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M. Solutions

“Is anyone of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.” James 5:13

1. *“Is anyone of you in trouble” - kakopatheis tis en humin*

The verb for in **trouble** is in the present active indicative of kakopatheo. The indicative mood stresses the reality of it, and the present tense tells us that this was something currently going on in their lives.

En humin, among you, is in the context of their local church. **Not every believer is having the same experience at the same time as other believers.** For some they're happy and everything is fine. While for other believers it isn't. This passage deals with believers who are having problems.

The word for having **trouble** is *kakopatheo* from the *pascho* word group. Some have translated it as suffering, with the idea that it refers to physical suffering such as sickness, etc., but that idea is covered later on. In context we have **two mental attitude states that believers were experiencing** and what they are to do in each one. Their applications are in opposition to each other, **praying, or singing songs of praise**, so their mental attitude states are in opposition to each other. **So if the one is cheerful, then the other must be its opposite.**

The basic meaning of *pascho* was to suffer from something which stems from outside myself, but affects me for good or bad. Originally it meant no more than to be affected by something. How one was affected had to be made clear by adding the words good or bad. *Pascho* had the idea of **that which is passively experienced**. But for the most part, *pathos* described the emotions of the soul, human feelings and impulses, which a man does not produce within himself, but finds present nevertheless, and by which he can be carried away, or at the very least to be affected by them.

These are the feelings that spring up by themselves and not necessarily because of some thought or decision that we have made. All of us, at one time or another, have experienced this phenomenon, where we are overcome with certain kinds of feelings and haven't got a clue where they came from, but affect us nonetheless, sometimes even overwhelming our soul. They could be from the subconscious, the heart, demons, but we don't know. All we know is that we are being affected adversely by them and they can indirectly affect our bodies!

They could be good feelings, or they could be bad! We even have this same phenomenon happening when we're cheerful or happy. How many times have we been happy and somebody will say, “You sure seem to be in a good mood, what's going on?” And the reply we often make is, **“I don't know. I'm just in a good mood and don't know the reason why!”**

So often the case with feelings is that we don't know where they're coming from, or why they're there, but we experience them nonetheless and they affect us for the good or the bad. That's one of the hard things for us when dealing with these feelings or moods; we don't know why we're having them and seem powerless to get rid of them! But this passage in the Bible teaches us how to deal with them, or what to do when we're having them. And judging by what I've seen going on in America it's something that all believers need to learn and apply.

Kakopattheo, here, tells us **what kind of feelings we're experiencing in this passage - bad feelings.** The word *kakos*, that is prefixed to *pattheo*, refers to things that are **bad, evil, destructive and malignant; feelings that are not beneficial to us.** It would refer to the kind of feelings that none of us want to have, such as anger, depression, despondency, despair, discouragement, moods that get us down that we can't even define.

We need to avoid the temptation of trying to identify and categorize what all these feelings are, whether in a clinical sense, or in our own limited abilities to put a specific name to a specific feeling. Instead, what we need to do is to adopt the scriptural position of gathering up all the bad feelings that believers experience into this group of *kakopattheo* regardless of what they are.

We may be in a mood; we may be depressed; we may be “down” as we would say; we may be agitated; we may be anxious and not know why; we may be afraid or angry and not know even know it's fear or anger! **The truth of the matter is we don't know most of the time what has caused the negative feelings we're experiencing; most of time we can't even explain what the feelings are!** All we know is that we're down, or our soul is in turmoil, or we're agitated for some reason. We don't know why, what it is, or how to deal with it. **It may even be due to an internal change of spiritual growth.**

This passage tells us what we're to do; **pray** to God about them and just be praying to God while we're experiencing them. And we need to know that **not all bad feelings, *kakopathos*, can be linked to some personal sin.** Bad feelings can be experienced in us at the present time, because something recently occurred that triggered old feelings connected to past experiences that we have had.

Kakopattheo really refers to “**feeling down**”. It could be fear, anxiety, worry, anger, depression, sadness, guilt; it would refer to all sorts of negative moods or feelings. Mental torment, which what the passage in 1 John speaks of where it says that, “*Fear hath torment*”, is a negative feeling, and is caused by **fear springing up out of insecurity. Insecurity can be caused by unsettling changes in one's life, job, friendships, home, country, health, finances, personal temperament and all sorts of things.**

When we're feeling down, for whatever the reason, what God wants us to do during that time is to be **praying to him**. That's the Biblical position for handling it. Most times we will find that in time, “This too shall pass”. Now, if one is having a persistent problem in an area; one where there is no relief, the believer needs to pray to God for direction in what to do about it. The “mood” may be from a neurological problem, psychological, or hormonal. One should seek the Lord's leading in this area to go to a competent physician (healer) to deal with the problem.

