

Humility or Defeatism

(Part One: Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. John Stott in his book *The Cross of Christ*, wrote, "It is impossible to read the New Testament without being impressed by the atmosphere of joyful confidence that pervades it, and that stands out in relief against the superficial religion that often passes for Christianity today. There was no defeatism about the early Christians; they spoke rather of victory... For if they spoke of victory, they knew they owed it to the victorious Jesus... It is he who overcame, has triumphed, and moreover did it by the cross."

B. Two common inaccuracies held by brethren are:

1. Associating confidence with pride.
 - a. They are not the same thing: confidence is assurance in Christ; pride is trust in the self
 - b. They do not come from the same place; confidence comes from blessings in Christ; pride comes from trust in the self
 - c. They are not viewed the same in the scriptures: those who are confident accomplish things in the name of the Lord (Phil. 4:13); those who are proud fall into sin (1Cor. 10:12)
 - d. "Be certain your passion for equality is not an attempt to portray your envy as a virtue."
2. Associating humility with defeatism
 - a. Humility is: "I can't do it without the Lord."
 - b. Defeatism is: "I can't do it."
 - c. Humility is: "I am weak, but God will help me get through."
 - d. Defeatism is: "I am weak, and that's just the way it is."
 - e. Humility is: "I am amazed that God loves me."
 - f. Defeatism is: "I am nothing."

I. DEFEATISM

A. Defeatism is acceptance of defeat without struggle. It is an attitude of accepting, expecting, or being resigned to defeat. It has negative connotations and can be linked to pessimism in psychology. The term is commonly used in the context of war to denote treason: a soldier is defeatist if he refuses to fight because he thinks it inevitable that the battle will be lost and thus there is no point in fighting.

B. Some folks have issues in their spiritual lives that contribute to defeatism

1. If you've travelled by air recently, you know that baggage is an issue.
2. The intangible baggage of past experiences or personal sin hinders our journey with Christ
3. Heb. 12:1-3

C. Heb. 12:1 uses two different words to describe those things that slow us down and create obstacles in our lives.

1. Weight (encumbrance) Anything that keeps us from effectively living the Christian life:
 - a. A poor self-image. Negative treatment and comments can lead us to doubt our value.

- b. A defeatist attitude. If we think we're beaten by circumstances, we'll never make a sincere effort to overcome
 - c. Feelings of rejection. Being devalued by others is painful and leaves us feeling unworthy.
 - d Perfectionism. If we think everything must be done flawlessly, we won't take risks.
 - e. Fear of failure. We miss wonderful opportunities from God if we let anxiety hinder us.
 - f. Procrastination. Putting off necessary tasks keeps us from accomplishing our goals.
 - g. A claim of a lack of self-control. If we don't control our impulses, we allow ourselves to be easily persuaded and led off track.
 - h. A lack of focus. When we permit our minds drift, we can't accomplish much.
 - i. A determined negative attitude. Pessimism has a powerful and self-perpetuating impact on our work and relationships.
 - j. A suspicious attitude. Being suspicious of others' motives keeps us from accepting love and friendship.
 - k. Indecision. Unwillingness to make decisions prevents us from making progress
 - l. A habit of shifting blame. Enables us to excuse ourselves for not moving forward.
2. Sin. This does not mean sin in the general sense of the word, but instead refers to a specific one. How does sin hinder progress?
- a. It is our primary area of vulnerability.
 - b. It uses resources because it demands we constantly remain on guard against it because it tempts us most.
 - c. It is a trap difficult to get out of.
 - d. It divides our mind when we think about it, re-activating the battle between the flesh and the spirit
 - e. It interferes our relationships with others.
 - f. It intrudes on our thoughts when we pray.
 - g. It attacks our self-confidence
 - h. It hinders our relationship with God.
- D. Like runners in a race, we must remove anything that slows us down.
1. Admitting to the Lord that we have encumbrances in our lives.
 2. Acknowledging our entangling sin.
 3. Taking responsibility for the baggage, no matter where it came from.
 4. Making a definite decision to deal with it.
 5. Laying it aside because it doesn't fit our chosen life.
 6. Relying on Christ's strength to put it down and walk away (Phil. 4:13).
 - a. God knows it's hindering us, and He doesn't want it in our lives.
 7. Understand that it is self-discipline that determines the outcome. Work hard on a daily basis to develop it, and over time it will come