matters worse. Our aim should be to identify the lies and counter it with the truth.

It is interesting to know that what we have seen here in Scripture is applied in psychology, a technique called existential analysis.

## Existential analysis

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A neurologist and psychiatrist by the name of Victor Frankl further developed this technique to help people.

Here is some information about him.

**Viktor Emil Frankl, M.D., Ph.D. (26 March 1905 – 2 September 1997)** was an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist as well as a Holocaust survivor. Frankl was the founder of logotherapy, which is a form of existential analysis, the “Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy”. His best-selling book [Man’s Search for Meaning](#) chronicles his experiences as a concentration camp inmate, which led him to discover the importance of finding meaning in all forms of existence, even the most brutal ones, and thus, a reason to continue living. Frankl became one of the key figures in existential therapy and a prominent source of inspiration for humanistic psychologists.<sup>3</sup>

Viktor Frankl used the experiences he gained while he was in the concentration camp to develop logotherapy and he also wrote a few books about what he learned. He is a very wise man and his book “[Man’s Search for meaning](#)” is worth a read. In the first half of this book He described what he experienced and in the second half he explained what he learned from this experience and how to apply it to help people. I mention this to show you that the practical application of what we find here in Scripture is effective. Viktor Frankl has applied this principle in his practice to help many people.

What the Psalmist described as pouring his soul out within him, is this analysis. If we were to examine what is written here, we see it is a three-step process.

1. We must first do the analysis; we basically must think about what we are thinking.
2. The next step is to reflect on this to see if what we are thinking really is the truth and then we are to take control of the negative thoughts
3. The third step is to renew our minds by speaking truth to ourselves.

We shall now look at each of these in a bit more detail.

## Doing the analysis

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Every time you experience anxiety or depression, you are to sit and write down how you feel and what you are thinking while you feel this way. In this way you are making yourself aware of your self-talk.

[There is a great resource, a six-week guide, available to help with this titled “\[Learning to tell myself the truth\]\(#\)”](#) by William Backus (ISBN 978-1556612909.) He is a believer and psychologist and applies this principle in his therapy. His “**truth therapy**” is in agreement with what we have been writing about in this article and the previous two about hope and purpose.

After we have identified our self-talk, the next step is to take those thoughts captive.

## Taking every thought captive

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Our thoughts play a very important role in how we feel and what we do. I have written two previous articles about this topic “Thoughts, the battle in our minds” and “Mind control and fear.” In the first article I show you the influence of thoughts and give you some practical advice on how to control our thoughts. In the second article I show you how satan uses fear to lure us away from YHVH.

Let us look at what Paul said to the Corinthians about thoughts.

2 Corinthians 10:5

5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of Elohim, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah,

*If our self-talk is negative and destructive, it falls into this category of “speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of Elohim.” Speculations are false reasoning or conclusions made which are not necessarily the truth. “Lofty” refers to haughtiness or idolatry. We can make a connection to fear here, because we can either fear YHVH or fear our circumstances or whatever threatens us. Fearing anything or anyone other than YHVH is a form of idolatry, because we give more power to that than to YHVH.*

If something is against the knowledge of Elohim, it is contrary to His Word and these things are. False reasoning or false conclusions are lies and fearing anything other than YHVH, as we said, is idolatry. These are thus the thoughts we are to take captive. Interesting that these two are the greatest causes of depression and anxiety, after death of a loved one.

Before we take control of the negative thoughts, we need to address our misbeliefs. We need to reflect on our self-talk and consider whether it is truth or not. Write down your self-talk and objectively consider whether it is true or not. You will see when you look at it objectively you would recognize that it is untrue. Only when we recognize that these are misbeliefs, can we replace it with truth. We can also think about possible causes for these misbeliefs and reflect on that.

It is normal to treat our self-talk as truth; we tend to never question these beliefs we have about ourselves or our situations. We need to start questioning these beliefs and you would be surprised at what you find out about yourself. These misbeliefs we nurture about ourselves and our situation are planted there to hold us back, to prevent us from living a life of purpose full of hope.

Read what Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

Ephesians 6:10–18

10 Finally, be strong in YHVH and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of Elohim, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of Elohim, so

that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of Elohim. 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

*Knowing this and the fact that we might be carrying major misbeliefs within ourselves as a result of this, I do believe this is a step in the right direction towards freedom from depression and anxiety. I have only recently started to put these principles in place and the difference is remarkable. Order yourself the six-week guide "Learning to tell myself the truth" and do this. Looking back, I am amazed at how YHVH has guided me in this. I started looking into the concept of having hope and YHVH just started revealing more and more to me and having tried it myself, I know this can help others.*

Now that we know our misbeliefs and possibly their origin, we have to take control of these thoughts. That is how we take it captive. We have the ability to change the direction of our thoughts and we are to do so. The next step is to replace these thoughts with the truth.

## Speaking truth to ourselves

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Speaking truth to ourselves is to replace the negative self-talk with YHVH's truth in the situation.

Scripture memorization is a great way to internalize YHVH's truth. If you have depression and anxiety in your life, study Scripture about the subject and memorize the verses that will help you change your self-talk. Replace the misbeliefs with YHVH's truth. Last but not least, pray that YHVH would help you and guide you in this. Ask Him to expose all the misbeliefs you are nurturing about yourself and write down why it is not true. Then renew your mind and belief His truth. This will transform your life.

Here are some verses about overcoming anxiety and depression, there are many more. Find them and memorize them. Renew your mind!

1 Peter 5:6–7

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of Elohim, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Isaiah 41:10

10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your Elohim. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Philippians 4:6–7

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to Elohim. 7 And the peace of Elohim, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard

your hearts and your minds in Messiah Y'shua.

Psalm 40:1–3

1 I waited patiently for YHVH; And He inclined to me and heard my cry. 2 He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. 3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our Elohim; Many will see and fear and will trust in YHVH.

## Conclusion

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Speaking truth to ourselves is a Biblical principle that can transform our lives. This is a process and we have to train our minds to think differently. We would like to urge you to try this and would love to have your feedback. Please let us know if this indeed helped you or not. Our next article will be about helping you form habits to ensure that this becomes a part of your life. This way the transformation would be lasting. May YHVH bless you in this and guide you to freedom from anxiety and depression.

## References

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1. All quoted passages are from the New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update. LaHabra,CA:TheLockmanFoundation, 1995. We have substituted YHVH for LORD, and Y'shua for Y'shua.
2. Swanson, J. (1997). Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.
3. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viktor\\_Frankl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viktor_Frankl)





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## 10. Who makes the earthquake?

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There are many natural disasters occurring in our day; earthquakes, tornados, hail the size of tennis balls and there are even volcanoes on the verge of erupting. What is going on?

Who do we ascribe this to? Some are ascribing all these or most of these occurrences to H.A.A.R.P. H.A.A.R.P is the abbreviation for High Frequency Active Auroral Research program, an investigation project to understand, simulate and control ionospheric processes.

Is the human race capable of creating some or even all of these disasters?

Who controls the weather? Is it China, Russia or the USA? People claim that this program can control weather patterns and create earthquakes and other natural disasters. Could this be, or is there perhaps another agenda behind this? An agenda that wants to hide the fact that our heavenly Father, YHVH, is orchestrating this; He is calling His people to return to Him.

If you consult the internet, you would easily become convinced that all these phenomena are caused by scientific technology. If you consult the Scripture, you might be convinced otherwise. Let's see...

Here is some wisdom from the book of Job.

Job 36:29–33

29 "Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, The thundering of His pavilion? 30 "Behold, He spreads His lightning about Him, And He covers the depths of the sea. 31 "For by these He judges peoples; He gives food in abundance. 32 "He covers His hands with the lightning, and commands it to strike the mark. 33 "Its noise declares His presence; The cattle also, concerning what is coming up.

Job 37:2–13 "Listen closely to the thunder of His voice, And the rumbling that goes out from His mouth. "Under the whole heaven He lets it loose, And His lightning to the ends of the earth. 4 "After it, a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic voice, And He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard. 5 "Elohim thunders with His voice wondrously, doing great things which we cannot comprehend. 6 "For to the snow He says, 'Fall on the earth,' And to the downpour and the rain, 'Be strong.' 7 "He seals the hand of every man, that all men may know His work. 8 "Then the beast goes into its lair and remains in its den. 9 "Out of the south comes the storm, And out of the north the cold. 10 "From the breath of Elohim ice is made, And the expanse of the waters is frozen. 11 "Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud; He disperses the cloud of His lightning. 12 "It changes direction, turning around by His guidance, that it may do whatever He commands it on the face of the inhabited earth. 13 "Whether for correction, or for His world, or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen.

We can see from these two quotes from the book of Job that YHVH uses nature for correction or for loving kindness. He causes it to happen!

Here are two other quotes where we can see that it is YHVH that controls whether it hails, thunders or rains on the earth.

We can see from these two quotes from the book of Job that YHVH uses nature for correction or for loving kindness. He causes it to happen!

Here are two other quotes where we can see that it is YHVH that controls whether it hails, thunders or rains on the earth.

Exodus 9:23

23 Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and YHVH sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And YHVH rained hail on the land of Egypt.

1 Samuel 12:18

18 So Samuel called to YHVH, and YHVH sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared YHVH and Samuel.

## The mountains quake at YHVH's presence

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When YHVH gave the Torah to His people, the mountain quaked violently. The mountains quake at His presence.

Exodus 19:18

18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because YHVH descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.

Psalms 68:7–8

7 O Elohim, when You went forth before Your people, When You marched through the wilderness, Selah.  
8 The earth quaked; The heavens also dropped rain at the presence of Elohim; Sinai itself quaked at the presence of Elohim, the Elohim of Israel.

