**Relaxed Mental Attitude, No. 2 – BD12-01**

We have been considering in this basic doctrine series the matter of our personal spiritual maturity. This we have found the Scriptures refer to under the word “edification” as a structure which is in our souls. This structure is in the form of a pentagon. It has five basic facets to it. (This is) one convenient way of thinking of it. It is a defense system which God provides for our souls. It is based upon doctrine and that in terms of full knowledge; that is, the Word of God which we have learned and we have received with a positive response and which now resides in our human spirit as the point of contact between us and God, and for the guidance of the various facets of our souls.

Now we have already looked at the facet of grace orientation. We have looked at the facet of mastering the details of life, where doctrine is first and all the elements of life are secondary. Both of these are very strategic and we spent quite a bit of time on these. They are structures upon which is based the one that we are now looking at—a relaxed mental attitude. Unless you thoroughly understand grace orientation and are oriented to the grace of God, and unless you understand how to be related to the details of your life so that you control them. Again I remind you (about) these details of eating and recreation and bank accounts and housing and clothing: (It’s) not that they are not essential, but that we are in control of them. Most Christians, as with most people of the world, are not in control of them. But when you have these two (facets), you’re in a position to build this mental attitude—a relaxed mental attitude.

**Faith Rest**

This means an attitude where there are no mental attitude sins that possess the mentality of our souls, so that in our minds we are at ease. Now God has supplied a technique by which to build and maintain a relaxed mental attitude. This technique is resting by faith in God and in His Word and His promises. So we call it “the faith rest” technique. It is one of those techniques for the Christian life that you have to learn. If you don’t learn how to operate under the faith rest technique, you will not be in a position to develop in your soul a relaxed mental attitude. So this is what we’re going to look at this morning.

This concept of resting by faith upon what God has said is expressed in the Word of God in the book of Isaiah 41:10. Isaiah puts it this way: “Fear thou not for I am with thee. Be not dismayed for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold these with the right hand of my righteousness.” Then that very precious verse in 1 Peter 5:7 where Peter says, “Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you.”

**Worry**

So the great enemy of a relaxed mental attitude is worry, in one form or another—anxieties that possess our souls through our minds. Now God has a plan, and we enter this plan at the point of salvation. Once we’ve entered the plan of God for us, there is no suffering, there is no disaster, no heartache, no disappointment, no hurt, no frustration, no aggravation which is too great for God’s provision. In His plan, every one of these has been covered. God’s provisions are all found in the Bible. These provisions we’re going to find, just as a little preview summary, are three-fold. God’s provisions for all the problems that face you: 1) Promises that He makes; 2) Doctrine; and, 3) Prophecy (which is a type of promises or a type of doctrine, but a little distinctive category).

Now the Christian’s concern in the time of trial is the question of whether he’s going to go positive or negative to these things in the form of promises, doctrines, and prophecy which come out of the Word of God. God has made these provisions for him to use in the faith rest technique. Now if a Christian goes positive when he’s under trial, and he uses the faith rest technique, God will bring into play in his life the provision that He has made from eternity past for that particular problem. Now if he goes negative, and refuses to act under the faith rest technique, then this will be indicated within the life of the believer by the fact that he is going to be trusting in self-made solutions.

You may evaluate yourselves as to how many times this week you came up to a problem and you came up with a self-made solution, and maybe it worked, and maybe you think it worked. Maybe you’re under the delusion that you resolved that in the best way possible, because you never bothered taking it to God. As a matter of fact, maybe the thing you should have done was not to do anything at all. It is very shocking to people to realize that part of the faith rest technique is learning to do nothing when you’re confronted with problems. It’s a little difficult for people to accept the idea when they come to you with a problem and they unravel a problem and they say to you, “Now here’s my difficulty.” And you say to them, “Well the first solution is to do nothing.”

