

Flying Lessons

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[0:00] We're going to talk about getting stronger, getting stronger. How can we grow? How can we be stronger in our faith? How can we be stronger Christian? I love to see people grow, to see spiritual development, spiritual growth, for God's people to be strong in the Lord. It's a repeated theme, isn't it?

Sadly, I see much spiritual shipwreck. Many are fainting, weak. They weaken and they fall. The spiritual energy seems to peter out and people stumble. But the Lord wants us to be renewed in strength. And he shows us how in these verses here.

Isaiah chapter 40, verse 28. It reads, Why are so many weak? They do not wait upon the Lord. I present to you some keys for growth here, some practical pointers, how we can grow as a Christian, how we can be an effective Christian, how you can strengthen your faith. And I'm talking about living the intentional Christian life. There's deliberate steps we can take as we're given here. Steps we can take, steps we must take.

It says even the young ones, the youths, will get weary. They will get fatigued. We all can get warned. Trials, tests, people, workload. It says the young men shall utterly fall.

[2:10] I've seen that. There are many who I could think of. Some young men. They're missing in action today. Men who've gone AWOL.

Where are they? Where are they? Where are they spiritually? You might think of others too that come to mind. Young men, young women. Where are they now? Some have lost their way. But it need not be that way. They can renew their strength. You might feel like maybe that's me.

It says that they can renew their strength. And the Lord promises his supernatural strength. If you're in that boat or you feel like you're lagging, it all hinges on this word.

But, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. So the Lord gives us here this picture of this soaring eagle. This picture of an eagle flying high, high above, high in the clouds. His strength is for us. It's available for us. The everlasting God.

He's the one who's talking to us here. And his power is promised. Where is this strength, this power? It's in him. He gives power to the faint. As we come to the end of ourselves, we can find his strength, the ultimate strength.

[3:27] As we wait upon him, he gives it to us. He's the source of it. And to wait, it speaks of that call to be available, to be ready. Waiting for an expected outcome.

Who's ever waited at the doctor's surgery? I know we had a four-hour wait at the local surgery lately. And it takes a bit of testing to wait, doesn't it? But we're waiting for an expected outcome. And there's an expected outcome here. It says, They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. And there's many verses that talk about waiting upon the Lord. For example, Lamentations 3, 25.

It says, The Lord is good unto them that wait for him. You've spent time waiting for an appointment, waiting in a queue.

Waiting can be a hard thing to do. But waiting is the right thing to do. Spiritually so. It's something we are called to do. To seek after God.

[4:26] God will bless you for that waiting upon him. It's the biblical pattern. Waiting is hard, but it works. Think of the men and women of God who had this experience.

We see David waited 12 years to become king. Joseph waited 13 years in prison for a crime that he did not commit. Jacob waited 20 years to get possession of his wives and property.

Abraham waited 25 years for a promised son. Moses waited 40 years in the wilderness before God called him to deliver his people from Egypt.

Isaac and Rebecca waited 20 years to have children. Noah waited 120 years for the rain. Boaz waited years for Ruth.

God's plan means waiting sometimes. Waiting. But the wait was worth it. In all those cases, wait upon God. Trust him for his plan, for his purpose.

[5:30] Trust God for your future. What lies ahead? Trust God for it. While we're waiting, God is working on us. He's preparing us for what he wants us to be. It's said of Moses, he spent 40 years thinking he was a somebody.

40 years learning he was a nobody. And 40 years discovering what God can do with a nobody. It's interesting, isn't it? Wait upon the Lord.

Wait on the Lord, brother, sister. Here's another one. Psalm 27, 14. Psalm 27, 14. Wait on the Lord. Be of good courage. And he shall strengthen thine heart.

Wait, I say, on the Lord. He's repeating it there. Wait, wait, wait. Don't stop waiting. Keep on waiting. Keep on persevering in that faith. Persevere in prayer. Don't give up.

When we wait upon the Lord, we go beyond our own ability. Now it's easy to get weary. But don't get weary. Wait. Galatians 6, verse 9 is a familiar one.

[6:31] Where Paul says, And let us not be weary in well-doing. For in due season we shall reap. If we faint not. So persevere. Trust in the faithfulness of God.

Recognise our weakness. Rely upon him. We cannot save ourselves. We must depend on him. And as we wait upon our God. Our expectation is of him.

The certain spiritual disciplines that help us to grow. Some resolutions we can make. Some resolutions for godly living. And it says that we can find his strength as we wait upon him.

And it says we will have a harvest. If we persevere, we're not weary in that well-doing. Keep plugging. We find his strength as we wait upon him. So basically it's talking about our communion with God, isn't it?

