

#133 “Renew Your Strength”

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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 tune out, calm down of our own accord, or be silent. Others 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 realize that our efforts are like running faster and faster on a treadmill. The belt can go around that machine at whatever speed we run, and we 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 which 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 we act as instruments of His working, but there is a landmark difference in letting God work in and through us as He desires versus problem-solving our own way and on our own power. When we feel this internal striving and fumbling around, we need to pause and simply stop. The Spirit’s exhortation to us is “Cease!”

We need to stop the fussing and the pride trip and just let God lead and provide. Not letting the Spirit lead in our hearts creates friction and takes more energy and effort on our part because we have to resist God. We are 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 willful 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 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 on our own power will drain our spiritually energy and life faster than we can imagine. However, if we cease striving in our own power, we can have our strength renewed. Isaiah 40:31 says, “Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.” The way to be truly rejuvenated, refreshed, reenergized, and restrengthened is to wait upon God, trusting in Him for deliverance rather than in something of our own fleshly concocting. 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 is those who choose by faith to wait upon God, longing, hoping, 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 ministry, and we might want to give up. We might have tried to stop a certain sin 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. These types of life experiences are severely draining. Strength is not just how much we can bench-press, but 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 young men and youths, 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 in life. Our only hope to be able to continue on and grow in strength is to wait upon God. As God promises in v. 29, "He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power."

We must not abandon hope, quit battling temptation, or stop serving God. When we are spiritually out of fuel, God will lift us up and empower us to do His will as long as we 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."

If we want to mount up with wings like eagles and feel what it is to spiritually fly with joy and peace and strength from God, we must cease striving in our own strength, cast our cares upon God, and hopefully and expectantly wait upon Him. He will keep His Word, and our strength will be renewed.