Not all moods are “spiritual” in nature. Look at Elijah; he was really down, as we would say. And look at what God's solution for him was, some good food and a good night's sleep. **Our problem could be spiritual in nature, physical, or emotional, or all three! It's important to have the correct diagnosis for the important thing is to get the healing that your body and soul need! Let the Lord direct you and seek out the most competent experts that you can in their fields.**

Grief can be an emotion in the category of *kakopattheo*. Not because grief is intrinsically bad, **but because of the destructive power that it can have on the soul and one's life if not properly dealt with**, when it is not allowed to be expressed. We may be suffering from unexpressed grief and not even know it! All we know is that we're experiencing a bad feeling in our emotions; we're down for some reason.

Anger is another destructive emotion, but there is a **righteous anger and a sinful anger**. There is anger over injustices, and there is anger because we did not get our way. There are outbursts of anger, and there is anger that is buried, seething and raging, both are destructive. Righteous anger can be released by channeling it into something constructive, sinful anger needs to be confessed. But most of the time our anger destroys our souls, our bodies and those around us. (See Bridging the GAP study).

Depression is an emotion that people have suffered from since the beginning of man. Its causes are many and it too is *kakopatheo*. It comes upon us sometimes for no reason at all and would take volumes of studies to cover it. Clinics exist by the thousands across the country all dealing with this problem, and even they don't have all the answers or solutions to the problem of depression.

Fear, anxiety and worry are feelings that overcome us at times. We may not know why we're afraid, or what we're afraid of; we may even know that what we're feeling is fear! **We do know that they arise out of the believer when he is not trusting the Lord**. We may be feeling **discouraged** at the time and not know it, or why we're discouraged, yet it would fall into this category. Or it may be that we're feeling **guilty** over something, or feeling like we're not worth anything, or maybe feeling shame.

Most people want to have a mood where we feel relaxed about things, calm, a sense of well-being, all the way to the optimum of feeling cheerful and confident. But instead we feel bad; we feel down, or agitated about something. We are feeling *kakopatheo* and **it isn't always our fault, and it isn't always due to a lack of spirituality**. Neurological problems, hormonal changes, being sick, childhood traumas, food allergies, even changes in the weather can cause us to "feel down". The point of all this is not to find fault, point the finger, or clinically define the malady, but to recognize the malady as negative feelings in the emotional life and solve the problem.

2. "Let him pray" - *proseuchesthe*

The present middle imperative deals with a command to continue an action that is in progress. What this is saying is that the believer is praying already and the Apostle commands him to continue praying. This is not a religious exercise, but is to be done because **the believer will be benefited by doing it**. Prayer is beneficial for the believer who is suffering due to negative feelings. The Lord is giving us the solution for what to do when negative feelings come upon us now and then; sometimes they overwhelm us plunging us into the depths of despair, and that is to pray!

The **first thing** we want to note is that **there is an answer; there is hope!** One of the things that hammer us down further, when our souls are so overwhelmed by moods and so on, is if we also begin **to feel there is no hope!** If we start to feel there is no help for us, no solution to our problem, no alleviation of the misery, then we start to go down even further. But because this passage tells us what to do in this kind of situation, and it's from the Lord himself, it gives us **hope!** Now we know what to do when we're overcome by, or just having problems with our emotions, keep on praying to the Lord!

Now all believers, who have been decimated by their unexplained negative emotions and have taken refuge in prayer with the Lord, know this is true by experience. But here we actually see it taught in the Word! Prayer is the solution for the times we are suffering because of our emotions. We only need to believe that it will work and apply it in our situation. And this is so important to us all, because our emotional state, those negative feelings that rise up for no reason at all it seems, adversely affect not only our state of mind, but our bodies as well. Our physical well-being is impacted more that we realize for the good or bad by our emotions.

The second thing, what else are we going to do? We usually try everything else and end up in prayer as the last resort, so this tells us to **make prayer our first resort!** For in prayer we will find comfort, encouragement, alleviation of the misery, strength, hope, peace, answers, or a direction to follow and many other wonderful things from God. We will find the peace and strength to go through it, or a way shown to get out of it.

