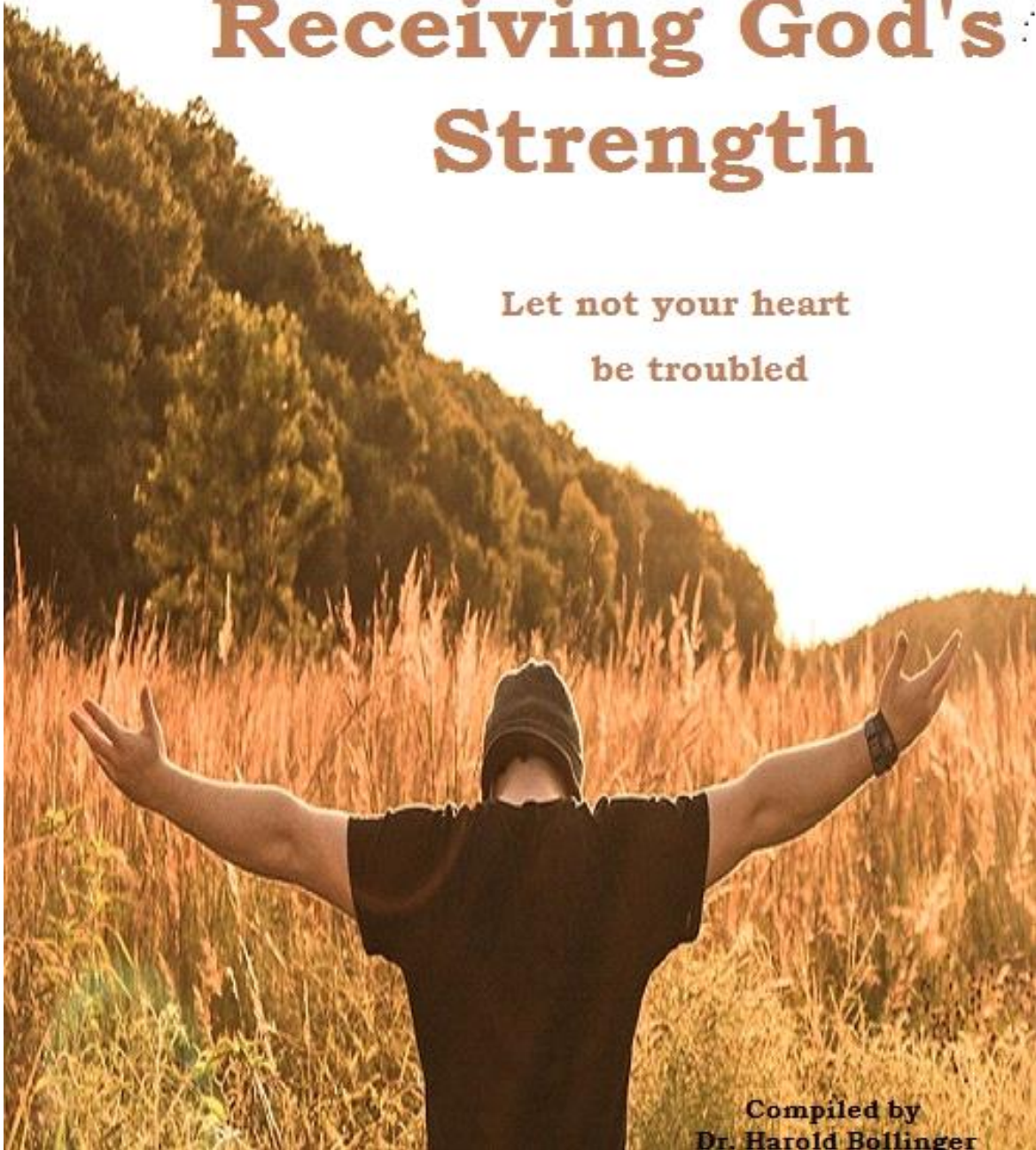


# Receiving God's Strength

Let not your heart  
be troubled



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**Strength given to the weary**

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## Forward

Ephes. 1:15-21 Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for Christians everywhere, I have never stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.

I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the wonderful future he has promised to those he called. I want you to realize what a rich and glorious inheritance he has given to his people.

I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.

Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or in the world to come.

We are also told that we can have this great power because God's Holy Spirit lives in us who believe in Jesus. When you are deeply rooted in God's love you are able to grasp how much Jesus loves you and cares for you.

