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CHAPTER 1

Wait for the Lord To Renew your Strength



*The Everlasting God...gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet **those who wait** [qavah] **for the Lord will gain new strength**; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary. (Isaiah 40:28-31 NAS)*

The Hebrew word *qavah* means, “to wait or to look for with eager expectation.”¹ It implies attentive engagement rather than idle indifference. The NIV reflects this tone of focused intent by rendering *qavah* as hope, i.e., “*they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength*”. Paul highlights this distinction by asserting:

*But if we **hope** for what we do not see, **with perseverance we wait eagerly** for it. (Romans 8:25 NAS)*

Waiting for the Lord evokes a proactive process sustained by faith, reinforced by hope, and enriched by love.

Active Waiting

As the father waited for his “*dead*”, “*lost*”, prodigal son, he rallied a steadfast commitment to watch expectantly for his return. He acted decisively with optimis-

¹ Harris, Archer, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, Moody Press, Chicago, 1980, p. 791.

tic faith, by fattening a festive calf, preparing a fine outer garment worn by kings, priests, and persons of rank, and by acquiring a distinguished ring.² This father had prepared to reconnect with his beloved son.

Editors for the “Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament” (TWOT) describe waiting as an expression of faith “that God will act decisively for the salvation of his people”.³ Faith fills the intermittent connection gaps with eager determination. It asserts confidence that God’s presence can and will fill our conscious awareness. Faith rallies patience and persistence, which sustain us on our pilgrimage as we seek the Lord and His strength. Deliberately waiting inspires initiative and foresight; it instills conviction and resolve. Energized by hope, waiting for the Lord propels us closer to God and His provision of strength.

*Blessed are those whose strength is in you, **who have set their hearts on pilgrimage**. ...They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion. (Psalm 84:5, 7 NIV)*

According to Gesenius’ Hebrew Lexicon, waiting for the Lord means twisting or binding our self together with Him, as with a multi-stranded rope.⁴ Michelangelo’s fresco in the Sistine Chapel falls short of this word picture. Rather than extending Himself to almost connect with our languid fingertip, our Heavenly Father interlaces Himself with us. He infuses us with His Spirit. Complacent indifference has no place in this sacred process. Mindless disregard is not an acceptable option.



Michelangelo's Creation of Adam, Wikipedia, 10-7-2019

Waiting for the Lord weaves all that we are into all that Christ offers. It moderates our moods, informs our behavior, and defines our priorities. Once connected with “*the mind of Christ*”, we are more likely to perceive accurately, choose wisely, and collaborate conscientiously with Him.⁵

*do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**.... (Romans 12:2 NKJ)*

² Luke 15:11-32

³ Harris, Archer, and Waltke, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, Moody Press, Chicago, 1980, p. 791.

⁴ H. F. W. Gesenius, Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, trans. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), s.v. 6960, pp. 726-727.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:16 NKJ

Waiting/Hoping for the Lord generates strength as we become entwined with His divine nature and supernatural activity. It allows time for the Holy Spirit to weave His eternal promises into our frayed perspective. The synergy derived from this spiritual union resembles a multi-stranded rope, which contains a great deal more strength than any individual strand.

David associated waiting for the Lord with strength and courage. He declared:

Wait for the Lord; Be strong, and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord. (Psalm 27:14)

Ezekiel prophesied that the returning Messiah would enter Jerusalem through the Golden Gate also called the Mercy Gate or Gate Beautiful (Ezekiel 44:1-4). The tenth and longest-reigning sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Suleiman (Kanuni in his realm), sealed this gate with stone and mortar in 1541 CE.



Prayer for Strength

Every fifteen seconds on average, the human mind disengages from sensory input to assimilate information. According to neuroscientist and child psychiatrist Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., memory consolidation occurs as thoughts wander to ponder the past, integrate the present, and imagine the future.⁶ In a natural rhythm of listening and reflecting, the mind drifts to synthesize implications and consider possibilities. Reflective thinking and creativity require time for dissociation and daydreaming. Such drifting in and out of focus facilitates comprehension and retention in an attentive relationship.

Contemplative Prayer

Contemplation means to ponder with thoughtful consideration. It incorporates deliberate reflection with an emphasis on hopeful expectation. Merriam-Webster and others add the notion of concentrating on “spiritual things as a form of pri-

⁶ Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., and Oprah Winfrey, *“What Happened to You”*, 2021, Flatiron Books, New York, NY, pp. 170-171.

vate devotion or a state of mystical awareness of God's being".⁷ Paul encourages contemplative prayer for everyone as a means of personal transformation.

*And we all, who with unveiled faces **contemplate** [or behold (NAS)] **the Lord's glory**, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18 NIV)*

Meditative Prayer

As we endeavor to comprehend God's attributes, recognize His activity, and realize His promises, meditation supplements contemplative prayer. Like contemplation, meditation emphasizes intentional consideration and review but with a concerted focus on specific details.⁸ Paul advocates that we "dwell" specifically on things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and/or praiseworthy.⁹

Where to Meditate: In the field, upon your bed, and in God's temple.

*Isaac went out to **meditate in the field** toward **evening**; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, camels were coming. Genesis 24:63 NAS*

*Tremble, and do not sin; **Meditate in your heart upon your bed** and be still. Selah. Psalm 4:4 NAS*

*When I **remember You on my bed**, I **meditate on You** in the **night watches**, Psalm 63:6 NAS*

***One thing I have asked** from the LORD, **that I shall seek**: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To **behold the beauty of the LORD** And to **meditate in His temple**. Psalm 27:4 NAS*

How to Meditate: Speaking wisdom while employing both heart and mind by activating emotional and intellectual faculties.

*My mouth will **speak wisdom**, And the **meditation of my heart** will be **understanding**. Psalm 49:3 NAS*

*Let the **words of my mouth** and the **meditation of my heart** Be **acceptable** in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:14 NAS*

⁷ Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition, 1994 by Merriam-Webster, Inc.

⁸ The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2006, 2000, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, MA

⁹ Philippians 4:8

I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, And my spirit ponders: Psalm 77:6 NAS

Let my meditation be pleasing to Him; As for me, I shall be glad in the LORD. Psalm 104:34 NAS

What to Meditate: On God's awesome attributes, accomplishments, and activity, His law, precepts, statutes, testimonies, word, ways, wonders, works, and deeds.

On the glorious splendor of Your majesty And on Your wonderful works, I will meditate. Psalm 145:5 NAS

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Joshua 1:8 NAS

I will meditate on all Your work And muse on Your deeds. Psalm 77:12 NAS

I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways. Psalm 119:15 NAS

Make me understand the way of Your precepts, So I will meditate on Your wonders. Psalm 119:27 NAS

And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, Which I love; And I will meditate on Your statutes. Zayin. Psalm 119:48 NAS

May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie; But I shall meditate on Your precepts. Psalm 119:78 NAS

O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. Psalm 119:97 NAS

I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. Psalm 119:99 NAS

My eyes anticipate the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NAS

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your doings; I muse on the work of Your hands. Psalm 143:5 NAS

Next Chapter: Rest for Strength A Sabbath Priority

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