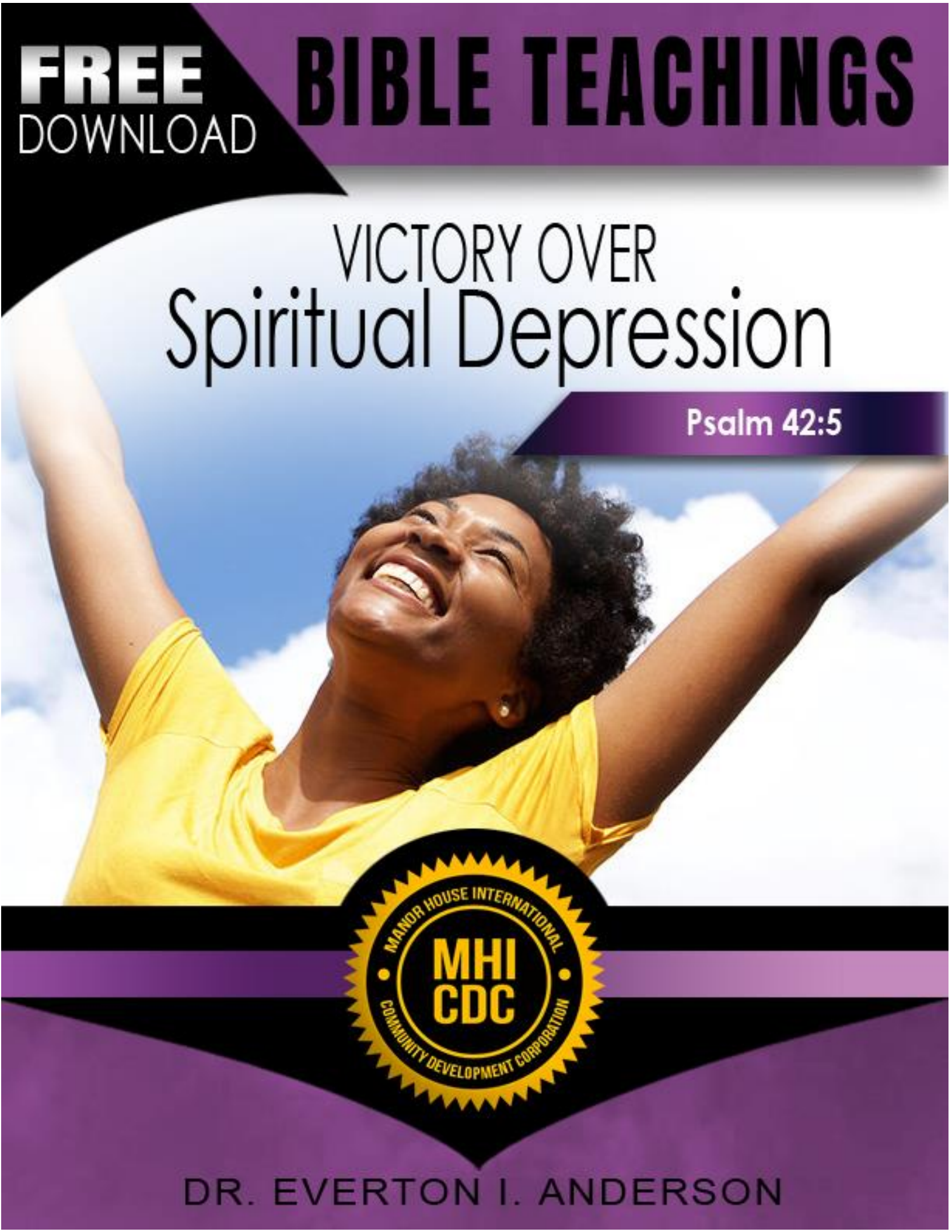


FREE
DOWNLOAD

BIBLE TEACHINGS

VICTORY OVER Spiritual Depression

Psalm 42:5



DR. EVERTON I. ANDERSON

Victory over Spiritual Depression

*Why are you in despair, O my soul?
And why have you become disturbed within me?
Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him
For the help of His presence
(Psalm 42: 5).*

INTRODUCTION

The simplest description of the Psalms is that they are the inspired prayer and praise book of Israel. They are revelations of biblical truth, not abstractly, but in terms of human experience. The truth revealed is wrought into the emotions, desires, and sufferings of the people of God by the circumstances through which they passed.

