
ARTIOS

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The Afflicted Soul

Isaiah 58 teaches us how to avoid an afflicted soul and how to help others avoid it too.

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You might not be religious, but you might have an afflicted soul. You know someone who has one most definitely. It is a well-known fact that some worldly religions promote soul-affliction, when one treats self in a punishing or depriving manner. One can also be treated this way. Both Christian and non-Christian religions and associated denominations practice this. Satanists cast spells. Roman Catholic Monks have been known to whip themselves. Devout followers of another group fast. Others weep. While many groups teach that the affliction of the soul is proper and to be expected, the Christian Epistles do not. The end result of all soul-affliction is a tormented body and a defeated mind. God has enable us to remove our own afflictions and other's afflictions as well.

Isaiah 58:5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? **is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?** wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

These people were doing this to themselves and asking God to put His stamp of approval on it. They



This kind of thinking turns our relationship with God into a Cat and Mouse situation with never-ending games of torment.

called it acceptable, but God did not.

Isaiah 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Isaiah 58:7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Isaiah 58:10 **And if thou draw out thy soul to the**

hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:

God's plan is a far cry from the book-thumping people that promote affliction. While God will afflict devilish people, He will never afflict you. He wants you happy, healthy and blessed.

God brought Israel out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 26:7-8 And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression:

And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders:

Man is so quick to jump to conclusions when he becomes afflicted. He blames God. God is easy to blame, but that doesn't mean He afflicted you. This kind of thinking turns our relationship with God into a Cat and Mouse situation with never-ending games of torment. I really hope you don't think of God in this fashion. He

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doesn't and He won't. When you read the bible, you must be sure of "to whom" it is addressed. If you are reading words written to the non-Christians and try to apply them to you, you will only become confused. The New Testament is written to Christians and even within these writings, certain non-Christian groups are addressed.

To understand soul-affliction, you must understand the difference between the soul and the body. If you are parents, in raising your children, you eventually understand that you are not raising their bodies. Instead, you are raising their souls, and what a difference there is between the two. You are helping them care for their bodies with instructions on diet, exercise, hygiene and so forth. But your real efforts are soul-directed. You spend great amounts of time, when they are young, molding their souls. When they are born into the world, they are lovely little bundles of moldable clay. Rods or whips can shape them. You correct their thoughts, their actions and their words. They soon learn what to expect from you and they abide within those confines. If you are a lousy artist, non-biblically minded and impatient, your lump of clay ends up looking afflicted. If you are a good artist, patient and loving, your lump of clay turns out like a wonderful work of art. There are plenty examples of both all around.

As you grow up, you learn to not eat too many doughnuts or you'll put on too much weight. You learn to not stay up too late or you'll feel tired the next day. You learn that if

you don't work out you'll be in lousy physical shape. And while these all have some impact on how you feel about yourself, they don't impact the direction of your soul. For instance, if you lie a lot, no matter how much you diet, you will still have a misdirected soul and you will experience the results of it. If you steal, you will still have soul suffering. If you misbehave sexually, you will face up to those consequences, and all of these are in a much different category than if you are physically out of shape. If you are mean and grouchy, others will let you know just what they

There is no verse in the bible that uses the word "soul" with either eternal or immortal. That combination does not exist.

think of that. The same is true for disobedience, law-breaking, bad morals and ethics and the list goes on and on and on. **Physical maintenance is routine. Soul maintenance is hard work, far from being routine.**

When dealing with your personal issues, separate body and soul. Some religions do not. They teach that perfection of the soul comes from physical activities, i.e. eating, breathing, fasting, exercising, etc. In fact, most religions teach that the soul is immortal, that it is the part of you that goes to heaven or hell. This is one of the greatest lies propounded in the world today! **The soul is not immortal and it never will be.** There is no verse in the bible that uses the word "soul" with either eternal or immortal.

That combination does not exist. I was raised in a Christian denomination that proclaimed then and proclaims now that the soul is immortal. Their main message is in saving the soul. Folks, the soul cannot be saved. It is a temporal entity that dies when you take your last breath. I suppose the reason they feel the need to pump up this ever so false doctrine is because they want you to believe that when you die, you really don't. They want you to believe that you immediately go to another place, be it limbo, purgatory, hell, heaven or wherever. How stupid we have been to allow ourselves to fall right into the hands of satan himself for he is the one who promotes such non-biblical doctrines.

When you die, you go to the grave and **STAY THERE** until Jesus Christ returns (Christians):

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18
For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Or until the judgment time (non-Christian):

Revelation 20:1-15 And I

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saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

In speaking to Christians, this is when you will be given a new body, one completely heavenly. This body will have a completely different life force than the temporal soul life you have today. Today, your temporal soul contains your mind and reasoning abilities. It is confined to this realm and will NEVER enter into the heavenly realm. It is not good enough for that. In fact, nothing you have today will enter into the heavenly realm. Not your earthy body, soul, worldly ways – NOTHING! Today, you are free to do with it

what you want. **You can throw away all of your God-given abilities or you can amass the great wealth of abilities and do good.** These are your ever-present choices.

If you are really smart, you will add something to the body and soul that will alter your course in life forever. That something is a heavenly gift called holy spirit. You receive it by becoming saved.

Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and

Good comes from God and His son Jesus Christ. Evil – every form of it – comes from the devil and his servants!

shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

If YOU want to be present at the return of Jesus Christ and participate in it, you must be saved or born again. I'm not going to twist your arm to do this. You need to do your own arm twisting. But, I do want you to know you will NEVER see into the heavenly spiritual realm, now or later, if you aren't born again.

