

In the Barn!

Barney's Newsletter



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Stumbling & Striding

by **Kathy Hansen**

How do we see God's strength, day by day? We seek strength through God's word and through prayer, but how does it work in a practical sense?

I have days I just stumble from one problem to another. I can't solve them. My staff are overworked. I can't help them. On Wednesday I had two customers ring me, one after the other, and yell at me. I pour

myself into prayer on days like that. If I have strength in God, shouldn't I feel stronger as time goes on? I don't. I stumble and wobble from one day to the next. Occasionally, I stride through the day with purpose. But a lot of days it's just one small, confused step after another.

Why aren't I having more of the striding days? I pray, and depend on God, but I'm not getting stronger. I'm staggering, trying to find my way through the jumble of feelings, confusion and weariness that life is right now.

But I'm looking at this from an earthly human perspective. God is working in me from an eternal, Godly perspective.

God doesn't want us to be self-sufficient, and stride off confidently with nary a backward glance at

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The promise in the midst of our suffering

By Elise Brake

Suffering

come back to life and appear to them. Jesus said: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace.

But take heart! I have overcome the world." Jesus promised his disciples that they would suffer, and they did. Yet they had courage even as they faced death for preaching the gospel, knowing that Jesus had overcome death for their sake.

We too have this promise, and can take heart in the midst of our own suffering!

God does not leave us to suffer alone; the Psalms speak to God being

present with us in our suffering. Psalm 23 says: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." The Psalmist recognises that God provides for us in the midst of our suffering, that He walks beside us as we face death and pain and trauma, that He guides us and comforts us in our suffering.

The Bible reveals a God who does not leave us to suffer alone in our illness, but provides us with His word: pages filled with accounts of people who suffered in numerous ways, yet trusted in God not just to deliver them, but also to equip them to endure their suffering. This faithful God promises that no suffering – no matter how great – can separate us from His love.

The apostle Paul recounts the suffering he experienced as he shared the gospel: imprisonment, beatings, shipwrecks, hunger, thirst and all kinds of danger (see 2 Cor 11:23-30). He later says that though he pleaded with God to take away his suffering, God didn't – rather, "He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness". And how does Paul respond? "Therefore I will boast all

the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:9-10).

In our weakness, like Paul we can learn to rely on God more – to recognise how much we need

In our weakness, like Paul we can learn to rely on God more – to recognise how much we need Him.

Him. When our bodies are weak, overwhelmed by pain and fatigue, we can look to God for strength, knowing that His grace is sufficient. When our minds are in chaos and anxiety leaves us reeling, we can pray, knowing that God not only hears our prayers but is already working for His glory in our lives.

The God of the Bible does not promise a suffering free life to those who believe in Him; in fact, He promises the opposite! We will suffer in this life; this is inevitable. John 16:33 recounts some of Jesus last words to his disciples – the men who walked alongside Him as He did his ministry on earth, the men who watched Him suffer and die on the cross, only to

Stumbling & Striding – Cont'd



Him, as He disappears from our awareness like a speck in the distance. That's not strength, that's denial. Denial that leads to emptiness and death.

Being strong in God does not mean we get so strong we rely on ourselves. God's purpose in making us strong is to fit us for the marathon, eternal life with Him. The strength is in the stumbling days, so we keep seeking God, and drawing close to Him.

I stumble along, but I persevere. I fall over, but I get up. That is the strength God gives me. Without God's strength I would not be able to get up and keep going. Strength comes from depending on God, and following his lead. Our strength in God, is displayed in all its fullness when we are weak in ourselves. I may be weak in myself, but I am strong in God.

After my dreadful day on

Wednesday, I went to bed early. I woke refreshed. I put everything else aside and worked with my angry customers to solve their problems. That was a striding day. God gave me that striding day, to get me through the stumbling days. Some days I stride and stumble together, like Friday. I stumbled along, but a seed I planted, with trepidation, a few days before, to help my staff; started to bud. Last Sunday was a stumbling day, but messages of encouragement out of the blue from a few of my Barneys family gave me cheer and love.

God's strength comes in many different forms. But it always comes when we need it, even if we can't always see it clearly at the time. Whether I am striding or stumbling, I get through each day, with God's help. That's all that matters.

Find-A-Word

Burden	Hope	Propitiation	Struggle
Character	Journey	Race	Stumble
Cross	Joy	Reliance	Suffering
Endurance	Justice	Resolve	Trust
Exasperation	Life	Running	Tulip
Exhortation	Marathon	Scripture	Weakness
Faith	Patience	Spirit	
Falling	Perseverance	Strengthen	

C N T U L I P J Q S F L I F E
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