I once had a very good youth director who got himself in a couple of pickles because he took dramatic moves when people came to him with crisis situations. Well the people were all upset. They were all in a furor. They were all in a lather. They were all determined that he had to do something. Being inexperienced, he rushed out, and he got himself burned. I said, “Next time, the thing you want to remember when people come to you with some climactic situation that requires some actions is that you have to do nothing. That’s the first thing you have to remember. You have to do nothing.” Faith rest starts with doing nothing.

Now that gives God an opportunity and a chance to start talking to your mentality, to start moving your emotions, and start acting upon your will, and it gets you out of the picture where you’re fouling up the situation. Now you’re going to have to think about that a while, and take some entering in, to learning how to meet your problems by doing nothing, because everything you’ve ever been taught … was to get out and be a hustler, and to start maneuvering with your self-made solutions.

Well, when you do this, you will reflect this in certain ways. You will be a worry wart. You will be filled with anxiety. You’ll constantly be planning. You’ll be fretting. You’ll be upset. You’ll be disturbed. You’ll suffer from insomnia. You’ll be scheming. You’ll be operating. You’ll be scrounging. And you’ll be shifty-eyed because you’re looking everywhere to take it all in. The signals are very definitive for the person who is operating in his own capacities rather than resting in faith on what God can do for him.

So you’re going to have to decide who’s more capable of solving your problems—you or the Lord. Then you’ll decide who’s going to be responsible for these problems. Though God is infinitely more capable, He only answers your problems on the faith rest technique; otherwise He won’t touch them. That’s the first thing you need to learn. God operates only on this technique, and if you’ve got problems, unless you take it and leave it with Him, He’s not going to touch it with a ten-foot pole. And you’re going to stay with your problems and you’re going to stay with your self-made human solutions. Now while God is working on our problems, therefore, we can have a relaxed mental attitude because it becomes His problem, and He’s an expert at problem-solving. So the faith rest technique puts the mentality of our souls at ease, and it supplies our emotions with peace and inner happiness, and it guides our will to the right move and the right decisions.

Now many Christians are willing, I realize, to turn their problems over to the Lord. We wouldn’t find a great deal of resistance in this auditorium this morning of people who don’t want to turn their problems over to the Lord. The problem is how to do it. So we’re going to ask you to turn to the book of Genesis, the 15th chapter, to take a look at an incident in the life of Abram that is an excellent example of how to go about the faith rest technique and what it involves in our lives, for the purpose of achieving a relaxed mental attitude.

**Genesis 14 - 15**

We have to look first of all briefly at the background of chapter 15 which is Genesis 14. In Genesis 14 you have an account of victory for Abram with a relaxed mental attitude. Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam, and three of his king pals attacked the city of Sodom where, you remember, his nephew Lot has chosen to live. Now Sodom was an extremely wicked city. It was a hotbed, along with Gomorrah, of homosexuality and of bestiality. (I hope you understand what that is—sex involvement with animals). And of the child sacrifices. It was the most degrading type of society you could imagine, very much of course like the one … in which we live today. God brought judgment. He wiped the city out eventually by destruction from heaven.

Now while Lot was a citizen there, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, with his king pals attacked the city, and Lot and a number of people were taken captives. The word was brought to Abram (that his) nephew has been taken captive by Chedorlaomer. Now Abram at this point could have taken the attitude toward Lot, “Well, I told him so. I told him so. I warned him, and he’s got what he deserves. This is just exactly what should happen to him when he wouldn’t listen to me.” But because Abram had a relaxed mental attitude, he was neither vindictive nor was he glad to see what had happened to Lot.

Instead we read in Genesis 14:14 that Abram (as he was called at this time) proceeded to mount a military expedition. “When Abram heard that his brother had been taken captive (that is, his nephew, Lot), he armed his trained servants born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.” Now Abram kept a military contingent among his own servants. He drilled them. He trained them. He had 318 men in a standing army within his own household.

Now he also had three allies, three kings, and their troops which joined him, so there were others besides these 318 that were involved in the attack under Abram. But, it was a small force, a very small force, in comparison with the large number under Chedorlaomer and the other three kings.

