

Ch 1 — Part 2

IF YOU DON'T RELEASE BURDENS, YOU WILL BECOME ONE

The Bible speaks of two types of burdens: the Greek “baros,” defined simply as ‘a weight’ — or anything pressing on one physically, and the second, “phortion” which is defined as ‘something carried.’ In life we must learn how to separate these two burdens in order to embrace the grace God offers us.

Unresolved fear, grief and other problems cause pain not just to ourselves, but to others as well. Individuals with unresolved problems are hindered emotionally, spiritually, even physically — and we are not capable of removing all the problems in our lives. Only God can do that.

When we try to conquer our burdens without the guidance of the Spirit, we become fragile. The things that weigh us down: addiction, illness, financial or marital struggles — become a *baros* weight, and we strive to rid ourselves of these burdens as quickly as possible.

When our lives are overwhelmed by baros weight, we cannot see how God can magnify Himself through our flaws; our eyes are focused more on what we see, and how far we are from getting better on our own, than on the power of God. We strive so hard to become self reliant, bearing these baros burdens on our own, that we begin to be defined by our struggles. The burdens we cling to weigh down our thinking, our emotions, our physical being — most importantly our spirit, and we begin to blame others for our problems, losing trust in everyone, even in God. This baros burden becomes a self-destructive force, and suddenly you are your own worst enemy, far from the strong and capable person you believed yourself to be.

Stop for a moment and say this aloud: There is liberty in Christ!

Romans 8:18 says, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

God does not intend for our burdens to rule over us. He reminds us in Matthew 11:30, “For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” This is the burden of phortion: anything God places on us is light, because we don’t have to carry it — Christ carries it for us.

That does not mean we won’t face difficult situations, but God promises as long as we face challenges in spirit and truth, He will give us the strength to overcome. ‘Phortion’ burdens are gifts wrapped in unpleasant situations, arriving in torn packages; the blessing lies in choosing what type of burden you will face.

Maybe we’ve lost a loved one, or lost a job. Maybe financial setbacks are dragging us down, or we are held hostage by addiction. In the midst of these trials, we can choose which burden we will make it. We can become engulfed in the pain and allow this baros burden to cloud our spiritual vision. Or — we can accept this challenge as a phortion burden; the circumstances are hard, unpleasant, maybe even impossible-seeming, but when we place our trust in God, He will show us what He wants us to do from that point, and He will carry the weight, and renew your spirit.

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

— Jeremiah 29:11

The burdens of God are meant to define us — not deny us. As trials arise in life, we should ask ourselves, “Am I becoming a burden to myself and others, or am I overcoming a burden and helping others do the same?” Denial only blocks God, and prohibits the flow of the Spirit in our lives.

Every position God places us in is for victory — not defeat. When we allow ourselves to be comfortable in a position of defeat, everything outside of that place seems complicated — but this is not what God intends for us. Why stay defeated, when we can live in peace?

God is our strength when we are weak. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, “But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

The burdens of this life can only make us stronger — as long as our burdens are tied to Jesus, and not our own abilities. God will give us strength and carry our burdens for us, when we choose to hand them to Him and trust Him to bear the weight.

ASK YOURSELF...

1. What burdens are you carrying right now?
2. How does this weight on your shoulders affect you? How does it impact the lives of those around you?
3. Have you given these burdens to God, or are you trying to carry them alone?
4. When is the last time you surrendered completely to Jesus, trusting Him to handle the tough situations in your life?