

Though God is able and ready to help us, we may find it disappointing when our every desire is not satisfied. Many times we call for God to deliver us without visible result. Are we to think that God is untrustworthy or cruel?

It is really more a question of priorities. Compared to spiritual glories, the sufferings of this world are nothing<sup>1</sup>, and all things will work out according to the plan that God has set forth<sup>2</sup>. God's idea is that we be strong in facing the times we don't get just what we want. This is the kind of character he is trying to build and develop in us. **He wants man to pray, not for ease, but for strength.** The power of God is not to be used just to give us an easy life.

There are many times when we just stand back and let God do our fighting for us, just as he did for the infant nation of Israel. But the major theme of the Bible is strength through God to meet the test of life. God wants to be used in this way.

Caleb rejected the 'easy' life by advocating the invasion of the land of Canaan. But he shows this spirit in another way, by being ready to take on the tough territorial battles in his old age<sup>3</sup>. In general, God did not drive out all of the peoples of the Promised Land at once, but insisted that they gradually win over possession of the land<sup>4</sup>. God knew that this would be the best for them.

David had much the same attitude, or he would never have run to meet the giant Goliath. And he wrote 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil'<sup>5</sup>. David knew that he would not always be able to avoid that valley, that God had never promised to take him out of that valley but to guide him through it with the strength of His presence.

Paul spoke of his experience when God would not remove a thorn in the flesh because he knew that God's grace was sufficient for him<sup>6</sup>. God doesn't solve his particular problem, but gave him the strength to deal with all problems. Indeed, we find that the holy men of God are not to use the power given them to solve their problems miraculously. God has another way.

Christ never took the easy way out, either. His entire life is a lesson in strength and not ease. When He was forty days in the wilderness without food, He did not create food for himself, even though he could have, for He fed thousands at a time. He definitely did not take the easy way out as he confronted the cross even though he could have escaped. He obtained from His Father the strength He needed to carry on.

He expects us to do the same, following his example. He wants us to launch out even though the road looks rough. Think about Peter walking on the water. Christ did not still the water just Peter could have a nice walk. He wanted Peter to walk on it while it was rough to develop his faith. Only after he began to sink did Christ save him and calm the sea.

We are called to be soldiers, how can we expect a safe or easy time. [Easy doesn't always do it.] Christ told us, 'But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place.'<sup>7</sup> And when fellow ministers of the Way have been imprisoned they would pray for the Lord to grant to them the ability to speak thy word with all boldness.<sup>8</sup> Notice that they did not pray that God remove the threats, but that they would be given the strength to respond properly to them.

God wants us to be bold in his strength, not simply hide behind Him. We know that in heaven we will have ease in the great rest that is promised us. So we must pray for strength from God to fully develop our ability to continue our commitment to the Way<sup>9</sup>.

We must become believers in the idea that we should not pray for ease, but for strength. Strength is the only thing that God has really promised us. We know that we can do all things through Him who strengthens us<sup>10</sup>. God has not promised us the easy life; but he promised us the best possible life that could be<sup>11</sup>. God wants us to come to Him no matter what our circumstances in life might be.

1. Romans 8.18.
2. Romans 8.28.
3. Joshua 14.10b-12.
4. Exodus 23.29.
5. Psalm 23:4.
6. 2 Corinthians 12.9.
7. Luke 21.36.
8. Acts 4.29.

9. God never promised us a rose garden (ease), but he planted the seed within each one of us. It is up to us to nourish it and allow it to grow as it should.
10. Philippians 4:13.
11. Consider Jesus' words about the abundant life in John 10:10.

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