And it says, as it led into that first verse, The everlasting God is the one who offers his power to the faint. Think of him. Who is he? He's the Almighty. What greater source can you have?

[7:31] So I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, Keep working out, nurturing your spiritual life, your prayer life. Build it stronger. It's easy to get too busy, isn't it?

So busy that we miss this. The waiting is important. We neglect that time with him. Our relationship with God is the most fundamental, isn't it?

We can miss that. In all the Russian bustle of life, we can miss that, that waiting. We can miss that. And so let's take stock of that. Waiting on God is about communion with him.

It's searching the word. It's seeking fellowship. It's surrendering to his will. So talk with him. Plead with him. Trust him. Where he has placed you.

And he has you where he can do a work in you. In that waiting time. It's his school. When God seems silent, keep trusting. Through the struggle. The trial.

[8:29] You can ask yourself, am I closer to God today than I was a year ago? In our fast-paced society, we need sometimes just to stop, wait, unplug, and plug into him.

Let us not neglect that relationship, that communication with our Lord. It's easy to get tired of waiting. Tired of waiting for God to answer.

But we must exercise patience. Persevere by faith. Press through. Pray through. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

It's God's promise. Where does my strength come from? It's from him. Isaiah 49 verse 5 says, My God shall be my strength.

There's a lot in that passage there, isn't there? My God shall be my strength. What a promise. Another means of strength is his word.

[9:31] He revives our strength by his word. As we wait upon the Lord, let's meditate upon his word. Abide in his word. There's strength there. There's growth there. 1 Peter 2 verse 2 reads, As newborn babes desire that sincere milk, that unadulterated, that pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

As Christians, we need regular nourishment from God's word for us to grow. So get the word. Be where the word is. There's strength there. Where the word is preached. Don't miss this. It's your strength. Where you can get to the word. To get to study. To get to hear it. To read it. To encourage yourself in it.

Living as we do in this itching ears generation. We need sound Bible truth. Now, more than ever. And we are to be the people that uphold the word of God.

The validity. The accuracy. It's true. Word for word. And we can take heart in its truth. Psalm 1 verse 1 through 2 says, Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

[10:54] It's where we find our delight. The godly man finds his delight in the word of God. We can find joy and strength. We can wait upon God. Lay hold of his word.

As Bible believers, we're called to develop that appetite for God's word. In the midst of an anti-biblical world, we can be counter-cultural. So let us meditate upon his word.

Day and night. Day after day. Night after night. And as we meditate on the word of God, we're going to grow. May we take our counsel from his word, not the world.

It's truly life-changing. There's strength and there's power here in the word of God. By it we can discern truth from error. To grow spiritually requires exercise as well as nourishment.

So use your spiritual senses, your spiritual muscles. Build that up. Be building up your spiritual muscles. The more of the word we have in our hearts and minds, the more power.

[11:58] We see that in Acts 17 verse 11. The Bereans were able to determine whether the truth was taught because they searched the scriptures daily.

The Bereans were unlike the dumbed-down churches of our day, some that looked more like circuses led by clowns. In these latter days, it seems that many just seem to abuse and neglect the word of God.

May we rather be as the Bereans. They were serious students of the word. And so should we be. Led by God's truth. Truthful.

The strength there. For us to grow spiritually, we can need that regular nourishment, just as we all need physical food regularly. For us to grow, we need to feed our soul by feeding on God's word. Psalm 119 verse 97 says, Oh, how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day. How much do you value God's word?

[13:01] You can ask yourself, how much time did I spend this week watching TV or other things? How much time watching sports or entertainment, reading the news or whatever?

How much time did I spend with some hobby or outside interest? Not necessarily anything wrong, but perhaps not necessary.

How many hours did you spend studying your Bible? Keep working at applying Bible truths. Communion with God. Feeding your soul with the word.

Another area we can develop spiritual strength is having the right spirit. May we seek after God and place God's will above our own.

How's our spirit? Let's not get so busy with other things that we fail to wait upon the Lord and renew our strength. When the Lord calls you to serve him, say, yes, Lord, I will wait upon you.

[14:02] I will renew my strength. I will do your will. It's getting that right spirit that you're ready. You're willing. Wait with patience.

Meantime, God will give you that calm, resilient spirit. He'll develop you. Being patient is a key part of trusting in God. Psalm 37 verse 7 says, Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.

Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. He's saying, don't fret yourself about others.

Get things right yourself. Rest in the Lord. Wait patiently for him. We have to trust him while we go through some things. As we wait on the Lord, we're going to get things sorted out.

