

THE FAITH-REST DRILL

Romans 8:28-32

This study is to provide us with a clear, comprehensive picture of what Paul meant in Ephesians 6:16 when he wrote of the Spiritual Warrior **“taking up the shield of faith...”** **“Taking up the shield of faith”** refers to the *application* of the faith-rest drill; which, in turn, leads to the *execution* of the Faith-rest Life-- the life of faith which seeks its preservation and its deliverance in the Word of God.

The faith-rest drill begins by conquering fear with promises. The believer applies doctrine logically while *resting* in God’s promises. In the three steps of the faith-rest drill, the believer must first establish a relaxed mental attitude. That means a freedom from mental and emotional sins, like fear, worry, anxiety and *panic*. He then concentrates on pertinent doctrines in a logical rationale, restoring divine viewpoint thinking. Finally, he reaches doctrinal conclusions and takes command in the situation. Command of what? Of himself.

Since concentration on truth requires a calm, stable mentality, the Spiritual Warrior’s mindset becomes the prime target of Satan’s opposition against the power of God’s Word.

Mental sins and lucid, doctrinal thought cannot co-exist.

Perhaps the most potent enemy of the Faith-rest Life is *fear*. Fear is the mental sin that shuts down thought and makes doctrinal application impossible. No matter how much doctrine resides in your soul, none of it can benefit you if your mind is immobilized in a state of panic. The difference between a brave man and a coward is that the brave man *thinks* under pressure. Satan knows that fear eliminates thought and he has formulated a strategy to induce fear in believers. Romans 8:15 tells us, that we **“...have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again** [as in our pre-Christian lives], **but... a spirit of adoption as sons** [Royal Family members] **by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’”** Fear is *antithetical* to the believer’s spiritual confidence, his courage in the realm of the Holy Spirit’s filling ministry. Cf. 1 John 4:18.

In 1 John 4:18, the Apostle tells us, that **“There is no fear in love** [what John’s saying is that we live, breathe and reside in / sphere of / furiously overwhelming love of God; *in* that love-- which is embodied in His Son-- there can be *no* fear whatsoever!]; [cf. comment from ‘Rag. Gosp.’] **but perfect love** [‘mature love;’ *teleios* is an adj. of excellence, / classical tragedian Aeschylus applied this word to / gods as a divine attribute: *mighty, efficacious*; Plato used it interchangeably with *arete*- ‘virtue;’ *teleios* becomes a synonym for virtue; virtue-love is / love created within / believer from / utilization of divine power {Spirit of God} and divine provision {Word / God}; it embodies both personal love for God and impersonal love for all mankind] **drives out fear** [fo/boj (phobos) is used here and in Rom. 8:15 of / *slavish fear* of a slave toward a cruel master or a criminal toward a judge], **because this fear involves** [causes] **punishment** [self-induced misery], **and the one who is constantly afraid** [living a lifestyle of fear] **has not been perfected** [matured] **in this [virtue] love.”**

The point here is that God is not a Judge anxiously waiting to condemn us (Rom. 8:1), but a merciful and gracious Father who never fails to make divine provision for His children. Consequently, we have no need to *fear* the circumstances of life or *any* aspect of the Cosmic System whatsoever. The principle is: *Confidence in God produces courage before man.*

“Nothing can ever separate you from the love of God made visible and experiential in Christ Jesus our Lord. ...You must be convinced of this, trust it, and never forget...” that “...everything else will pass away, but the love of Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Faith will become vision, hope will become possession, but the love of Jesus Christ that is stronger than death endures forever. In the end, it is the *one* thing you can hang onto!” Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, p. 86

Comments on Fear

It is “sad but true-- some Christians” seem to “*want* to be slaves. ...Most believers today are not experiencing what Paul calls in Romans 8:21 the ‘**glorious freedom of the children of God.**’ The basic problem” is that “we accept grace in theory but deny it in practice. Living by grace rather than law leads us out of the house of fear into the house of love.” What was it we just saw? “**There is no fear in love; but perfect love [spiritual love that has been ‘matured’] drives out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who resides in the realm of fear has not matured in spiritual love,**” 1 John 4:18. You better take it down and commit it to heart, “**the one who resides...**”

“...The author of Hebrews describes Jesus as the One who has delivered ‘**those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives,**’ Hebrews 2:15. The Gospel of freedom proclaims that death is an illusion, a phantom, the” nightmare “of little children. Death is simply a transition into the one experience worthy of the name *life.*” *ibid.*, pp. 146-7

In our passage Paul said to the believers in Rome, “**And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to {His} purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined {to become} conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God {is} for us, who {is} against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?**”

Stage One: Claim a Biblical promise-- v. 28.