It is because that it is such a true description of them that the Psalms have always proved to be a great source of solace and encouragement to God's people through the centuries – both to the children of Israel and the members of the early Christian Church.

In this particular Psalm, David gives the facts for his unhappiness. Probably at that particular time he was prevented from joining with others in public worship in the House of God. But not only that, he was clearly being attacked by his adversaries as there were those who were doing their utmost to ridicule him and he gave an account of that oppression. See vv. 9-10.

I. Some apparent reasons for Discouragement.

▪ The Testing of the Long Journey –

“Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey” (Num. 21:4).

Moses could see the impossibility of penetrating Canaan from the south. Apparently, he even gave up his plan to go north led by the Lord and the people became frustrated by this change, so they began to complain not only about that, but also about the *desert*, lack of *water*, and *food* (i.e., manna, v. 5).

▪ The Challenges of the Task –

“Thus in Judah it was said, ‘The strength of the burden bearers is failing, yet there is much rubbish; and we ourselves are unable to rebuild the wall’” (Neh. 4:10).

The laborers were physically and psychologically exhausted and the work seemed endless; therefore, they became fearful as the *exposed places* were not fortified.

- **The Prosperity of the Wicked –**

“But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling; my steps had almost slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant, as I saw the prosperity of the wicked” (Ps. 73:2-3).

Why should the people who oppose God be better off than those who trust Him? This problem was so overwhelming for the psalmist that he almost lost faith in God’s goodness.

- **Delay in the Fulfillment of Dreams –**

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life” (Prov. 13:12).

The modern emphasis on the need for achievement simply picks up a very old fact about human nature. It is spiritually healthy for a person to have *hope*, but if it is not fulfilled for a long time (*deferred* means ‘put off or long drawn out’), then he experiences disappointment (his *heart* become sick).

II. Christ the Suffering Servant gives Hope.

In a sense, a continuously depressed Christian is a contradiction in terms, and he or she is a very poor recommendation for the gospel. It is absolutely necessary that such a one receive counselling to determine required assistance. Furthermore, there is no reason why a believer should be living reduced of vitality, vigor, or spirit; lack of God’s peace; lack of God’s presence, lack of God’s power and absent of His will. God permitted Jesus to be afflicted for all. He is our burden-bearer, He was the substitute for sin, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3-5). Through Christ’s sacrificial death we have peace.

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit” (1 Pet. 3:18, NKJ).

This verse clarifies the design of Christ’s sufferings and ours. He was put to death in His human nature, to purge away sin and reconcile fallen man to God. If Christ was not exempt from suffering, why should Christians expect it? If He suffered, though perfectly just, why should not we, who are all lawbreakers? If He once suffered, and then entered into glory, shall not we be patient under trouble?

We are living in a pragmatic age. People today are not primarily interested in truth (rules or laws, or Church principles), pretty Church buildings or padded pews, but they are interested in results. The number one question is, ‘does it work?’ They are frantically

seeking and searching for something that can help, they desire a remedy for their pain, they are looking for peace of mind, they require urgent release from their mess and they are in need of redemption from the chaos in the soul.

Nothing is more important, therefore, than the Christian should be delivered from a condition which gives other people, looking at us, the impression that to be a follower of Christ means to be unhappy, to be sad, to be morbid, and that the Christian is one who 'scorns great pleasure and lives laborious days' behind the four walls of the Church building. Of a truth, Christianity is not an abnormal lifestyle, but life in abundance, an eternal relationship (John 10:10), an intimacy in the world, lived in Christ through His spirit and in God. This scriptural fact gives hope to the troubled heart in a shaky world.

