

Applying your faith with Psalm 42

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.

Psalm 42.5, KJV

Why art thou cast down my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.

Psalm 42.11, KJV

Reading the entire Psalm 42 you will see that the Psalmist felt deeply miserable. Have you ever felt deeply miserable?

As a follower of God, have you *still* ever felt deeply miserable?

Of course you have. You are but human and you were deeply involved in that emotional state at that time. The problem is that you (and many times, I) often stayed there without taking seriously the notion that God himself has set several examples in the scriptures of how we are to respond to trials.

Not so, our Psalmist. Once he has expressed himself, once he has 'let it all out' he does what many of us fail to do. He takes control of his inner voice(s) and steps up to give himself a good 'talking to'; he purposefully makes use of his mind's ability to talk to itself (the meta-function) and begins to set a new direction for his attention. In essence, he does a state interrupt, and starts to set a new context for his thinking.

A different translation may make this more obvious with its exclamation marks and implication of finding the entire matter slightly ridiculous, and definitely unnecessary:

- 1. Why am I discouraged?*
- 2. Why am I restless?*
- 3. I trust you!*
- 4. And I will praise you again*
- 5. because you help me,*
and you are my God

Psalm 42.11, CEV

Do you see the process here?

First, the psalmist takes a (meta) step back (or conceptually 'up' in the Meta-states model) and acknowledges his condition. He names his states, which immediately can reduce their power. He starts purposefully talking to himself rather than letting the negative voices inside his head talk *to* him. (Technically, he is using his meta-cognition to meta-comment on the content of his mind.)

Secondly, he remembers the Lord. He recalls God's mighty power, who He is and what He has promised. Of course, the psalm does not detail all of that but the point can be surmised from the exclamation 'I trust you!'. The man has called to mind his understanding of the greatness of the Lord and the answers make him remember his faith so that he comes close to saying "What am earth was I thinking?"

I would like to reinforce this point by quoting Dr Martin Lloyd George, author of *Spiritual Depression*, who says:

Faith reminds itself of what the Scripture calls "the exceedingly great and precious promises". Faith says: "I

cannot believe that He who has brought me so far is going to let me down at this point. It is impossible, it would be inconsistent with the character of God". *So faith, having refused to be controlled by circumstances, [step 1] reminds itself of what it believes and what it knows. [step 2][my italics]*

The psalmist's mental-emotional state is now changing because he is pulling more and more positive references into mind; and (thirdly) because he is *applying them to his previous thoughts of woe*. He is starting to think about his troubles in a *new context, in a new way*. His thoughts of God's greatness have begun to minimize his troubles as he remembers that he trusts God. As it should be!

(Note for NLP practitioners who are interested - this is what happens when states interface from a higher 'level' of mind onto a lower level. You will understand how to make system-wide changes in a single sweep when you learn how to apply this model.)

So, he now has experienced a shift in consciousness as the 'higher-level' ideas about his belief in the Almighty's all-mighty power, transform and alter the content and the emotions in the original mind-body states. Again, we can guess that this interfacing of states is taking place because, as he does this, he next goes on to say: '...and I will praise you again, *because you help me [my italics]*' You can almost hear the sigh, the change in his breathing as his state changes.

Amen.

Quite a change in attitude from the abject misery of a few verses ago, don't you think?

If there's one point I want you take away from this article it is that you have to *apply* your faith. "It [faith] does not come into operation itself, you and I have to put it into action. It is a form of activity", p143

Some of you may quote the scripture that we are 'dealt or given a measure of faith by God. That is the start of a good discussion that we cannot carry on here. In response, I will just say that even a mustard seed of faith needs watering and sunlight to grow or it will remain only a seed of potential!" Follow this process, apply your faith in the Lord and see what He does for you. He has never let me down in my entire life.

The process again:

The three steps of faith in action – or action in faith!

1. Stop or interrupt your state.
2. Remember the Lord: who He is, what He has done and His promises.
3. Apply this knowledge and the scriptures to your current situation.
4. Be at peace!

To summarize, I would once more like to quote Dr Martin Lloyd George, author of *Spiritual Depression*, here:

"Whatever your circumstances at this moment, bring all you know to be true of your relationship with God to bear upon it. Then you will know full well that He will never allow anything to happen to you that is harmful... You may not have a full explanation of it; but you will know for certain that God is not unconcerned. That is impossible."