Definition: A *promise* is a divine guarantee, an encapsulated statement of doctrine, a solid rock on which to anchor your soul. Promises accomplish three basic things in the plan of God.

Promises [1] express the essence of God; [2] provide instantaneous perspective; and [3] reduce complicated situations to utmost simplicity.

When fear catches you off-guard, the ability to think and apply the doctrine in your soul must be recovered. Confession and cleansing is the first requirement-- 1 John 1:9-- because fear is a sin, but confession alone will not conquer the *source* of fear. You need a technique that will enable you to *apply* the Word to the situation at hand. A calm mind, a ‘poise of soul,’ is recovered by claiming promises found throughout the Bible. Paul presents us, in Romans

8:28-32, with the classic delineation of the faith-rest drill. V. 28 is a divine promise intended to dispel worry *or* fear.

A. When Paul say's, "**and we know,**" he uses the Greek oi=da (oida), which refers to *certain* knowledge, *absolute* understanding. It is the strongest Greek word for 'knowledge.' Beyond *gnosis*, which is 'perception;' beyond *epignosis*, which is 'perception plus faith,' i.e., what is perceived and understood through the teaching ministry of the Spirit of God and the faith you exercise in it; *oida* is *experiential* knowledge.

- 1) The perfect tense signifies knowledge held in the *present* because it was learned in the *past*.
- 2) Paul is not talking about *all* believers, but about those who have been taught, and therefore know with *certainty* that [1] there is a reason they exist; and [2] what that reason is.

B. What is it that they know with absolute certainty? "**That God causes all things to work together for good**" to those who love Him.

The "**all things**" includes pain, sorrow, rejection, loss, even suffering. All those things we try not to think about; all those things we try so desperately not to deal with; all those things we try, oftentimes, to *avoid* at all costs. There are three points we can draw out of this passage already.

- 1) Pain and suffering are a *vital* part of God's Plan; they are the catalysts to spiritual growth. How often do you see people who are prospering at home, at work, in their social lives, on their knees begging God for deliverance? It's the pain and the hurt of life 'lived on the battlefield' that cause us to refocus and rededicate ourselves to the Word of God and the plan of Grace. Some of you have discovered this principle the hard way: that *Pain is a great motivator in life*. Not as great as love, or grace, or the tender mercy of Jesus Christ, but a very powerful attention grabber none-the-less.
- 2) Whether suffering for blessing or suffering for cursing, *why* is not the issue. At the slightest hint of adversity, pain or pressure the *first* thing most believers do-- out of their ignorance of the Word of God, or their arrogance toward it-- is cry out, "*Why* God? *Why* is this happening to *me*?" The self-centered implication is: that if it happened to somebody else, great, as long as it isn't me! But *why* is not even the issue.
- 3) The *only* thing that matters in the midst of trial and testing is our response! James say's, in James 1:2, "**Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance** [this is 'perseverance' in / spiritual realm]. **And let endurance have {its} perfect result, that you** [in your growth and your character and your service and your warfare] **may be perfect and complete** [that is, 'spiritually mature'], **lacking in nothing,**" vv. 3-4.

In v. 12 of this same ch. he adds, "**Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved** ['once his character and faithfulness have been forged in the fires of adversity'], **he will receive the crown of life, which {the Lord}**

has promised to those who love Him.” On the battleground of the Spiritual Conflict we face a choice every single day: How are we going to respond to the trials, the tests and the tribulations that come our way?

- C. **“Good”** here is lit. **“the good,”** with the definite article. It comes from a)gaqo/j (agathos), which means- good of intrinsic value, i.e., *divine good*.

