

## The Secret of Spiritual Strength



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) October 21, 2019

### A Message for Today

The prophet Isaiah pronounced a woe on Israel: “Woe to the rebellious children,” says the Lord” (*Isaiah 30:1, NKJV*). The Hebrew word Isaiah uses for “rebellious” means backsliding, stubbornness, a turning away. What, exactly, were God’s people turning away from? And what caused their backsliding?

The answer is in the next phrase: “[They] take counsel, but not of Me, and [they] devise plans, but not of My Spirit” (*30:1*). This means they make their own plans. Simply put, God said, “My people no longer look to me for guidance and counsel. Instead, they lean on the arm of the flesh. Every time they act without seeking me, turning to the world for help, they pile sin upon sin. They’ve forsaken their trust in my strong arm.”

God’s people knew full well they were to trust the Lord in every situation, no matter how insignificant. The Psalms constantly reminded them, “How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings” (*Psalms 36:7*). “For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge” (*57:1*). “Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice” (*63:7*).

Isaiah declared that God would break down all their self-protective walls: “Therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall...whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant. And He shall break it like the breaking of the potter’s vessel, which is broken in pieces; He shall not spare” (*Isaiah 30:13-14*). God was saying, “I’m going to break into pieces every false thing you’ve trusted in. Your plans are going to collapse.”

Then Isaiah revealed God’s compassionate heart toward his people. He urged Judah, “You don’t have to live in confusion anymore. You don’t have to endure this sudden breaking. God has provided a way out for us.” “For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: ‘In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength’” (*30:15*).

Here, in short, is God’s secret to spiritual strength: “Quietness and confidence shall be your strength.” The word for quietness in Hebrew means repose, indicating calm, relaxing, free from all anxiety, lying down with support underneath.

### **Not many Christians today have this kind of quietness and confidence.**

Multitudes of believers are involved in a frenzy of activity, rushing madly to obtain things. Even in the ministry, God’s servants are full of worry and fear, looking for answers in conferences, seminars, best-selling books. Everyone wants guidance, solutions, something to calm their spirit, yet they seek it in every source except the Lord.

They don’t realize God has already spoken a word for them through the prophet Isaiah. He describes what God’s righteousness is supposed to accomplish in us: “The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of

righteousness, quietness and assurance forever" (*Isaiah 32:17*). If we're truly walking in righteousness, our lives will bear the fruit of a calm spirit, quietness of heart and peace with God.

Peter speaks of "the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (*1 Peter 3:4*). Such a spirit has nothing to do with temperament or personality. Some people are naturally inclined to be calm and shy while others are simply morbid. No, the meek, quiet spirit Peter refers to can only be implanted in us by the Holy Spirit. He gives it to everyone who fully trusts the Lord in all things.

As Isaiah looked around, he saw God's people fleeing to Egypt for help, trusting in men, relying on horses and chariots. The prophet warned, "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord stretches out His hand, both he who helps will fall, and he who is helped will fall down; they all will perish together" (*Isaiah 31:3*).

Ambassadors were coming and going. Leaders were holding emergency strategy meetings. Everyone was in a panic, wailing, "What can we do? The Assyrians are going to wipe us out."

Isaiah assured them, "It doesn't have to be this way. Return from your backsliding. Repent of your rebellion of trusting in others. Turn to the Lord, and he'll cover you with a blanket of peace. He'll give you quietness and rest in the midst of everything you face."

### **The Holy Spirit gives us strength when we release all our needs into God's hands and trust in his might.**

Ruth is an example of this kind of trust. After her husband died, Ruth lived with her mother-in-law, Naomi, who was quite elderly. Naomi was concerned about Ruth's welfare and wanted to ensure her daughter-in-law's future. She advised Ruth to lie down at the feet of the wealthy Boaz and ask him to fulfill his obligation to her as her kinsman.

That evening, after the day's winnowing was finished, Boaz lay down "at the end of the heap of grain; and [Ruth] came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down" (*Ruth 3:7*). The next morning, he woke up startled, finding a woman lying at his feet. (There was nothing immoral about Ruth's presence there; this was a common custom of the day.) "And he said, 'Who are you?' So she answered, 'I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative'" (*3:9*). She was saying, in essence, "Will you take on the obligation of a relative for me? Will you provide for me?" In short, she was asking, "Will you marry me?"

This was no manipulative scheme. Ruth and Naomi had done everything in divine order. We can be sure of this, because Christ's lineage came through Ruth. When Ruth returned home early that morning, Naomi asked her, "Is that you, my daughter?" (*3:16*). She was asking, in other words, "Should I call you 'engaged Ruth'? Or are you still widowed Ruth?"

Ruth told Naomi all that had happened. Now listen to her godly mother-in-law's advice: "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day" (*3:18*). Naomi had prayed about the matter, seeking God's direction, and God had given her counsel. He had reminded her of the law of the kinsman-redeemer (which was a type and foreshadowing of Christ). Naomi was confident that she and Ruth had done their part. Now it was time to sit still and trust God to perform what he had promised.

She was saying, "It's all in the Lord's hands now, Ruth. Just relax and be calm. God will move supernaturally for you, so you don't have to worry, fret or manipulate anything. Let quietness and confidence be your strength. God won't let Boaz rest until he puts a ring on your finger."

A calm and peace settled over Naomi's house. Nobody was in a frenzy, biting fingernails and wondering, "Will God do it? When will it happen?" These two faithful women could relax, sing and praise the Lord for his goodness.

What about your home? Is it a calm, peaceful abode? Or is it a place of doubt, questioning, anxiety, restlessness? Do you run here and there, fretting, "How am I going to pay the bills?" When trouble comes, do you seek God diligently before any other source? Then do you obey everything he tells you to do? Finally, are you still, restful, trusting him for the result? If so, your home should be one of calm and peace.

## Isaiah lists the good things that come to those who wait on the Lord in all ways.

“Blessed are all those who wait for Him.... You shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry... Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.... You shall have a song as in the night...and gladness of heart” (*Isaiah 30:18-19, 21, 29*). Isaiah was saying, “If you’ll just wait on the Lord—if you’ll cry out to him again and return to trusting him—he’ll do for you everything I’ve said and more.”

God can merely speak a word, and the enemy will falter before us: “For through the voice of the Lord Assyria will be beaten down, as He strikes with the rod” (*30:31*). There is no matter our Father can’t solve, no battle he can’t win for us, with a mere word from his lips. Isaiah says “the breath of the Lord” will consume everything in our way (see *30:33*).

Dear saint, he wants it all: your health, your family, your future. He wants you to entrust him with every matter, and he wants you to live in quietness, confidence and rest. Go to your secret closet and get alone with the Lord. Bring everything to him. He has promised, “You’ll hear my word behind you, telling you which way to go. This is the way. Now, walk in it.”

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