

June 2014 Newsletter – Dealing With Emotions – Review

Twenty-seven

Looking for clues would be the first step we take after having determined that something is not right. Now most people don't care about these things because they are too busy making money and trying to get ahead in life. But for the believer who wants to live in a state of peace and have daily communion with God, then it's important to him or her.

James tells us that if we're in a **mood**, or down over something, then we are commanded to keep on praying. *“Is any among you **afflicted**? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.” James 5:13* He also tells us that we're to ask God for wisdom on everything and this includes asking God for wisdom concerning what's going on **inside** our souls! Which also carries with it the idea that he will give us the wisdom on what's wrong, but also on **what to do about it!** *“If any of you lack **wisdom**, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5*

One of the first clues we need to observe is if there is an absence of God's peace? Peace is produced by the filling of the Holy Spirit along with love and joy, so it would indicate that we are not filled with the Holy Spirit. Another clue we could be looking for is there divine discipline in my life? If so, then what is connected to?

These clues are generally clustered around our physical health where we could be having a physical problem in our lives. So we need to ask the questions of, is it corrective discipline? are we violating God's laws for our bodies? is it self-induced misery? is it tension myositis syndrome related? So we must investigate each area to determine that it isn't corrective discipline and that it isn't self-induced misery; we also need to do to be certain that it isn't our diet that is causing our bodies problems. But we also need to ascertain if whether our physical discomfort is due to stress or unresolved emotions!

By observing the clues with an open mind we are now ready to seek solutions. But where do we go? Whom do we talk to about the matter? What approach do we use? This is where James 1:5 comes in and is vital to the process. *“If any of you lack **wisdom**, (and we do), let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”* Assuming that our problems are connected to repressed feelings, and if they're repressed then there is no way we will be able to ascertain if that's our problem, then we have to go to God and keep going to God for the wisdom on what to do about it.

The problem with repressed feelings is that they are repressed down into the subconscious. And down there we can't see what they are! They may be tied to fear, or anger, or something else, but down there we can't *see* what they are. And if we can't see them, then we can't deal with them. So we need wisdom on the matter and only God can direct us in the path to get that wisdom.

The priesthood function of prayer to God for wisdom pertaining to the things of one's body and soul are crucial to the health of our souls and bodies! The omniscient God knew all the knowable back in eternity past and not only that he knows everything about our bodies and souls for he created them! So he knows exactly what to do about these matters and that's why we have to ask him for wisdom. He may lead us to a competent physician, or he may lead us to a psychologist, or he may lead us to a health practitioner, but it's God answering our prayer for wisdom.

Let's say that our physical health isn't what we'd like it to be. What do we do? We go to the Father and ask him for the wisdom, doctrine that will be applied to the situation, and he will give it to us. But he also expects us to apply it! If it is divine discipline, where God is trying to straighten out our path in life or deal with an area of sin, then we go to God in prayer asking him for the wisdom and he'll show us what it is and what to do about it.

If we have a misery index going on in our lives, whether self-induced misery, (we should be able to figure that one out, but if we don't, then he'll show us what it is), or tension myositis complex, and we don't know what is causing it, then we go to God in prayer asking him for the wisdom on what to do about it. We may have to go to him over and over until we get the answers, but he has promised he will give us the wisdom.

We may be eating junk food and that's what's contributing to our bad health. We may be eating foods that our bodies can't tolerate. Just because other people can eat a certain kind of food doesn't mean that **we** can! We may not be able to sleep well at night due to indigestion from eating spicy foods, or from just eating late at night! Remember, everybody's body is different!

Now when God gives us the wisdom in reply to our prayer request he expects us to do it. The believer must not deceive himself in this matter; he is to do what God tells him to do, or what God leads him to do, such as, seeking help from a competent professional. What that means is that he might need to stop eating junk food altogether, or start a regimen of diet and exercise, or to eliminate the foods and drinks that aren't good for his body, or to give up the booze and/or drugs! He might start eating the right foods for his physical health, in the right proportions and at the right time of day. One may also be led to start a quality supplemental program for their health and God will provide the extra money for it.