“The good” points to the ultimate objective of God’s plan-- the glorification of Jesus Christ through our spiritual growth, blessing in time and rewards in eternity.

- D. The phrase **“those who love God”** is a reference to mature and / or *maturing* believers.
- 1) **“Love”** is the pres. tense of *agapao*; it speaks of a constant, habitual action-- a *lifestyle* of loving God.
 - 2) Jesus said in John 14:15, **“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”** *Tereo*, the word translated **“keep,”** means- ‘guard, treasure.’ It means you look upon His Word as the most precious thing you possess, the greatest possible prize in life; that through your diligence in application you demonstrate its value above everything else.
- E. When Paul writes of **“those who are called according to {His} purpose,”** he’s amplifying the phrase **“those who love God.”**
- 1) For **“His purpose”** is simply His *pre-determined* plan.
 - 2) **“The called,”** in its general sense, denotes those who have been ‘elected to privilege,’ i.e., every member of the Royal Family. Here Paul uses it in a particular sense, specifically for Church Age believers *fulfilling* their spiritual destiny.
- F. The faith-rest drill *begins* in Romans 8:28 with claiming a Biblical promise-- “God works *all* things together for divine good in the life of the advancing believer.”

Summary of v. 28: When you lay hold of the fact that God is working all things together for good in your life, fear is brought under control. Where panic reigned, peace is now restored, but peace is only the beginning of the faith-rest drill. Claiming promises is never an end in itself. Understand that divine promises alone can neither sustain the spiritual mindset nor solve complex problems. Promises set the stage for the most important aspect of faith-rest: *thought*.

Stage Two: Apply a doctrinal rationale-- vv. 29-30.

- A. The faith-rest drill shifts into stage two-- application of a doctrinal rationale-- in Romans 8:29-30.

Definition: a *rationale* is “a statement, exposition, or explanation of reasons or principles.” *Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language*, p. 1179

- B. “Foreknowledge” and “predestination” are terms which simply mean- ‘to *know* beforehand, and to *ordain* beforehand.’ They come from two verbs in the Greek-- *proginosko*, and *proorizo*.

- C. This leads us to an immediate question. What are we **“predestined”** for? Is it to heaven or hell? Is our eternal destiny weighing in the divine balance here? No, contrary to the erroneous idea of certain groups and certain denominations, predestination applies *only* to the believer. We have been **“predestined to be conformed to the living image of His Son.”**
- D. The word **“conformed”** is from a root word that refers to the outward expression of the inner nature. It means- ‘be similar in form’-- meaning the inner man, or soul-- ‘and appearance’-- which is the outer man, or body.
- E. The word for **“image”** is the Greek noun *ει)kw/n* (*eikon*), meaning- *likeness, embodiment, manifestation*.
- 1) *Eikon* was used in ancient Greece by Plato for the reflection of the sun in the water; and in Matthew 22:20 of the emperor’s head on a coin. Jesus said to the disciples of the Pharisees-- who were trying, maliciously, to test Him, to trip Him up-- “Whose *eikon* is this?”
 - 2) In the NT it comes to mean not just a copy or facsimile but a *living image* in which the original is always present. Just as the child is the *eikon* of his parents, so we are destined-- as children of God-- to be the *eikons* of Christ.
 - 3) God is refining us into Christ-likeness through the process of spiritual growth, a process to be consummated with our resurrection body at the Rapture
 - a. The psalmist writes of this ‘process of purification’ in Psalm 17:3, as being **“tried... and tested”** by God. In Psalm 66:10 he speaks, of being **“refined... as silver is refined.”**
 - b. The words **“tested”** and **“refined”** both come from the Hebrew *varfc tsaraph*-smelt, refine, test. It parallels 1 Peter 1:7, which refers to our faith being **“tested by fire.”** The Greek verb translated **“tested”** in 1 Peter 1:7 is *dokimazo*, a word used in the ancient world for the testing and examination of precious metals for their genuineness.
- F. V. 30 say’s, that **“whom God predestined, these [same ones] He also called.”** The word **“called”** here alludes to our ‘election to privilege’ in eternity past.
- G. Paul goes on to say that those **“whom He elected to privilege, these [same ones] He also justified.”** **“Justified”** is from *di/kaiow* (*dikaioo*), a legal term meaning- *acquit, vindicate, declare legally righteous*.
This is something God accomplishes for *every* believer. How, you might ask? Through the imputation of His absolute righteousness at the moment of faith in Christ. Galatians 2:16 tells us, **“...that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus;”** Paul goes on to say, **“even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”**

