

## Dealing With the Roots of Fretfulness

**A.W. Tozer:**

The Holy Spirit in Psalm 37:1 admonishes us to beware of irritation in our religious lives: "Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong."

The word "fret" comes to us from the Anglo-Saxon, and carries with it such a variety of meanings as bring a rather pained smile to our faces. Notice how they expose us and locate us behind our disguises. The primary meaning of the word is to eat, and from there it has been extended with rare honesty to cover most of the manifestations of an irritable disposition. "To eat away; to gnaw; to chafe; to gall; to vex; to worry; to agitate; to wear away"; so says Webster, and all who have felt the exhausting, corrosive effects of fretfulness know how accurately the description fits the facts.

Now, the grace of God in the human heart works to calm the agitation that normally accompanies life in such a world as ours. The Holy Spirit acts as a lubricant to reduce the friction to a minimum and to stop the fretting and chafing in their grosser phases. But for most of us the problem is not as simple as that. Fretfulness may be trimmed down to the ground and its roots remain alive deep within the soul, there growing and extending themselves all unsuspected, sending up their old poisonous shoots under other names and other appearances.