And if their physical problems, (one of the clues), are caused by negative, destructive feelings, then God in his wisdom will reveal that to us as well. He will also give us the wisdom on identifying them and how to deal with them doctrinally. The concept of God searching our hearts would be a part of our healing as well. *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”* Psalms 139:23,24

Stiff Necked Believers

Intro: What is it that causes us so much problem in our lives and interferes with us having fellowship with God and receiving his blessings on our lives? Could it be that the problem is one of pride? This is a short study on pride and its effect even on our bodies.

Old Testament References

Deuteronomy 21:18 - *“If a man have a **stubborn** (sarar) and rebellious (marah) son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them:”* סורר ומורה

Deuteronomy 21:20 - *“And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is **stubborn** and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.”* סורר ומרה

Exodus 32:9 - *“And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a **stiffnecked** people:”* עם־קשה־עַרֶף

Exodus 33:3 - *“Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for*

thou art a **stiffnecked** people: lest I consume thee in the way." עַם־קִשְׁה־עַרְף

Exodus 33:5 - "For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a **stiffnecked** people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee." עַם־קִשְׁה־עַרְף

Exodus 34:9 - "And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a **stiffnecked** people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance." עַם־קִשְׁה־עַרְף

Deuteronomy 9:6 - "Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a **stiffnecked** people." עַם־קִשְׁה־עַרְף

Deuteronomy 9:13 - "Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a **stiffnecked** people:" עַם־קִשְׁה־עַרְף

Deuteronomy 9:27 - "Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the **stubbornness** of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin:" אֶל־קִשְׁי־הָעַם הַזֶּה

Deuteronomy 10:16 - "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked." וְעַרְפְּכֶם לֹא תִקְשׁוּ

Deuteronomy 31:27 - "For I know thy rebellion, and thy **stiff neck**: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?" וְאַתֶּם־ עַרְפֹּךְ הַקִּשְׁה

Judges 2:19 - "And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their **stubborn** way." וּמְדַרְכֵם הַקִּשְׁה

1 Samuel 15:23 - "For **rebellion** is as the sin of witchcraft, and **stubbornness**, (patsar), is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." הַפְצַר

2 Kings 17:14 - "Notwithstanding they would not hear; but **hardened their necks**, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God." וַיִּקְשׁוּ אֶת־עַרְפֵּם

2 Chronicles 30:8 - "Now be ye not **stiffnecked**, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you." אֶל־תִּקְשׁוּ עַרְפְּכֶם

2 Chronicles 36:13 - "And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he **stiffened his neck**, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel." וַיִּקְשׂ אֶת־עַרְפוֹ

Nehemiah 9:16 - "But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and **hardened their necks**, and hearkened not to thy commandments," וַיִּקְשׁוּ אֶת־עַרְפֵם

Nehemiah 9:17 - "And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but **hardened their necks**, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not." קִשׁוּ אֶת־עַרְפֵם

Nehemiah 9:29 - "And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder, and **hardened their neck**, and would not hear." וְעַרְפֵם הַקִּשׁוּ

Psalms 78:8 - "And might not be as their fathers, a **stubborn**, (sarar), and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God. סוֹרֵר וּמֵרָה

Proverbs 7:11 - "(She is loud and **stubborn**, (sarar); her feet abide not in her house:" וּסְרָרַת

Proverbs 29:1 - "He, that being often reprov'd **hardeneth his neck**, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." מִקְשְׁה־עַרְף

Isaiah 48:4 - "Because I knew that thou art **obstinate**, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;" קִשְׁה אֶתָּה וּגְיִד בְּרִזֵל עַרְפֶּךָ

Jeremiah 7:26 - "Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but **hardened their neck**: they did worse than their fathers." ויקשו את־ערפם

Jeremiah 17:23 - "But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their **neck stiff**, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction." ויקשו את־ערפם

Jeremiah 19:15 - "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have **hardened their necks**, that they might not hear my words." הקשו את־ערפם

Hosea 4:16 - "For Israel slideth back as a backsliding (*sasar*) (**stubborn**) heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place." סרר

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1. "A stubborn and rebellious son", *sasar* and *marah*. Deuteronomy 21:18

This phrase is found frequently in the Old Testament to describe the attitude and actions of believers and the effect that our attitudes have toward our actions. The word *sasar* is translated as **stubborn**, which is a good rendering of the idea. It means that a believer won't listen to the Word of God; they refuse to sit under the teaching of Bible Doctrine and/or they refuse to apply it in their lives.