This is hugely important because as you embrace this love, you begin to realize the fullness and power of God. God's Holy Spirit, who lives in you, gives your mind this ability. It's not your power, but God's strength and power that is manifested in you and at work in you. (Ephesians 3:20)

## Chapter 1



### God will strengthen you

Philip. 4:13

For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.

Paul was content because he could see life from God's point of view. He focused on what he was supposed to *do*, not what he felt he should *have*. Paul had his priorities straight, and he was grateful for everything God had given him.

Paul had detached himself from the nonessentials so that he could concentrate on the eternal. Often the desire for more or better possessions is really a longing to fill an empty place in a person's life. To what are you drawn when you feel empty inside? How can you find true contentment? The answer lies in your perspective, your priorities, and your source of power.

Can we really do everything? The power we receive in union with Christ is sufficient to do his will and to face the challenges that arise from our commitment to doing it.

He does not grant us superhuman ability to accomplish anything we can imagine without regard to his interests. As we contend for the faith we will face troubles, pressures, and trials. As they come, ask Christ to strengthen you.

### **Strength is given to the weary**

Isaiah 40:29

He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak.

Even the strongest people get tired at times, but God's power and strength never diminish. He is never too tired or too busy to help and listen. His strength is our source of strength. When you feel all of life crushing you and cannot go another step, remember that you can call upon God to renew your strength.

Hoping in the Lord is expecting that his promise of strength will help us to rise above life's distractions and difficulties. It also means trusting in God. Trusting helps us to be prepared when he speaks to us. Then we will be patient when he asks us to wait and expect him to fulfill the promises found in his Word.

### **Strengthened according to the word**

Psalms 119:28

I weep with grief; encourage me by your word. Be strong in the Lord

Our lives are cluttered with rulebooks, but the authors never come with us to help us follow the rules. But God does. That is the uniqueness of our Bible. God not only provides the rules and guidelines, but comes with us personally each day to strengthen us so that we can live according to those rules.

All we must do is invite him and respond to his direction.

Ephes. 6:10

A final word: Be strong with the Lord's mighty power.

In the Christian life we battle against rulers and authorities (the powerful evil forces of fallen angels headed by Satan, who is a vicious fighter, see 1 Peter 5:8). To withstand their attacks, we must depend on God's strength and use every piece of his armor.

Paul is not only giving this counsel to the church, the body of Christ, but to all individuals within the church. The whole body needs to be armed. As you do battle against "the powers of this dark world," fight in the strength of the church, whose power comes from the Holy Spirit.

### **Strength shall be renewed**

Isaiah 40:31

But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

Isaiah describes God's power to create, his provision to sustain, and his presence to help. God is almighty and all-powerful; but even so, he cares for each of us personally. No person or thing can be compared to God (Isaiah 40:25).

We describe God as best we can with our limited knowledge and language, but we only limit our understanding of him and his power when we compare him to what we experience on earth. What is your concept of God, especially as revealed in his Son, Jesus Christ? Don't limit his work in your life by underestimating him.

### **Love the Lord with all your strength**

Mark 12:30

And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.

God's laws are not burdensome. They can be reduced to two simple principles: love God and love others. These commands are from the Old Testament (Deut. 6:5; Leviticus 19:18).

When you love God completely and care for others as you care for yourself, then you have fulfilled the intent of the Ten Commandments and the other Old Testament laws. According to Jesus, these two commandments summarize all God's laws.

Let them rule your thoughts, decisions, and actions. When you are uncertain about what to do, ask yourself which course of action best demonstrates love for God and love for others.

## Chapter 2



**God's power will rest on me.**

2 Cor. 12:9-10

Each time he said, "My gracious favor is all you need. My power works best in your weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may work through me.

Since I know it is all for Christ's good, I am quite content with my weaknesses and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Although God did not remove Paul's physical affliction, he promised to demonstrate his power in Paul.

The fact that God's power is displayed in weak people should give us courage. Though we recognize our limitations, we will not congratulate ourselves and rest at that. Instead, we will turn to God to seek pathways for effectiveness. We must rely on God for our effectiveness rather than simply on our own energy, effort, or talent. Our weakness not only helps develop Christian character; it also deepens our worship, because in admitting our weakness, we affirm God's strength.