Judges 5:4–5

4 "YHVH, when You went out from Seir, When You marched from the field of Edom, The earth quaked, the heavens also dripped, Even the clouds dripped water. 5 "The mountains quaked at the presence of YHVH, This Sinai, at the presence of YHVH, the Elohim of Israel.

Isaiah 64:1–3

1 Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, That the mountains might quake at Your presence— 2 As fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil— To make Your name known to Your adversaries, That the nations may tremble at Your presence! 3 When You did awesome things which we did not expect, You came down, the mountains quaked at Your presence.

Jeremiah 10:10

10 But YHVH is the true Elohim; He is the living Elohim and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation.

# Natural disasters – the result of YHVH's judgment

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YHVH uses natural disasters for punishment. Most of the time people only listen when extreme measures are used!

Psalms 78:34–35

<sup>34</sup> When He killed them, then they sought Him, and returned and searched diligently for Elohim; <sup>35</sup> And they remembered that Elohim was their rock, And the Most High YHVH their Redeemer.

Isaiah 26:9

<sup>9</sup> At night my soul longs for You, Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently; For when the earth experiences Your judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

YHVH uses tornado's, earthquakes, hail, snow and clouds for His purposes, to get His people to return to Him. Consider the following Scriptures:

Isaiah 29:6

6 From YHVH of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise,

With whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.

Psalms 77:16–19

16 The waters saw You, O Elohim; The waters saw You, they were in anguish; The deeps also trembled. 17 The clouds poured out water; The skies gave forth a sound; Your arrows flashed here and there. 18 The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world; The earth trembled and shook. 19 Your way was in the sea And Your paths in the mighty waters, And Your footprints may not be known.

These last two scriptures are very profound, but what caught my attention was the “loud noise” and “the skies gave forth a sound”. Makes you think doesn't it?

For further study, you can also read [Ps 60:1-2](#); [Isa 5:25](#); [Jer 4:24-26](#).

In the book of Amos, chapter 3, we see YHVH using calamity to call His people to return to Him; how is this different to what we are experiencing?

- He caused “lack of bread in all your places” ([Amos 4:6](#)), yet they did not return to Him. He withheld rain ([Amos 4:7](#)), yet they did not return to Him.
- He smote them with scorching wind and mildew ([Amos 4:9](#)), they did not return to Him;
- He sent a plague among them after the manner of Egypt ([Amos 4:10](#)), they did not return to Him;
- He slew your young men by the sword ([Amos 4:10](#)); however, they did not return to Him!

Another passage is found in Haggai:

Haggai 1:7

7 Thus says YHVH of hosts, “Consider your ways!

Haggai 1:11

11 "I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands."

Haggai 2:17

17 'I smote you and every work of your hands with blasting wind, mildew and hail; yet you did not come back to Me,' declares YHVH.

## In the end times

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YHVH will continue to use natural disasters to call His people back to Him! It will even intensify as we get closer to the time of Y'shua's return.

Matthew 24:7

<sup>7</sup> "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

Ezekiel 38:18–23

<sup>18</sup> "It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," declares the YHVH Elohim, "that My fury will mount up in My anger. <sup>19</sup> "In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be **a great earthquake** in the land of Israel. <sup>20</sup> "The fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all the creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence; the mountains also will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground. <sup>21</sup> "I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains," declares YHVH Elohim. "Every man's sword will be against his brother. <sup>22</sup> "With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone. <sup>23</sup> **"I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am YHVH."** "

This passage in Ezekiel refers to the end time. YHVH uses a great earthquake here to magnify Himself, to make Himself known in the sight of many nations. He will do this in future.

Job 38:22–23

<sup>22</sup> "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, <sup>23</sup> Which I have reserved for the time of distress, For the day of war and battle?

Isaiah 13:13

<sup>13</sup> Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, And the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of YHVH of hosts in the day of His burning anger.

Revelation 6:12–17

12 I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. 14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Who caused this great earthquake? It could only be YHVH! We see "the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong" all hiding in caves. If they caused it to happen, they surely didn't plan it well!

## YHVH is in control of the earth, He is sovereign

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Psalms 148:8

8 Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;

YHVH creates storms and causes them to stop.

Psalms 107:25

25 For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea.

Psalms 107:28–29

28 Then they cried to YHVH in their trouble, And He brought them out of their distresses. 29

He caused the storm to be still, so that the waves of the sea were hushed.

## Conspiracies causes fear and confusion!

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It is good to know what's going on in the world, but how much can we trust the media. How much can we trust the internet? For every article proving something, you might find another disproving the same. This is what counter-intelligence is all about. It gives rise to confusion! You end up asking: "What is actually the truth?"

Satan is the father of lies, fear and confusion. This is his agenda; he causes enough distraction for you to take your focus off YHVH, the Creator of heaven and earth. You end up spending far too much time studying conspiracies, instead of studying His Word.

I am not denying the existence of technology able to influence some of the weather patterns. This said, can we now generally assume that all-natural disasters are caused by man? People tend to do that, **slowly but surely, you will start to doubt YHVH's power, and this will result in you fearing man, and what he can do to you.**

Once the adversary has convinced you that man is responsible for controlling most things, including natural disasters, who

would you turn to? **Would you even consider that YHVH might be using this to call His people back to Him?** It is like a huge billboard in front of you, but you don't see it, because you are focused on some little detail elsewhere.

Fear YHVH and give esteem to Him only. Put your focus entirely on Him and your relationship with Him.

How can you trust Him if you don't know him?

Isaiah 2:22

22 Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; For why should he be esteemed?

1 Chronicles 29:11

11 "Yours, O YHVH, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O YHVH, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.

YHVH is in control of the universe and uses everything for His purposes. Fear only Him and keep your eyes on Him.

Return to Him and He will protect you.

Psalms 73:27–28

27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. 28 But as for me, the nearness of Elohim is my good; I have made YHVH Elohim my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.

You are precious to our heavenly Father. You are His child! Fear only Him and it will be well with you!

Matthew 10:29–33

29 "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

Stop wasting your time! Time is precious, spend your time doing something with eternal value.

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## 11. Forgive Yourself

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If you were to look in the mirror and ask yourself this question right now what would your answer be. For me for the longest time, people would ask me and I would respond I hate myself. I only see disappointment, and failure looking back at me. Part of that was baggage from my childhood, but this is not about that period of my life. It does not help the situation where the issues started from, only where we go from this point forward. For certain that some of the resentment was definitely unforgiveness to myself but also the fact that I did not believe that I could be forgiven. That I was beyond forgiveness.

When you get to this point in your life, then you have completely not only forgotten who you are, what you have learned in your studies, but you have completely given yourself over to the lies that this world and ha satan has been feeding you all along.

Many of us, myself included, struggle to forgive ourselves. We may have done things in the past, we regret, and may even live with the consequences of those past sins. This may cause guilt, lack of self-esteem and in self-hatred. Did you know that this self-hatred can give your body permission to destroy itself? This may be one cause of auto-immune disease that is unknown to mainstream healthcare. There may be other causes of auto-immune disease, so be wise in this. Don't just stop your medication, it could be dangerous to your health. I would suggest you work with a healthcare provider if you have identified a spiritual root in yourself. In some cases, the damage to your body would necessitate medication, but you may be able to stop further damage. Don't forget that we serve an Elohim Who can heal any disease, if it is according to His will.

From this, we may deduce that self-hatred, bitterness and guilt can, in some cases, be the root cause of diseases like Hashimoto's hypothyroidism, Graves' disease. Lupus, Eczema and Rheumatoid arthritis. These are a few examples, there are many more.

Here is a definition of autoimmune disease:

*An autoimmune disease develops when your immune system, which defends your body against disease, decides your healthy cells are foreign. As a result, your immune system attacks healthy cells. Depending on the type, an autoimmune disease can affect one or many different types of body tissue. It can also cause abnormal organ growth and changes in organfunction.*

*There are as many as 80 types of autoimmune diseases. Many of them have similar symptoms, which makes them very difficult to diagnose. It's also possible to have more than one at the same time. Autoimmune diseases usually fluctuate between periods of remission (little or no symptoms) and flare-ups (worsening symptoms). Currently, treatment for autoimmune diseases focuses on relieving symptoms because there is no curative therapy.<sup>2</sup>*

Thebodycanuseitsownimmunesystemtodestroyitselfslowlybutsurely.Itmakessense if you think about it. A person who hates him or herself, or is consumed with guilt and bitternessmaywanttosub-consciouslydestroythemselves. So, whatweneedto dealwith, is the root of this bitterness, guilt or self-hatred. If we can get rid of the root, the problem may go away or at least go into remission. That is our mission with this study. If we have identified this root in ourselves, how do

we get rid of it?

Before we do this, we would like to determine if self-forgiveness is biblical. I have not found a direct commandment that reads “thou shalt forgive thyself,” however, we shall show you that it is implied in scripture.

## Love YHVH and your neighbor as yourself

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When Y’shua was asked about the most important commandment, He answered as follows:

Mark 12:30–31

30 and you shall love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ 31 “The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

We are to love YHVH with all our heart, soul and mind. This is the greatest commandment. If we love YHVH in this way, we will honor Him as our Elohim, we will not worship idols, nor take His name in vain, and we will keep the Sabbath holy, in general we will obey His commandments. If we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will not do to them what YHVH prohibited us to do to them. We were created to care for and protect ourselves, and we are to do thus unto others. No person was created with an urge to destroy themselves, sin caused it, but we will look into this later.

Y’shua was quoting from Deuteronomy 6:4 and Leviticus 19:18. Let’s look at Leviticus 19:18 in more detail.

Leviticus 19:18

18 ‘You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am YHVH.

This verse and the verses before it, give us more insight on what it means to love your neighbor. We are specifically commanded not to take vengeance, nor bear any grudge.