Well the result was, in verses 15 and 16, that Abram used the tactic of dividing his men into two (groups), having an attack that hit from directions, and it was a night attack, we’re told, and the result was that it caused confusion among the troops of Chedorlaomer. They began fighting against one another, and they set them to flight toward Damascus unto Hobah. He brought back, verse 16 says, all the goods. He also brought again his brother Lot and his goods, and the women also and the people. The result was tremendous victory. Abram had a relaxed mental attitude toward this stupid move on the part of Lot to go and get himself involved so deeply with the world. He could not distinguish between all the good times and the good things that the world had to offer through the city of Sodom and that which was the plan of God for him. But Abram had a great victory in spite of what Lot deserved, and he rescued him.

But Abram also had a great victory in conquering his greed for the loot of the battle. He brought back the goods. When he returned, we read in verse 18, that he met Melchizedek. Now this was before the Aaronic priesthood was in existence. He was a priest of the most high God. This priest blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram (verse 19) of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.” Here you have a little bit of Bible doctrine that Melchizedek reminded Abram that the God that he served, and to whom he owed his allegiance, was the possessor of all of heaven and all of earth.

Now this was going to be important because the king of Sodom was grateful for the rescue that Abram had brought off. So he went to Abram and he said, “You take the loot. I’ll take the captives and the people.” But Abram refused. In verse 22, Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I’ve lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth.” He repeats what he heard Melchizedek say. He learned his doctrine and in that moment he believed it. God possesses everything, and he says, “I’ve lifted my hand to this God who possesses everything, and I’ve declared to this God (in verse 23) that I’ll not take a thread, even to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is thine lest thou should say, ‘I’ve made Abram rich.’”

Now this may not have pleased Sodom. Sometimes Christians are in a position where somebody comes and gives you a gift (and I’ve had this experience, and it’s a very painful thing to go through, and you have to tell a person, “I won’t take your gift because of the reason I think you’re giving it and what I think this gift is reflecting, and I cannot in conscience accept your gift, and I think you’re using it to an evil end, for conscience, prestige, or for other reasons.”)

And Abram said to this king who was something in his own right, the King of Sodom, “I don’t want anything. You keep it all.” He really was bordering on an insult to the King of Sodom. While he had this victory over his greed for what could have been a very valuable addition to his wealth—fantastic addition, he refused to do anything that would take credit away from God.

Yet he also experienced another victory. That was that he didn’t impose his standard of spirituality on the kings who were his allies. For he turns to the king Sodom and he says in verse 24, “Save (or accept) only that which the young men have eaten.” He says, “What my men in battle have eaten, I’ll take that. I won’t pay you for that.” “… and the portion of the men that were with me (his allies) Aner, Eschol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.” He wasn’t going to impose upon his allies his spiritual convictions. Now that takes (a) relaxed mental attitude.

We have a lot of Christians running around who because they don’t have a relaxed mental attitude are ever trying to impose their advanced relationship with the Lord and their growth in spiritual things upon those who have not come to that point or who don’t see it that way. So they want their convictions imposed in the patterns of dress and living and expression and vacationing and recreation and what not, that they consider consistent and fitting for their concepts of spiritual development and spirituality. Where again, that’s a matter of that individual and his God.

So here are three great victories: the victory over the military force of Chedorlaomer; the victory over his greed for the loot; (and,) the victory over imposing his standards on his allies. That’s how you come out of chapter 14. Now you’re on a mountaintop. This is exhilarating. This is great to have come off the field of battle and then to have been able to have two more victories over yourself in this very dramatic and wonderful way.

(However,) learn a spiritual principal at this point. It is characteristic in spiritual things that when you have won a great victory with the Lord, when you have really come to grips with a sin, with a temptation, when you have conquered because of your response to doctrine, that that’s when you become extremely vulnerable to defeat. You would think that now you have become really strong and stable. But Satan immediately counterattacks. He moves right in because there is a certain letdown in us spiritually and in our total beings after a spiritual victory. He takes advantage of this fact. That’s why in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 12 says, “Wherefore him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Because you think you stand at the point of some spiritual victory and some spiritual strength.

