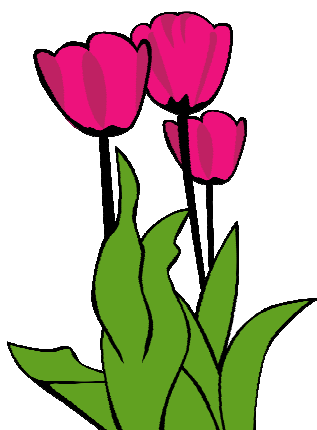


INSIDE THIS  
ISSUE:

Resistance 1, 2

Settle it Now 3

Closing Thoughts 4



*Dear Friends,*



Our fallen nature is transformed first in the new birth by the impartation of Christ's life which changes our nature. We can still sin, but it is no longer our nature to do it and that is why it hurts us when we do sin. The formation of character is through trials, frustration, resistance - what some verses refer to as vanity. **Romans 8:20** tells us something vital most of us don't seem to know - that God is the one who subjected creation to frustration! Not the devil. The Lord did it. Why? To eventually deliver the entire creation from the bondage of corruption. And your life of struggle, no matter what it is you struggle with, is a small but precious version of that larger universal work He set in motion when He subjected the entire creation to the resisting force of frustration.

The life of God in us begins the moment of the new birth to exercise us in godliness. This works for us a **far more exceeding weight of glory**. It is not done by direct impartation, but it is exercised into us through trials. How do we exercise? By meeting resistance. How do we build muscle, raise crops, or fly a plane? By resistance. How do we become Christ-like in our lifestyle? By meeting and overcoming resistance. That is why **Revelation 2-3** refers over and over to those who overcome. We overcome by the godly choices we make in facing temptation, hurt, mistreatment, betrayal, and disappointment. This **light affliction works (exercises) for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Cor 4:17)** And these pains, difficult as they are at the time, **are not even worthy to be compared with the glory that shall eventually be revealed in and to and through us. (Romans 8:18)** This is what **Hebrews 12** refers to as **the discipline of the Lord**, and what the apostle Peter refers to as the necessity of **fiery trials. (I Peter)**

Think about temptation, especially temptation for 'pleasurable' sins. This may not hold true for other types of sin like anger, revenge, or holding a grudge, but I'm thinking more of the sins of fleshly indulgence. What is it that we are considering when tempted? That the thing we are gazing at is, at

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the moment, the height of pleasure and we must have it now. Why do we give in? Because since it appears on a deep non-conscious but powerful level to be far greater than it is, we truly believe we will not be able to ever say no to it for the rest of our lives. So since we can't overcome it now, we shall not be able to overcome it for the long haul either. So we just give in and do it. It leaves us at first shamed. Then the cycle of false promise begins again, for shame awakens craving for comfort, keeping us going round and round in frustration until we learn better and rise above it.

How do we overcome the treadmill? We have to reconsider these two lies. First, this is NOT the best thing ever. It is only a temporary counterfeit of the everlasting good we long for. But since we are not in touch enough with the true good, we opt for this temporary temporal tempting lie. Our vision of the invisible real, our true destiny, and our real Home is vague and hidden by the loud likes of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Secondly, we do not have to try to figure out how to overcome this temptation for the rest of our lives. We live in the eternal moment of NOW. Trying to project our ability to say no to sin for a lifetime IS daunting. **Give us today our daily bread. Today is the day of salvation. NOW faith is...** *Temp-tation* is called that because it is *temp-orary*. It will pass, just as the false joy it offers will always pass. We do not have complete freedom by saying no to the temptation only. That's only the negative side. We must have the true good that is lasting, full, and pure. When we overcome this lie by choosing to obey and treat God's promise as if it is true because it is, we at that moment begin receiving a greater vision of what we are created for, Who we belong to now, and what our full and true destiny is. We were created for total Joy. And the struggle to get there, which often seems devoid of any joy, works for our good. **(Romans 8:26-28)** So when we try and stumble, and get up and try again, we are never losing ground. **Everything is for your sakes... (2 Cor. 4:15)**



*No temptation has seized you  
except what is common to man.  
And God is faithful;  
He will not let you be tempted  
beyond what you can bear.  
But when you are tempted,  
He will also provide a way out  
so that you can stand up under it.*

*1 Corinthians 10:13*

## **THIS IS THE TIME FOR SETTLING WHO WE TRUST AND WHAT WE BELIEVE**

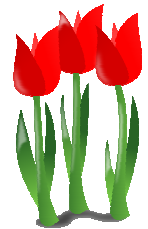
We may think we have settled that. But it is part of this very process of resistance and wrestling with truth that happens over and over, taking us further on into character development and change into Christ's likeness. So settle it now, if you have not yet done so before, that you will embrace whatever process God has you in, knowing that He is working all for your good and His glory in your life. Then rest in that truth. That is how you will have what you need to face whatever may be coming. And it is clear that this world is heading for turbulent times, far beyond what this generation has ever known. It is necessary for our sakes that it be so. **For only when the judgments of God are in the earth will the people learn righteousness. (Isaiah 26:9)**

## *Closing Thoughts...*



We all need the power to obey in the day by day ups and downs of life. Solomon laments the drudgery of life under the sun in Ecclesiastes. This refers to the 'vanity of life' Paul describes in Romans 8:20. God subjected this world to frustration for an eventual great purpose: the total deliverance from all sin, disappointment, death, and sorrow. So all that is against us is for us, because of the mystery of the work of the Cross and the Resurrection. We obey Him step by step the best we know how. And that increasing Power in us and for us - He who is Faithful and True - moves through us to bring the Kingdom not only to us, but to those around us. This is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

*With Love, Clay & Mary*



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