To take vengeance means:

5933 נָקַם (*nā·qām*): v.; ≡ Str 5358; TWOT 1413—LN 38.1–38.13 (*qal*) **seek vengeance, avenge, i.e., pay harm with another harm, with a focus on justice and punishment of guilt, real or perceived** (Ex 21:20a; Lev 19:18; 26:25; Nu 31:2; Dt 32:43; Jos 10:13; 1Sa 24:13[EB 12]; Ps 99:8; Eze 24:8; 25:12a, 15; Na 1:2+), see also domain LN 39.33; (*nif*) **be avenged, avenge oneself** (Ex 21:20b; Jdg 15:7; 16:28; 1Sa 14:24; 18:25; Est 8:13; Isa 1:24; Jer 15:15; 46:10; 50:15; Eze 25:12b, 15+); (*piel*) **avenge** (2Ki 9:7; Jer 51:36+); (*hitp*) **take one’s own vengeance** (Ps 8:3[EB 2]; 44:17[EB 16]; Jer 5:9, 29; 9:8[EB 9]+); (*hof*) **be avenged** (Ge 4:15, 24; Ex 21:21+)<sup>3</sup>

To bear a grudge:

5757 ל. נָטַר (*nā·ṭār*): v.; ≡ Str 5201; TWOT 1356—LN 35.36–35.46 (*qal*) **care for, tend, act. as a**



*caretaker, be in a state of caring for objects by proper actions (SS 1:6; 8:11, 12+)*

5758 II. נָטַר (*nā·ṭār*): v.; ≡ Str 5201; TWOT 1356—LN 88.171–88.191 (*qal*) *be angry, harbor a grudge, maintain wrath, i.e., be in a state of displeasure with an object, implying for a considerable period of time (Lev 19:18; Ps 103:9; Jer 3:5, 12; Na 1:2+)*<sup>3</sup>

To bear a grudge is to keep our anger against somebody, to nurture it. This will cause bitterness. If you forgive your neighbor, you will not feel a need to punish him and you will not be angry or be in a state of displeasure with him for a considerable period of time. So, if we were to love our neighbor as ourselves, it implies that if we are not to do this to our neighbor, we are naturally not to do it to ourselves. We will not want to take vengeance against ourselves or carry a grudge. That is not love. This implies that we are to forgive ourselves and do likewise unto others. You cannot love others if you do not love yourself.

This verse also confirms that there are three kinds of relationships. Our relationship with YHVH, which forms the base of all our other relationships, then our relationship with ourselves and then with other people. Relationships have rules of engagement. YHVH has given us His commandments. These commandments teach us how YHVH wants us to conduct ourselves towards Him and others. Transgressing these commandments is sin and brings separation between us and YHVH. Any sin is against YHVH, but sin can also be against ourselves and against others. This brings about separation from self and other people, respectively. You may wonder what separation from yourself means. Separation from self is what we described in the first paragraph. You don't like yourself or even hate yourself, has constant guilt about what you have done, or not done and bitterness. Bitterness is the most severe form of separation from self or others.

## The root of bitterness

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Hebrews 12:15

15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of Elohim; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

This Greek word “mianthosin,” translated as “defiled” further means to contaminate, to cause someone to be morally tainted.

88.260 *μιαίνω*: *to cause someone to be morally tainted or defiled—‘to defile, to contaminate, to cause to be morally filthy.’ τοῖς δὲ μεμιαμμένοις καὶ ἀπίστοις οὐδὲν καθαρὸν ‘to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure’ Tt 1:15.*<sup>4</sup>

Henry Wright, author of *A More Excellent Way* describes bitterness as a principality with seven spirits that reinforce it. We can harbor this bitterness against others, but also against ourselves. Here is a list of these seven from his book.

The first one is unforgiveness:

## Unforgiveness

Unforgiveness is keeping a record of wrongs. You can still vividly remember all that was done to you by another person

or all the things you have done that you regret. Keeping this record is unforgiveness. Then resentment sets in.

## Resentment

Resentment is when you fuel this record of wrongs with feelings of holding on to it and starting to meditate of chew on it. Resentment is spiritual. This resentment brings separation and is the foundation of fear. Fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of abandonment. We want to hide!

The next step is retaliation.

## Retaliation

After resentment has started to simmer, we find ways to get back at the person who caused it. We want to punish them.

## Anger

Anger is the next in line.

These three: unforgiveness, resentment, and retaliation has been brewing and now anger comes along. Have you experienced it like this? This is followed by hatred.

## Hatred

All this has been brewing in us and now we get to a point where we feel that we cannot be in the same room with this person.

After hatred comes violence.

## Violence

You now get to a point you want to do violence to this person. You want them to experience the same pain you are experiencing.

The next step is murder.

## Murder

This murder could be actual murder, or murder with the tongue in the form of character assassination or verbal abuse. If we don't deal with this, it is going to the heart and take up residence. When hatred, violence and murder are in someone's life, they feel they are justified and everybody else is going to pay the price.

If you see hatred in a person's life, unforgiveness, resentment, retaliation and anger always precede. Also, each of the seven is progressively worse than the one preceding it.<sup>5</sup> **When you consider this, you will realize that this is true not only in our relationship with others, but also with ourselves.**

The question is how do we stop this?

# Forgiving others

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This whole chain of events that results in a root of bitterness in our lives, can be stopped by being willing to forgive those who have trespassed against us. This may seem difficult to do. When somebody has wronged us, we want to be angry and get even, we want to see justice done, that is human nature. This willingness to forgive does not come from ourselves, but from YHVH through His Ruach. We cannot do this of our own accord and we cannot do this unless we have experienced that forgiveness ourselves. We have received the free gift of forgiveness from YHVH, and are to pay it forward.

To have experienced it ourselves will enable us to separate the person in a way from the sin. What I mean is that we are to come to the realization that this person sinned because they are human and have brokenness in their own lives just like we have.

The parable Y'shua told illustrates this very well.

Matthew 18:23–35

23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24 "When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 25 "But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. 26 "So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' 27 "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. 28 "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' 29 "So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' 30 "But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. 31 "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. 32 "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' 34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35 "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

We are that slave who has been forgiven so much. How can we then withhold that which we freely received?

This doesn't justify sinful behavior, though, but we are to know that YHVH will deal with that, we are not to seek or take vengeance or hold a grudge. When we are willing to forgive, we don't let them off the hook, we give them to YHVH to deal with. He will avenge.

Luke 18:7

7 now, will not Elohim bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?

He will bring about justice, it is not for us to do. Y'shua, when He taught His disciples to pray said:

Matthew 6:12

12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And also:

Matthew 6:14–15

14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

There is much to be said about forgiveness. Forgiveness is key to bringing restoration. Restoration between us and YHWH, between us and others and restoration within ourselves. Many people, myself included, tend to dwell on our pasts and all we have done wrong, all the sin we have committed and we resent ourselves for it. We live all seven steps we have previously discussed. We can't forgive ourselves for the sins we have committed and ends up with much regret and bitterness towards ourselves. The root cause of this may be because we have not accepted YHWH's forgiveness of our sin. That causes us to harbor unforgiveness towards ourselves and gives the enemy a place in our lives. He uses this unforgiveness to condemn us and afflict us with spiritual diseases. It literally makes us sick. We have been given over to the torturer due to our unwillingness to forgive.

We can be free from this. We are to accept YHWH's complete forgiveness of our sins. YHWH said in His word that He forgives our sins completely when we confess our sins and repent of it (or turn away from it). The beginning of all healing is restoration.<sup>5</sup> To be restored we need to accept the forgiveness we have received from YHWH and be willing to forgive in the same way we have been forgiven. This includes forgiving ourselves. We cannot be restored to ourselves in any other way and we cannot love others the way YHWH wants us to if we do not love ourselves.

## Accepting YHWH's gift of forgiveness

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YHWH says in His word:

1 John 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we continually condemn ourselves, or live in unforgiveness towards others or ourselves, we have not accepted YHWH's forgiveness. If we can't or don't accept YHWH's gift of forgiveness, we actually don't believe Him or we think we are better than Him. Y'shua took the punishment for our sin upon Himself, He died in our place. We have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.

Ephesians 1:7

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

We don't have to do anything for this, all we need to do is believe and receive this free gift. Accepting YHVH's forgiveness first, will enable us to be willing to forgive others and ourselves. A great help in this is to renew our minds. We are to meditate on YHVH's word and so change our thinking. Here are a few verses to consider and make your own. We are to read it and speak it audibly until we believe it with our whole heart. This will change us.

I read an article about forgiveness and the author suggested that we insert "I" in each scripture and confess it audibly. This list is from his article.<sup>6</sup>

*If I am in Y'shua, I am a new creature. The old things have passed away.*

2 Corinthians 5:1

717 Therefore if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

*If I confess my sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive me my sins and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*I will love and forgive others and myself as Y'shua has forgiven me*

Colossians 3:13

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as YHVH forgave you, so also should you.

*My sins are not part of me anymore, they are not simply covered, but are removed from me as far as the east is from the west.*

Psalms 103:12

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

*Y'shua released me from my sins by His blood*

Revelation 1:5

5 and from Y'shua Messiah, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—

**My sin is forgiven through the blood of Y'shua**

Matthew 26:28

28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

**I have been justified (made right, as if I have never sinned) by faith and have peace with Elohim through my Master**

**Y'shua Messiah.**

Romans 5:1

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with Elohim through our Master Y'shua Messiah,

**I cannot be justified by works of the law or acts of righteousness, but by my faith in Messiah Y'shua.**

Galatians 2:16

16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Messiah Y'shua, even we have believed in Messiah Y'shua, so that we may be justified by faith in Messiah and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

**Because I believe, the righteousness of Elohim is upon me, a gift by His grace.**

Romans 3:22–24

22 even the righteousness of Elohim through faith in Y'shua Messiah for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of Elohim, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Messiah Y'shua;

**The old me has been crucified and my old man has been buried with Messiah. Now my life is in Messiah as I have been raised to life with Him and I am free to walk in the newness of life.**

Galatians 2:20

20 "I have been crucified with Messiah; and it is no longer I who live, but Messiah lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of Elohim, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Romans 6:4

4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Messiah was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

**My Heavenly Father wipes out my transgressions for HIS sake. He will not remember my sins.**

Isaiah 43:25

25 "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.