Now Satan is out to conduct a counterattack. 1 Peter 5 describes this for us in verses 8-9. 1 Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober; be vigilant because your adversary the devil like a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Whom is this steadfast in the faith knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

Now there’s a lot in this verse that we can’t pause on this morning, but we’re going to in the near future, as to what it means to resist the devil. Because there are a lot of Christians who have made the grievous mistake of thinking that because the Scripture says, “Greater is He that is in us than is in the world,” that we’ve got it made as far as the devil is concerned. They don’t understand the techniques and the wiles by which the devil manipulates you mentality so that your emotions and you will are completely under his domination. Here you are a born again believer, and this verse has a basic declaration about that.

But so much this morning that it indicates that Satan is ready with a counterattack and he’s ready to move in at the time when we have experienced our victories. Well this is what happened to Abram and we move into chapter 15, and the first thing we discover is that Abram has deteriorated in his relaxed mental attitude. Verse 1 in chapter 15 begins, “After these things,” that is, after these victories of chapter 14, the Word of the Lord comes to Abram’s rescue. God is going to deliver something specific to Abram, and God is speaking to him in a vision because the Word, the Bible, has not been written up to this time—it’s not completed.

Today God does not speak to you in a vision. If somebody comes along to you and says, “I just had a vision last night and God told me to do something,” you know you’re talking to a nut, or to a Christian who’s gotten himself tied in with some cult group. God is not going to speak to you in dreams, and he’s not going to speak to you in visions. Now the devil might move in on you that way, but God is not. He’s going to speak to you through one thing only and that is through the Word of God. If you want to know something about what God has for you and about the solutions for what you face, then you better get into the Word of God, or you’re never going to find out.

So the Word of the Lord is the answer that comes here to Abram. And this word is the dramatic statement, “Fear not.” Now the very fact that God comes along and says this to Abram after the victories of chapter 14 indicates that something has happened to Abram’s relaxed mental attitude. It’s the same concept that you find in Deuteronomy 31:6-8: “Be strong and of good courage. Fear not, nor be afraid of them, for the Lord thy God, He it is that doeth go with thee, and He will not fail thee nor forsake thee. And Moses called unto Joshua and said unto him in the site of all Israel, ‘Be strong and of good courage for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them, and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, He it is that doeth go before thee. He will be with thee and will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Fear not. Neither be dismayed.”

We have the same thing in the New Testament. Philippians 4:5: “Let your moderation be known unto men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” The concept of not being afraid.

Now this raises the question, why would Abram be afraid? What is it that he fears? We put the Scriptures together on the things that follow, and we can perhaps draw some conclusions, some deductions, as to what’s bothering him and what has fractured his relaxed mental attitude. For God goes on to say, “Fear not Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceedingly great reward.” “I am thy shield,” which means God is his protector, and this perhaps suggests that he’s worried that maybe Chedorlaomer is going to retaliate to seek vengeance upon the defeat that Abram and his allies imposed on him. So he’s worried about the counterattack.

When God says, “I am thy exceedingly great reward,” it may suggest, and seems to suggest that Abram had a little concern about his security, and he was giving second thoughts to whether he should have passed by what may have amounted to a million dollars’ worth of loot out of this battle. He’s getting kind of old now. He’s an 85-year-old cat at this time. This is getting to be a little up there, and he’s beginning to think about when he’s going to retire, and perhaps this is on his mind. Where is his real social security going to come from?

Well, if God is our shield, and He’s our exceedingly great reward, then the only thing to do is to relax and to believe it. Our human viewpoint will discount these promises, but divine viewpoint sees these circumstances in God’s light and accepts them.

Now what God is doing here is giving him promises, right here. If you want to learn the faith rest technique, the first thing you have to learn is to believe and to claim the promises of God. Now immediately you recognize that that requires one other thing. You can neither nor claim the promises of God until you have learned them.