When we are strong in abilities or resources, we are tempted to do God's work on our own, and that can lead to pride. When we are weak, allowing God to fill us with *his* power, then we are stronger than we could ever be on our own. God does not intend for us to seek to be weak, passive, or ineffective—life provides enough hindrances and setbacks without us creating them.

When those obstacles come, we must depend on God. Only his power will make us effective for him and will help us do work that has lasting value.

### **God is our refuge and our strength**

Psalm 46:1

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of the fear of mountains or cities suddenly crumbling into the sea as the result of a nuclear blast haunts many people today. But the psalmist says that even if the world ends, we need not fear. In the face of utter destruction, the writer expressed a quiet confidence in God's ability to save him.

It seems impossible to consider the end of the world without becoming consumed by fear, but the Bible is clear—God is our refuge even in the face of total destruction. He is not merely a temporary retreat; he is our eternal refuge and can provide strength in any circumstance.

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### **The joy of the Lord is your strength**

Neh. 8:10

And Nehemiah continued, "Go and celebrate with a feast of choice foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!"

Ezra, not Nehemiah, was the official religious leader. It is significant that Nehemiah was a layman, not a member of the religious establishment or a prophet. He was motivated by his relationship with God, and he devoted his life to doing God's will in a secular world. Such people are crucial to God's work in all aspects of life.

No matter what your work or role in life, view it as God's special calling to serve him.

The people wept openly when they heard God's laws and realized how far they were from obeying them. But Ezra told them they should be filled with joy because the day was holy. It was time to celebrate and to give gifts to those in need.

Celebration is not to be self-centered. Ezra connected celebration with giving. This gave those in need an opportunity to celebrate as well. Often when we celebrate and give to others (even when we don't feel like it), we are strengthened spiritually and filled with joy. Enter into celebrations that honor God, and allow him to fill you with joy.

## **Come quickly with your strength Lord**

Psalm 22:19

O Lord, do not stay away! You are my strength; come quickly to my aid!

David would praise God in the congregation because his private deliverance deserved a public testimony. God wonderfully delivers us in the quiet moments when we are hurting, and we must be prepared to offer public praise for his care.

## **My heart trusts in God's strength**

Psalm 28:7-8

The Lord is my strength, my shield from every danger. I trust in him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving. The Lord protects his people and gives victory to his anointed king.

It's easy to pretend friendship. Wicked people often put on a show of kindness or friendship in order to gain their own ends.

David, in his royal position, may have met many who pretended friendship only to meet their own goals. David knew that God would punish them eventually, but he prayed that their punishment would come swiftly. True believers should be straightforward and sincere in all their relationships.

## **The Lord has become my salvation**

Psalm 118:14

The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my victory.

This psalm gives two reasons for praising God: his great love toward us, and his faithfulness that endures forever. If he did nothing else for us, he would still be worthy of our highest praise.

## Chapter 3



### **The Lord is my song**

Isaiah 12:2

See, God has come to save me. I will trust in him and not be afraid.  
The Lord God is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."

This chapter is a hymn of praise—another graphic description of the people's joy when Jesus Christ comes to reign over the earth. Even now we need to express our gratitude to God—thanking him, praising him, and telling others about him. From the depths of our gratitude, we must praise him. And we should share the Good News with others.

### **God is our strength every day.**

Isaiah 33:2

But Lord, be merciful to us, for we have waited for you. Be our strength each day and our salvation in times of trouble.

Having suffered much injustice from evil rulers, many in Judah were hungry for a strong king who would rule with justice. This desire will be fulfilled when Christ reigns. Evil will be banished, and the King will reign in righteousness and rule with justice.

In the immediate future, Judah would be destroyed and taken into captivity. But one day, God's Son, the King unlike any other king, will reign in righteousness.

### **God gives power to the tired and worn.**

Isaiah 40:29-31

He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. Even youths will become exhausted, and young men will give up.

But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

Even the strongest people get tired at times, but God's power and strength never diminish. He is never too tired or too busy to help and listen. His strength is our source of strength. When you feel all of life crushing you and cannot go another step, remember that you can call upon God to renew your strength.

Hoping in the Lord is expecting that his promise of strength will help us to rise above life's distractions and difficulties. It also means trusting in God. Trusting helps us to be prepared when he speaks to us. Then we will be patient when he asks us to wait and expect him to fulfill the promises found in his Word.

## **The Sovereign Lord is my strength**

Habakkuk 3:19

The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He will make me as surefooted as a deer and bring me safely over the mountains.

