



# The Strength To Go On

By

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Being a Christian is not easy. We get tired, frustrated and discouraged. That's because we're human. God knows that and built into His Plan a way to deal with the weaknesses we face in this body. He did not leave us alone in this world to fight the fight of faith. God gave us His Spirit so we would have the strength to go on.

“For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Romans 8:24-28

What Paul wrote about in this portion of his letter to the Romans is a very personal relationship between a Christian and God. Paul told the Roman believers about God giving them a right standing before Him (Justification). He then shared with them about how God's Grace helps us live a life pleasing to Him (Sanctification). Paul wrote about how Christians have become dead to the law through the body of Christ that we should bear fruit to God – “But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.” (Romans 7:6)

Paul also told the Romans that they had two natures warring within them –

“So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” Romans 7:25

Are you familiar with that battle? I know you are. It's very personal. God knows all about it, so we can always go to Him when the battle becomes too much. What does God say when we ask Him for the strength to go on?

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” Romans 8:1

Praise God for Romans 8! That chapter is one of the most quoted by Christians around the world and through the ages. It takes us from the deep valley of despair to the high mountain of delight as we deal with the weakness of our flesh –

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:2

Praise God! We are free from the law of sin and death. Paul did not say that Christians are free from sin and death – we all sin and we will all die (if Jesus doesn't come for us first) – but we are free from the “law” of sin and death –

“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Romans 8:3-4

Paul also wrote the Romans about how God was going to deliver them from their body of death (Glorification) –

“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with the birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.” Romans 8:22-23

That leads us to today’s verses in Romans 8:24-28 –

“For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

The redemption of our body from sin and death is our great hope! We were saved with that hope in view, but how do we get there from here?

I love this – “the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses.” Oh, thank you, Lord! God’s Spirit lives inside every believer and He helps us in our weaknesses – and they are many. The first example Paul presented the Romans was their weakness in prayer – “For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Jesus makes intercessions for us in Heaven and the Holy Spirit makes intercessions for us on earth. I think that covers us pretty well. Jesus intercedes on our behalf when the devil throws accusations at us before the Throne of God and the Spirit of God makes intercessions for us with “groanings which cannot be uttered” as we face the devil’s devices on earth.

Two events and emotions that stand out to me in God’s Word are love and life. God is Love and He gave us life. God is Life and He gave us love. Life and love are what the saints of all generations – from Adam to Noah to Abraham to Moses to David to James to Paul to us – have dealt with every day of their lives. Sometimes life is good – sometimes it’s not. Sometimes we feel loved – sometimes we don’t. Life has its ups and its downs. Sometimes we’re happy – sometimes we’re not. There are times when we feel so high on life that we could fly above the highest cloud. There are other times when we feel so low on life that we could drown in the deepest sea.

Can you imagine how Adam felt two hours after God ushered him and his wife out of the Garden of Eden? What do you think Adam thought about every morning when he woke from a night's sleep, wiped his eyes, looked around at the new day and knew the pain he and his wife and their children and their children's children would experience that day because of his sin against God? How do you think Adam was able to withstand the sorrow he had brought on the human race during a lifetime that lasted 930 years? That's more than 330,000 mornings he had to wake up and face the day – and his family – responsible for plunging the human race into spiritual darkness and death.

How did Adam do it? He had a personal relationship with his Heavenly Father. Even though Adam sinned against God, the Lord gave him hope – the hope of redemption. Adam knew God in a way that no other human being has ever known God. Adam paid dearly for his sin, but God didn't give up on him. That's because God loved him. Before God sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden, the Lord made tunics of skin and clothed them. God covered them with His love and gave them the promise that one day the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the head of Satan – after the seed of Satan bruised the heel of the woman's Seed.

All of us have faced many tough times in our life. Some of those times have probably been so difficult that you may have thought it would be better to just die and go to Heaven than to continue in the pain and suffering of this life. We're not alone – millions of believers have thought and felt the same thing in their lives. The Bible gives us some clues about how they got through the tough times – a close and personal relationship with God – believing in the hope He promises His children.

Have you noticed in Scripture that God's people were usually alone when God spoke to them? That's the best time to hear God's Voice. In fact, God even tells us that – "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) The sons of Korah wrote those words as a tribute to God for His amazing protection of and provision for the nation Israel. That's what we need to do in our "still" times – our quiet, alone times with God. We need to consider the great works of God, how He has protected us and provided for us. It is during those times of still reflection on the greatness of God that we will hear from God. Hearing from God will deepen our faith in Him to go forward and do great things in His Name.

Here are some wonderful examples that never fail to stir my heart to trust God.

“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.”

“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

“By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.”

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.”

“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.”

“By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.”

“By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.”

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command. By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.”

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.”

“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”

“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.” Hebrews

David is one of my favorite examples of a man of faith who went through every problem imaginable and didn't give up. He was so honest about his need for God to give him the strength to go on – and God answered his prayers day after day, year after year, through the very last day of his life. God was always faithful to David – and He'll always be faithful to you. Look at some of the situations David faced and what he prayed for during his private times with God. You can probably relate with what he was thinking and feeling.

“Save me, O God, by Your name, And vindicate me by Your strength. Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers have risen up against me, And oppressors have sought after my life; They have not set God before them. Selah Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is with those who uphold my life.” Psalm 54:1-4

“Give ear to my prayer, O God, And do not hide Yourself from my supplication. Attend to me, and hear me; I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily, Because of the voice of the enemy, Because of the oppression of the wicked; For they bring down trouble upon me, And in wrath they hate me. My heart is severely pained within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, And horror has overwhelmed me. So I said, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. Indeed, I would wander far off, And remain in the wilderness. Selah I would hasten my escape From the windy storm and tempest.” Psalm 55:1-8

“Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; Fighting all day he oppresses me. My enemies would hound me all day, For there are many who fight against me, O Most High. Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?” Psalm 56:1-4

“Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until these calamities have passed by. I will cry out to God Most High, To God who performs all things for me. He shall send from heaven and save me; He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. Selah God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.” Psalm 57:1-3

“But I will sing of Your power; Yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; For You have been my defense And refuge in the day of my trouble. To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; For God is my defense, My God of mercy.” Psalm 59:16-17

“Hear my cry, O God; Attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to You, When my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For You have been a shelter for me, A strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah” Psalm 61:1-4

“My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah” Psalm 62:5-8

I hope you see how important private and personal worship is to our faith. We need to be close to God – very close. I love the old hymn, “I Need Thee Every Hour.” The words express so well the heart of a believer who understands what it means to trust God every day – every hour.

“I need Thee every hour, most gracious Lord; No tender voice like Thine can peace afford.

I need Thee, oh, I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee; Oh, bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee.

I need Thee every hour, stay Thou nearby; Temptations lose their pow’r when Thou art nigh.

I need Thee, oh, I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee; Oh, bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee.

I need Thee every hour, in joy or pain; Come quickly and abide, or life is vain.

I need Thee, oh, I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee; Oh, bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee.

I need Thee every hour; teach me Thy will; And Thy rich promises in me fulfill.

I need Thee, oh, I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee; Oh, bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee.

I need Thee every hour, most Holy One; Oh, make me Thine indeed, Thou blessed Son.

I need Thee, oh, I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee; Oh, bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee.”

Spending time with God privately is not an option for a Christian. If we don't have that time alone with God, our lives will be filled with failure and frustration. We need Him, every hour, we need Him.

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