The **backsliding** heifer is a poor translation but a good picture of the dynamic. It should be rendered as a "**stubborn heifer**" for it speaks of an heifer that refuses to go along with what its master wants; it resists the yoke and will not be disciplined. One can use many words to describe the concept, but better still is a mental picture of an heifer pulling away, kicking and fighting its owner.

And this is a good description of what so many believers in Christ are doing with the Lord. Christ said that his yoke is easy and his burden is light, but believers all over the world are fighting him constantly. We refuse to do what he wants us to do; we refuse to listen to him; we refuse to apply his Word to our lives; we fight him all the way. That's the idea of **stubbornness**.

So in the idea of stubbornness, *sasar*, are the elements of resistance to God, disobedience to God, fighting God's will for our lives and the element of resentment and pride.

So a stubborn son is one that won't listen to his parents, (the ones who brought him into this life). He won't obey them; he won't listen to reason; he's disrespectful; he's proud and arrogant and he fights them all the way; and many Christians are like this. And in a time of national apostasy, and/or the end times, most Christians will be like this!

The word for **rebellious** is *marah*. Now *marah* does mean to rebel against God, to not do what he wants, to not only disobey him, but intentionally go in the other direction. But its root idea is one of **bitterness!**

The emotion of bitterness, is the root of our arrogant rebellion against God and all the wonderful spiritual and material blessings that he has for us! And **its source is the pride of the believer in Christ**. All the way through the Bible every bad act had as its root **the reaction of a bitter soul!** Cain's murder of his brother; Esau's marriage to the two wrong women; Israel's rebellion against God in the wilderness and throughout its entire existence had bitterness as the mental attitude behind idolatry, rebellion and every other evil act!

So, in our study on dealing with negative emotions and the destructive effect that they have on our bodies, we see that at the root of all this is the pride of the believer and his refusal to listen to and apply the Word of God to his life. It is our stubbornness, our pride, our rebelliousness and our bitterness that brings all these negative emotions on ourselves!

2. "And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:"
Exodus 32:9

The term "*stiff necked people*" is found all the way through the Old Testament when God was describing the nation of Israel. When Stephen was addressing the Israelites that is what he called them. "*Ye **stiffnecked** and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*" Acts 7:51

In the Hebrew it's *im qashah oreph*, עִם־קָשָׁה־עֵרֶף, three words, but all connected together with the hyphen to treat them as one word. What it's saying is that the Israelites were not just the people, *im*, of God, but that they were lumped together in the identifying feature of being the ***stiff-necked-people*** of God! So throughout the entire history of Israel in the Old Testament right on into the time of the Church Age, the Israelites were called the "*Stiff-Necked-People of God*" as referred to by Stephen in this way.

But what does it mean to be **stiff necked**? To understand this we must go back to the Old Testament and find out what it meant from that context, for that's where the term originally comes from. The term has a **figurative** use, which we will explain, but it also has a **literal** idea, which we will get into later on in the study.

Having a *stiff neck*, or *stiffening the neck*, meant that they didn't obey the Lord, that they refused to obey the Lord, that they didn't believe the Lord, that they refused to believe the Lord; that they didn't trust the Lord and that they refused to trust the Lord. It meant that they wouldn't listen to the teaching of Bible doctrine and that they rejected the authority and teachings of the communicators of Bible doctrine; that they wouldn't apply Bible Doctrine to their lives. They went the other way from God, that they wanted to be like the World System, that they loved the World and it was more important to them than God, that they got into idolatry, that they rejected the spiritual dynamic that God had for them in the Old Testament and us today in the Church Age. It meant that they refused to do God's will and rejected his authority over them, that they rebelled against and became resentful of his discipline. These are all concepts connected to having a stiff neck.

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But there is also a **literal** dynamic going on which is quite fascinating because of its impact on our bodies! The word for **stiff** is *qashah*, such as to have a stiff neck, or to stiffen the neck, and it means to be obstinate or stubborn, but it also means to be hardened, or to stiffen something both figuratively and literally! When applied to the **body** it means to stiffen the muscles! That the muscles become stiff, that they tighten up and lose their flexibility. In time, they can become rigid, unbending, like stone or gristle, or as one passage puts it, "*Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;*" Isaiah 48:4 **There are certain mental attitude and emotional dynamics that go into our muscles tightening up to the place that they become stiff. What this shows is that our attitude toward God and our feelings do have an impact on our bodies.**

Any woman who has worked over a typewriter or a computer, or any man who has worked over a bench for hours can certainly testify that their neck muscles will become tight because of having to hold the body in a certain position for long periods of time. But that's a stiffening of the muscles due to a physiological reason. There is also a spiritual, volitional and emotional cause for the same effect!