**Because of the Blood of Messiah, my conscience can be purged of dead works (your past failures) so that I can serve the Living Elohim."**

Hebrews 9:14

14 how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to Elohim, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living Elohim?

**Not only did YHVH chose to forget my sins, but He also wants me to forget them as well. He wants me to draw near to Him with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, being sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.**

Hebrews 10:22

22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

*I am in Messiah Y'shua, and therefore free from condemnation.* <sup>6</sup>

Romans 8:1–2

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Y'shua. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Messiah Y'shua has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

## Conclusion

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Unforgiveness causes bitterness and this causes separation from YHVH, ourselves and others. This bitterness causes us to resent or even hate ourselves or others. If we do not love ourselves, we can't possibly love others as we are commanded to do. We have to deal with this root of bitterness. We can do this by first accepting the free gift of forgiveness we have received from YHVH.

We are to renew our minds to see ourselves as YHVH sees us: a new creation in Y'shua. If we accept the free gift of redemption, we have received through Y'shua taking our punishment upon Himself, we will be willing to forgive as we have been forgiven. If we continue in self-hatred and condemnation, we deny what Y'shua has done for us. Who are we to hate the person YHVH loved so much, He gave His Son to die for their redemption? If we want to bring honor to YHVH, we are to accept His gift and live accordingly. When we do, we will be free. In this freedom we can bring glory to Him and fulfill the task He has for us.

Our past failures have been paid in full and have been removed from us as far as the east is from the west. In Y'shua, we have become a new creation. See yourself as YHVH sees you and walk His way in freedom.

Luke 4:18

18 "The Spirit of YHVH is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed,

You cannot go back and change the past, but you can change how you are influenced by it by forgiving. Start living in the newness of life bought for us by Y'shua. Accept this free gift and pay it forward.

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## *12. Self-discipline and Self-control*

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A lack of self-control can result in endless pain for the one who doesn't have it and sometimes even more for the one who falls victim to someone who lacks self-control. Lives can be and are ruined because of this. I don't have to give you graphic examples of this, the news is full of it. Accidents due to drunken drivers, children whose lives are ruined because of adults without self-control. Broken marriages. Just consider your own life... Each of us have done things we will always regret, things we did as a result of no self-control. This article is not to condemn, but to help. These situations and temptations are a part of being human, but we must know how to deal with this. We must know our limitations and our strengths in order to ensure we don't fall victim to this and suffer or make others suffer.

Even without considering the serious consequences of a lack of self-control, we need to have self-control every day. We need self-control in order not to lose our temper, or break our diet or to refrain from saying something we shouldn't.

We also need it for building ourselves up. We have written about speaking truth to ourselves, forming habits, memorizing Scripture and doing Bible study. We need to do all these consistently before we will see results in our lives and this requires self-discipline and self-control.

### Examples from Scripture

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There are many passages in Scripture that contain examples of self-control and self-discipline. We certainly can learn from all these. Here are a few examples: Adam didn't exercise self-control when Eve offered him the fruit. Joseph exercised self-control when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. Samson didn't have self-control when Delilah seduced him. In fact, he often didn't exert self-control. David lost his self-control when he saw Bathsheba bathing.

Daniel and his friends practiced self-discipline and self-control when they chose not to defile themselves with the food of the king of Babylon (Dan 1:8.) Daniel also prayed three times a day, even after it became illegal to do so (Dan 1:8). Daniel's three friends: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego did not bow down, nor serve the image of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3:8) even when threatened to be thrown into the furnace. That is self-discipline. Achan didn't have self-control when it came to the things under the ban in Jericho.

We can find many more examples in Scripture. What caused David not to have self-control in that specific situation? He was a man after YHWH's heart (1 Sam 13:14.) Why were Daniel and his friends able to prevail even with death staring them in the face? What was different about Samson? We don't know the answers to these questions, we can only speculate. What we do see is that it is easy to fall and it is also possible to prevail.

We first need to understand the concepts of self-discipline and self-control properly before we can make any conclusions.

We shall start off by defining self-control.

# Self-control

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*self-con•trol \-kən- 'trōl\ noun*

**1711: *restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires*—self-con•trolled \-'trōld\ adjective<sup>2</sup>**

Self-control is self-restraint or willpower. All of us possess this in variable amounts and we are admonished to have self-control. Those who do are often credited as wise.

It has also been proven scientifically that people who have stronger willpower have better life outcomes than people who don't. An experiment was conducted in the 1960s, known as the marshmallow experiment in which willpower, or delayed gratification, was tested.

The **Stanford marshmallow experiment** [1] was a series of studies on delayed gratification in the late 1960s and early 1970s led by psychologist Walter Mischel, then a professor at Stanford University. In these studies, a child was offered a choice between one small reward provided immediately or two small rewards if they waited for a short period, approximately 15 minutes, during which the tester left the room and then returned. (The reward was sometimes a marshmallow, but often a cookie or a pretzel.) In follow-up studies, the researchers found that children who were able to wait longer for the preferred rewards tended to have better life outcomes, as measured by SAT scores,[2] educational attainment,[3] body mass index (BMI),[4] and other life measures.[5]3

## Self-control can be learned

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This experiment was later repeated and this time the kids who ate the marshmallow were put in a room with an adult, the kids observed the techniques the adult used to maintain their willpower. Techniques like distraction, taking a nap, closing their eyes, etc. The children were tested again and most were able to wait the 15 minutes. This proves that self-control can be taught.

## Self-control is a limited resource

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It has also been proven scientifically that self-control is a limited resource. Studies have shown that if a person was in a position of having to exert self-control for a period of time, it is very likely that when they are faced with a temptation after this period, that they will succumb to it.

John Tierney wrote in the New York Times:

These experiments demonstrated that there is a finite store of mental energy for exerting self-control. When people fended off the temptation to scarf down M&M's or freshly baked chocolate-chip cookies, they were then less able to resist other temptations. When they forced themselves to remain stoic during a tearjerker movie, afterward they gave up more quickly on lab tasks requiring self-discipline, like working on a geometry puzzle or squeezing a hand-grip exerciser.

Willpower turned out to be more than a folk concept or a metaphor. It really was a form of mental energy that could be exhausted. <sup>4</sup>

You can read the article, if you are interested, the link is in the reference section.

From this, and other studies, we can understand why YHVH did not want Israel to mix with the nations. YHVH knew that while Israel may be able to resist in the beginning, sooner or later they would give in and succumb to the way of the nations and bring judgement upon themselves. He also knew that self-control is something we can't always claim to have. Paul also warns:

1 Corinthians 10:12  
12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

Every one of us when tempted at a time when we are tired or vulnerable for some reason, will fall. It is for this reason that we are told to flee from evil.

## Flee from temptation!

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1 Thessalonians 5:22  
22 abstain from every form of evil.

The Complete Jewish Bible translated it as follows:

1 Thessalonians 5:22  
22 but keep away from every form of evil.

We are to keep away from every form of evil! Indulging in a little bit, might just be the beginning of indulging in a lot. If we as believers were strong enough to face every temptation, why would Y'shua have us pray

Matthew 6:13

13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

It is also written in 2 Tim 2:22:

2 Timothy 2:22  
22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on YHVH from a pure heart.

1 Corinthians 6:18  
18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

If you know you are weak in a certain area, make sure you avoid getting in a situation where you have to exert self-

control. In this way, you will ensure that you don't succumb to the temptation at a vulnerable time. The best way to control self is avoidance of that which we may be tempted by.

## Restoring self-control

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Studies have also been done on how to restore self-control. They found that watching re-runs of television programs restored willpower. The brain being exposed to something familiar with a known outcome, can relax and re-fuel in a sense. I believe that instead of watching re-runs, we could restore self-control by reading Scripture or repeating memorized passages of Scripture. It is also familiar and has a known outcome. Maybe another reason why Scripture memorization is something of real importance to us.

## Self-control is a virtue and is considered a fruit of the Spirit.

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Titus 1:8

8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

Galatians 5:22–23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Anger is an area that is problematic to most of us. We may find it easy to exert self-control when confronted with most things, but may snap at the tiniest provocation. One way of dealing with anger is to do self-analysis every time we get angry. We are to find out what we thought and why, then we can speak truth to ourselves in this area and will eventually be able to conquer this. I covered this in detail in the chapter "Speak truth to yourself."

There are many scriptures that teach us about keeping our temper under control.

Proverbs 29:11

11 A fool always loses his temper, but a wise man holds it back.

Proverbs 14:17

17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated.

Proverbs 14:29

29 He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.

Proverbs 16:32

32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

Proverbs 25:28

28 Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.

Before we look into self-discipline, just a few ideas on how we can teach self-control to our children.

## Teaching our children self-control

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We as parents have a great responsibility. We are to ensure that self-control and self-discipline is taught from a young age. We have seen through the marshmallow experiment, that it will have a huge impact on their lives.

We are to firstly model self-control. Children learn much more from our example than from our instruction. Both are important but should never contradict. Secondly, we are to keep our promises to them. Children are more likely to have willpower if we keep our promises to them. They would otherwise think “why bother” it will anyway most probably not happen.