Our priorities right. It's important that we put first things first, isn't it? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Put God in the highest place.

[15:02] The Lord wants us to have that right spirit in how we live and act towards others and towards him. When we know God, he fills us with his love to love other people.

The Lord helps us to reach out, to reach the outcasts. He makes us useful. To those who have no might, he increaseth strength. We derive strength from God because he is the one who has unending strength.

He gives us endurance. David was humbled in repentance and contrition. He had got off track and into sin. And it says, David sought after God and asked the Lord for the right spirit.

Psalm 51.10 says, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. One of the big problems today in churches is where people get the wrong spirit.

Sometimes things get wrong in their spirit. Something hinders their walk. They get diverted. They end up living in spiritual bondage. They have the wrong spirit.

[16:05] Some get prideful. They walk in pride or the flesh. There's a spiritual weakness there. Even the young men shall utterly fall. It's a spiritual fall.

Spiritual damage. How shameful. How difficult to see people fall. I've seen people fall. They get bruised, wounded, just somehow distracted.

Yet we see God can heal the fallen and restore them. There's hope there. Thank God he is in the salvage business. Psalm 37.23-24 says, The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way.

Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. We need repair. We all do. And God can affect that.

He can do that work. It's getting the spirit right. Getting it healed. That's what we need. Ask the Lord to deal with your spirit, your hardness of heart, if that's the case for you.

[17:09] That he do a deep work within you. He can. He wants to. Let him. Seek God to revive your heart. He doesn't write off the weak. We all have times where we feel weak, inadequate, unworthy.

He doesn't write you off. He doesn't give up on the fallen. He giveth power to the faint. We just have to let him touch us. He lifts up the weary.

The Lord upholds us with his hand. Thank God. He revives us. He will refresh our flagging spirits and renew our zeal. He promises that he will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him and we can find joy in him.

He can restore our joy. Seek God to give you a boldness to follow hard after him. You can impact your world. When you get the right spirit, you'll get the fire back.

Ask yourself, which do you nourish the best, your spirit or your body? We can all think of what's the next meal and get some appetite for that. But what about spiritually?

[18:17] How's your spiritual appetite? How is your spirit? Have you got the right spirit? How's your spirit before man and God? Are you feeding your mind on God's word or other things?

God has created you to be like an eagle. God's called us to be eagles, not chooks, scratching, pecking at the ground at one another.

Some birds will eat any old thing. We've got chooks at home and they'll eat any old scraps. But eagles don't eat dead things. They're not scavengers. They only eat fresh prey.

An eagle can see something the size of a rabbit running at three miles away. They soar high above and they've got keen eyesight. They're made to fly higher, to soar.

What a picture for us, spiritually. Eagles can achieve 30 miles an hour using powerful wing beats and even faster when they're diving after they pray.

[19:18] Bald eagles can dive at up to 100 miles an hour. Golden eagles at up to 150 miles an hour. Eagles have been known to fly even 125 miles in a day during migration depending on the weather and the wind conditions.

An eagle is a powerful bird. They fly and they fly high. And we're compared to an eagle. Most birds fly under 500 foot.

Eagles fly much, much higher. Much higher up. The bald eagle for example glides at altitudes of up to 10,000 feet. 500, 10,000.

Eagles are in a class above. God wants us to be like an eagle. He wants to renew a right spirit within us. And the spiritual analogy that he gives is of an eagle.

Some birds cannot handle storms. They scurry in fear and fright. But an eagle will mount up, it says, with their powerful wings. They will fly high above the storm clouds.

[20:24] What a picture for you, for me. You can rise above the storm. Whatever the storm is for you, you can rise above. We can have that right spirit. The Holy Spirit works within us.

And we are helpless without him. Thank God he strengthens us that are weak for a purpose, to do his will. And for us to grow well as Christians it's important that we absolutely must rest on the vital work of his Holy Spirit.

Acts 1 verse 8 says, but you shall receive power. After that the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me. He gives us power for a purpose.

Power to witness. We can know God's power, his power supply. And there's a spiritual transformation that happens. Friends, there's no shortage of God's power.

No shortage of God's might and strength. There's no lack of ability on his part. God's spirit. And what's more, we can tap into that.

[21:30] He tells us we can. So may we learn to be submissive to God's spirit, to let his Holy Spirit transform our life, give us that strength, that spiritual power, to work at developing our spiritual gifts.

God wants to see spiritual fruit flowing out of our life. We should be channels that God works through. We should produce something by his power.

As we strengthen our faith, we can become more effective in the Lord's work. So, brother, sister, I exhort you today, put your faith into action.

