

Series: **GROW STRONGER**

Topic: **From Strength to Strength**

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Text: **Isaiah 40 v 28 - 31**

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Message

Declare that 'Every day and in every way, I am getting stronger and stronger in Jesus name'.

While in high school, I had some funny experiences in the track and field events. I cannot say that I am built for that nor is that an area of strength, but I often push myself a lot. For example, I tried to lift something like a barbell while in JSS 1 but failed (I was of a small stature as a fresher in high school). I simply told myself that I had about 5 years to 'conquer' the barbell. I kept going and finally lifted it in my final year. It took me almost a full length of time but God is faithful. **What you cannot lift today, you can carry tomorrow, so you need not despair.**

Ecclesiastes 9 v 4 says that '*For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion*'. The most important thing is life. When life is at your disposal, you can accomplish tomorrow what you cannot do today.

God is in the business of increasing us in strength if we walk with Him. Someone may need emotional strength and another, intellectual strength. God is our strength and He is always in the business of loading us with fresh strength. So, it is important to know that the will of God for our lives is not for us to diminish in strength but to go from strength to strength.

Life, by the way, is not a sprint but a marathon. The Bible is replete with descriptions of what God expects from us, as we run our race, if we want to go from strength to strength. For example, in Isaiah 40 v 28 – 31, God says that the young men may fall and be weary but they that wait upon Him shall renew their strength. When we consider the horizon today, we see many who are supposed to be astute, many who are supposed to be strong, and many who demonstrate strength financially or physically but are emotionally bankrupt, while some are intellectually bankrupt. Some are valueless because it takes strength to uphold one's values; it takes emotional and spiritual strengths to be a person of value. God can strengthen you in various areas where you need strength. You do not have to succeed in one area and be weak in another. God wants to watch your back in the place the devil knows constitutes your weak point. That is why He said that 'they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength' because there is a need for us to continue going from strength to strength.

Most of us connect our mobile phones to a power source before retreating to our beds. This is usually done so as not to run out of battery power. However, some of us do not mind running out of power, be it emotional or physical, because we take more than we can handle, believing everything will sort out themselves but things do not work that way. God wants us to pay attention.

When you read Psalms 84 v 5-7, you will discover that the will of God for us is to go from strength to strength, notwithstanding the things we go through. The valley of Baca in the scripture above refers to the valley of weeping. When you walk through the valley of Baca, one thing is guaranteed: it will become a place of refreshing springs and the autumn rain will clothe it with blessings. There is something about leveraging the God factor to be able to move from strength to strength and not become bankrupt strength-wise in any area of life. That's the will of God for us.

In the physical, we get stronger by food, rest, exercise, etc. Exercise builds resilience, endurance and stamina. God also wants us to build resilience in spiritual and emotional things because the journey of life is not a sprint but a marathon. So we need to understand how to pace, refresh and recharge ourselves as far as strength is concerned.

Let us consider one or two things that are important, if we want to build strength:

When God shows you what your future is like, build strength for that future. God told Elijah, ‘Eat, for the journey is far’ (I Kings 19 v 7) and that is not limited to physical food – it also includes spiritual food. Many of us celebrate the things God has shown us; we celebrate where God is taking us. Someone is seeing himself or herself as the CEO of a multinational corporation. All these dreams require strength. For instance, it takes strength for you to allow your children go when it is time. It is one thing to have a dream that you will raise Godly children and it is another issue to have the emotional fortitude to discipline them when the need arises. When a parent does not have the emotional fortitude to say ‘No’, the dream may not come to pass.

I was talking to a brother in this church a few years ago, who had worked in a bank for so long, and I looked at him and said, ‘The way you are going, even though everyone is celebrating you, when the time will come for your real promotion, you will be excused’. The brother then asked, ‘Why?’ and I responded that since you joined this bank, about 10 years ago, you have not added any professional certification to your qualifications. He was a performer alright but there is a level that performance isn’t enough. The excuse that will be given at that stage will be that this person is very good but he has only a first degree. He asked for what should be done and I directed him to those who are the level he was aspiring to get to, and to obtain what they have. It takes emotional fortitude for you to say, ‘I am going to study and prepare for the next level’.