If you have a physical issue, handle it within the physical realm. If you have a soul issue, handle it in the mental realm.

God will not afflict you. The devil will. In a recent teaching, I taught that satan afflicts the body, but he

STRIKES OUT AT THE SOUL. If he can hurt the soul in any way, he can slow you down and even kill you.

John 10:10 The thief (the devil) cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I (Jesus Christ) am come that they (you) might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

Jesus Christ came to give you life – NOT AFFLICTION. Jesus Christ represents God 100%. Since this is true about Jesus Christ, it is also true about God! On the other hand, the devil came as a thief to steal from your soul, kill your soul and destroy you. The difference between the two is like day and night! **Don't ever mix up the sources of good and evil.** Good comes from God and His son Jesus Christ. Evil – every form of it – comes from the devil and his servants!

So, are you having a physical affliction or a soul affliction? Once you figure it out and answer this question, you can address it properly. I would like to address the problem as if you had soul-affliction.

When I speak of soul-affliction, I speak of one who is tormented mentally and emotionally, way down deep in a place that doesn't seem to change no matter what is done to change it. I am not speaking of the things this person has done to get or stay this way. I am speaking of the state he is

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currently in. Is he depressed, hurt, mean, jealous, _____ you fill in the blank? Is his soul misguided and does it need to be redirected?

I want you to understand that you can see your own state and do something about it, whether it requires activity changes or doctrinal changes. If you are tired of feeling the way you feel, do something about it now! Change the direction of your soul. Learn to feed it a proper diet and it will respond properly. Learn to slap your soul into shape and never accept no for an answer. If you are a parent and your kids are always telling you “no,” then your soul is probably telling you the same. **Learn to take charge of your life by directing your soul into the ways of God.** No other way will work if you expect life more than abundant.

It's not enough to delight in the ways of God. Many people do this and are miserable. It takes more. How much more? Isaiah 58 tells us:

Isaiah 58:2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

These guys sought after God daily in prayer and other things and they delighted to know His ways. They acted righteously and abided by God's laws.

Isaiah 58:3 Wherefore have we fasted, *say they*, and thou seest not? *wherefore* have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

They fasted and afflicted their souls by making themselves miserable physically. They even found pleasure in these things. God didn't like this at all. Why?

If you are tired of feeling the way you feel, do something about it now! Change the direction of your soul.

Isaiah 58:4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as *ye do this* day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

Because their motives were completely wrong. They were doing these things for all the wrong reasons! They figured that if they did these things, God would like them even more. Their reasons were fighting and arguing and hurting people. They assumed that since they were making themselves so afflicted they should have power over others. Wrong!

God wouldn't buy it then and He won't buy it now. Why? Because He already accepted you. There is

no need to become reaccepted by God. That stated, there could be a good case that His Word, the bible, has become unacceptable to you. And this is always where the breakdown occurs. **As soon as you disagree with His Word, you break down.**

Isaiah 58:5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? *is it* to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes *under him*? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

This guy in verse five looks pretty broken down, doesn't he? If you are going to repair the breakdowns in the soul, you must reintroduce God's Word. And just what is God's Word along this line?

Isaiah 58:6 *Is* not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Isaiah 58:7 *Is it* not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

For God's sake, don't do what these people were doing by hurting themselves and others. Do you know how easy it is to hurt another's soul? It's really easy!

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Sharp words, mean looks, unspoken words between spoken words, bad attitudes and the list just goes on. Most of us are all too familiar with these things whether we do them or are their recipients. **Never afflict a soul.** It has a really bad pay back possibility. **Learn to bless and help other souls.** If you have been wicked to others, stop it now and fix it. Undo your wickedness. If you see another banded by someone's wickedness, help him out of it. If you see someone with heavy burdens, and if he is willing to receive help (some are not), help him. Perhaps you can carry some of his load until he is strong enough to carry his own. **The soul can become mighty if allowed to.** In fact, God wants us to love Him with all the might of our soul.

Deuteronomy 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy **soul**, and with all thy **might**.

Spare no energy in these matters. No matter the oppression, help people out of it by ministering to their souls. Teach them God's Word so that there is a great and mighty Christian biblical foundation in their lives. Instead of refusing people, accept them into your life and help them with their needs be they food, shelter or clothing. Always be ready to help others. Whatever you do, don't allow yourself to sink so low that you hide from you own self. **If you do hide from yourself, you signal the beginning of a most dreadful self-tragedy – a true soul affliction.**

What can you expect if you do these things God's Way?

Isaiah 58:8-12 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward (rear guard).

Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I *am*. If thou take away from the midst of thee

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the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

And *if* thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness *be* as the noon day:

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

And *they that shall be* of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

How about - great health, a righteous lifestyle, God protecting your backside and answered prayers. You will remove the darkness in your own life and shine God's light to others still in darkness. The darkest spot in you will be as dim as the noonday. Not only these things, but also God will guide you continually, be as waters to your thirsty soul and health to your bones. Why, you'll be so bubbly that you won't recognize yourself. Your good works will impact people for generations to come. Do you know what God will call you? He will call you the repairer of the breach (broken places including broken souls) and the restorer of paths to dwell in (leading home). What more do you want? While most people sit at home and stew in their misery, you won't be part of that lot. You'll know the importance of removing your own affliction and helping others with the removal of theirs!

God bless you abundantly,

Jerry D. Brown