Crop failure and the death of animals would devastate Judah. But Habakkuk affirmed that even in the times of starvation and loss, he would still rejoice in the Lord.

Habakkuk's feelings were not controlled by the events around him but by faith in God's ability to give him strength. When nothing makes sense, and when troubles seem more than you can bear, remember that God gives strength. Take your eyes off your difficulties and look to God.

God will give his followers surefooted confidence through difficult times.

They will run like deer across rough and dangerous terrain. At the proper time, God will bring about his justice and completely rid the world of evil. In the meantime, God's people need to live in the strength of his Spirit, confident in his ultimate victory over evil.

Habakkuk had asked God why evil people prosper while the righteous suffer. God's answer: they don't, not in the long run. Habakkuk saw his own limitations in contrast to God's unlimited control of all the world's events.

God is alive and in control of the world and its events. We cannot see all that God is doing, and we cannot see all that God will do.

But we can be assured that he is God and will do what is right. Knowing this can give us confidence and hope in a confusing world.

### **Power through the strength of your inner being**

Ephes. 3:16

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will give you mighty inner strength through his Holy Spirit.

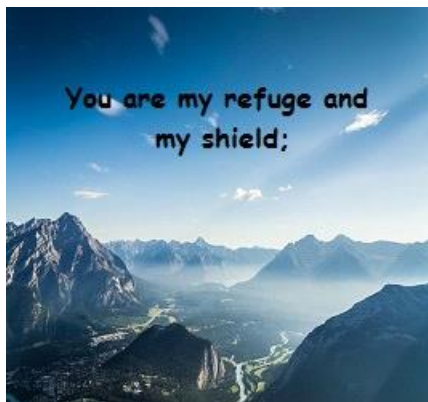
The family of God includes all who have believed in him in the past, all who believe in the present, and all who will believe in the future. We are all a family because we have the same Father.

He is the source of all creation, the rightful owner of everything. God promises his love and power to his family, the church (Ephes. 3:16-21).

If we want to receive God's blessings, it is important that we stay in contact with other believers in the body of Christ. Those who isolate themselves from God's family and try to go it alone cut themselves off from God's power.



## Chapter 4



**God is our refuge and shield.**

Psalm 119:114-115

You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my only source of hope. Get out of my life, you evil-minded people, for I intend to obey the commands of my God.

The psalmist asked God for discernment. Faith comes alive when we apply Scripture to our daily tasks and concerns. We need discernment so we can understand, and we need the desire to apply Scripture where we need help. The Bible is like medicine—it goes to work only when we apply it to the affected areas. As you read the Bible, be alert for lessons, commands, or examples that you can put into practice.

## **Preserve my life according to your word**

Psalm 119:25

I lie in the dust, completely discouraged; revive me by your word.

Most of us chafe under rules, for we think they restrict us from doing what we want. At first glance, then, it may seem strange to hear the psalmist talk of rejoicing in following God's statutes as much as in great riches. But God's laws were given to free us to be all he wants us to be.

They restrict us from doing what might cripple us and keep us from being our best. God's guidelines help us follow his path and avoid paths that lead to destruction.

The psalmist says that he is a "stranger on earth," and so he needed guidance. Almost any long trip requires a map or guide. As we travel through life, the Bible should be our road map, pointing out safe routes, obstacles to avoid, and our final destination.

We must recognize ourselves as pilgrims, travelers here on earth that need to study God's map to learn the way. If we ignore the map, we will wander aimlessly through life and risk missing our real destination.

## **Your promises preserve my life**

Psalm 119:50

Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles.

The psalmist talks about keeping the laws and yet being free. Contrary to what we often expect, obeying God's laws does not inhibit or restrain us.

Instead it frees us to be what God designed us to be. By seeking God's salvation and forgiveness, we have freedom from sin and the resulting oppressive guilt. By living God's way, we have freedom to fulfill God's plan for our lives.

### **I have learned God's decrees**

Psalm 119:71

The suffering you sent was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your principles.

### **God heard me in my distress**

Psalm 120:1

In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me.

Meshech was a nation far to the north of Israel; Kedar a nation to the southeast. Both were known for being warlike and barbarian. Because the psalmist couldn't have been in two places at one time, he was lamenting that he felt far from home and surrounded by pagan people.

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**Holy Bible: King James Translation**

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**Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print**