In every instance where we have the *stiffening of the neck* concept mentioned in the Word, the sin that is behind it all is a volitional sin! The believer in Christ does **not** want to do what God wants him to do! And the mental attitude sin behind that is **pride!** So it is the believer's personal pride that rebels against doing what God wants him to do.

It is our pride that keeps us from praying to God, that keeps us from confessing our sins, that keeps us from living in the filling of the Holy Spirit, that keeps us from forgiving others, that keeps us from applying the spiritual problem solving devices that he has supplied us in grace, and on and on. It is a rare believer indeed that does not have **an authority problem** with the Lord. As the Lord said, “*Why do you call me Lord, but don't do what I say!*” The rebellion of the will is directly linked to our pride. It was Israel's problem in the Old Testament and it's our problem today.

The relationship that our anger has with our **pride** is that **we get angry when we have to do what we don't want to do. We get angry when we're not able to do, or not allowed to do, what we want to do. We get angry when we have to do something when we would rather be doing something else. So our anger comes about when God's will is at cross purposes with our wills!** We get angry when we don't get our way! So anger is directly related to our will which is controlled by our pride! **So we have pride > negative volition > anger.** All of this is manifested by our not believing God's Word, by not trusting the Lord, by not sitting under Bible Doctrine and by not applying the Word to our lives.

So our pride has affected our will, which has caused anger to be aroused in us, now we have another problem. Our anger restricts the blood flow causing the muscles around our neck to tighten up, or to stiffen as the Hebrew has it! So being a “stiff necked” believer, or having stiff muscles in our neck and the surrounding areas, is due to our own old sin nature activity of being angry, becoming angered, of burning with anger, over having to do God's will for our lives!! It is our inner rebellion of having to do God's will for our lives!!! So we do it to ourselves!

The word for **neck** in the Hebrew is *oreph*, which does refer to the neck, but it also refers generally to the back! So what we are talking about is not just a stiffening of the muscles in the neck, **but it can also refer to the stiffening of the muscles in the upper and lower back!** This can be helpful and insightful information to all those believers who suffer from lower back problems.

So when it talks about believers who are “*stiff necked*” we know that it's referring to believers who are resisting God's will and his Word in their lives. Even though they have the indwelling Holy Spirit and a new nature, they still, due to personal pride and the sin nature, resist, rebel against and reject the will of God in their lives.

This resistance to the will of God, which is their will not wanting to do what God wants them to do, creates, resentment, anger, burning anger, repressed anger, anger of all forms inside their souls, which tightens up the muscles in the back and/or neck, which in turn creates all sorts of problems and discomfort in their bodies!

The key to success in overcoming all this is by appropriating the spiritual provisions that God has supplied to every believer in Christ. To do this means to submit yourself unto God and it is the opposite

of pride. Pride is the thing that holds us back. God has provided for us the filling of the Holy Spirit, a new nature, Bible doctrine, the confession of our sins to him, prayer that will enable us to do God's will from the heart, which is what all Christians are supposed to do. Not with lip service, not with the facade of hypocrisy, but wanting to do, and doing, the will of God from the heart.

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” Romans 6:17 We see here that obedience to God must proceed out of the heart. “Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;” Ephesians 6:6 And we see here, again, that God wants us to do his will out of the heart.

An interesting side note is Nehemiah 9:17, *“And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; **but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.**”*

God had a wonderful plan for ancient Israel, as he does for Church Age believers today. Their own land, financial prosperity, being out of debt, freedom, independence, physical health and soul prosperity, which included freedom from the ravages of the sin nature and the tyranny of the emotions.

But they rebelled against his will, (the function of pride), they refused to take in Bible doctrine and apply its teachings to their lives, and they disobeyed him. They rejected the means by which God's blessings would come upon them. It deteriorated to the place where they wanted to go back to the slavery that they were enslaved in, **and selected leaders to lead them back into slavery!**

The connection goes like this: there is the factor of pride in every believer, which causes the believer to refuse to submit to the authority of God and his Word, which pride is the reactor factor that causes the believer to become angry, the old sin nature is unleashed, negative emotions of all sorts are activated, the believer is definitely out of fellowship with the Lord, and the body is affected with TMS, all sorts of other maladies, and as we have seen, the stiffening of the upper, middle and lower back muscles.

