

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm One Hundred And Thirty-One - Maintaining One's Peace-Of-Mind When Facing Overwhelming Trials (Psalm 131:1-3)

I. Introduction

- A. There are some matters we face in life that are just humanly overwhelming.
- B. In the midst of facing such challenges, Jesus says to His own, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33b) To understand just **how** to **apply** Christ's directives, Psalm 131 in three short, power-packed verses, describes the process as follows:

II. Maintaining One's Peace-Of-Mind When Facing Overwhelming Trials, Psalm 131:1-3.

- A. This pilgrim psalm by David who as king **lived** in Jerusalem and did **not need** to trek as a pilgrim to the city was obviously written to supply insight for his subjects who would trek up to the city temple. As such, the psalm draws from David's pilgrimage of his spiritual walk with God to instruct others, Psalm 131:1a.
- B. David's lesson deals with handling life's overwhelming trials that are too great for one to bear, 131:1-2:
 - 1. David testified that he had learned in his walk with Jahweh no longer to be proud, Ps. 131:1b.
 - 2. He testified that he had learned in his walk with Jahweh no longer to concern himself with great matters or with things that were above his human ability to handle, Ps. 131:1c, d.
 - 3. Rather, David did something else in order to keep his spiritual equilibrium, Ps. 131:2:
 - a. Verse 2 begins with a very strong adversative, *im lo* in the Hebrew, that contrasts what David had come to do as opposed to being proud or taking on matters above his capacity to handle, Ps. 131:2a.
 - b. David had learned to still and quiet himself like a weaned child does with his mother, Ps. 131:2b. This analogy carries a huge lesson as follows: (a) an unweaned child does not trust its mother to feed him or to know when he is hungry, so he insecurely makes a fuss when troubled. (b) However, a weaned child has had to learn through experience that there is little he can do to manipulate his mother, and that his mother is not only willing, but fully able and knowledgeable to feed and care for all his needs. Accordingly, he quiets himself to keep from being scolded and waits for his mother to meet his needs! (c) David thus testified that he had learned through experience not to question God's desire, ability or knowledge to care for needs he could not meet himself. Rather, he would wait quietly in faith as a weaned child for God to help him out of life's overwhelming challenges!
 - 4. David then called on the pilgrims of Israel who were traveling up to Jerusalem to do what he had learned to do with life's overwhelming trials -- to put their trust in God as self-restrained, non-fussing, trusting children of God when it comes to meeting life's overwhelming challenges, Psalm 131:3!

Lesson: *Fretting about overwhelmingly worrisome matters we face is caused by our assuming we have the ability to address them when in reality we really CANNOT do so. We must RATHER HUMBLY recognize our LIMITATIONS, and leave the overwhelming problems for God to address! God's sovereignty, goodness, omniscience and omnipotence work to keep us going!*

Application: *(1) Realizing our HUMAN LIMITATIONS is the first step in dealing effectively with overwhelming challenges, for then we save what human resources we have left for truly PRODUCTIVE action. (2) Also, we must learn to stand behind the spiritual gifts we have for power in service, and use THEM, for working apart from those gifts leaves us failing miserably when facing the angelic conflict, cf. 2 Timothy 1:4-5, 6-7. (3) It pays dividends to be in the Word of God as a way of life so that God can speak to us through that Word in relationship to overwhelming events we face so we can find direction for overwhelming crises, Deut. 17:18-20.*

Illustration: *While at Johns Hopkins and fretting about plans for Connie's coming surgery, I was reminded to QUIET myself in Christ by coming across the institution's huge marble statue of Christ with Mtt. 11:28 at its base! It says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We must quiet ourselves as weaned children before God.*