

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Source Of Strength

(Jerry Fite)

Man up! Refuse to stay down, get up! Pull yourself up by your own book straps! Sheer determination, will power, and self-sufficiency are qualities many Americans admire, and strive to possess. But how should a Christian view his or her strength?

Determination to be strong as men is definitely an exhortation from Scripture: “...quit you like men, be strong” (*I Corinthians 16:13*). But the source of that strength is not merely self-determination. Paul prefaces such exhortation with, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith...” (*I Corinthians 16:13*). Watchfulness and determination to be strong are coupled with standing in the faith.

“The faith” is “the word” or “the gospel” that has been revealed once and for all times (*Jude 3*). We can receive it because it is revealed and knowable. “As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema” (*Galatians 1:9*). What was Paul preaching when he preached the gospel? “...He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made

havoc” (*Galatians 1:23*). The word of God or the faith is our connection to our strength in the Lord.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might” (*Ephesians 6:10*). Notice, Paul speaks of being strong and having strength; but we are strong “in the Lord” and strength is “of His might”. When we equip our minds with the truth of the Gospel we are putting on “the armor of God” (*Ephesians 6:13*). We then are strengthened to withstand the “wiles of the devil” (*Ephesians 6:11, 16*). We reinforce our will with a spiritual power to defeat a spiritual foe.

Our Faith or trust in God and His promises is the source of strength for the Christian. Yes, we will or determine to believe, but merely believing does not make us strong. Believing in God through what He has revealed and promised is the source of strength in the believer. Abraham experienced strength to even “believe against hope” (*Romans 4:20*). “...he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform” (*Romans 4:20-21*).

Abraham had been promised a son in his own age through Sarah who was past the age of child bearing. God promised. God is able. Abraham believed. Abraham waxed strong in his faith, which connected Him with our strength-giving God.

When the Devil tempts us to live for today, satisfying the lusts of the flesh, for there is nothing beyond this life; we strengthen our resolve to resist in the promise that an eternal inheritance awaits the righteous in heaven (*Titus 1:2, I Peter 1:4-5 I Corinthians 6:9-11*).

Relying on God’s providential care is also a source of inner strength. Paul writes, “I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me” (*Philippians 4:13*). Paul could always be “content” or feel sufficient for any situation because of his dependence on the Lord. The strength to not be distracted from our walk with the Lord by earthly circumstances is leaning on the fact that the Lord will supply our needs (*Matthew 6:25-34*).

We have strength to stand when through faith we know the Lord is standing by us (*2 Timothy 4:17*).