

LESSON 8

DISHRAG VS. STEEL

Introduction

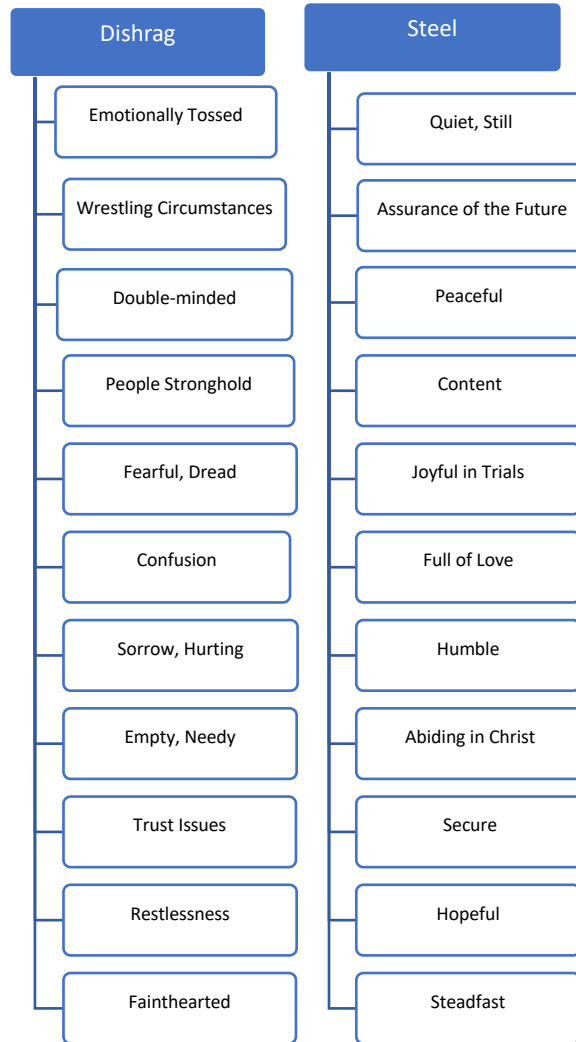
There is a mentality that repeats itself over and over without resolution. This feels like a wet dishrag. We are soaking up all the spills around us good or bad. It is time to learn to discern what you allow in your mind and not to allow anything to control you other than the truth of God's Word and right thinking. This is what I call becoming "steel".

Jeremiah is complaining to the Lord and even calls God a liar. The Lord corrects the prophet Jeremiah and instructs him to not align himself with the wicked (unbelievers), but to re-align himself with God. Then God will be able to make the prophet like a fortified brazen wall.

Jeremiah 15: 18-20 (Jeremiah is speaking to God.) (18) Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuses to be healed? Will you be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail? (19) Therefore this says the Lord, If you return, then will I bring you again, and you shall stand before me: and if you take forth the precious (worthy) from the vile (unworthy), you will be as my mouth... (20) And I will make you unto this people a fenced brazen wall:...for I am with you and to will deliver (rescue) you, says the Lord. (KJV)

Lesson

Identify and correct your attitudes of unbelief. Separate what is precious (worthy) in your life from what is vile (unworthy).



Where is your focus?

Detach from a temporary earthly focus and attach to an eternal godly focus. This is intentional. It doesn't come easy; we must wrestle our thoughts and choose which ones are beneficial for us to think and which ones are not and reject the thoughts that cause our suffering. If we focus on the temporary, we will have travail and vexation; if we focus on what's really important for eternity, we will have a quiet heart. (Ecclesiastes 4:6)

The psalmist starts many psalms with his feelings, and he unloads his troubles. Frequently, he complains and asks, "God, where are you?" Then he remembers who he is talking to and he settles down. He changes from this wet, dishrag mentality of wrestling with his own internal anguish into faithfulness and hope. This is how he does it.

"I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken" (Psalm 16:8)

He shifts his focus from the temporal things he cannot control, and he focuses on the eternal goodness of God.

Exercise

As you read through the psalms, note the behaviors or negative circumstances of the people around the psalmist. Identify feelings the psalmist experiences and the thoughts the psalmist allows himself to think. He speaks to himself until he changes his feelings into the solid foundation of truth of the attributes of God.

Psalm 16:

The Psalmist David's thoughts:

God keeps me safe.

God is my refuge.

You are my Lord, apart from you I have no good thing.

Lord is my portion.

Lord is my cup.

Lord makes me secure.

Lord places me in pleasant places.

Lord counsels me.

Lord instructs me.

David's commitment following his thoughts:

I will delight in holy people.

I will look for to a delightful inheritance.

I will praise the Lord.

I will keep my eyes on the Lord.

Results:

My heart is glad.

My tongue rejoices.

My body rest secure.

I am filled with joy in God's presence.

I have God's eternal pleasures.

Truth (David's observations):

Running after other gods causes suffering.

David's commitment:

I will not sacrifice to other gods.

I will not even mention their names.

Where is David's God?

God is at my right hand.

David was privileged to see the messianic future of Christ. I believe this is for all of us who follow God.
God will not abandon me.
God keeps His faithful ones.
God makes me to know the path of life.

Application

Situations are the same but now the psalmist David has taken dominion or authority over the ground that is within his soul.

No longer will he tolerate being tossed around by circumstances. Instead he fills it with the love of God. Now he can find contentment, peace, quietness, and stillness within his soul. The psalmist settles on the attributes of a merciful and loving God and he only seeks to know and trust in his God to save him. As he does this, his circumstances may or may not change, but he changes.

Principle

Joy is a condition of the soul and is separate from our circumstances.

Conclusion

Happiness is temporary, allusive and based on circumstances. True and lasting joy is as deep as eternity. David found the secret to maintaining this lasting joy. It is in thinking high thoughts about God and trusting totally in Him.

Psalm 15 David conveys how to never be shaken. Psalm 17 he is pleaded with God about his circumstances and he ends the chapter with wanted to be conformed into the image of God. Psalm 17:15 has become my life verse.

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.
Psalm 17:15 KJV

Ask God for a “life verse”. One that is powerful enough to give you strength in the darkest night.

The Lord is my Rock and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I trust.

Psalm 18:2