

## As the Man Is, So Is His Strength

Strength that is visible and pleasing to the eyes is not strength at all. The person of inner strength is like a house built on a strong foundation, able to withstand storms of all strength. He may look feeble physically in the eyes of people; his muscles may not look outstanding; he may not be of a tall stature; he may look average and overlooked by all. However his inner strength is not one to be exposed by his looks; his strength comes from his in most being. Nothing moves him to despair, not even the worse tragedy of life. The more the winds blow against him, rocking his place, his family, the stronger his faith grows reaching deeper into the strength that comes from above, because the spiritual foundation of his house is firmly established in YAHSHUA, whose strength is greater than anyone's available. Paul was a man of great inner strength; he could confidently speak from experience. His life was marked by storms and sufferings few have experienced and have remained firm and strong in faith. He declared his strength to have come from the Lord. He said, I can do all things, because He (YAHSHUA) gives me strength. He was not proud to admit that his strength was not of his own; he said, When I am weak, then I am strong, and why so? Because it was the strength of the Lord that sustained him in his weakness.

The invisible strength is manifested in the grace given us when life is challenged with problems. God said to Paul, My grace is sufficient, and it was through the life of Paul and it is through our life, if we embrace God's grace with faith. The greater the sufferings we go through, the greater the strength available to us through God's grace. The man who walks with God will have the joy of the Lord and display his strength in every situation. Spiritual strength is a product of wisdom and understanding. By wisdom a house is built and by understanding it is established, said Solomon. Wisdom is the foundation that will sustain life and understanding will finalize it with peace. We see the strength of the heroes of the faith mentioned in Hebrews 11: 33-34, it reads, by the help of faith (they) subdued kingdom, administered justice, obtained promised blessings, closed the mouths of lions, extinguished the power of raging fire, escaped the devourings of the sword out of frailty and weakness won strength and became stalwart, even mighty and resistless in battle, routing alien hosts. And as man is inwardly, so is his strength outwardly.

When we hear about physical strength, we think Samson and rightly so, because Samson was anointed by YAHWEH with strength to deliver his people from the hands of the Philistines. But Samson rejected the inner strength from the Lord, when he went his own way by choosing an ungodly wife who betrayed him and handed him to the Philistines, the people he was to deliver Israel from. The life of Samson is a history of failure because he lacked the spiritual inner strength from the Lord, although being chosen for a special task that required strength to perform it. Not until his death, when he was blind and weak, did he fulfill partially the task YAHWEH had chosen him to do. At that time he called to the Lord and said, O Lord, God, remember me, I pray You, and strengthen me, I pray You only this once, O God, and let me have one vengeance upon the Philistines for both my eyes. He cried, Let me die with the philistines! He bowed mightily and the house fell upon the princes and upon all the people that were in it. So the dead whom he slew at his death were more than they whom he slew in his life

(Judges 16:28,30). "Not by might, nor by power says the Lord, but by My Spirit says the Lord". Samson's strength was only effective when he called on the Lord, where all strength comes from.

The prophetess Deborah was a woman of great inner strength. The Spirit of the Lord elevated her with strength to defeat Israel's enemies; when Barak despaired, Deborah was calm and courageous to go forth in the name of the Lord to face the enemies and YAHWEH gave her the victory. The Lord uses the weak of this world to humble the seemingly strong. The inner strength is with those with a calm spirit. The Word of YAHWEH instructs us to be still to know Him; to have a calm heart to believe in Him; in calmness there is strength. Those who wait for the Lord shall change and renew their strength and power; they lift their wings and mount up as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint or becoming tired (Isaiah 40:31). What separates the strong person from the weak one? Is it not adversity? A person of inner strength sees adversity as a challenge and arms himself with strength to face it; the weak, crumbles with fear and despair. Adversities are like a rainy storm that shakes all the dead leaves and branches of a tree, bringing out its beauty after all is over. Adversity is then a kind of therapy for the soul; it is painful at times, but at the end we can say, it was worthy the pain, for it strengthens the spiritual muscles and matures the soul of men.

As the man is, so is his strength; in steadfast patience and endurance in immovable faith to the end of his time on earth like Job, who in innocence of evil committed that brought him trials, resisted all temptation to forsake YAHWEH and never blamed Him for the adversities embracing him. At the hearing of the bad news concerning his family, he accepted all by saying, Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord! In all this Job sinned not nor charged God foolishly (Job 1:21-22). Job's heart was not leaned on the strength of his riches, but on his God, Who had given him and had taken away for a time. Job's inner strength is expressed well by his faith and fear of his God. Much knowledge has been perceived in his written words, as he wished they would be. Oh, that the words I now speak were written! He said; oh that they were inscribed in a book! That with an iron pen and lead they were graven in the rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer and Vindicator lives, and at last He will stand upon the earth, and after my skin, even this body, has been destroyed, then from my flesh or without it I shall see God, Whom I, even I, shall see for myself and on my side! And my eyes shall behold Him, and not as a stranger! (Job 19: 23-27). As a result of Job's inner strength we have this poetic and prophetic book full of knowledge and lessons guiding us how to experience God's faithfulness in times of suffering.

Our behavior in times of adversity demonstrates how strong we are inside. And not until then will we know ourselves for what we are and others see us. We do seem to have a better view of self than the reality shows. Our inner strength is measured by adversities as Solomon said, If you faint in the day of adversity your strength is small (Prov. 24:10). Acting in fear is being outside of God's love and faith. Faith is our weapon of self-defense; it is a shield that quenches all the flaming missiles of the wicked one (Ephesians 6:16), which comes to us as a spirit of fear, cowardice. The word of YAHWEH said that He has not given us a spirit of fear, but of love,

power and sound mind. Let's embrace that and be strong in Him; and be empowered through our relationship with Him, where our strength will come to overcome the dark days of trouble. Remember that as you are so is your strength!