Now that we have learned more about self-control, we shall look at self-discipline as well as the relation between self-discipline and self-control as these two are closely related.

Self-discipline is defined as follows:

## Self-discipline

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The definition of self-discipline is as follows:

Discipline may be defined as “orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior” and “to train or develop by instruction and exercise especially in self-control” 2

Before we continue with self-discipline, we need to understand the relation between self-discipline and self-control.

We shall now explain the relationship between self-control and self-discipline in the context of habits.

Establishing a good habit is an example of self-discipline. To implement the habit, you have to react to the trigger. Making the right choice when the trigger occurs is self-control. For example, setting our alarm to get up early to do Bible study is self-discipline. Getting up when the alarm goes off, is self-control. When I move behind my computer doing the Bible study, I am practicing self-discipline. My choice then would be either open my Bible study program or Facebook. That is where self-control comes in again.

I also believe that when we apply self-discipline in our lives the likelihood of having to apply self-control will be less, especially if we apply the self-discipline of avoidance of temptation. For example, when you know YHWH's Word and are obedient to it, you will know what is good and what is sin. Avoiding areas or situations that can be a temptation to sin, is self-discipline. When you avoid the temptation, chances are that you will not need to apply self-control in that area you avoided.

To sum it up: Self-discipline equals good habits, while self-control equals good choices.

Applying self-discipline starts with a plan or decision. We, for example, make a decision to get more exercise. That is the plan, now we need to decide how we will execute the plan and we will then need self-control to make sure we do.

So, we will also need a plan if we want to live a set apart life. The amazing thing is that YHVH has already given us that plan. He gave us His commandments to teach us how to live. That is the plan. We need to study this plan in order to know how to execute it. We then need to avoid what may be problem areas for us and apply self-control in the day to day execution of this plan. The Bible is our self-discipline manual. YHVH has also given us a helper.

John 14:26

26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

The apostle Paul wrote on self-discipline.

2 Thessalonians 3:11

11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

It is about having that plan. That plan is rooted in our purpose. I have written about finding our purpose in the article, Finding meaning, which you would have already read. Our purpose is connected to YHVH's purpose, or it should be. That is what finding meaning is all about.

In order to achieve this, we are to discipline ourselves.

1 Corinthians 9:27

27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

We have seen before that YHVH has given us His Spirit in order to teach us all things.

2 Timothy 1:7

7 For Elohim has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

## Conclusion

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In order to live a set apart life, we need self-control and self-discipline. YHVH gave us a plan to live by His Word, containing His purpose. We have learned that self-discipline and self-control are closely related. Self-discipline is the habit and self-control the good choices we make to realize this plan in our lives.

We have also learned that self-control can be learned and that it is a limited resource. For this reason, we are to avoid temptation, flee from it. We could otherwise be caught at a vulnerable time and may be unable to resist. Scripture memorization is a means we can use to restore self-control.

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## 13. Overcoming Temptation

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Temptation is something every one of us has to deal with on a regular basis. We are YHWH's children and for this reason, satan will not rest, but will constantly attempt to lure us away into his kingdom of darkness and sin. However, if we know this and know what to look out for, we can stand strong against this. Self-control is important, but at certain times our self-control may fail us due to tiredness or stress. We need to have a strategy in place to protect us from falling into temptation.

### What is temptation?

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The Greek word "*peirasmos*" is often translated as temptation, but also as test or trial.

4280 *πειρασμός* (*peirasmos*), οὗ (*ou*), ὁ (*ho*): *n.masc.*; ≡ *Str 3986; TDNT 6.23—1. LN 27.46 examination, submit another to a test, to learn the true nature or character of (Jas 1:2; 1Pe 4:12); 2. LN 88.308 temptation, trial, given for the purpose to make one stumble (Lk 4:13; Ac 15:26 v.r. NA26)*<sup>2</sup>

From this, we learn a little about the purpose of temptation. The way I understand it, is that every temptation is a test, but not every test is in the form of a temptation. We see this in scripture too. The context determines the meaning. A temptation is given for the purpose to make one stumble, but both a test and temptation help us to learn the true nature or character of ourselves or another person. To put it differently: temptation is a device satan employs to make us stumble, however, YHWH uses this temptation and trials to show us our true character. This is necessary for us in order to change and grow.

Saying this, it is important to know and remember that YHWH does not tempt us.

### YHWH does not tempt

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Matthew 6:13, can give the impression that YHWH is the one leading us into temptation. This is a prayer to YHWH and it states "do not lead us into temptation"

Matthew 6:13

13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

The Complete Jewish Bible has translated it as "lead us not into hard testing" and the NRSV as

**"do not bring us to the time of trial."** The Syriac version of the Bible has it translated as "do not let us enter into temptation" <sup>3</sup> This translation fits better with the context as the rest of the sentence reads "but deliver us from evil". Most translations have translated this part of the verse as "deliver us from the evil one." Thus, a more correct translation would be "do not let us enter into temptation, **but deliver us from the evil one.**"

This makes more sense as YHVH does not tempt anyone, but the evil one does. He isn't called the tempter for nothing (1 Thes 3:5; Matt 4:3).

James 1:13–16

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by Elohim"; for Elohim cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

This verse in James, accurately describes the mechanism of temptation. Satan knows our weaknesses, our lusts and will use these to entice us to sin. We then entertain these ideas and when the opportunity comes, we sin.

Temptation comes in three categories: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

1 John 2:16–17

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of Elohim lives forever.

This verse confirms that temptation is not from YHVH, but from the world system. The Greek word translated as "world" is "cosmos" and refers to the "world system." This world system is satans' doing. The world as such is not evil, it is this world system without YHVH that is.

We have all been tempted in all three of these, but we have a perfect example on how to overcome this in Y'shua. He, also was tempted in each one of these. Let's look at this in more detail.

## Y'shua's temptation

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After Y'shua's immersion in the Jordan He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted.

Matthew 4:1

1 Then Y'shua was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and nights and became hungry.

## The lust of the flesh

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Satan told Him to make stones into bread. This temptation falls into the "lust of the flesh" category.

Matthew 4:3

3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of Elohim, command that these stones become bread."

Y'shua could have done this. He, as the Son of Elohim had the power in Him to satisfy every fleshly desire He had. You may wonder what is so wrong about wanting to eat. It isn't wrong, but this wasn't about food. This was illustrating a point. Later, when Y'shua was praying in the garden before He was crucified, He could have summoned

myriads of angels to protect Him from bodily harm. He didn't do that either.

Matthew 26:53

53 "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

Y'shua didn't come to use His miraculous powers to satisfy His fleshly desires. He didn't come for Himself; He suppressed His own desires to do YHWH's desire. He could easily have provided Himself a banquet to satisfy His hunger, but He did not.

How did He deal with this?

Matthew 4:4

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of Elohim.' "

He quoted YHWH's word (Deut. 8:3). Y'shua made it clear that fleshly desires are secondary to what YHWH desires of us. We are to filter everything we desire through YHWH's word first.

## The pride of life

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The second temptation was about who He was, His authority and power.

Matthew 4:6

and said to Him, "If You are the Son of Elohim, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.' "

As the Son of Elohim, nothing was impossible to Y'shua. He could have said boastfully "I am Y'shua, Son of the Most High, I can command angels to protect me. Nothing can harm me" However, He did not do it, instead, He completely submitted to YHWH and did His will in everything.

He answered, quoting Deuteronomy 6:16:

Matthew 4:7

Y'shua said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put YHWH your Elohim to the test.' "

## The lust of the eyes

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The third time He was tempted, He was shown the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Satan said "all these things I will give you." This falls into the "lust of the eyes" category as Y'shua was shown the power and riches of the world.

Matthew 4:8-9

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me."

Y'shua answered from Deuteronomy 6:13:

Matthew 4:10

10 Then Y'shua said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship YHWH your Elohim, and serve Him only.' "

Y'shua successfully resisted all three categories of temptation and Satan left Him. How He reacted to these temptations revealed His character. He was focused on doing YHWH's will above all. Y'shua also used YHWH's word to overcome every temptation.

## Overcoming temptation

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We can learn much from the example Y'shua gave us. In order to effectively resist temptation, **we must know YHWH's word and submit to His will**. His will is stipulated in His word, His commandments.

## Being spiritually awake

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Y'shua advised His disciples to keep watching and praying in order for them not to enter into temptation.

Matthew 26:41

41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

This command to keep watching was not about staying awake physically. The Greek word translated as watching literally means to stay awake.

*23.72 γρηγορέω: to remain awake because of the need to continue alert—'to stay awake, to be watchful.' εἰ ἦδει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ποῖα φυλακῇ ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται, ἐγρηγόρησεν ἄν 'if the man of the house knew the time when the thief would come, he would stay awake' Mt 24:43. In some languages γρηγορέω in Mt 24:43 may be rendered as 'his eyes would be open' or 'he would surely see what was happening.'<sup>4</sup>*

However, if we look deeper into this, we see there is more to this. This watching or remaining awake means to be spiritually awake. When we fall away from YHWH, it starts as "drowsiness" and we eventually "fall asleep" like the five unwise maidens. However, if we continue in zeal for YHWH, as in keeping His commandments, and working on our relationship with Him, we remain spiritually awake.

This spiritual awareness will help us not to fall into temptation. When we are spiritually awake, and temptation comes our way, we will not allow it to get a foot in the door.

Sometimes, when temptation comes our way, we see how far we can go, it is almost like we play with or entertain the idea of it. We don't resist it immediately. That is a sign that we are not being watchful. We are not to let our hearts turn aside like this. It will lead to sin eventually.

# Flee from temptation

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Proverbs 7:25

25 Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths.

**We are to abstain from every form of evil.**

James 4:7–8

7 Submit therefore to Elohim. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to Elohim and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

2 Timothy 2:22

22 Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on YHVH from a pure heart.

