

Isaiah Lesson 13 Articles

Someone has defined “circumstances” as “those nasty things you see when you get your eyes off of God.” If you look at God through your circumstances, He will seem small and very far away; but if by faith you look at your circumstances through God, He will draw very near and reveal His greatness to you.

The circumstances within us (Isa. 40:27–31). Instead of praising the Lord, the nation was complaining to Him that He acted as though He did not know their situation or have any concern for their problems (v. 27; 49:14). Instead of seeing the open door, the Jews saw only the long road before them; and they complained that they did not have strength for the journey. God was asking them to do the impossible.

But God knows how we feel and what we fear, and He is adequate to meet our every need. We can never obey God in our own strength, but we can always trust Him to provide the strength we need (Phil. 4:13). If we trust ourselves, we will faint and fall; but if we wait on the Lord by faith, we will receive strength for the journey. The word “wait” does not suggest that we sit around and do nothing. It means “to hope,” to look to God for all that we need (Isa. 26:3; 30:15). This involves meditating on His character and His promises, praying, and seeking to glorify Him.

The word “renew” means “to exchange,” as taking off old clothes and putting on new. We exchange our weakness for His power (2 Cor. 12:1–10). As we wait before Him, God enables us to soar when there is a crisis, to run when the challenges are many, and to walk faithfully in the day-by-day demands of life. *It is much harder to walk in the ordinary pressures of life than to fly like the eagle in a time of crisis.*

“I can plod,” said William Carey, the father of modern missions. “That is my only genius. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything.”

The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. The greatest heroes of faith are not always those who seem to be soaring; often it is they who are patiently plodding. As we wait on the Lord, He enables us not only to fly higher and run faster, but also *to walk longer*. Blessed are the plodders, for they eventually arrive at their destination!¹

Burnout. The very expression seems to make us sigh, doesn’t it? In this fast-paced, overworked world, most of us have felt the tiring numbness of burnout. How should a believer in Christ respond to these feelings?

1. **Surrender.** You may think this means to throw up your hands and cry, “I give up!” but that is not what we must do. Rather, we should surrender everything we have to the Lord. His hands are large enough to hold anything we need Him to handle. Remember what God says: “I have made the earth, and created man on it. I—My hands—stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded” (Is. 45:12). When we try to keep everything in our puny hands, we will eventually start dropping it all.

2. **Depend on Him.** Have you ever relinquished a concern to the Lord, only to find yourself trying to pull it back out of His hand? We tend to want to fix things ourselves. The truth is, however, that only God has both the power and perspective to bring all matters to their proper conclusion (Rom. 11:33–36). When we try to take things back from Him, we only interfere with the solution He wants to bring about.

3. **Trust Him.** Do not overlook this vital point: God loves you! Because of His great love, God wants to take care of you—and that means He wants to handle all of your worries (Matt. 6:25–34).

God does not want you to run yourself into exhaustion, even by doing “good deeds” or “church work.” Instead, He desires that you rejoice in His rest (Matt. 11:29, 30). You may have reached the end of your rope, but God never will: “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Is. 40:28–31). Are you burning out? If so, return to the Flame and be rekindled today.²

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted* (pp. 111–112). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

² Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (Is 40:28–31). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.