

HOW CAN WE HAVE STRENGTH AND COURAGE IN DIFFICULT TIMES?

4 PART BIBLE STUDY



“ I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU,
NOR FORSAKE YOU.”
- HEBREWS 13:5 ESV



4 TRUTHS FOR TOUGH TIMES

Difficult times are an inevitability of our imperfect and fallen world, but God is ever present in everything that happens.



BRINGING OUR PAIN TO GOD

Difficult times are an inevitability of our imperfect and fallen world. These difficulties can come in all shapes and sizes; the only thing that changes is the scale. Personal trials and tribulations, familial issues, financial strife, health struggles, disputes with friends—these are all challenges. One thing is certain, and that is that troubles will arise. This is not meant to be a disheartening statement; rather, it's meant to be one of truth.

HOW TO HAVE STRENGTH & COURAGE IN TOUGH TIMES

PAY ATTENTION TO THE LITTLE MERCIES

1

REMEMBER, GOD IS THERE IN DIFFICULT TIMES

2

PRAY FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS

3

KNOW, YOU WERE MADE FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

4

It can be easy to be overwhelmed by the looming threats of this world. In those instances, it's so important to take a step back. Perspective is what becomes important. A lot of things can go wrong, and so we must also develop an eye for the little mercies that exist in our daily lives, the things that go right.

See the list to the right, and add your own 'new morning mercies' below:

- Daily prayer
- The happiness of your pet when they see you
- A beautiful sunrise or sunset
- A delicious meal or snack you've made
- Surprise gifts
- The sound of birds chirping in the morning
- Laughter from you or a loved one
- The feeling we get after cleaning a room in our home
- Reading a good book
- Meeting up with a friend to catch up

New morning mercies in my daily life:



**“BUT THOSE WHO HOPE
IN THE LORD
WILL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH. THEY
WILL SOAR ON WINGS LIKE EAGLES;
THEY WILL RUN AND NOT GROW WEARY,
THEY WILL WALK AND NOT BE FAINT.”
- ISAIAH 40:31**

Learning to recognize the good and triumphant in the most mundane of daily tasks is what will turn it all around. What could be ignored should not. There's beauty all around that is anything but ordinary if we take an intentional moment to recognize it. It builds our strength and refreshes the soul. These little miracles are not accidents, either.

God wants us to experience beauty and truly good moments. When all we think about or see is our struggles, they can become our whole reality. I know for me, that quickly becomes exhausting. We should not grow weary. These gifts from the Lord aid in building our ability to continue forward.

2

REMEMBER,
GOD IS THERE
IN DIFFICULT TIMES

IT'S REFRESHING TO KNOW THAT DIFFICULT TIMES ARE NOT NEW.

There are countless stories in the Bible about this very concept, and the story of Daniel demonstrates this. Daniel was a noble and trustworthy administrator of King Darius and he set himself apart so much that the other administrators and those who reported to them were threatened by him. They tried to find corruption and ways to expose him to no avail. They knew he worshipped God, and so they conceived of a plan to set him up by convincing the king to decree that anyone found worshipping anyone or anything outside of the kind himself should be thrown in a lion's den.

Since Daniel prayed often, it was a short time before he was discovered and, even to the king's chagrin, was thrown into the lion's den. A stone was rolled over the entrance to shut him in. Surely, he wouldn't come out alive. When the king went to check on him the next morning, Daniel was alive!



**“My God sent his angel,
and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have
not hurt me,
because I was found innocent in his sight.
Nor have I ever done any wrong before you,
Your Majesty.**

**The king was overjoyed
and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den.
And when Daniel was lifted from the den,
no wound was found on him,
because he had trusted in his God.”**

- Daniel 6:22-23

What happened in Daniel's story is also true in our lives. I'm certain that if I were thrown into a den full of lions, I would be shaking like a leaf. I'd think Daniel probably was, too, and yet he emerged the next morning after what I'm sure was a LOT of dutiful prayer in that den. Daniel was strong and he was courageous, even when it was extremely hard to be either of those things.

Daniel was a good person and lived his life as best he could, praying often and being kind to all. Despite this, he still faced hardship. And in the worst of the times he faced, God was there. God is there. He's there in the good times and in the bad. As long as we have faith in Him and trust in Him, the mouths of the lions we face will be shut.

3

PRAY FOR YOURSELF
AND OTHERS

**“IF YOU HAVE FAITH AS SMALL AS A MUSTARD SEED,
YOU CAN SAY TO THIS MOUNTAIN,
‘MOVE FROM HERE TO THERE,’
AND IT WILL MOVE.
NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU.”
- MATTHEW 17:20**



Prayer is one of the most powerful tools for fortifying our relationship with God. Our faith can move mountains.

Sometimes, all we need to do is ask. It's crazy how simple that is, but how often it's forgotten. Praying for strength and courage is a good way to start if we want to be strong and courageous. These would also be worthy prayers for not just ourselves but for our family and even for our country and its leaders. Community has many levels, and it seems one of the higher levels is in need of it at this current time.