**Y'shua effectively resisted satan in the wilderness when He was tempted. We are to follow His example and not entertain temptation, but flee from it and when we can't flee, resist it with YHVH's truth.**

## When we do fall into temptation

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**When we do fall into temptation, we are to repent of it. YHVH is patient and full of mercy. He will forgive us.**

1 John 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**Also, we are to know that when we do fall into temptation, we can know that YHVH would not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able. The choice is ours...**

1 Corinthians 10:13

13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and Elohim is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

**We can turn away from it. The choice is ours. Also, YHVH is faithful, He protects us.**

Thessalonians 3:3

But YHVH is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

1 John 5:18

18 We know that no one who is born of Elohim sins; but He who was born of Elohim keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

## Conclusion

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Temptation is something each of us is confronted with regularly. We need to have a plan in place on how to deal with this. Here is the gist of what I have learned.

We are to guard YHVH's commandments. If we do, it will guard us from sin for we will be living according to YHVH's will. If we live according to YHVH will, He will protect us. We are to talk to YHVH, and work on our relationship with Him.

Read, study and memorize scripture Flee from temptation

Trials and temptations are allowed in our lives by YHVH to examine us, to reveal our character to us and to others. This will have consequences. These consequences, although usually unpleasant, results in growth. When we do persevere through trial and temptation our faith is strengthened.

For this reason, we are to rejoice when trials come upon us and persevere.

1 Peter 1:6–7

6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Y'shua Messiah;

James 1:12

12 Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that YHVH has promised to those who love him. (NRSV)

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## 14. *How important are we?*

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Self-importance, self-worth, self-assurance, self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence and self-centered are all words with the prefix self. People live their lives for themselves. It's all about me. Many friendships are based on "I'm in this relationship with you for me, and you are in this relationship with me for you" The new craze is to take "selfies." All these statements confirm that we are part of a "Me-generation" a generation of people whose lives are centered on self with very little regard for others.

How did we get here?

### The me-generation and how it originated

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Here is a little bit of history on how this "Me-generation" originated. This quote is from the book "Deliver us from Me-ville" authored by D. A. Zimmerman. This quote gives us some insight as to why we are where we are today.

The reality of YHWH came into question philosophically in the late nineteenth century when Friedrich Nietzsche declared YHWH dead at the hands of his creation. With YHWH's lights out, the theory went, the world plunged into darkness. The question took on stark dimensions in the years that followed as a world war was eclipsed by a global economic crisis and a second world war, one in which entire people groups—including YHWH's "chosen people," the Jews—faced a very real possibility of extinction. The war ended with a strong punctuation mark in the first two atomic bombs, leaving hundreds of thousands, dead in two instants. Maybe YHWH is dead, philosophers wondered; maybe he never lived in the first place, others considered. Maybe we're a meandering step on an evolutionary journey dictated by random events and mathematical possibilities.

Maybe we're not that important.

Social psychologist Jean Twenge, in her book *Generation Me*, suggests that the decades following this philosophical self-doubt nursed a self-esteem crisis that in the wake of the Vietnam era reared its ugly head:

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, a scale written specifically for children [revealed that] during the 1970s—when the nation's children shifted from the late Baby Boom to the early years of GenX—kids' self-esteem declined, probably because of societal instability. Rampant divorce, a wobbly economy, soaring crime rates, and swinging singles culture made the 1970s a difficult time to be a kid. The average child in 1979 scored lower than 81% of kids in the mid-1960s.

A strong concern for the emotional health of children in the wake of this cultural self-doubt led to a system wide commitment to training people with self-esteem.

Research on programs to boost self-esteem first blossomed in the 1980s, and the number of psychology and

education journal articles devoted to self-esteem doubled between the 1970s and 1980s. Journal articles on self-esteem increased another 52% during the 1990s, and the number of books on self-esteem doubled over the same time. Generation Me is the first generation raised to believe that everyone should have high self-esteem.<sup>2</sup>

Not everybody has self-esteem as a result of this. However, all this has slowly, but surely, influenced people and has created a general focus on self. Most people suffer from superbia as a result of this. Superbia can be defined as pride, haughtiness, arrogance, conceit, vanity, rudeness or discourtesy.<sup>3</sup>

This self-importance or superbia has as a result, devastating results for the individual. Jean Twenge wrote:

*GenMe trusts no one, suggesting a culture growing ever more toward disconnection and away from close communities. Trusting no one and relying on yourself is a self-fulfilling prophecy in an individualistic world where the prevailing sentiment is "Do unto others before they do it unto you."*<sup>4</sup>

Another outcome is not taking responsibility for our own situation, but externalizing it because of our belief that we are too important to be responsible for the situation we are in. We play the blame game just like Adam and Eve did.

*Adam and Eve each denied their own responsibility when confronted by YHVH because they saw themselves as too important to be wrong, to be weak, to be vulnerable to the shrewdness of a mere serpent.*<sup>2</sup>

When things go well, we take credit for it, but when things go wrong, we blame our childhood or other external circumstances. We don't take responsibility for our own choices. To summarize, when we become self-absorbed, it results in the following: superbia not trusting people and as a result disconnecting from others not taking responsibility resulting in blaming others and circumstances.

The process of becoming self-absorbed is gradual and therefore not noticed by ourselves. Others that cross our path do see it and are affected by it. It is not attractive and ruins relationships. You will see later that it is also contrary to what is taught in Scripture, we are therefore to identify it in ourselves and ask YHVH to help us change.

## Do you suffer from superbia?

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So, how do we find out if we suffer from this? We can do this by evaluating our interactions with other people. Take note of your thoughts about other people when you interact with them either in real life, Facebook or in any other way, even when you just pass someone on the street. Also note what thoughts about yourself surface when you think about these people. Also, if you were to create a pecking order in your mind, where would they rate compared to you. This will create an awareness of your own superbia. This is necessary to do, because we are mostly unaware of our own superbia, but we need to identify it, if we want to change. Even if you don't suffer from full-blown superbia, you may display selfish behavior. We know that we can be selfish towards other people, but did you know that we can be selfish towards YHVH?



# Selfish behavior towards YHVH

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It is not easy to distinguish between selfishness towards YHVH and men, because what we do unto others, we actually do unto YHVH (Matt 25:40.) However, one area where we can identify selfishness toward YHVH is in our reluctance to be obedient to Him, especially if it impacts our lives in any way. We may even reject YHVH's truth as a result of this. Obedience to YHVH may require from us a change in what we eat, our day of rest or in the feast days we observe. This will cause us not to want to obey YHVH because it may change our lives too much. This is selfishness towards YHVH, or obeying unrighteousness. This is our choice, but we will be rewarded according to our choices.

Romans 2:8

<sup>8</sup> but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

The Complete Jewish Bible translated this verse as follows:

Romans 2:8

<sup>8</sup> But to those who are self-seeking, who disobey the truth and obey evil, he will pay back wrath and anger.

Selfishness leads to rebellion and sin.

James 3:16

<sup>16</sup> For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

The word disorder can be translated as follows:

*189 ἀκαταστασία (akatastasia), ας (as), ἡ (hē): n.fem.; ≡ Str 181; TDNT 3.446—1. LN 39.34 **rebellion, disorderly insurrection** (Lk 21:9; 1Co 14:33; 2Co 12:20; Jas 3:16+); 2. LN 39.36 riot, violent disorder (2Co 6:5)<sup>5</sup>*

Evil means bad, dysfunctional or harmful. That, in essence, is what sin or disobedience is, evil or bad, dysfunctional or harmful. So, if we paraphrase this verse, it will read as follows:

*“Where jealousy and selfishness exist, there is rebellion and every sinful thing”* This is in essence what we get where there is jealousy and selfishness, rebellion towards YHVH and sin towards YHVH and other people.

Whenever we sin, we are selfish, and whenever we are selfish, we sin. When we sin, we act on what our flesh wants.

## Selfishness towards others

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Y'shua taught this:

Luke 6:35

<sup>35</sup> “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

Consider Y’shua’s words, He names three things: love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Selfishness says, this person hurt me, therefore I hate him or her. Also, I do not have time to invest in doing what is right or helping others and I will not lend, because I won’t get it back.

We will also not harbor unforgiveness, because we won’t be able to love our enemy if we have not forgiven him. Y’shua chose three areas that are most difficult to show selflessness in. Something to ponder...

These words of Y’shua are in line with what Paul later taught:

Philippians 2:3–4

<sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; <sup>4</sup>do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

This is a great verse to memorize! From this we learn that the opposite of selfishness and pride is humility of mind and regarding others as more important than ourselves. It is interesting to me how much these two verses have in common. If we regard one another more important than ourselves, we will love our enemies, do good and lend when asked.

1 Corinthians 10:24

<sup>24</sup> Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.

Selfishness is not new, but is said to increase in the last days.

2 Timothy 3:1–5

<sup>1</sup> But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. <sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of Elohim, <sup>5</sup> holding to a form of YHVHliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

We are to be alert for others needs

Proverbs 28:27

<sup>27</sup> He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.

Proverbs 21:13

<sup>13</sup> He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered.

Hebrews 13:16

<sup>16</sup> And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices Elohim is pleased.

## How are we to live?

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Apart from what we quoted, what more does YHVH's Word teach us about this topic?

Matthew 22:37–40

<sup>37</sup> And He said to him, “ ‘You shall love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> “This is the great and foremost commandment. <sup>39</sup> “The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

What Y'shua taught was not a new commandment, He was quoting from the Torah. These verses are from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 respectively.

Deuteronomy 6:5

<sup>5</sup> “You shall love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Leviticus 19:18

<sup>18</sup> ‘You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself**; I am YHVH.