I think it would be a good thing at our Lord’s Supper service, come the first of next month, that we spend the time with the believers sharing dramatic promises that they have found in the Word of God. Now you won’t have any trouble finding them because (someone has counted up) there are over 7,000 of them, for this life. And they’re only good for this life. After you die, these over 7,000 promises are absolutely no good.

Now all this week you ought to have been claiming the promises of God in order to keep your mind at ease. You ought to have been claiming the promises like 1 John 1:9 concerning the confession of sin and the forgiveness that it brings. You ought to have been claiming the promises of something like Romans 8:28 that tells us that all things are working out for divine good. The promise of 1 Peter 5:7 that tells us to just put your cares on the Lord Jesus Christ. Promises of Hebrews 13:5 that tells us that the Lord will never leave us or forsake us. He stands by us. Hebrews 13:6: God’s help is always available. The promise of Matthew 21:22 of our access to prayer and what we accomplish through it. And of course 1 Thessalonians 5:18 that says, “In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” This is the will of God concerning you. This is the promise of blessing, to give thanks.

Now it’s necessary that you claim the promises of God if you’re going to have a relaxed mental attitude. So it’s not too bad an idea, and I’ve been thinking about doing this in Berean Academy: to have our students each start a spiritual notebook included in which is one section called The Promises of God. And as they read the Word of God, they record in their own words (1, 2, 3, down the page) the promise of God. And that sometime we have academy chapel sessions where we let the kids share what they find God has promised that He will do for them, and talk about it a little bit. It wouldn’t be too bad an idea for you to do that at home with your children. Maybe just sit down to the supper table and say, “Now I want you to tell me the promises that you found in the Bible today (or this week).”It wouldn’t be too bad an idea for you to keep a little book, and when you come across a promise you jot it down.

Now some of you, I know, do that. I’ve been with some of you where you’ve been talking over some of your problems, and right while you’re talking over some of your problems you have your notebook there. While you’re saying something (“here’s a problem”), you say, “And here’s …” and you turn down to your notebook and you read a promise that you understand this, and you’re answering your own question and coming to your own solutions because you’re believing the promises of God.

Now this is a very great thing. If you as parents are not imposing and pressing upon your children the place that promise play in their lives, you’ve done them a very great disservice. Your kids will never have a mind that is at ease. Your kids will never have a mind that’s any freer than most people’s are anxieties and worries and pressures until they learn what God has promised to do for them. And the more you learn about His promises, the harder it is to be uptight. So you go ahead and pay all the money you want to your psychiatrist and your analyst and everybody else that you think can give you solutions, but I’m giving you a cheap way out, and the one that works. You get the promises of God and you get them into the mentality of your soul, and you’re going to be at ease as no psychiatrist can ever bring you.

Now Abram apparently responded to that positively, in a positive way, and he accepted these promises that he need not fear and that God would be his shield. BUT, and here we go again, that’s how we do. There’s something else. OK, I see that, but I’m still unhappy. In verses 2 and 3 he comes up with concern over the fact that he has no son. And even though God is his shield and God is his reward, there’s still something else. And that’s how you and I often are. We’re so blessed above what other people are, and yet we’re not happy because there’s something we think we should have that we don’t have.

There are a lot of people going around kicking perfectly good marriages to pieces because certain ideals that they have, or things they think are ideals, or certain things they’d like to see that they think they’d like to have are not there, or they think are not there. So they proceed to forget all the blessing and to accept the happy situation that they do have for some ideal that they never will have, so they kick it to pieces. We’re too preoccupied often with demanding so that we can’t enjoy what God’s grace has provided.

Well Abram said, “I have to view my steward Eleazar as my heir.” Notice how he says this. Abram said, “Lord God, what will thou give me?” God says, “I’m going to be your shield. I’m going to be your reward.” Abram says, “Reward! What reward! What are you going to give me? How are you going to reward me? You didn’t give me a son. Reward, schmeward! And what you have here is a little tinge of Abram rebuking and complaining to God about the fact that God has let him down. He says, “I’m childless. The heir of my house is this Eleazar of Damascus.” And when people are spiritually confused, they blame someone else for their situation.

