

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith

CXXXI: Abandoning Self-Rule For God's Rule

(Psalm 131:1-3)

I. Introduction

- A. Spiritual blessing arrives when a believer submits to God's rule in his life versus ruling his life by himself.
- B. Psalm 131:1-3 presents this truth in a brief and expressive way, so we view it for our application (as follows):

II. Abandoning Self-Rule For God's Rule, Psalm 131:1-3.

- A. The introductory remarks are part of verse one, so the numbering system in the Hebrew text matches that of the English Bible (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1091). We thus stay with the English Bible's numbering system.
- B. We then translate Psalm 131:1-3 (as follows):
 - 1. "A song of ascents of David. O Jahweh, my heart is not exalted, haughty (*gabah*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 146-147) and my eyes are not uplifted in arrogance (*rum*, Ibid., p. 926-927) and I do not walk, tread [occupy myself] (*halak*, Ibid., p. 235) with things to great or too surpassing, extraordinary [difficult] (*pala'*, Ibid., p. 810) for me," Psalm 131:1.
 - 2. "But rather (*'im-lo'*, Ibid., p. 50; emphatic negative following the former statement) I have smoothed [composed] (*shawah*, Ibid., p. 1000-1001; Piel stem = intensive active) and quieted (*damam*, Ibid., p. 198-199; Poel stem = intensive active) my life principle like a weaned child (*gamal*, Ibid., p. 168; passive participle used as a substantive) with its mother, like a weaned child is my life principle within me," v. 2.
 - 3. "O Israel, wait for, hope for (*yahal*, Ibid., p. 403-404; Piel stem = Intensive active) Jahweh from now unto eternity [both now and forevermore]," Psalm 131:3. (cf. ESV)
- C. We note significant observations regarding this psalm (as follows):
 - 1. David's claim that he had composed and quieted his spirit like a weaned child with its mother (v. 2) reveals that he had learned to cease being an immature, frightened believer who nervously nagged God to meet his every need immediately much like an unweaned infant does. In other words, he had learned through his spiritual walk with God to **wait patiently** in **real FAITH** in God for the Lord to meet his needs.
 - 2. Also, David implied that immaturity is caused by (a) pride (v. 1a,b) and (b) presumptuously trying to achieve objectives above our God-given abilities and callings (v. 1c). Thus, self-composure in spiritual maturity is available by (a) avoiding pride and (b) by not presumptuously shouldering responsibilities that exceed one's God-given abilities or calling. Like the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:3 directed, the believer must not think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with "sober judgment" (NIV) and minister within the realm of his spiritual gifting and calling in relating to other people!
 - 3. Psalm 131:3 urges all Israel to hope in Jahweh both now and evermore, that everyone in the nation learn to trust God and function with a realistic view of themselves and their role in the plan of God, expecting the Lord to meet their needs as He determines in His ways and means.

Lesson: *David's pilgrim psalm for his subjects to learn was intended to teach them the lesson he had learned in his walk with God, the lesson of shifting from an immature spiritual walk that was marked by unrest and upheaval where he always impatiently cried out for God to help him instead to waiting quietly on the Lord for help due to aligning to God's will to do His simple, modest calling in God's enabling.*

Application: *(1) If we regularly live from crisis to crisis and often cry out to God for help, we are spiritually immature and do not really trust God, but often in pride function on our own initiative and involve ourselves in ventures that exceed our God-given resources and calling from God. We must thus repent of such an errant way of life. (2) Rather, we should perform God's calling in the resources He provides to achieve His objectives for us, trusting God to meet what needs we have for fulfilling our assignments. We will thus enjoy peaceful, productive living like a weaned child beside its mother. (3) Applied especially to the Christian walk and ministry, we need to pay attention to the spiritual gift God has given us (2 Timothy 1:6-7), which gift will be identified to other Christians who testify of how God blesses them through our ministry efforts, and which gift will become evident in our own experience. (1 Corinthians 12:28-30 NIV) We should then focus on using that gift to serve the Lord instead of involving ourselves in other pursuits outside of our gifting and calling that only lead to trouble. (4) If God clarifies His will for our role in business, family, etc., we need to be content with that role and learn to wait on God to provide the resources we need to succeed in that role.*