If we love YHVH, we will put Him first and we will want to do what pleases Him. That means we will follow His instructions. If we love our neighbor, we will want to please them. Doing this is selfless, not doing this is selfish. As easy as that. There are three more quotes that affirm the second part of loving our neighbor.

Matthew 7:12

<sup>12</sup> “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Another great verse to memorize!

Galatians 5:14

<sup>14</sup> For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Galatians 6:2

<sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Messiah.

There is another amazing passage that describes what we are to do. YHVH does not want us to practice mere religion, but is pleased with us when we help others:

Isaiah 58:6–12

<sup>6</sup> “Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke? <sup>7</sup> “Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh? <sup>8</sup> “Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; And your righteousness will go before you; The glory of YHVH will be your rear guard. <sup>9</sup> “Then you will call, and YHVH will answer; You will cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you remove the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness, <sup>10</sup> And if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness and your gloom will become like midday. <sup>11</sup> “And YHVH will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; And you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water

whose waters do not fail. 12 “Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; You will raise up the age-old foundations; And you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets in which to dwell.

Ponder on this...

## Why would we want to do this?

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2 Corinthians 5:15

15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

This is the greatest reason there is. Y’shua gave everything, we are His disciples and are to live for Him, not for ourselves.

## Conclusion

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Self-centeredness has become the norm and the worst is that we are not even aware of this. We have learned how insidious superbia or self-absorption is. Chances are that we are all suffering from it to some degree. We are selfish beings; it would otherwise not be necessary for YHVH to teach us not to be selfish.

To remedy this, we are to love YHVH with everything we have and our neighbor as ourselves. We are to do unto others as we would want them to do unto us, and we are to consider others as more important than ourselves. If we consciously do this, we will not be selfish.

Our relationships would improve and we will live in such a way that we draw people to YHVH. Living our lives unselfishly is a great testimony and fulfilling our purpose. Greatness to aspire to!

Make these Scriptures your own by memorizing it, and live it. Here is another great opportunity to improve ourselves in order to be more like Y’shua. He gave everything and we are to follow Him.

Philippians 2:5–8

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Messiah Y’shua, 6 who, although He existed in the form of Elohim, did not regard equality with Elohim a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

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## 15. *More about faith*

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Faith is a topic we can study over and over and every time learn something new. Faith is something you do and not just something you say you believe! We know that our faith will be tested and that faith without works is dead, but we want to expand on this. I have lots of questions about faith. Why don't we as believers have the same amount of faith? Where does faith originate from? Is it something we are to work at or do we ask YHVH to increase it? Why do we sometimes have much while other times less? I sometimes experience that lack of faith. If this happens, what am I to do?

So, this is what this study is about. Let's first define faith.

### What is faith?

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Hebrews 11:1

1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

The key is in the word "assurance". To have faith is to know the outcome would be best for us whatever it may be. Faith is "know-so" instead of "hope-so." A few years ago, my neighbor was terminally ill with cancer. She was an elderly lady and I visited her often. About two weeks before she died, she told me that she did not know where she would be going when she dies. She doubted because she was told that it was too late for her. I asked her if she wanted me to pray with her. I explained to her that YHVH will forgive us when we repent and remove our sin from us. She prayed with me for the forgiveness of her sin. However, afterward, when we talked about it, she said she hoped her sin was forgiven. She could not bring herself to a point of trusting that it was. She felt she didn't deserve forgiveness after having lived her life the way she did. That was so incredibly sad.

The worst part is that I myself have also at times believed that I did not deserve this free gift and was unworthy of receiving it. At first, I thought my actions were honest because I was a sinner and knew that. Because I continue to sin, I questioned my faith and my relationship with YHVH. I still pray and ask for forgiveness, but our lack of true faith can convince us that we will never be worthy and in doing so will cause us to walk away from our relationship without even knowing we have done so. This is why we must act out our faith and the works produced by our faith are the true evidence of that faith, not something that is shallow and made up.

Faith is having that assurance, not a faint hope, but knowing with every fiber of your being that the outcome will be what is best for you.

Romans 8:28

<sup>28</sup>And we know that Elohim causes all things to work together for good to those who love Elohim, to those who are called according to His purpose.

When we chose to follow YHVH, we became those who are called according to His purpose. He will therefore cause all things to work together for good for us.

When Y'shua healed people, they had that assurance.

Matthew 9:29

<sup>29</sup>Then He touched their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith."

How often do we choose to believe the negative instead of having that assurance that the outcome will be best for us? These blind men, who were healed here could have chosen to hope that Y'shua would heal them, but without the assurance. The outcome would have been different.

The same is true for the woman who touched Y'shua's tzitzit.

Matthew 9:22

<sup>22</sup> But Y'shua turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well." At once the woman was made well.

The centurion whose servant was healed was commended by Y'shua for having great faith.

Matthew 8:10

<sup>10</sup> Now when Y'shua heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.

Y'shua said that it shall be as he has believed.

Matthew 8:13

<sup>13</sup> And Y'shua said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that very moment.

Why did they have this assurance and what made the centurion's faith "great?"

The answer is that they have heard what He had done for others, and believed that He could do the same for them. Faith came by hearing.

Romans 10:17

<sup>17</sup> So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Messiah.

So, why did Y'shua specifically commend the centurion for his faith? The centurion said Y'shua only needed to say the word and his servant would be healed. He proceeded by explaining the authority structure he was part of as a centurion. How he would instruct them, and they would obey. His authority was such that they would take him at his word. So, his great faith was taking Y'shua at His word.

## Taking YHVH at His Word

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Faith comes by hearing and taking YHVH at His word.

When we read Hebrews 11:1-40, also known as the hall of faith, we read how each of these people took YHVH at His word and did what He commanded. That is what faith is. Noah took YHVH at His word and built an ark. He was



probably ridiculed for it because it seemed so incredibly far-fetched, but he did it. Abraham left his family and moved to a land he did not know. He believed YHVH, he took Him at His word. Of Sarah it is said that she considered Him faithful who promised. She took YHVH at his word.

There are many more examples for us of how people took YHVH at His word. We are to do the same, we are to take YHVH at His word and obey Him.

This sounds incredibly easy, but is it? How can we just believe? The answer is twofold. We are given a measure of faith, and we have to know YHVH. Allow me to explain.

## To each a measure of faith is given

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To each of us a measure of faith is given.

Romans 12:3

<sup>3</sup> For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as Elohim has allotted to each a measure of faith.

*The standard which YHVH has given to each of you, namely, trust. Or: “the standard of trust” (or: “faithfulness”), namely, that of Yeshua, “that YHVH has given to each.” Or: “the amount and particular pattern of trust that YHVH has given to each.” <sup>2</sup>*

According to this verse YHVH allots an amount and pattern of trust to each of us. He knows what we need. The question is can we do anything to increase this faith.

Luke 17:5–6

<sup>5</sup> The apostles said to YHVH, “Increase our faith!” <sup>6</sup> And Y’shua said, “If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea’; and it would obey you.

*As they express their sense of the weakness, and imperfection of their faith; and their great desire to have it increased, which might be for their comfort, and his glory; so they acknowledge his divine power, and that he is the author and finisher of faith; and that as the beginning, so the increase of it is from him: wherefore faith is not of a man’s self, or the produce of man’s freewill and power, but is the gift of YHVH; and even where it is, it is not in man to increase it, or add to it, or to draw it forth into exercise; this also is the operation of YHVH. And if the apostles had need to put up such a petition to Y’shua, much more reason have other men. <sup>3</sup>*

Hebrews 12:2

<sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Y’shua, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of Elohim.

## Knowing YHVH

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The second, but actually more important part of the answer is knowing YHVH. We learn YHVH’s character through

His word and what He has done, for us and for others. So, our faith is built up by our regenerating of our minds by studying and learning scripture as well as reflex ion on what YHVH has done for us or for others.

This is why Scripture memorization ... having YHVH's Word in our hearts... is so incredibly important. When we have a relationship with another person, we learn their character and trust them based on their integrity. It is the same when we have a relationship with YHVH. Only difference is He will never fail us. Based on this knowledge, we can take him at His word.

There are times when more faith is required. I believe this is where the gift of faith comes in.

## Faith is also a gift of the Holy Spirit

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1 Corinthians 12:7–10

<sup>7</sup> But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

This is all very interesting, but did you know that our faith is not only for ourselves. The faith manifesting in our lives is for uplifting of the body, but more so for YHVH's glory.

## All for YHVH's glory

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All we do and all we are here on earth is for His glory and His Kingdom.

1 Peter 4:11

<sup>11</sup> Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of Elohim; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which Elohim supplies; so that in all things Elohim may be glorified through Y'shua Messiah, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

## Conclusion

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Did we answer the questions? We have learned that faith originates with YHVH as He gives to each a measure of faith.

Faith is taking YHVH at His word. This is possible if we have a trusting relationship with Him. We get to know YHVH through his word when we study His word. We also get to know YHVH through our experiences with Him, like when He answers our prayers and when He does not, also when He speaks to us. All this builds our faith.

We have also learned that our faith is ultimately for YHVH's glory.

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3. [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Biblehttp://biblehub.com/luke/17-5.htm](http://biblehub.com/luke/17-5.htm)



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## 16. *A call to Boldness*

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Do you speak with boldness about YHVH and His things or do you prefer to keep quiet? Boldness is another one of those recurring themes that I am experiencing in my life. I believe that it is not only for me, but that YHVH is calling us to be bold and to tell people about Him. This is still possible, we have the freedom now, but only YHVH knows for how long. Persecution of believers is on the increase and will force most to silence. If you follow what is happening in the world, you will notice that anti-Semitism is growing and persecution of believers is on the rise. It is against all believers; Jewish, Christian and Torah- observant believers in Y'shua are all on this list.