A spiritually mature Christian takes responsibility for his situation and for the decisions of his life. And I can always tell somebody that’s spiritually disoriented when they come with a complaint and then they identify somebody else as the cause of that complaint. Now this is so elementary you would think that people would know better than to do this. When you get far enough into an understanding of the Word of God, you won’t go around saying, “Here’s my situation, and so-and-so is to blame.” That is not true. Your situation is the result of your direct actions and relationships to God, and don’t you forget it. When your relationships to God are right, your situations will follow in the same pattern. When they’re not right, you will be suffering from self-imposed misery. But it won’t be somebody else’s fault.

This is the trend of modern psychology—to find a patsy. It ignores the fact that we have an old sin nature and that’s where our wrong acts originate, and so we are responsible for our own miseries. But it’s a nice cop-out for the odd-balls and for unhappy people who want to save face for themselves.

So what does God do? Well He comes through with another promise. Verse 4 says, “And behold the Word of the Lord came. (Here you’ve got doctrine again.) The Word of the Lord came unto him saying, ‘This shall not be thine heir. But he that shall come forth out of thine own loins shall be thy heir.’” Abram is to have a son out of his own body. Now mind you, he is now 85 years old. How old was he when the son was born? He was 100. He had 15 more years with no son. Now God says, “Don’t worry, Abram, you’re going to have a baby boy.” He says, “I’m going to have a baby boy? I’m 85.” And as we’re going to see next Sunday, the Bible says that Abram was sexually a dead potato, and so was the whole system of the body of his wife Sarah.

And now do you get the feeling of faith rest? He says, “You didn’t give me a son. What are you talking about reward? The big reward was the nation that I was to become and this land that we were to possess. I’m 85.” God says, “You’ll have the boy.” So Abram says, “Oh, good,” and he starts building the cradle, and he keeps working on it for 15 years. The thing begins to peel the paint off and he has to keep repainting it. God has promised, so what’s going to happen. Well he keeps a relaxed mental attitude for most of those 15 years.

Romans 4:20-21 puts it in a very beautiful way. For most of those 15 years after God told him this, Abram stood by the promise and he believed it. Romans 4:20 says, “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able to perform.” Now there was a little time when he did fracture his relaxed mental attitude, and it was because of his wife again. And he was not spiritually mature to carry the ball. So he let her talk him into a substitute arrangement to solve this problem of having a baby son through marrying the servant girl Hagar, which has come down to this day as the cause of the conflict and the problem between the Jews and the Arabs who descended from that son of Hagar.

But these promises are illustrated. God said, “Now I’m going to illustrate what I’m telling you, Abram. When I give you a promise I want you to understand what it is I’m giving you.” So He said, “Let’s walk outside here.” So he takes him out of the tent and He says, “Look up at that sky,” and there was that magnificent star-spangled sky above his head. He said, “Abram, do you see those stars? As numerous as you see those interstellar spaces above your head, so shall be your descendants. That’s how many people are going to descend from your body—not from Eleazar’s.”

This declared a principal that is behind all promises that we need to learn. The stars in space are innumerable, and yet they move in an orderly pattern because of God’s creation. Colossians 1:17 says He created it and He keeps it in order. Now the stars call attention to the essence of God. Here was something that Abram could draw from what God said. He looked up at the stars and what he saw reminded him of the character of God. It reminded him of God’s omniscience. God had the intelligence to create the star plan. It reminded him of God’s omnipotence. He had the power to make and to control the interstellar spaces and the universe. He had the omnipresence to be on hand to control this star creation. And He was immutable, and He was veracity. He was absolutely unchangeable, and He was truth. So His promises were always going to be fulfilled.