- H. When Paul say's, "**these** [same ones] **He also glorified,**" the construction in the Greek is magnificent. What we have is a future event written in the *past tense*. Though still future in the fullest possible sense of the term, it is stated as *already* accomplished. What Paul's saying is that this conclusive step of glorification is both *final* and *inevitable* in the divine decrees.

Mechanics: By mentally tracing out a rationale in a crisis, you are reexplaining to yourself basic concepts of doctrine that pertain to your relationship with God. This is necessary because fear and emotion have revolted against thought, and you must take conscious, deliberate steps to reinstate the rightful authority in your soul.

Five Points from vv. 29-30

- 1) The application of doctrine calls for reverse concentration *away* from the problem and toward the solution-- the Word of God.
 - 2) The Word of God is *always* the solution, and it is the *only* solution! Most believers waste their time and effort trying to solve spiritual problems with cosmic solutions. There are two things I want you to get here.
 - a. Cosmic solutions can *never* solve spiritual problems. That simply substitutes the arrogance of human viewpoint for the wisdom of divine viewpoint.
 - b. Spiritual problems *demand* spiritual solutions.
 - 3) Concentration during Bible class brings truth *into* the soul; now concentration moves truth *out* to meet the demands of the moment.
 - 4) On the strength of Romans 8:28, vv. 29-30 present a logical rationale extracted from *epignosis* in the heart-- *kardia*- 'right lobe of the mentality, soul's stream of consciousness.'
 - 5) What we have in vv. 29-30 is a series of five basic doctrines designed to restore divine viewpoint thinking.
 - a. Foreknowledge-- God thought about *you* in eternity past.
 - b. Predestination-- God designed a perfect plan for you in eternity past.
 - c. Election-- God *chose* you for the privileged part of His plan.
 - d. Justification-- God can bless you now because you possess His righteousness.
 - e. Glorification-- God can bless you in Heaven *forever* in a resurrection body.
- I. Following the five points I just gave you, I want to develop for you, briefly, the five basic aspects of the 'plan of God rationale.'
- 1) *Foreknowledge* is a technical, theological term, referring to a category of God's knowledge different than omniscience. Omniscience encompasses all divine knowledge of human history, including all the alternatives and possibilities that *could*

exist but will not. Foreknowledge is a subcategory of omniscience, focusing in on what will *actually* occur in the believer's life. Foreknowledge is a very positive concept that implies divine care and support.

- 2) *Predestination* means that He designed a plan for us in eternity past. That plan calls for our sanctification, which means that we are 'set apart' unto God and belong to Him under a unique, eternal contract. The three-step process of sanctification--beginning with positional {ph. 1}, moving to experiential {ph. 2}, then ultimate, or eternal {ph. 3}-- culminates in eternity future, when we are entirely "**conformed to the image of His Son**" in our resurrection bodies.
- 3) In the divine outline of human history, the CA stands out as the era of unequalled advantage. God chose, or *elected*, each CA believer to be spiritual royalty, just as in the previous dispensation He selected Israel to be His witnesses among the Gentiles (Isa. 43:10-13, 21), just as He chose the line of David to bring forth the Messiah (2 Sam. 7:12-16), and just as He elected Christ to be the Redeemer of mankind (Matt. 12:18; Lk. 9:35). Divine election bestows special privilege; it's the *honor* of having impact on history. The believer fulfills his election by advancing to maturity and beyond in the power and enablement of God the HS.
- 4) Believers of other dispensations were not elected to the tremendous privilege we enjoy, but all believers in every dispensation are *justified* or *legally declared righteous*. God imputes divine righteousness to everyone in any era of human history who believes in Christ as Savior. And with imputed righteousness God establishes the potential for fabulous blessings on earth, by creating the grace pipeline which extends from His justice in Heaven to His righteousness in us.
- 5) Believers who exploit this potential and secure the high ground of spiritual maturity will be rewarded, or, to use Paul's term, *glorified* in Heaven. Mature believers will participate in the *eternal* glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ, who receives all the honor and esteem for any blessing or reward we possess.