So what does prayer do for us? One thing it does it **get our minds off the problem!** That in itself is a big help, for **occupation with suffering intensifies suffering, while occupation with Christ alleviates it.** Which is to say, thinking about our grief, anger, fears, worries, or whatever else it is that is troubling our minds, intensifies the misery we're experiencing, while drawing near to God in prayer alleviates our misery! "*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.*" Isaiah 26:3

Prayer also makes us want to get right with God. In prayer we ask God to point out our sins so that we can confess them to him, with the result that we will be forgiven and cleansed, and the possibility that our misery may have been caused by some mental attitude sin, and by confession the whole matter could be cleared up.

Prayer is also the vehicle by which we ask God for answers, for wisdom on what to do about the situation, on how to get out of it. It may be that in prayer and confession of sin the issue of the negative mood is all cleared up. But it may be that we're having some other reason for the problem and he will direct us to a course of action utilizing professionals to help us get the healing we need. Whatever will happen always begins with the matter of prayer to God.

Prayer is also the vehicle of our requests, our petitions. When a believer is "feeling down", for whatever the reason, he is in a hurtful situation and only God can help. So, according to his covenant relationship to us as our Helper, we ask him to help us. Read the OT and you will find that it is full of believer's experiences along this line.

Prayer is also comforting. It is of tremendous advantage to pull away from the world, people and suffering and draw near to God, for in his presence is comfort, peace and joy. It is extremely helpful to the believer to have his eyes and heart on the Lord in any kind of suffering, for as the grammar shows, it benefits the believer. And when you get down to it, that's about all we can do. If we're like everybody else, we probably have tried everything else we can think of and to no avail: doctors, medicine, self-help books, positive thinking, alternative healing, health regimens, other people's advice and they all may be helpful to some degree, but somehow don't solve the problem.

And lastly, because God commands us to do it. He would never command us to do this, if he didn't know for sure that it is the answer for feeling down. God never commands us to do something that we can't do; and he never commands us to do something if it will not benefit us in some way!

3. "*Is anyone happy?*" - *euthumei tis*

The word for **happy** here is *euthumeo*, and it comes from the *thumos* word group which speaks about the feelings and passions of the soul. *Epithumeo*, the word for lusts or desires, also comes from this word group, but refers to sinful desires. But we have the word *eu* prefixed to it, the word for well or good, making it *euthumeo*, so it refers to good feelings. **What it actually meant in those days was to be cheerful, to be in good spirits, to be in a good mood.**

Obviously we can see the contrast between these **two opposing emotional moods**, where one is feeling down due to negative feelings and the other where one is feeling up because of positive feelings; feeling down versus feeling up; **being in a bad mood versus being in a good mood**.

But this word also has the same idea that *kakopatheo* did **where the feelings can spring up all by themselves and not necessarily because of something that we had said, thought or did, or a decision**; not everything is volitional. Are you feeling down at this moment? Try this experiment - choose not to feel down. You see the problem.

Good feelings versus bad feelings, being in a good mood versus being in a down mood; we want the one and not the other. We seek after the one and not the other, but are unsuccessful. That's the problem with our emotions; we don't have the control over them that we think we do and would like to have. I know there are those out there, who think they have the answer for everything, that would disagree with this statement, but it's not always a matter of the mind, or the will, and it isn't true that all this can be controlled if we just want to bad enough.

You can make a choice to do something about feeling down by pursuing a course of action to find relief, but you just can't choose to turn off your "feeling down" like a light switch! Look at what Job went through. He could have chosen and wanted all he liked, but it still wasn't going to change his situation. All he could do was endure it until the Lord turned it around for him.

There are plenty of people out there who are like Job's comforters. They're either trying to dig up some sin that you have done; or they're telling you just to "cheer up", (what a novel thought, too bad we hadn't thought of it before), or to just "snap out of it". After all, you can if you really wanted to. These people do not help, all they do is impose an additional burden on us.

While it is true that we do have some control over our emotions by utilizing faith in the Word, having a positive mental attitude, etc., and some things we may be able to figure out, like, say, watching a sad movie or a funny comedy, or maybe getting down around the holidays or someone that you love passed away and it's the time of their birthday once again and you're down, you can see that, but as so often is the case, we don't know why we're in a mood! Trying to figure them out can also be exhausting and futile, that's why we're to apply God's solution by going to him in prayer, or singing as the case may be.