The promises of the Bible depend on this essence of God. You need to remember and remind yourself very often of what God is like. And sometimes when you sit down with your children you should say, “Alright, tell me what God is like.” And they should be able to tell you that God is sovereignty. He is righteousness. He is eternal life. He is justice. He is love. He is omnipotent. He is omniscient. He is omnipresent. He is immutable. He is veracity. They ought to have a precise understanding of what God is like. Because as we move through life and remember the essence of God, it answers a lot of problems.

Now God cannot be untrue to Himself. So these promises for fulfillment depend upon who God is, and this is what He’s like. So once you’ve learned a promise, it’s not a question of whether He’s going to keep it. It’s a questions of whether you’re going to believe it. And your negative volition is an insult to the character of God. And if you do that, you fall apart in a crisis. You worry. You’re with fear, and that’s an insult.

Now the major problem with Christians today is that they don’t know the promises, and so they’re in a frap in their lives. If God can hold a complex universe together, as Abram looked at those starts, he realized He could solve his problem of having that baby son.

Another illustration: First were the stars. Then he illustrated the business of promises with salvation. We read in verse 6, “He (Abram) believed in the Lord, and He (God) accounted it to him for righteousness.” The word “believed” in the Lord here is in the Hebrew, “amen,” from which we have our word “amen.” What it says is that Abram said, “amen” to God. He confirmed it. It’s in a Hebrew stem which means that he was caused to believe this; that is by when he looked up there, he saw those stars, he realized what God was like to be able to create and maintain that, and he was forced to the conclusion that He would keep His promise.

And this is in that tense that indicates that he believed God in the past. Years ago when he was a young man in Ur of the Chaldeans, he believed. And God credited this faith in God and what He was going to do for him to Abram’s salvation.

Now what, in effect, the Scriptures are reminding us of here is that God did the most for Abram when he provided him salvation, and that’s when He does the most for you and me. Romans 8:32 says, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also freely give us all things?” Now God has given us the most here in salvation. That’s the hardest thing that God had to provide for you and me; that was resolving the fact that we were dirty sinners, and yet we can walk in a sinless heaven. Now that took some doing. And He did that. Now He did this for us when we were His enemies.

Now turn to Romans 5:10. Now that we are His friends and family, what will He do? “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life.” And God says, “Now that you’re saved; I’ve already done the most for you in saving you; now I’m going to do much more than the most.” Now that’s about as strong as language can put it. And that’s grace. And when God gives you a promise of salvation, he’s going to give you not only that which is the most, but much more along with it. No problem is too great which our Father hasn’t solved.

So the unsaved world is turned off toward Christians because we don’t claim promises. So what do we do? Well, we sublimate by going to emotional meetings, with gimmicks so we can stir people up to draw forth human vows so we’ll get God to improve our situation.

Now there’s one other thing, and that is the faithfulness of God. He illustrates his promises with faithfulness. He says, “I am the Lord who brought you forth out of the Ur of the Chaldeans to give thee this land to inherit it.” Abram’s been in the Promised Land for many years now. He has failed God many times. God has never failed Him. And all these illustrations point up to one thing—the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Creator reminded by the stars. He is the One who went to the cross. And He is the faithful and true one.

There is another factor that we’re going to take up next time by which we develop the faith rest technique. This morning we learned: 1) Promises – If you are going to come to a relaxed mental attitude, learn the promises of the Word of God and claim them. There are over 7,000 of them, all available for you to use in this life only. If you know them, and you claim them with a positive response, you are on your way. If you go negative and reject them, you’re going to start sublimating, substituting, creating your own solutions, and creating along with it all of your own misery. And your life is going to be a poverty pathetic situation of pursuit of self-interest such that someday you can hardly stand to look at yourself for what you have surrounded yourself with, or what you have pursued, or what you have sacrificed in the process of that pursuit, whereas Satan had you tied up in knots, and your mind was anything but leaning upon the provisions and the guidance of God.

I hope you were impressed with the leading of Satan. It is a big thing in the life of Christians, and he does it under cover. A relaxed mental attitude puts the skids on that power in Satan’s life in a very big way.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971