

When Surrender Does Not Relieve the Weight

Faith, Discouragement, and the Middle Path

The Paradox of Surrender

Psalm 37:5 is one of the most quoted and memorized verses in all of Christianity: “*Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act.*” For many, it sounds like a magical formula for instant relief. But what happens when you do exactly that, when you surrender your worries, pray fervently, lay your burden before the altar, and when you rise, the discouragement is still there, heavy and dark, dragging your days into the shadow of depression?

There is a sense of guilt that often accompanies the discouraged Christian: “**If I surrendered it, why do I still feel this weight?**” This is where we must align our theology with the reality of our mental health. As I often say: “*We may walk with our heads in the clouds, but our feet must remain on the ground.*”

1. Understanding the Nature of Discouragement

Discouragement that borders on depression is rarely just a problem of “lack of faith.” Human beings are a unified composition of spirit, mind, and body.

Sometimes the soul is ready to trust, but the mind is exhausted and the body is chemically imbalanced.

In Psalm 42:11, we see the psalmist in an honest internal dialogue: “*Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?*” He does not deny his discouragement; he questions it. The “*surrender*” of Psalm 37 is not a switch that turns off feelings, but a process of transferring authority. You surrender the outcome, but the emotions may take time to align with this new reality.

2. The Farmer and the Storm

Imagine a farmer who prepares the soil, sows carefully, and following the principle of Psalm 37:5 entrusts the harvest into God’s hands. He trusts that rain will come at the right time.

However, a severe storm approaches, or a prolonged drought strikes the land. The farmer feels fear. He becomes discouraged when he sees the dry field.

His trust in God does not cancel his perception of reality. The mistake many make is to think that “trusting” means “not feeling.”

Deep discouragement happens when we stop looking at the God who governs the rain and begin focusing only on the cracks in the soil. To surrender your way means accepting that, although the ground looks dry today, the Owner of the land is still in control.

3. The Practical Step: What to Do When Prayer Seems Not Enough

If you are on the edge between discouragement and depression, here are three foundational pillars to keep your feet on the ground:

A. Elijah’s Perspective: Rest for the Body

In 1 Kings 19, we see the prophet Elijah, a man of extraordinary faith, plunged into deep depression, wishing to die. God did not rebuke him for lack of faith. What did God do first? He gave him food and sleep.

Often, “spiritual discouragement” is actually physical and mental fatigue. Mental health requires caring for the temple of the Holy Spirit.

If your biological rhythm (your circadian intelligence) is broken, your perception of God will also be affected.

B. Therapeutic Vulnerability

Psalm 37:5 says “*trust in Him,*” but God has also given us the body of Christ (the Church) and science.

If discouragement persists, seeking professional help, a psychologist or Christian counselor, is not a lack of trust in God; it is the use of the resources God has placed on earth.

Keeping your feet on the ground means recognizing that sometimes we need a human arm to help us carry the burden while God works in the unseen.

C. Surrender as a Process, Not an Event

The word “**surrender**” in the original Hebrew carries the idea of “**rolling onto.**” It is as if you are carrying a heavy backpack and roll it onto the back of someone stronger.

The problem is that, out of habit, we often pull the backpack back. Practicing Psalm 37:5 is a daily exercise. If today you do not feel the “solution,” keep rolling the burden.

Faith is a muscle strengthened through resistance, not only through relief.

4. The Mental Health Insight: Validating Pain

Depression has a deceptive voice that says: “*God has abandoned you*” or “*You don’t have enough faith.*” As a mental health professional, I tell you: **Do not believe everything you feel when you are exhausted.**

Brain chemistry can distort theological reality. When you look at Psalm 37:5 and feel no joy, shift your focus from feeling to knowing. You may not feel peace, but you can **know** that He is faithful. **Depression is a dark cloud, but the cloud does not extinguish the sun, it only hides it for a moment.**

Between the Cloud and the Ground

If you are discouraged, do not punish yourself. Jesus, in Gethsemane, experienced deep anguish, to the point of sweating blood. He surrendered His way to the Father, but the cup was not immediately removed.

Practicing Psalm 37:5 while depressed is an act of spiritual heroism. It is saying: “*Lord, I do not feel Your presence, my heart is heavy, and my feet feel stuck to the ground, but I choose to place my way into Your hands again today.*”

Remember: God is not looking for perfect, smiling faith; He welcomes a contrite heart and a weary soul. If you cannot find the strength to walk, simply rest in Him. Sometimes, “surrendering your way” means allowing yourself to be carried by the One who never grows weary.

Keep your head turned toward the eternal promise (in the clouds), but allow your feet to rest in the reality of God’s daily care, even when that care comes in the form of silence, rest, or help from others.

You are not alone in this journey.

Pr. Paul Rech