The Israelites had freedom, but they wanted to go back into slavery. The Egyptian government provided them “free” food, garlic, fish, etc., and **they thought that they had a good deal!** The Egyptian government owned the land they lived on, the land they worked; it owned all that the land produced; it owned their bodies; it worked them 12 hours a day; it tried to kill their male children at one point, but gave them “free” food and they thought that was a good deal! How can one comprehend this level of insanity?

Freedom, independence, autonomy, sovereignty, prosperity, owning their own land and houses was what God had for them, but they would not submit to his authority over them and their lives to have these things! They would rather have been slaves and submit to the Pharaoh's authority, than submit to God and his Word and be free! They would have rather been psychotic, bitter, angry – mentally ill, than be sane, calm and peaceful! They would have rather given the Pharaoh 100 % of their labor in the fields, than give God his 10% and keep 90% for themselves! And most Christians today are no different! They refuse to live by faith and walk in God's ways and receive the wonderful blessings he has for them. They would rather have the government's hand-outs.

Pride and the will that refuses to submit to the authority of God over us will drive believers literally insane. And there's no rhyme or reason for their actions. In fact we would say, why would anyone do that? In the wilderness all the Israelites had to do each morning was to go out and gather up the food

that God provided them, their *manna* from heaven, which was their entire day's need for food! While the Israelites in Egypt had to work 12 hours a day just to get their daily food needs taken care of. And how many Christians today are working 8 hours a day, 12 hours, or more, just to get by?

So when it talks about believers who are stiff-necked we know that it's believers who are resisting God's will and God's Word in their lives. Even though they have the indwelling Holy Spirit and a new nature, they still, due to pride and the flesh nature rebel against God's will for their lives.

This resistance to God's will, which is their will not wanting to do what God wants them to do, creates resentment, anger, burning anger, repressed anger, and anger of all forms inside their souls, which tightens up the muscles in the back and/or the neck, which in turn creates all sorts of problems and discomfort in their bodies.

The key to overcoming all this is by appropriating the spiritual provisions that God has supplied to every believer in Christ. To do this is to submit yourself to the authority of God over you, which is the opposite of pride. Pride is the thing that holds us back. God has provided us the filling of the Holy Spirit, a new nature, Bible Doctrine, the confession of our sins to him, faith and prayer that will enable us to do God's will from the heart, which is what all Christians are supposed to do; not with lip-service, not with the face of hypocrisy, but wanting to and doing the will of God from the heart.

Obedience to God must come from the heart. *“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”* Romans 6:17 doing the will of God must come from the heart. *“Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;”* Ephesians 6:6

An interesting side note is that some believers would rather go back into slavery, (or legalism today), than have to submit to God's will and enjoy his grace blessings for their lives! *“And **refused to obey**, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain **to return to their bondage**: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.”* Nehemiah 9:17

God had a wonderful plan for ancient Israel as he has for Church Age believers today; their own land, financial prosperity, being out of debt, freedom, independence, physical health, prosperity of soul, which included the ravages from the sin nature and the tyranny of the emotions. But they rebelled against his will, (the function of pride); they refused to take in his Bible Doctrine and apply it to their lives and they disobeyed him. They rejected the **means** by which God's blessings would be upon them. It deteriorated to the place where they wanted to back to the slavery they were once in and selected leaders to lead them back into slavery!

The connection goes like this; there is the factor of pride in the flesh nature in every believer in Christ that causes the believer to refuse to submit to the authority of God and his Word, which pride is the sin nature dynamic that **reacts** against the will of God. Pride reacts, the old sin nature is now activated and the emotional complex of the soul comes into play and the believer now becomes resentful, which leads to the rest of the anger complex. The believer is definitely out of fellowship; he is not filled with the Holy Spirit; and is controlled by the flesh and not the Spirit. In time the body will suffer because of the anger with such things as: TMS and other maladies, among which, as we have seen, the stiffening of the upper, middle and lower back muscles. *“My back is filled with **searing** pain; there is no health in my body.”* Psalms 38:7