

FAITH - THE SOURCE AND FOUNDATION OF OUR STRENGTH

Faith is only seen in the calmness of the soul in the midst of a tempest. The Bible tells us to be still to know God, being shod with shoes that will support and maintain us standing firmly on the ground. As a source and foundation of our strength, it needs to be cultivated daily, for it is by faith that victory is won. Faith sustains hope, hope in the promised future the Bible assures us. Practical faith is exercised every moment, as we move and accomplish the tasks of the day. Although challenging circumstances change and redirect our path, it is, without a doubt, the way to strengthen faith's muscles. As the physical body's muscles need to be exercised, so faith needs trials to be strengthened. Unpleasant as it might be, it carries a weight of reward at the end. In the physical world, it is faith that gets us out of bed, that carries us through the day, helping us to accomplish the things we need to do, without us thinking about it, for it is a natural way of life, part of being human. Faith eliminates fear and encourages power: "I can do all things, because YAHSHUA strengthens me." Believing it, empowers faith to be effective in all aspects of life. Proverbs 31 describes the virtuous woman as courageous in all the subjects of life; courageous, fearless, industrious. Faith, is without a doubt, the secret of her strength, the pillar and foundation of all she can accomplish. Today, is hard to find such woman, because the world is guided by gadgets. The woman of Proverbs 31 is non-existent in this life style of today. Technology has taken the human abilities away and replaced them with laziness. Robots clean the floors; washing machines and stoves are labor saving electrical devises, facilitating women's work. Cooking has been replaced with prepared frozen foods; sowing is no longer a need, for clothes are bought ready to wear. So, what's there for women to do to show her virtuality as a virtuous woman?

A virtuous woman of today is still a woman of faith, when she performs her responsibilities in season and out of season. In the physical world, her work is diminished, however remains her spiritual duty to perform toward her household. When her goal is to please her Lord and Savior, her actions will show in the way of love toward her husband and children, in the way she cares for them. The family that is sustained by faith is a family that stays together. When the Lord returns, will He find faith on this earth? Was His question. We can understand His question, observing the easy life-style, in the absence of spiritual priority, in the lack of respect for God's Word, in its interpretation to conform to our life style. We walk in a church and what do we see? A lack of respect for God's house, it is as if a party is about to happen, not a worship service. Uttered sermons are, in many cases, means of entertaining the crowd with jokes and not conviction of sins. The church becomes then a platform for comedians. This environment offers no place for faith to be exercised, because it lacks the source and foundation of faith, from where our strength emanates. It is faith that compels us to do what is right in the sight of God and man. A life voided of faith shows to be weak and victim of circumstances. Looking at the lives of the heroes of faith is plain to see that they depended heavily on faith for their spiritual sustenance; *they had to suffer the trial of mocking and scourging and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death; they were lured with tempting offers [to renounce*

their faith]; they were sawn asunder; they were slaughtered by the sword; [while they were alive] they had to go about wrapped in the skins of sheep and goats, utterly destitute, oppressed, cruelly treated- Men of whom the world was not worthy- roaming over the desolate places and the mountains, and [living] in caves and caverns and holes of the earth...(Heb. 11:36-38). And none of them gave up the faith to flee suffering of persecution.

Proverbs says, "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small" (24:10). Not acting in faith, will result in weakness of mind and body. I once met a couple stripped of all earthly goods, but possessed of great faith. Crippled, due to a stroke, he had to beg for his necessary food. They lived in a small clay house, unprotected from the weather elements, but what they were strengthened with these words: "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good courage, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). At only 15 years old, I marveled at their faith and have never forgotten their testimony. That genuine faith, we must embrace. Faith in persecution, faith in poverty, faith in trials, it is enduring faith. It is manifested strongly in the endurance of the life's valleys and deserts. If you will not believe in God and His Word, *surely you will not be established nor will you remain (Isa. 7:9b)*. For our strength comes from enduring faith. Obviously, we do need it to be overcomers in this world of temptations and trials. It is by faith that we will be transported to heaven; its strength is powerful and capable to take us upwardly. Faith, should be the Lord's redeemed way of walking.

The Apostle Peter dared to confront a storm of great proportion, when he asked the Lord to command him to come Him on the water. While held unto faith, His eyes firm on the Lord, he walked on water without problems. The moment his eyes focused on the storm, fear took over his mind and he almost sank right before the Lord. He cried out, Lord, save me! That is the picture of our today's daily living when faced with life's storm. The Word of God never lost the power to rescue, to provide for us in times of our needs; God's Word is very powerful when believed, when practiced every day, when we make it part of our life. The Word of God offers complete help in our trials. It says, "God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present and well proved help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). The Word of God must be mingled with faith. But as Peter's lack of faith, so is ours. When circumstances of great pain arise, we lose the ability to think and reason according to the Word of God; frightened, we begin to sink in the waters of doubt and fear. O we of little faith! YAHSHUA, after rescued Peter, He said to him, "*O you of little faith. Why did you doubt?*" (Matt. 14:31b) Where are we in our relationship with our heavenly Father? We have faith, but we don't. It disappears when we need it most. Do we truly believe Who He said He is, or do we just go through the emotions, pretending to know Him, without really knowing Him? Faith is a gift from God, but sadly, we all suffer from misunderstanding its true meaning; its concepts and reasons.

Three times Paul asked the Lord to remove from him a thorn in his flesh; three times the Lord said no. Paul didn't get frustrated; he submitted to God's will. His faith elevated him to a place of closer relationship and dependance on God. The Lord's answer to him was, *My grace is sufficient for you; My strength and power are made perfect in weakness. Therefore, Paul concluded, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities that the strength and power of Christ may rest upon me! So, for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure*

in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities and distresses; for when I am weak, then I am strong (II Cor. 12: 9-10). A testimony of faith, one that can be applicable to all of us in every circumstance, when we do not experience God's answer to our prayers, as we wanted Him to answer. Behind Paul's strength in submission to God's will there was the word faith. How pleasing it is to our heavenly Father when we walk in faith that causes us to submit to His will in understanding of His purpose of sanctification!

A prayer:

Lord, I am just a speck of dust, needing Your light of understanding, as I go through the trials of life. Seemly, so long, I ask You, How much longer can I endure this testing of my faith? As long as it takes to conform me to be more like You? May Your will prevail then. As Paul, I will submit to Your will, until the storm passes by and faith transports me to You.

In Yahshua's name. Amen!