

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

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Relationship, not Circumstances, is the Source of One's Strength

It is human nature to bemoan one's dire circumstances. Furthermore, regardless of what an individual's circumstances happen to be, there is something to bemoan in them; there is something that could be better. The old proverb is still true: the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. This means that, regardless of how good one has it, he will see something better that is out of his reach.

The truth is that much of the time one cannot really control his circumstances. He may be able to control some aspects, but overall, one cannot control them. However, it is not one's circumstances that actually define who and what he is. What defines a person is with whom he has a relationship. If one has a relationship with Mashiach Yeshua, then he will be one kind of person. If one does not have a relationship with Him, but claims to have a relationship with Him, then he will be another type of person. Finally, if one doesn't know Him, and doesn't care to know Him, then he will be a different person altogether.

In these verses from the Brit Chadasha (New Testament), the concept discussed is whether one has plenty or one has need. Either way, those things do not define who a person is. Rather, it is one's relationship with Mashiach. It is Mashiach who strengthens His people regardless of what one has or doesn't have.

Philippians 4:10

But I rejoice in Adonenu greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; wherein you were concerned, but you lacked opportunity.

Shaul, in writing to those who had believed in Yeshua as Mashiach in the city of Philippi, closes with remarks about how they had been quite concerned about their brother in the faith, but had not always had an opportunity to do anything about it. However, when they could do something about it, they did. This was a cause for rejoicing for Shaul and those with him, to praise YHWH.

Philippians 4:11

Not that I speak according to want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content.

However, the important thing that Shaul writes in this paragraph to His friends in Philippi is dealing with his own spiritual stability. He was always able to do his very best for YHWH regardless of whether he was in need or whether he had plenty. Either way, Shaul had learned how to be content with whatever it was that YHWH had blessed him.

How many truly can say that today? With the way that the media is, in the news, in TV shows, in movies, in all sorts of print media, on the radio, and even on the internet now, everything attempts to make a person dissatisfied with what he has and to want more in order to motivate him to go and spend money on the advertiser's products. Is there anyone these days who is truly content with what YHWH has supplied him? Have His people learned this most valuable of lessons today? His people surely need to if they haven't already!

Philippians 4:12

I know how to live in want, and I know also how to live in plenty; in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to have plenty and to be in want.

In the West, people have learned how to live with plenty. However, have those same people learned how to live in times of plenty in a manner pleasing to our heavenly Father?

Times seem to be close at hand for learning to live in times of need. Will you be able to do that? Particularly those of you who have learned about the Hebrew Roots movement and have begun the process of coming out of Babylon and Egypt: will you be able to live through a time of want? Or, will you be like that generation who came out in the first exodus and was always complaining and grumbling against YHWH and His chosen leader and was not pleased with them and laid them low in the wilderness?

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him that strengthens me.

This is true; one can do all things through Mashiach who strengthens him. However, if one does not practice this on a daily basis now, how will one be able to do this when his life depends upon it? It is truly doubtful that one would be able to do this then if he is not now doing it.

Philippians 4:14

Nevertheless you have done well to share in my affliction.

When a friend and brother steps into hard times, his brothers and sisters in Mashiach should go to his side, lift him up, and do what they can to ease the affliction. All too often, what happens is that the one who falls on hard times of any kind is kicked when he is down. Do not reject his friendship when the

chips are down. Yeshua said that what one does unto the least of His brethren, one is doing to Him. How have you been treating Yeshua lately?

Philippians 4:15-16

15 And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that in the beginning of the Besorah, when I departed from Macedonia, no assembly had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent more than once for my need.

This seems to be a pretty high commendation from Shaul, as no other assembly accepted him and helped him. It seems that this was most likely one of those times in which he was in need. It is easy to support a winner, someone we can see with our physical eyes as being blessed with great and wondrous things from YHWH. However, to stick with one who is on hard times, that is another matter altogether. Apparently, these believers at Philippi had done that very thing and stuck with Shaul through his hard times.

Philippians 4:17

Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increases to your account.

Shaul wants to make it very clear that he is not after more support, but rather he is after helping them increase their fruit in the world to come. The sad thing is that there have been many unscrupulous men in the past, and there are even many today, who go after dishonest gain in order to rob and steal from YHWH's people by saying such things as Shaul said, but who do not mean what they are saying. Rather, what many are interested in today is bilking the sheep of His pasture in order to line their own pockets.

However, Shaul was not really interested in the gift, but what the gift would do for the giver of that gift.

Philippians 4:18

But I have received everything in full, and have abundance, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to Elohim.

More than anything, Shaul wants them to know that he has received the full gift they had sent to him via a fellow believer. It was not only a sweet smelling aroma to him, but it was also a sweet smelling aroma to YHWH, as well.

When one does his very best to help others, then this is very pleasing to YHWH, particularly when one does it without any strings attached and does not expect anything in return. When one does this, then YHWH is free to do His very best for him, which will always be beyond anything one could think or expect.

Philippians 4:19

And my Elohim shall supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Yeshua the Mashiach.

YHWH has promised to supply every need of His people. This does not mean He will supply all of their wants. However, it does mean that what He has called a person to do, this He will supply to him without reservation. He will not lack anything in doing the task He has called him to do.

If one is lacking in some area, then he should diligently seek His face to see if he is in His will in that particular area, because chances are that he is off in some way and needs a course correction to make sure he is on target and on the straight and narrow path.

Philippians 4:20

Now to our Father Elohim is the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Why do you do what you do? Is it to receive recognition? If so, then you need to back up some and really take into account that one is supposed to be doing what he is doing in order to bring glory and honor to YHWH, not to himself!

ABBA YHWH, establish a good, healthy, and strong relationship with us, and do whatever it takes in our lives to bring this to pass; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amen.

Shabbat Shalom

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