Summary of Vv. 29-30: In two vv., Romans 8:29-30, Paul has outlined the plan of God. In their logical order the five doctrines of foreknowledge, predestination, election, justification and glorification encapsulate God's design, beginning in eternity past and concluding with the mature believer's rewards in eternity future. By utilizing this systematic reverse concentration on doctrines previously learned, the believer can *immediately* recall his place in the overall picture of God's magnificent grace. By this faith-application of the Word of God, he stabilizes his objectivity.

- III. **Stage Three:** Reach doctrinal conclusions; take command *in* the situation-- vv. 31-32.
 - A. Romans 8:31-32 are used to move ahead into stage three of the faith-rest drill: *reach doctrinal conclusions and take command in the situation*. The question is: Command of what? Command of *self*-- your attitude, your thoughts, your motivation. Here's a principle that ought to be easy enough for us to understand: *You are the only one you can control!*
 - B. The question in v. 31, "**What then shall we say to these things?,"** means-- in light of what we've just learned in the previous three vv., to what conclusion are we now forced?

- C. The answer is brought out in the words, **“If God {is} for us, who {can be} against us?”** **“If”** is not actually a word of uncertainty, for it has four exact meanings in the Greek. Here Paul uses what is called a 1st class condition. It represents a true statement, a statement of fact. What Paul’s saying is, that “Since God is for us, or in view of the fact that God is for us, who can possibly stand against us?”
- D. V. 32 tells us that God the Father didn’t spare His own Son, even though that Son was His own exclusive, private possession, coequal and coeternal with Himself. Instead, He **“delivered Him up for us all,”** i.e., on our behalf, according to the predeterminate counsel, the ‘Eternal Life Conference’ of the Triune Godhead in Acts 2:23.
- E. Which brings us to the second conclusion, **“how will He not also [along] with Him [Jesus Christ] graciously give us all things?”** The phrase **“freely give”** is from *xari/zomai* (*charizomai*)-- a cognate of the noun *charis*- ‘grace.’ *Charizomai* means- *give graciously as a favor*.
- F. All that we have learned so far in vv. 28-30 is brought together in summation and application with two simple conclusions.
- 1) Since God is for us, who can stand against us? Nothing and no one!
 - 2) If God gave us His Son, He will also give us all things. The **“all things”** includes the fifty-one grace gifts given at the moment of faith in Christ, which outfit and equip us for spiritual conflict; *and* the eleven problem-solving devices of the Spiritual Life, which must be learned and appropriated by our *faith* in the Word of God, by our diligence [1] in study; and [2] in application.

Summary of vv. 31-32: These simple conclusions, which are stated as rhetorical questions, enable you to seize command in the midst of the situation that ignited fear and anxiety only a few moments before. With thought, objectivity and spiritual courage reinstated, you can evaluate your circumstances and make the decision, or take the action, your wisdom {metabolized doctrine} and spiritual common sense dictate as a solution to the problem. If the issue is entirely beyond your ability to resolve-- and it may very well be-- you can cope with the situation by intelligently trusting the Lord for a solution, as the Jews *should* have at the Red Sea.

In Exodus 14:13-14, Moses said three things to the people of Israel, “[1] **Do not fear!** [2] **Stand by** [i.e., do nothing] **and see the salvation** [deliverance] **of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The LORD will fight for you** [3] **while you keep silent.**” What Moses said, in effect, was, “Stand still; shut up and let God be God, let God do His job!” Cf. ‘Diagram of Biblical Faith.’

In Conclusion

I want you to keep in mind that Romans 8:28-32 occurs in a context that explains *undeserved* suffering in the plan of God. In dramatic contrast to your adverse circumstances, God demonstrates His power through your application of His Word. The faith-rest drill maintains your ability to think, and to appreciate the grace of God and the God of grace. Now, if Bible

doctrine in your soul can give you mastery over the most difficult, the most frightening, and the most shocking situations in life, then certainly doctrine can sustain and bless you under m

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