**“God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.”
- Psalm 46:1**

- Pray for wisdom and for God to keep a strong guiding hand over those who are making tough decisions. That all of those decisions would be made in a way that is most glorifying to Him.
- Pray that He will redeem what has and will be lost.
- Pray that we can all find strength and courage and be given opportunities to be strong and courageous.
- Pray that He makes His presence known in powerful ways to those who need it most.

Take a moment to write your own prayer. If helpful, use the prompts above as a guide.

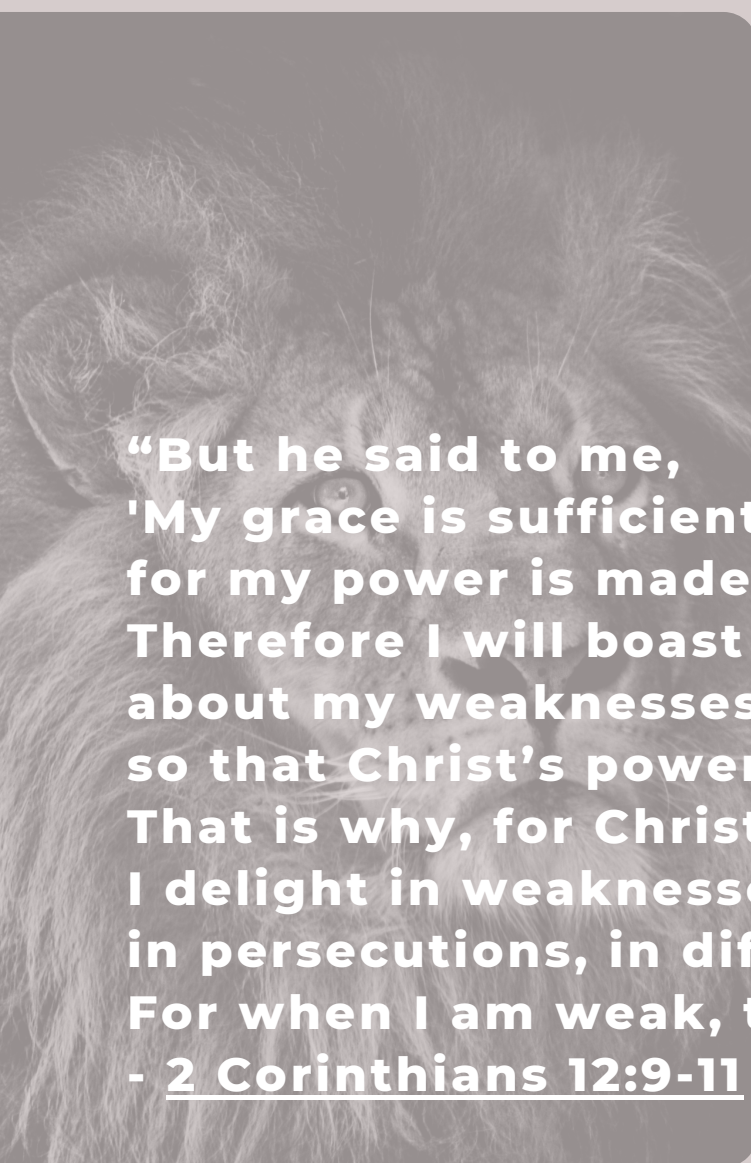
4

KNOW, YOU WERE
MADE FOR SUCH
A TIME AS THIS

Strength and courage can feel like very heavy and powerful words at times. Saying that we need to have strength and courage in difficult times often elicits images of the heroes we read about in stories or see in headlines splashed across the news. For me, the thing that comes to mind is the larger-than-life heroes we see in Disney movies like Hercules.

When these are the feats and people associated with “strength” and “courage,” it feels daunting to think about ourselves as possessing those same qualities. However, I want to remind you that being strong can come from starting weak. To be courageous can start from a place of fear, as I’m sure was true of Daniel’s story. We don’t have to start perfect and ready to be strong and courageous.

It can begin when you don’t feel either of those qualities at all. It begins with one step. One day at a time. Paul experiences exactly this:



**“But he said to me,
'My grace is sufficient for you,
for my power is made perfect in weakness.'
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly
about my weaknesses,
so that Christ’s power may rest on me.
That is why, for Christ’s sake,
I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships,
in persecutions, in difficulties.
For when I am weak, then I am strong.”
- 2 Corinthians 12:9-11**

Now, I don't know if I've gotten to the point of delighting in my weaknesses yet. It can be frustrating to know our weaknesses, but I know that God is my strength!

Being strong and courageous is not dependent on our own ability to be strong and courageous. It's about God's presence in our lives. When we cannot be these things, our faith in God and our reliance on Him provides provision.

Lord, I lift these weaknesses & worries up to You:



What starts as simply getting out of bed in the morning when a loved one has passed turns into a daily routine, which turns into one day realizing that you will be okay.

What starts as wariness for the future and being unsure about the state of the world and all that's to come turns into the understanding that God has control of it all and what's meant to be will be.



IN OUR WEAKNESS, HE IS STRONG

We become strong and courageous by making little attempts to be that way. We must remember that despite this being a difficult time, God specifically placed us all in it. We were made for now, and there's nothing that could happen that we are not made for. Where God guides, He provides.

“

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” -

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Isaiah 40:31

Additional Notes:



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