I was preaching in the United Kingdom a few years ago. I had applied for my MBA at Manchester Business School but felt like it was a bad decision. There was an old man in his mid-sixties who was invited to speak at the same conference, and by the time his profile was read out, I was intimidated. Thank God, I spoke before him. After the event, I approached him and informed him about my admission into the Manchester Business School, and all the issues like funds, travel time, study time, family, etc., associated with the admission. The old man looked at me and asked about the vision that God had given me. He inquired to know if the skills that the MBA degree will equip me will be required to pull through this vision. When I answered in the affirmative, he asked me go for it and encouraged me that God will sort the rest out. That was it. I knew I had to send the acceptance letter after I returned to Nigeria. I did not even know where I was going to get the £25,000 tuition fees at that time but today that is history. Some people will sit on the same spot and continue to engage in wishful thinking without taking concrete steps

You need strength to make the right decisions that will move your life forward and that is the strength that God supplies. Psalms 105 v 4 (NLT) says, ‘*Search for the Lord and for His strength; continually seek Him.*’ Seek the LORD for sustenance.

As we search for the Lord, let’s not do it religiously, but with the mindset that we are also searching for strength to pull through because there is always a way with God. You can spend time in church and in prayer but the rubber isn’t meeting the road.

It is time to prepare for your season! Be diligent and consistent. Don’t live on the defensive. Be proactive, not reactive. Being proactive is when you engage the strength of God because you are not waiting for things to happen; you want to happen to things.

How Do You Sustain Strength or Go From Strength To Strength?

1. Wait on God (Isaiah 40 v 31)

When you wait on God, you renew your strength. When you are at the restaurant, the waiter has no agenda other than to please the customer. The waiter is waiting for an instruction from you. When you are waiting on the LORD, you are seeking His face for instructions, because one word from God can turn your life around forever.

In Acts 13 v 1 – 3: They waited on the LORD in prayer and fasting. And the Holy Spirit said, ‘Separate Saul and Barnabas unto Me.’ One word from God from that gathering defined the rest of the ministry of Apostle Paul.

It is about the time you are spending in His presence. The Bible says that ‘Where the Word of a King is, there is power’ (Ecclesiastes 8 v 4). If anyone is bringing you God’s word, irrespective of the person’s status, open your heart to receive it. One word from God can redefine your destiny. One word from God is a source of strength.

2. **Increase in Knowledge**

Increase in knowledge if you want to grow from strength to strength. You need to talk to yourself about your appetite for the knowledge of God. The Word of God is spiritual food for my spirit man. It is spiritual sickness to lose appetite for God's word, especially if you are born-again. If your appetite for the Word is going down, you need a spiritual doctor. Something must fall back into place, because you need to desire God's word whether in reading, hearing, etc.

Proverbs 24 v 5 (NLT) says, 'The wise are mightier than the strong, and **those with knowledge grow stronger and stronger.**' So, don't go to war without wise guidance; victory depends on having many advisers. Many sources of instruction in the word of God is what guarantees victory. Through knowledge we gain strength. So, do not treat knowledge anyhow, knowledge of God's word being primary and secondarily, general knowledge in relevant fields. If you treat knowledge anyhow, you will make wrong judgements.

Some people are fixated on spiritual milk, a.k.a., 'Touch and Go Christianity' (Hebrews 5 v 13). They cannot read the Bible for themselves. Some people only interact with the Bible when they are talking over lunch. You should be able to discuss the Word with your friends. You cannot have friends where the only discussions are centred on worldly things. You cannot have friends where the discussion does not centre on God's word. You cannot limit your interaction with the Word of God to just church services alone else, you will remain a babe in the Word. The bible says 'But solid food belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil' (Hebrews 5:14).

3. **Leverage the testimonies of the saints and on your past experiences**

You gain strength and endurance from testimonies of others (Hebrews 12 v 1 – 4) and from your past experiences because you know that the God who showed up then can yet do even bigger things for you. If you do not consider what has happened to others or what they have gone through and are standing strong, you will not be able to draw strength or unleash your potential.

Sometimes God looks at us and say, 'if only you take that step, you will see the miracles I will do in your life. Your mind can become bigger when you leverage God's word. Leverage the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit by doing these two things:

- a. Tap into joy
- b. Pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit

God did not create or wire us to succeed alone without the help of the Holy Spirit. If God did, Jesus will not make the statements in John 14 v 15 – 18. Many people will achieve great things but at great costs without the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings strength to us (Acts 1 v 8 – NKJV). The joy of the LORD is our strength.

Prayers:

- Father, move me from strength to strength. I desire a fresh anointing this moment; I need the help of the Holy Spirit.
- I acknowledge you again this moment as my strength. Fill me afresh with Your Spirit.