We need to understand that all three groups believe in the same Elohim. The Jewish people have been blinded and has as a result of this not yet accepted Y'shua as the Messiah. The Christians, on the other hand, are blinded not to accept the validity of YHVH's Torah. This is changing as more Jewish people are accepting Y'shua as the Messiah and more Christian's eyes are being opened to YHVH's life-changing truth.

Why do we consider both the Christian and Jewish groups to be blinded and not the group we are in? A specific group is mentioned twice in Revelation, those who keep the commandments of Elohim and hold on to the testimony of Y'shua.

Revelation 12:17

17 So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of Elohim and hold to the testimony of Y'shua.

Revelation 14:12

12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of Elohim and their faith in Y'shua.

If we want to be part of YHVH's "saints", we are to keep His commandments and have faith in Y'shua's redemptive work. Other groups are not mentioned. With this I am not saying that this group is not without fault. These three groups can be seen as brothers with different levels of revelation.

This will probably go against popular teachings that Christians are in essence pagans and similar disturbing teachings about the Jewish people. Friends, do not believe this, THIS IS WRONG! However, we are not to condone false doctrine, and are definitely not to partake in whatever is contrary to YHVH's Word, including traditions or feasts.

Before YHVH revealed truth to us, we were part of the Christian group. I know that we did not willfully rebel against YHVH's commandments, we were simply brought up with wrong doctrine. We did believe in YHVH. However, this changed when we asked YHVH to reveal His truth to us. Being the faithful Elohim that He is, He revealed to us that His law has not been done away with. He changed our hearts and opened our eyes and we repented and chose obedience.

You will, however, find people who hear the truth, but willfully reject it and rebel against it. That is different, but most Christians are simply blinded to the truth. It is the same with Jewish people, they too have been blinded. All this

is part of YHVH's redemption plan for mankind.

Isaiah 6:10

"Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed."

For how long will this be?

Isaiah 6:11

Then I said, "YHVH, how long?" And He answered, "Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, houses are without people and the land is utterly desolate, Then, all the eyes will be open and all the ears will hear and all hearts would be receptive to YHVH's truth."

The restoration process has already begun, but will conclude as written here.

Interestingly, after Y'shua told the parable of the sower, He was asked why He was teaching in parables. He answered, quoting Isaiah 6:10. This verse has been quoted seven times in the Apostolic writings. This is not for nothing.

As I said before, you reading this, are part of this restoration process which YHVH has begun and will conclude at His perfect time. We are workers with Him in this and we are called to be bold.

## What is boldness?

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The Greek word "parrësia" is used 31 times in Scripture. It is sometimes translated as boldness, confidence, publicly, openly or plainly.

This word is used in two contexts. One is boldness in speaking YHVH's word and the other boldness to come before the throne of YHVH. We will briefly look at boldness to come before YHVH, but will focus on boldness in speaking YHVH's word.

## Boldness to come before YHVH

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Because of Y'shua's redemptive work, we can boldly come before YHVH.

Ephesians 3:11–12

11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Messiah Y'shua our Master,  
12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

1 John 5:14

14 This is the confidence (boldness) which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Hebrews 10:19–22

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence (boldness) to enter the holy place by the blood of Y'shua, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since

we have a great priest over the house of Elohim, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

This does not mean that what YHVH has instituted before has been done away with. Y'shua taught that He did not come to change or abolish what YHVH has put in place (Matt 5:17-21). It means that Y'shua is an advocate for us before YHVH. He does not accuse us, but intercedes on our behalf as explained in the book of Hebrews.

The other context is boldness in speech.

It can be defined as standing up for or sharing truth, sometimes even in intimidating circumstances. In this case it becomes an act of courage.

*25.158 παρρησία, ας f: a state of boldness and confidence, sometimes implying intimidating circumstances—'boldness, courage.' προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος 'let us boldly approach the throne of grace' He 4:16; μὴ ἀποβάλητε οὖν τὴν παρρησίαν ὑμῶν, ἥτις ἔχει μεγάλην μισθοδοσίαν 'do not lose your courage which brings a great reward' He 10:35.*

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 306). New York: United Bible Societies.

To be bold is to share truth without having a fear of man. This fear may be for physical harm, but also for being scoffed at.

## Boldness in speech

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When Y'shua was questioned after being arrested He told them that He always spoke boldly, not in secret. He went to the public places, the synagogues, to teach the people.

John 18:20

Y'shua answered him, "I have spoken openly (boldly) to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.

Y'shua's disciples spoke boldly, just as He had.

Acts 4:13

13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Y'shua.

Peter and John were summoned and commanded not to speak of Y'shua or teach about Him.

Acts 4:18

18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Y'shua.

They, then prayed to YHVH, that He might grant them to speak His word boldly.

Acts 4:29

29 “And now, YHVH, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,

Acts 14:3

3 Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon YHVH, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.

Steven also comes to mind. He spoke with great boldness even until his death. Paul was also known for speaking boldly.

2 Corinthians 3:12

12 Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech,

Acts 28:30–31

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of Elohim and teaching about the Master Y’shua Messiah with all boldness and without hindrance.

Ephesians 6:19

19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

From these examples of Y’shua and His followers, we learn that we too have to be bold when speaking about YHVH, because we are to imitate Y’shua. He is our perfect example and the fact that His followers also spoke boldly, confirms this.

The boldness Paul refers to is fueled by faith.

## Boldness fueled by faith

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Philippians 1:14

14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in YHVH because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of Elohim without fear.

Philippians 1:20

20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Messiah will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Ephesians 3:12

12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

Thessalonians 2:2

2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our Elohim to speak to you the gospel of Elohim amid much opposition.

**Boldness is a manifestation of faith. Where does this boldness originate from?**



# Where does our boldness originate from?

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We find the answer in the book of Acts.

Acts 4:31

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of Elohim with boldness.

Before they were filled with the Holy Spirit, this is what they prayed:

Acts 4:29

29 “And now, YHVH, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence,

(The word “confidence” is the same Greek word and can be translated as boldness.)

When we ask YHVH to grant us to speak with boldness, He will enable us by filling us with His Spirit. We can be filled with the Spirit multiple times, but this is a study for another time. Y’shua also spoke about how the Spirit would give the words to speak when believers are persecuted for example.

Matthew 10:19–20

19 “But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. 20 “For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

When we are filled with YHVH’s Spirit, it is important to listen to Him.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

19 Do not quench the Spirit;

Ephesians 4:30

30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of Elohim, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

We grieve the Holy Spirit when we rebel against YHVH.

Isaiah 63:10

10 But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them.

When Saul continued in sin, thus rebelling against YHVH, YHVH removed His Spirit from him and gave him a spirit to torment him instead.

It is essential for us to be filled with YHVH’s Spirit. We cannot have true boldness when we don’t have YHVH’s Spirit in us. How do we know it is YHVH’s Spirit speaking to us? We are to test it against YHVH’s word and we can ask Him for confirmation.

Boldness is fueled by faith and enabled by YHVH's Spirit. We just have to be available and willing to do YHVH's will. We are also to be careful not to steamroller ahead and do our own thing in the name of boldness. Ask for confirmation if you are unsure, but make sure you act and speak according to YHVH's leading.

## A Great Reward

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There is also a great reward for those who do not throw away their boldness.

Hebrews 10:35

<sup>35</sup> Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

If there is a reward for doing something, there usually are consequences for not doing it.

## Not speaking boldly when we are required to have consequences

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Read these two passages in Ezekiel and consider what is said here.

Ezekiel 3:17–21

17 "Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. 18 "When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 "Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself. 20 "Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he will die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. 21 "However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; and you have delivered yourself."

Ezekiel 33:6–9

6 'But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand.' 7 "Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them warning from Me. 8 "When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand. 9 "But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your life.

Ezekiel was appointed a watchman. A watchman is called by YHVH to warn others, he was a prophet. We may also, from time to time, be called to this task of warning others. You may be called to warn a co-worker or family member or to tell them about YHVH. When we are called by YHVH, we are to fulfill this responsibility with boldness. If we

don't, that person may die in their iniquity, and their blood will be required from us. I say may, because YHWH can use another person if we are disobedient, but what if this was this persons' last opportunity, and we didn't obey?

We can, however, not make the choice for them, we can only warn them. We plant the seed, YHWH will make it grow. The choice remains with them whether they will heed the warning. This is conveyed by the second part of the verse. If they were warned, and do not listen, their blood will be on their own head.

## Conclusion

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It is not easy to be different, especially in the world we live in. Being believers means we stand out and say things that may confront people. The system also promotes tolerance of all kinds of sin, so when we speak out about this, we go against the grain. Once again, a confronting situation. This confrontation may put strain on relationships or make us feel uncomfortable. This may force us to silence.

However, if we follow Y'shua and His disciples' example, we are to be bold and speak His word whenever an opportunity arises. This does not necessarily mean we are all to stand on street corners and proclaim the word of YHWH, although to some it might mean that. It means we are to listen to that small voice and say what needs to be said with boldness. We are not to hide our faith or keep quiet when prompted by YHWH to say or do something. If we are unsure, we can ask for confirmation from YHWH and we can test what the Spirit prompted us to do or say against YHWH's word. YHWH'S Spirit would never contradict His word.

When we became believers, we became YHWH's servants. We work for Him, and are to do His will. This may require speaking or acting in boldness. If we do, we will receive a great reward. If we don't, we will have to give a reckoning of it.

We are to pray that our Father fill us with His Spirit so we can speak His word with boldness. Boldness without fear of man.

Hebrews 13:6

6 so that we confidently say, "YHWH is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?"

2 Timothy 1:7

7 For Elohim has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

## References

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1. All quoted passages are from the New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update. LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995. We have substituted YHWH for LORD and Y'shua for Y'shua.