III. Suggestive means to Defeat Spiritual Depression.

A. Commemorate the Eternal Promises of God.

"For by these he has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escape the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Pet. 1:4).

Besides the *superlatively great* promises given to the Gentiles, which distinguished the Mosaic dispensation, Peter says that God had given them the *valuable* promises, those which came through the great price - enrollment with the Church of God, redemption in and through the Blood of the Cross, the continual indwelling influence of the Holy Ghost, the resurrection of the body and eternal rest at the right hand of God.

In the seasons of despair, very often believers are tempted to doubt the Word of God. They think the Word is applicable to other people's situations. But Paul reminded the suffering saints at Rome: *"Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope"* (Rom. 15:4) – that we will be upheld and blessed as they were, and our sufferings become the means of our greater advances in faith and holiness, and consequently our hope of eternal glory be the more confirmed.

The concept of 'hope' is often linked with the word 'faith' - *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen"* (Heb. 11:1). The Christian's hope then, is distinguished from the secular optimism in that it is grounded in what God did in Christ. So, it does not matter what caused our circumstance to be sour, in the light of Calvary believers may have confidence that God's intentions will be worked out to the end.

For example, Abraham and Sarah were as good as dead with respect to procreation when they received the promise of God. However, Abraham believed against all hope; he believed when there was nothing from this world's point of view to justify his faith or his hope. It is important to note also that *'faith'* does not close its eyes to reality. It is not limited by the best human estimates of what is possible, for it is faith in God *"who gives life to the dead."*

B. Count on the Presence of God.

"...I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you...the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" (Heb. 13:5-6).

This passage is the concluding chapter regarding moral directions. It is so fitting to the contemporary Church, that I would recommend every clergy person to spend quality time digesting its instruction. The subject matter of the above text is contentment - *"Let your character be free from the love of money."* The love of filthy lust and the love of filthy lucre follow one another as closely akin, both alienating the heart from the Creator to the creature.

We should remember that God *'will never desert.'* These words were, in sum, spoken to Joshua 1:5 - *"Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you nor forsake you."* They were spoken also by David to Solomon in 1Chron. 28:20: *"Then David said to his son Solomon, 'Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you.'"* It is therefore like a divine proverb. What was said to them extends also to us. The apostle, in referring to the same promises, feels authorized to strengthen the expressions, as the Christian dispensation affords more consolation and confidence in matters of this kind than the old covenant did.

Whatever the circumstances, while cleaving to the Lord, we may confidently apply to ourselves what God spoke to Joshua and to Solomon and what He spoke to David, *'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do.'* God is omnipotent and man's power is limited. However strong he may be, he can do nothing against the Almighty. Jesus in the Great Commission said to His disciples, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matt. 28:19-20).

Note the emphatic *'I am'* which does not only denote certainty, but is the speech of Him who is lifted above the lower regions where time rolls and the succession of events occurs. Furthermore, that *'I am'* covers all the varieties of *was, is* and *will be*. However tinted the days might become, however many they be, however different their complexion, days of

summer and days of winter, days of sunshine and days of rain, days of buoyant youth and days of stagnancy, stereo-typed old age, days of apparent failure and days of apparent prosperity, He is with us and will remain with us all. He is *'the same yesterday, and today, and forever.'*

C. Make Welcome the Peace of God.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

There seems to be many God-fearing people who fail to appropriate the tranquility He offers. They continue to embrace negative and despairing feelings. They refuse to press forward with their lives, carrying unnecessary baggage from one state to another. It was the apostle Paul who said, *"One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal..."* (Phil 3:13-14).

Through deliberate action, the negatives must be replaced with the positives. Christians should endeavor (strive, make an effort) to look for the good things in life, not the bad. The apostle continues, *"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ..., think on these things"* (Phil. 4:8, KJV). The first effect of believing prayer is the enjoyment of God's peace which He has promised to all who are harassed and turn to him in trust – *"The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee"* (Isa. 26:3). Moreover, we can only know God's peace as we first received his grace in reconciliation (Phil. 1:2). The peace of God follows directly from peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1), who made that peace by the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20).