The best way to grow is to extend yourself. Volunteer. Offer to serve. 1 Timothy 4 verse 7 says, exercise yourself towards godliness.

We learn by doing. Be active. exercise and practice what's important. And what's important for you is to grow as a Christian.

[22:32] So, find areas where you can serve, ways you can produce God's fruit in your lives, and practice serving God. Serve consistently. Press on. Again, Galatians 6 verse 9, and let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

Persevere. Press on. The enemy delights in wearing out the saints, wearing them down. Don't flag. Get back in the race. Realize it's the devil trying to get you down.

Know that the reaping time is ahead. It's coming, that harvest time. Make a list of things that you do that are seen as important in heaven. And see how you can do them.

Take stock of how you are investing your life. God's strength. Sometimes God takes away our strength that we might have God's strength. Think of Paul, the thorn that he sought to be delivered from and how God said that my strength is made perfect in weakness.

So believe in God's promises. Let us not be weary in well-doing. Again, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

[23:45] They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint. So friends, don't be weary.

Recharge. One of the best ways to grow and to strengthen your faith and the faith of others to truly serve the Lord is to really commit to fellowship. Christianity isn't something we fly solo in.

We have a family around us. And the Lord calls us to relate to one another and be a blessing to one another. So as we gather together in fellowship we can grow and be strengthened together.

We can speak words that will uplift and encourage and hearten and bless other people. That's one of the blessings of fellowship that you're imparting to others as well as receiving for yourself.

Proverbs 27 17 says iron sharpeneth iron so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. There's a sense where we learn from one another. We're speaking to one another.

[24:45] We're exhorting one another. There's a sharing. There's a discussion a growing together as we learn from one another. We can't do that when we miss fellowship.

You're not going to grow. As the church we're here to accomplish things of eternal significance and we do that together. So do we make use of the opportunities for the nourishment that comes from

fellowship?

Don't miss fellowship. Don't withhold your support. Don't withhold your labor. Be loyal. Commit and participate in church life. There's opportunities God gives to us to feed our soul.

You can ask yourself how many services of the church do I attend? How many do I miss that I really could have attended? Fellowship is important for your spiritual growth.

The promise is here. God's strength in your weakness. So there's a victory too. We've got a wonderful liberty in Christ that his strength is for you. For you to break those destructive habits and patterns in your life.

[25:53] God can supply his strength and it never diminishes. It's always available for us. Ephesians 6 10 through 11 says Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Be strong in the Lord his strength he strengthens you. Stay on guard he clothes you with his might and power. Walk in that victory that you have in Christ.

victory is assured it may not always feel like it when you have some setbacks but you have victory in Christ you have victory so how is your walk with God may you walk in that victory delight in him we can go through a spiritual refreshing and when all is said and done as you seek to strengthen your faith and to grow make sure you maintain that humility too again 2 corinthians 12 verse 9 in that context of the thorn Paul sought to be delivered God says unto him my grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in weakness friend if you're feeling weak you're feeling weak as a brother a sister in Christ then you're just like Paul thank God you've got the same God his strength is made perfect in your weakness so Paul says God grace is sufficient don't you just love it that

God strength is made perfect in weakness there's a promise there isn't there one that we can lay hold of who does he give power to he gives power to the faint to them that have no might he increaseth strength the glory of God has gone from churches and lives where God is not truly exalted people can get proud and puffed up churches can get prideful and ichabod is written all over them we need to keep that place of humility God calls us rather to live in the fear of the Lord to live a life that pleases him let us live in that may our churches walk in the fear of the Lord that's the right thing to do to walk in humility with our God it's possible to get pride for even about our spirituality and so we always need to keep that place of humility acknowledge your weakness and receive his strength how wait upon the Lord now God can often answer our prayers with wait that can be hard to do but waiting on

God is a discipline that can produce righteousness peace and strength we all need to learn to depend to be humble before our God to wait for him his timing learn to be content to trust God's control as we live the intentional Christian life we'll want to grow right not grow puffed up and be a know all spiritually but to live humble and holy under the master's hand this is the intentional Christian life this is discipleship this is that life truly well lived a life that depends on him a life that pleases God bears fruit and all the glory will go to God he giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might he increases strength even the youth shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall but they that wait upon the

[29:29] Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings as eagles they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint may we make this our aim wait upon him and we will see his faithfulness keep waiting it will be worth the wait may we consecrate and re-consecrate ourselves to this glorious intent he can rejuvenate us let's determine for a life intent on setting spiritual goals a life filled with God's values wait upon the Lord and you will soar like an eagle we can fly higher and rise above above the wind the storms he will make you strong wait upon the Lord