So here we have a case where the believer is in a good mood; he's happy or feeling cheerful for some reason. He may not even know why he is; he just is. You see, in a local church you will find believers going through all sorts of things and not everyone is experiencing the same phenomenon. Some may be very down and depressed over something, or for no apparent reason at all. While others may be cheerful! We need to rejoice with the ones who are rejoicing and be compassionate, loving, comforting and understanding to those who are feeling down, not take some legalistic approach to presume that you know what's wrong with them, or have the answers for them. **And we need to be ever mindful that we may be next!!**

4. "Let him sing songs" - *psalleto*

Psallo referred to the singing of an hymn, a psalm, sacred song, or hymn of praise. The noun psalmos referred to the actual hymn that was sung. Originally, psalmos referred to the sound made by a musical instrument, usually a plucked instrument such as a harp.

Psallo and *psalmos* had two basic meanings. The first meaning dealt with one of the OT psalms in the Bible, whether sung or chanted, accepted sacred songs, or NT quotes which were sung or chanted. The second meaning would be any spiritual song of praise or thanksgiving to God sung by the believer to the Lord. Context would determine which one would be used. The former in a formal church setting, which would also be sung by Christians outside of church. The latter by believers from all walks and places, who could break forth in song at any moment, even making up their own melodies and words.

Again we have this in a form of a **command**. God is commanding us what he wants us to do in this situation. **If we're down, then pray! If we're in a cheerful mood, then sing songs of praise to him with thanksgiving!** What a fantastic concept this would be to see if all Christians obeyed God in this way. Why we would see the entire church on earth doing one of these two things all the time - praying or singing! Think of what it would be like to live in your town with thousands and thousands of Christians praying and singing all the time! What a testimony to Christ that would be.

The middle voice is not used here, just the active, perhaps to emphasize our volitional responsibility to obey God in this situation by singing, while in the matter of praying when feeling down it was to emphasize that prayer is really beneficial in those times. If we're in a cheerful mood, we already are being benefited.

Singing is perhaps more important to the life and soul than we know. It appears that it is a vital aspect of, and part of our existence. Namely that God created man to sing along with the other aspects of his humanity. Man is able to modulate his voice, compose lyrics and melodies, sing in harmony, even understand the mathematics of music. All people and cultures have music, play music or sing songs. It is not a cultural phenomenon, but a human phenomenon expressed in culture.

History shows that it has been this way since the beginning showing that it is a concept put there in man by God, and seeing that it is a part of our humanity it should be there on a daily basis. David sang songs of praise and thanksgiving, both formally in the great assembly and in his privacy. All the men of the books of Psalms sang; the nation of Israel sang and Israel's national choir sang. The early church sang; Christ sings songs of praise right now to the Father, "*Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.*" Hebrews 2:12, even the NT consists of songs that were sang or chanted.

Basically, singing is an expression of joy. Some think if you sing it'll make you happy. But it's the other way around in this passage. But singing is also an expression of **being thankful, of love and of praise to God.** And sometimes singing comes about just **because we're in a good mood, cheerful, in good spirits.** And did we mention the angels? All the unfallen angels, who are obviously always happy, cheerful, in a good mood, sing all the time!

Heaven is not only a place of peace and joy, a place where everybody, God, man and angels are in "good spirits", but a place where music, harmony and singing occur all the time. Perfect music, perfect harmony, perfect melody, music that is mathematically and doctrinally perfect, and with music, melody and singing that fit the occasion and the soul.

To have music, melody with singing, there has to be words that are true, positive and uplifting; and the sound of the music has to be soothing and beneficial to body and soul. If these things aren't there, then all you have is irritating noise. (Does that sound like much of the stuff we hear today?) Anyway, if we find ourselves in a cheerful mood, for whatever the reason, God commands us to sing songs of praise and thanksgiving.

N. The impact of the feelings on the spiritual life.

“We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange - I speak to you as to my children - open wide your hearts also.”

2 Corinthians 6:11-13

To set the context **it was the communication ministry of the Apostle Paul, as he was filled with the Holy Spirit and operating in his new nature, that established a spiritual connection or conduit for the flow of spiritual phenomenon to the Corinthian church.** It not only established a spiritual connection to them, but was to be the basis for the inner working of spiritual phenomenon in their souls.

Think of it like a mother bird flying home with food for her chicks. She has the food in her mouth and from her mouth she transfers the food to her chick's mouths. Once they eat and swallow it they will have the nourishment to provide their physical needs. **But if their necks have some kind of binding device around them that cuts of the flow of the food, then the entire physical dynamic soon breaks down and comes to a halt; sickness then ensues.**

Paul said that they were being restrained - not by them, (he and the other Apostles), but by something of their own doing. There was something going on inside of them that not only choked off the spiritual flow of the Word into them, but the spiritual flow inside of them!