Bottom line - God's peace transcends every human thought, surpassing all our dreams, and therefore beyond the range of our comprehension (Eph. 3:20). We can become overcomers of discouragement by simply accepting God's peace. Never-ending peace is promised to all - Ps. 29:11, the gift of God; Ps. 119:165, abundant; Isa. 26:3, perfect; Jn. 14:27, the legacy of Christ.

D. Overcoming through Unceasing Praise to God.

"Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him..."

Generally, we as Christians fail to praise the Lord as we should, because this action is not automatic. When discouragement strikes, we mope in self-pity and despair. But praise

enables us to dislodge the demagogue [*stir up people's emotions*] spirits from around us. The more we offer praise, the greater the victory we experience. The verb *to praise* in the Hebrew form of expression signifies - *to celebrate, to glory, to boast, shouting and jubilation*. Unceasing jubilation should evolve from the core of our being. Spare a moment and listen as the psalmist give praise to the Sovereign Lord for His creation and providence – *"I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being"* (Ps. 104:33). David also, joins the glory celebration – *"I will extol Thee, my God, O King; and I will bless Thy name forever and ever"* (Ps. 145:1). How sublime the acclaims? We must offer up praise to God, *'for the help of His presence.'* We praise for his favor, the support we have by it and the satisfaction we have in it.

The following emphasize some excellent ways to glory in the Lord:

Utter words with a set tune – Ps. 9:11, *"Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion; declare among the peoples His deeds."*

With Musical Instruments – Ps. 33: 2, *"Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; Sing praises to Him with the harp of ten strings."*

Universal Worship – Ps. 67:3, *"Let the peoples praise Thee, O God; Let all the peoples praise Thee."*

Perpetual – Heb. 13:15, *"Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."*

SUMMARY

Let people back-bite as much as they desire, devise as much scheme as possible, to drive you to depression; but you must hope in God continually, hope in all conditions, in the most cloudy and dark days. God's people must live on hope to the end. You can rise above depression, because you possess a spiritual hope, which is the saving element in life (Rom. 8:24). But not only that, you can also mount up with wings as an eagle, because you have an eternal hope, which is grounded in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:3).

*My hope is built on nothing less,
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness,
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

On Christ the solid Rock I stand,

*All other ground is sinking stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

The Christian's hope is the anchor that keeps any soul plagued by hopelessness -
"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil" (Heb. 6:19).

Estius explains: *"As the anchor does not stay in the waters, but enters the ground hidden beneath the waters, and fastens itself in it, so hope, our anchor of the soul, is not satisfied with merely coming to the vestibule, i.e. is not content with merely earthly and visible goods, but penetrates even to those which are within the veil, viz., to the Holy of Holies, where it lays hold on God Himself, and heavenly goods, and fastens on them."*

Assignment

1. Review Psalm 73. What happened to the Psalmist why he was so overwhelmed that he almost lost his faith in God?

-
2. Consider the apostle Peter's words to those he wrote to, *"Christ also suffered once for sins"* (1 Peter 3:18). What lesson is to be received from this verse when the believer slides into a depression?

-
3. There are numerous occasions when if we are not careful, it is possible that our confidence in God may become eroded. These are seasons of *'fear.'* Describe the posture of the Holy Spirit at this juncture - Note Hebrews 13: 5-6.

-
4. How can the child of God be victorious through perpetual *'praise?'* (See Psalm 104 :33-35 and 145: 1-3).



Chief Editor

Dr. Everton I. Anderson

FREE DOWNLOAD BIBLE TEACHINGS

Copyright© 2019 – *All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of M.H.I.C.D.C. MEDIA*



M.H.I.C.D.C. MEDIA

P.O. Box 7755, Port St. Lucie, FL 34983 U.S.A.
manorhministries@gmail.com

Cover Art & Visual Content provided by: Specialtouchgraphics.com