

ATTITUDE CHECK



The storm around me is raging, the outlook appears bleak,
'Gainst the challenges that face me I feel powerless and weak;
Circumstances engulf me like unyielding prison walls,
And heaven seems unmoved, despite my vexed, heartfelt calls.

'Tis then my soul's enemy – a destroyer, liar, thief Jn 8:44 & 10:10
Is always quick to sow seeds of doubt and unbelief, Rev 12:10; Heb 3:12
Stirring up resentment, anxiety and fear
As 'Your God has forgotten you' he whispers in my ear. Ps 77:9

Yet I know God works everything together for my good Rom 8:28
So I'll let His flawless word determine my attitude; Ps 19:7
Why should I let the devil my confidence in God wreck? Heb 10:35
And, though life proves a battle, I'll take an attitude check.

Battles are won or lost in the mind, so my resolve is this –
I'll focus not on my problems, but on God's promises; 2 Pet 1:4; 2 Cor 1:20
When the devil says I'm nothing, I'll fiercely disagree,
And take comfort in knowing just how God values me. Gal 2:20; 1 Jn 3:1-2

I'll focus not on my obstacles and difficulties
But on the God Who knows naught of impossibilities. Matt 19:26; Luke 1:37
I'll fret not o'er my weakness, or the pain past failure brings,
But rejoice that my God chooses and then uses weak things. 1 Cor 1:26-29

And when troubles don't come singly, but in twos and threes,
I'll not let them floor me - just drive me to my knees;
I'll trust Him to bear me, and carry me safely through, Is 46:4
And help me comfort others who'll tread this pathway too. 2 Cor 1:3-4

The Potter moulds the clay with precision, skill and care, Is 64:8
And won't subject me to anything He knows I can't bear;
In His love, come what may, eternally I'm secure, Jer 31:3; Jn 10:28-29
And what He doesn't change, He'll give me grace to endure. 2 Cor 12:7-10

I won't wallow in self-pity, or drown in despair, Ps 42:5 & 11
But, upon my Heav'nly Father, I'll cast my every care; 1 Pet 5:7
I'll endeavour to 'wait well', and have Him show me how Ps 27:14
To make the very most of the priceless treasure of now. Ps 90:12; Eph 5:16

Whatever troubles I face, I won't face them alone, Prov 18:24; Heb 13:8 & 5
And they're never wasted, if they make me yearn for home; Col 3:2
His word gives me the confidence to face life here with a smile,
My faithful Shepherd promising goodness and mercy all the while. Ps 23:1 & 6

I know His way is perfect, despite how it now appears, Ps 18:30-32
Building character and Christlikeness, through my trials and tears; Rom 5:2-5
Let me become better, not bitter; to not miss, but see 1 Pet 1:6-7; Job 23:10
And learn from and grow through everything He's teaching me. Jam 1:2-4

Retired Members Corner



THE ROAD WE TRAVEL

We seem to be in the midst of another financial crisis. New forms of linguistic jargon crop up daily to leave me baffled. Banks are having a "haircut". When I have a haircut it costs about £5. The haircut for some banks will cost millions of pounds. Just whose hair is getting cut I'm not sure. Perhaps if they were "top sliced" they would have no hair to cut. Is there an official EU hairdresser appointed for this lucrative post? Then there's another term, "sovereign debt". I am fairly sure that the Queen is not in debt and I am also unaware of a return to the gold standard. Sovereign debt is incurred by sovereign borrowers, it seems. As far as I can gather this is money borrowed by the state to keep it in business. I might have problems with modern English usage but I certainly feel at home with the 400-year-old King James Version of the Bible. Crisis or no crisis, God is still on the throne.

When you are seated in your recliner chair in front of the fire, snoozing after a satisfying meal, do you ever look back at the road you have travelled so far? You think back to your days at school, maybe to WWII, to when you first started work, to when you left home, to all the places you have been to, to the day you retired, to those loved ones who have died, and you wonder what the future holds. Then you might say to yourself, "Where was God in all these experiences?" Was all this part of God's plan for me? The Bible tells me that I was chosen by Him before the foundation of the world (Eph 1 v 4). I was raised in a household that encouraged me to work my way through school with good results, both in England and Scotland. Was that God's plan - to enable me to pass the Civil Service examination and interview? Did He cause me to serve in an African colonial regiment in the Army in order to give me a desire to return to Africa in later life? Did He cause me to be posted to Northern Ireland in the Customs and Excise in order that I might hear the gospel and emerge from darkness into light? The answer to all these questions must be, "YES". My times were in His hands.

I remember way back in 1973 when VAT was in its infancy. I had been posted to a vacancy for a Surveyor (DP in NICS speak) in the VAT Office in Lisburn. I arrived in my car one Monday morning. I had a lot of books and personal items in the boot. Two members of the staff came out to the car to help me carry my gear

into the room allocated to me. They told me that they had heard I was coming and they were pleased. They were both Christians and they hoped I would start a lunchtime meeting in the office for prayer and Bible study. (My reputation had travelled ahead of me!) I said that it sounded a great idea to me. I obtained written permission from the head of office to hold meetings on official premises. Very soon eight Christians gathered on Wednesdays at lunchtime in my room for a time of fellowship. Was this why God placed me in the Civil Service?

One day one of our fellowship came to me and asked if I had ever heard of the Civil Service Christian Union. No, I hadn't. Well, there's a lady called Ethel Patterson in the N. Ireland Dept. of Education in Rathgael who could tell you all about it if you write to her. I wrote and we all joined. As time progressed Christians from the Inland Revenue office came to join us and soon we had regular meetings of 12 or more. Then three folk for whom we were praying accepted the Lord as Saviour. There were about one hundred in the building, many of them involved in visits to dangerous areas. None were hurt. The Customs had 8 killed on duty and many injured in the troubles. VAT staff were not popular, especially if they were distraining. The Lord was a very present help in our time of need.

In II Samuel 22, David looks back at how the Lord travelled with him on his journey through life. The Lord was his rock, his fortress, his deliverer (v2), his shield, his high tower and refuge (v3). The Lord delivered him from his enemies and all manner of dangers, seen and unseen. The Lord had rewarded him as he walked in His ways (v20- 22). The Lord had been his lamp in times of darkness (v29). He was able to say, "the Lord liveth and blessed be my Rock; and exalted be the God and Rock of my Salvation" (v47).

As I look back, I can concur with David regarding the faithfulness of God in His provision for me throughout my life. As regards the future, my journey is to a celestial city, a city whose builder and maker is God, the heavenly Jerusalem. The road is a narrow one but the Lord is able to keep me on it. I trust, dear reader, that you are journeying along the narrow road which leadeth to eternal life rather than the broad road that leadeth to destruction (Matt 7 v13/14). I am not walking alone. I have lost the travelling companions I had on the broad road but the Lord has given me many Christian friends who provide fellowship along the narrow way. Praise the Name of the Lord.