To explain what's going on Paul uses the word, *stenochoria*, to describe the dynamic that takes place inside the soul that causes the shutting down of the spiritual flow. *Stenochoria* meant to restrain, to constrain; it has the idea of restraining something, a narrowing or constricting of something, like a boa constrictor would do, or like pinching off a garden hose so that the water can't flow through.

When we talk about “spiritual flow” we're talking about the filling of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual phenomenon that occurs when faith is combined with the teaching of the Word of God. The Apostle Peter put it as, *“partaking in the divine nature”*, **which is we being able to experience for ourselves the wonder of wonders - God's very own spiritual dynamic!** This is where the peace, the calm, the clarity, the love, the hope, the joy and all the other wonderful things that can be found in his spiritual state can actually be experienced in **our** souls!

But there is something going on inside of us that cuts this off; it restrains it from going on. There's something that is taking place inside of us that constricts the flow of this wonderful spiritual dynamic, and it is our **feelings! It is our emotions that are constricting around our spiritual pipe, so to speak, that prevent the flow of the spiritual dynamic inside of us.**

The problem with our feelings is that they not only choke off the flow of spiritual energy, but that they can also make us miserable both in our souls and our bodies. Who has not been decimated by fear; made miserable by guilt; choked by worry; overcome by grief and plagued by hurtful feelings out of the past? And what happens to God's peace, love and joy in our hearts when these feelings are there? It's choked off; not allowed to course through our souls. **The emotions act in such a way that they constrict the spiritual dynamic.** The activity of sin in the flesh creates severe negative agitation in the emotions resulting in severe negative feelings. The filling of the Holy Spirit, though, renders the sin nature inactive, thereby ceasing its destructive influence on the emotional center.

The verb *stenochoreo* is in the present passive indicative telling us that this was something that was currently going on; thankfully it was not a condition, something of a more permanent nature, but something that was currently going on in their souls, which tells us that it could stop! The indicative mood stresses the reality of it. In the passive voice it tells us that they were receiving the action; **something was acting upon them to close off the spiritual dynamic inside them, to constrict it, and it was their feelings or emotions that was the thing doing it!**

When studying out the effect that the emotional life has on the body, we have seen that there is a direct cause and effect of one on the other. Many books have been written on this subject, some going into great detail specifying even what emotions can affect the different parts of the body and the different maladies they produce. The emotions can and do have an affect on our physical life and they can and do have an affect on our spiritual life. They tighten things up, constrict it, as Paul has it here, so that the flow of spiritual energy is stopped inside us. But they can be rectified by confession of sins, claiming the promises of God, being filled with the Holy Spirit and operating in the new nature.

Fear and anger do all kinds of detrimental things to the body. One of the things they do, especially anger, is tighten up the muscles, not all the muscles in the body, but muscles involved along their meridian lines. It's very common, natural, when experiencing a negative feeling, (and who knows what it is), to find an area in your back, or hamstrings tighten up, or get into knots because of that feeling. Or we may get stressed out over our job and find that our neck and shoulders get very tight. And as they get tighter and tighter, the next thing we know is that our backs are pulled out of alignment. It isn't a physical injury that is causing our problem, nor working hard on the job, although that can happen, **it's our emotions that are doing it to us!** Who hasn't had their stomach hurt them, when they've been worried about things?

O. Solutions Continued.

“Is anyone of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.” James 5:14

1. *“Is anyone of you sick?” - Asthenei tis humin?*

Astheneo speaks of weakness, infirmity, disease and sickness. **It is the opposite of strength and of being healthy**. It can refer to moral weakness, economic weakness, even military weakness, but here it refers to physical weakness. It is not to be thought of in the sense of being strong or weak in the area of muscle strength, although that could apply, but in **the area of one's health**. So it would cover everything from actually being sick, as we would say, to diseases, infection, all the way to having a **weakened immune system**.

Having a weakened immune system is so prevalent today in America due primarily to the toxicity of the environment. The **air** we breathe is polluted due to smog and chemtrails; the **water** we drink has chemicals in it, most of which are not filtered out by municipal water treatment plants; the **food** we eat has chemical pesticides, fungicides and fertilizers in it, not to mention being deficient in minerals and the things our bodies need. Then there is the **electronic pollution** of cell phones, TV's, radio transmitters, microwaves, the electronic devices we can't seem to do without, high voltage lines, satellites that sweep through us every moment, not to mention the **moral pollution** of our society. **And we wonder why we feel weak, sick, tired and run down!**