

Leaning on God and on His Understanding

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the 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." I saiah 40: 28-31

So many times we go through life's struggles feeling that there is no person who could understand what we are going through. Jesus hears our cries and our every word and hears the whispers of our hearts. He understands, He listens when no one seems to care; and when our troubles are more than we can bear, He takes our load that we carry; if we give it to Him. We get weary, we feel helpless and powerless to do anything about our situation and our strength in our own might fails. As Christians we were not meant to live in our own power and we have the everlasting arms of God the Father to uphold us. We have a God who will strengthen us, help us and uphold us with His right hand of righteousness.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness". I saiah 41:10

He is a wellspring of strength and according to God's word, the everlasting God, the Lord is never weary; never grows faint. According to Isaiah 40 He gives power to the faint and to them that have no might He increaseth their strength. Young and old alike shall utterly fall. But those who wait on the 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.

But what if you are facing an illness that leaves you utterly weak physically and doctors are unable to find a cure? What if you are facing a physical or mental illness that causes memory loss? It is a normal human emotion to want to feel better and to be able to do the things that we are used to doing.

Maybe the question isn't God when am I going to get better, but God, how can you use me despite my limitations? And what is God's purpose through this? Do we allow God to use us for His purpose or do we want to know all the answers?

God is in control and He has all the answers. Perhaps it is for us to just trust and to have faith that God is working things out for our good and to put one foot in front of the other, even if we are using a cane, a walker, a wheelchair and step out in faith, knowing that God is our God and our existence here is but a vapor; a temporary home where we are to surrender, to yield and to be obedient. Jesus was obedient even to the point of death upon the cross.

Jesus could have come as a warrior with thousands marching at His side. But he chose to come as a tiny child. He denied His power as God and humbled himself as a man upon the cross. He showed us how to be servants to the Almighty God. He could have come clothed in splendor and majesty with a crown of jewels, but He gave up His life for us.

Perhaps if we try to save our lives physically we are not surrendering as Jesus did.

We can learn to pray as He prayed. God, Heavenly Father if thou would let this cup pass me by, but Your will not mine.

You may think, what about all the times you got down on your knees in prayer and those prayers seem to go unanswered? What then? With each doctor appointment, each round of chemo, each surgery, each medication change, each attempt to get some answers, if we are not careful our lives can be totally consumed with finding a way to feel better and in desperation we can stray from God's guidance and try to manage our illness on our own. As Christians we will still have illness and there are many people who go years without answers, feeling that they do not have the strength to go on. They may even begin to pray for God to take them home to relieve them from the pain they are going through.

Just yesterday I overheard a woman telling another person what a blessing it was after 7 years of her husband having heart and lung problems to have went to an empty emergency room after leaving a hospital ER that was full. Yesterday her and her husband finally had a doctor that told them what was going on and they finally had an answer to his prayers. Or did they?

All that this man had needed for the last 7 years God had provided. Each day God is faithful and never leaves us nor forsakes us.

Our faithfulness to Him that day may be an answer to our prayer. Talking to Him as we have yet another MRI and knowing He is there and knowing He is our only hope and allowing ourselves to need Him is an answer to prayer.

Asking God to help us to make it through another day of feeling sick because we are unable to eat from a medical procedure is an answer to prayer.

What is our purpose for prayer when we have a physical or mental illness? That we get better, or that God use us despite our illness?

That we will lean on Him or that He will lean towards what we want? That we will have understanding or that we will know that God's understanding is unsearchable. Giving a nurse a smile even though we are in such physical pain is us allowing God to work through us. It may seem like such a small thing, but to her it may be the only smile she has seen in days. She may be lonely and needing to feel God's presence.

Do we pray that we can still witness to people even when we are feeling sick or in treatment for our illness?

Everything we have God's hand has provided.

The man who waited 7 years to find out what was wrong with him may have had many blessings from God along the way. I wonder if he saw God's hand at work in his life? Or if others saw God shining in him?

Do we pray that we will see God working in our lives? Or do we expect God to give us immediate results to our demands?

God probably put people in this man's path over and over again to encourage him, to give him a bible verse that spoke to him directly from the mouth of God as He read his bible or heard his preacher in the church that they went to. God tells us to lean on Him and to not lean on our own understanding.

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths".

Proverbs 3: 5-6

In our understanding it may look like this man waited 7

years to get his prayers answered. In God's understanding He may see the first day that this man prayed as more important than having him feel well. There are people who finally come to Jesus after 70 years of running from God.

Our ways are so different than God's ways. What we look at as a severe trial, may actually be a blessing.

As Christians some of us have a misconception that following Christ somehow means that our lives will be healthier mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. When we realize that this is false we can then cooperate with God in loving obedience when we face various trials. We can develop a relationship and an understanding with God that stems from our confidence that God will always make a way; that even if our circumstances seem bleak; there is a purpose and God turns things out for our good and for His glory.

How do we give God the glory in the midst of our trials and pain? Seeking Him first according to Matt. 6:33, becoming totally dependent on Him for everything, allowing Him to direct our paths, taking up our cross and following Christ is a daily act of obedience.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you". Matthew 6:33

When we know that we have the victory because of our Savior Jesus Christ and we trust He will bring us through anything we face, our thinking will line up with God's word. Reacting this way not only strengthens our faith in God and better equips us to handle future situations, but it also ministers to those to whom we may be connected and/or have influence with. As we continually get reminded of God's love and grace towards us, we will gain a better understanding of why it is so important for

us as Christians to handle situations in a way that gives God the glory. For one, I think that because of how badly the Christian faith has been distorted and misappropriated (historically and presently), we as Christians are probably the most watched group in the world. People are waiting for us to fall or slip-up so we can be called hypocrites and for our faith to be discredited. Second, I think that one of God's primary purposes for us is so bring about character change, so that we become better people. I'm not suggesting that everything that we go through is "caused" by God because I personally don't believe that. What I do believe, however, is that there are times where God puts us in certain situations to show us some things that we need to see in order for us to be the people He has called us to be so others see Jesus in us.

Prayer

God, heavenly Father,

We thank You and praise You in everything and come boldly to Your throne of grace. During our dark hours Lord, help us to lean on You who never grow weary nor faint. Help us to realize that if we wait on You, we will find strength. Thank You for Your grace and mercy upon us, Your children as we go through various trials and tribulations. No matter what we face in our lives, Lord, we ask that you answer our prayer to come to You, to lean on You instead of our own understanding and to know that there is no searching of Your understanding. We thank You dear Father for our struggles for we glory in tribulations knowing that You are working patience in us and experience and hope. We thank You that we are

justified by faith, that we have peace with God through
our Lord Jesus Christ by whom also we have access by
faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope
of the glory of God.
in Jesus' name,
Amen