

Renewing your Strength

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isaiah 40:31). Even the most inspired Christians can, from time to time, find themselves running on empty. The demands of daily life can drain us of our strength and rob us of the joy that is rightfully ours in Christ. When we find ourselves tired, discouraged, or worse, there is a source from which we can draw the power needed to recharge our spiritual batteries. That source is God.

People in general live more and more in a state of anxiety. Indeed our time is probably full of unpredictable events. Today, numerous circumstances are creating a lot of turmoil for many. And yet God created this earth, and mankind, with a precise aim in mind. Therefore, God is still talking to us – still giving us clear instructions. But even the strongest Christians get tired. Nevertheless, God's power and strength never diminishes. He is never too busy to help or to listen. His strength is our source of strength. When you feel that everything is crushing you and you can't go another step. Remember that you can call on God to **renew** your strength.

Psalm 46:1 declares, **“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble times.”** God is not a temporary retreat. He is our eternal refuge and can provide strength for any circumstance. His power is complete; and the victory is certain. He will not fail to rescue those who love him. Whether you realise it or not, God is always working in you and through you (and on your behalf). Your role (and duty) is to let Him do His work without undue interference. So don't blame him for your exhaustion! It's probably because of your stubborn insistence on squeezing too many activities into a 24-hour day that you've allowed yourself to become exhausted or frustrated, or both.

A verse that is often misquoted and misapplied is Psalm 46:10. We hear **“Be still, and know that I am God”** and think that God just wants us to chill out, calm down (of our own accord), or to be silent. Other religions imply some mind-numbing mystical experience which is not at all what God wants – in this passage or anywhere in Scripture. What God is really getting at in Psalm 46:10 is better received and understood when it is more accurately translated, **“Cease striving, and know that I am God.”** **Striving** implies a feverish toiling on our own power to fix a problem or situation. Panic and anxiety enter into our being when we realise that our efforts are like running faster and faster on a treadmill. The belt can go around that machine at whatever speed we wish, but we still get nowhere fast!

Solving problems by our own intellectual acumen, willpower, and skill never works. God hates pride, but He gives grace to the humble. The humble are the ones who bow the knee to God (1 Peter 5:5), cast their cares upon Him (1 Peter 5:7), and trust Him with the result. We are to pray because prayer is an acknowledgement that it is God Who must fix our situation rather than we ourselves. Perhaps He might choose to fix it, in and through us (as instruments of His), but there is a landmark difference in letting God work in and through us as He desires, versus, problem-solving our own way and in our own power. When we feel this internal striving, we need to press, “pause” and simply stop. The Spirit's exhortation to us is “Cease!”

We need to stop the fussing and just let God lead and provide. Not letting the Spirit lead us (in our hearts) creates friction and takes more energy and effort on our part because we have to resist God. We are told not to resist the Spirit (Acts 7:51), grieve the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), or quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). We must **yield** to the Spirit by letting Him lead (Romans 8:14). This is a wilful act of obedience whereby we let God take our burdens, our stress, and our pain. We must call to Him in earnest telling Him that we need help – that we are out of ideas, that we need guidance, and that we need provision. He knows even before we ask what we need. Sadly, too often He also knows that we need to learn the lesson of our inability before we can be reminded of His **ability**.

The whole of Psalm 46:10 says, **“Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”** When we act in our own power, our success would be our own exaltation and boast, rather than God's. When we **yield** to God, He alone gets the glory, which is how it ought to be. Striving in your own power will drain your spiritual energy faster than you can imagine. However, if you cease striving in your own power, you can have your strength renewed (like the eagles). The way to be truly rejuvenated, refreshed, reenergised, and re-strengthened is to **“wait upon God”**, trusting in Him for deliverance rather than in something of your own fleshly efforts. Waiting upon God does not mean just sitting idly by passing the time, but it is from the Hebrew word “qavah,” meaning to **“wait, hope, look for, or expect.”**

Waiting on God is an active, exciting, dramatic, and hopeful **faith** experience. Just as we eagerly await the return of Christ, when we can finally escape this body of death and be with Jesus, we are eagerly to long for, look for, and hope for His deliverance and ministry in this life. Wherever we are, God is there to comfort. We

don't know what form His deliverance or provision will take, but that is not the issue as far as our joy, peace, and sustenance is concerned. The issue is the state of our hearts. It's only those who choose by faith to wait upon God (to put their **hope** in Him), longing and expecting, who will run and not grow tired and walk and not become weary.

There will likely be multiple times in our Christian lives where we will feel like serving God is too difficult, too trying, or too frustrating. We might encounter obstacle after obstacle in life, and we might want to give up. We might have tried to stop a certain weakness in our lives only to fail more times than we would like. We might have tried to reach out to a person, but our message of hope and love just isn't getting through. Often these life experiences are severely draining. However strength is not just how much we can bench-press, it has much more to do with an internal **spiritual stamina** that gets its drive and energy from trusting in, hoping in, and waiting upon God. Difficult experiences drain our strength, and rather than strive in our own vain self-effort, we need to call to God and lean upon Him in eager expectation.

Even teenagers, who of all people should have the most energy, strength, and stamina, grow tired and weary (Isaiah 40:30). Even they will need to have their strength renewed. No matter what age we are or where we are at in life, we will inevitably come to a place where we find ourselves feeling drained. Our only hope to be able to continue on, and grow in strength, is to wait upon God. As God promises in verse 29, ***“He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power.”***

You must not abandon hope, quit battling temptation, or stop serving God. When you are spiritually out of fuel, God will lift you up and empower you to do His will - as long as you keep hoping in and trusting in His provision. As Paul said in Philippians 4:13, ***“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”*** So, if you are feeling exhausted, tired or troubled – turn your heart toward God in prayer. And while you're at it, pray for the wisdom to simplify your life. When you do, you'll discover that, with God as your partner, you can accomplish the important tasks He places before you today, tomorrow, and every day of your life. Remember, with Him you can do ALL things!

If you want to mount up with wings like an eagle and feel what it is to spiritually fly with joy and peace and strength from God, you must cease striving in your own strength, cast your cares upon God. Then hopefully and expectantly wait upon Him. He will keep His Word, and your **strength** will be **renewed**. So be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. Live well, laugh often, and love much. And the peace of God that transcends all understanding will fill your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

The peace of God invigorates us with renewed strength. We are no longer relegated to live in difficulties, but can now soar with God through (and in) the power of His blessed Holy Spirit. If we **rest** in God's strength, He will allow us to do things we never dreamed we were capable of. We can face life with the confidence that God will lead us through the difficult times.

Isaiah 40:31 in the Amplified reads, ***“But those who wait for the Lord [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] shall change and renew their strength and power; they shall lift their wings and mount up [close to God] as eagles [mount up to the sun]; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint or become tired.”***

Isaiah 40:29 declares, ***“He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength.”***

In 2 Corinthians 12:9 Jesus said to the apostle Paul, ***“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.***

Joel 3:10 simply says, ***“Let the weak say, ‘I am strong’.”***