

Working for the Lord!

Where does the strength come from?

[Isa 40:28](#) Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.

[Isa 40:29](#) He gives strength to the weary, And to *him who* lacks might He increases power. [Isa 40:30](#) Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, [Isa 40:31](#) Yet those who wait 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.

- I. Work! Christians are supposed to work hard! We were created to work! No we can not earn our salvation, but we are not to be “pew potatoes.” [Ephesians 2:8-10](#)
- II. All about us?.... Not! Church is not about what we can get! We should put God first , then others, then ourselves last!
- III. Tired and weary! Everyone gets tired! Everyone becomes burned out at some point in their life. We all stumble and fall. We cannot use being burned out as an excuse to quit serving God!
- IV. Waiting on the Lord gives us new strength! That is when we soar on eagles wings. He is the one who accomplishes what we set out to do. We are his instrument. We can do nothing truly good without him.

We have a _____ and _____ from God to work!

When we come to the end of our strength _____ takes over!

Answer: mandate, command, God

Wait upon the Lord **Wait upon the Lord**

Isaiah 40:31

by

Steven P. Wickstrom

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. NASB

Isaiah 40:31 is a verse of scripture that almost all of us have memorized. It is a verse that we claim, cling to, quote out loud, and if we know the tune, sing it to ourselves. But do we really know what this verse means? Do we really know what it is talking about? We want to renew and gain new strength. We want to mount up with wings like eagles. We want to run through this life and not get weary. We want to walk through our problems and not become faint. But how many of us really know how to do these things? How many of us actually experience what this verse is talking about?

To me, this verse describes the type of “over-comer” talked about in the book of Revelations. This is the type of Christian life that I want to live. This is the type of Christian life that I want to experience. More than likely, so do you. So I have to ask myself; what's wrong? Why am I not renewing and gaining new strength? Why am I not mounting up with wings like eagles? Why am I running through life and getting weary? Why am I becoming faint when I walk through experiences and adversity? Is this passage of scripture just wishful thinking, or is it actually a promise from God?

Let me ask you a question. How many times have you looked at your own life and wondered why you were not renewing or even gaining new strength? If you're like me, you have probably wondered about that quite a few times yourself. You may not be mounting up with wings like eagles and rising above your problems. You may be running through life with its unique problems and getting extremely tired. You might find yourself

walking through life's experiences and adversities with much weariness. If you fit into this category (which most of us do) you have probably questioned what was wrong. It is a valid question that deserves an answer.

Isaiah 40:31 is a verse of scripture that is talking about strength and its attributes. It mentions renewing strength and gaining new strength. It mentions the strength of an eagle's wings that lift it high above the earth. It mentions the strength necessary to run without becoming weary and the strength to walk without becoming faint. It's all about strength. Specifically, it is about attributes of strength that we are in desperate need of in our lives.

In order for us to renew and gain new strength, to mount up with eagle's wings, to run and not get weary, to walk and not become faint, something must first happen. We must do something in order for the strength in this verse to come to pass in our lives. So what is it that we need to do? What is the key that unlocks the strength in this verse? How do we obtain this strength that we need to live from day to day?

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The key to unlocking this verse is the word *wait*. Those who **wait** on (upon) the Lord get all the attributes of strength listed in this verse. So if we want the strength in its various forms listed in this verse, then we must first learn *how* to wait on the Lord. Think of it this way: if we don't learn to **wait** on the Lord, we will never get the **strength** of the Lord. So what exactly does it mean to wait on the Lord? To answer this question we need to know what the word *wait* really means. In order to do this, we need to define this word.

The word *wait* used in this verse is the Hebrew word “הוֹקֵק” (qavah). The word “qavah” has two definitions or meanings. It has both a *literal* and a *figurative* meaning. What does that mean, the Hebrew word “qavah” has both a literal and a figurative meaning? Actually, even words in the English language have both literal and figurative definitions. We are just so accustomed to them that we don't even realize that we use them both on a daily basis. To give us a better understanding of this concept, let's take a look at these two meanings or definitions. The literal meaning of a word is the exact, precise meaning or definition of that word. The figurative meaning of a word is a metaphorical or symbolic meaning.

Let me clarify this by using the word *dead* as an example. The literal definition of the word *dead* is “to be deprived of life.” In the sentence: *The man buried in that grave is dead*, we understand that the **literal** meaning of the word *dead* is being used. When you read that sentence, your brain automatically understood that the literal meaning of the word *dead* was being utilized. You didn't even have to think about it. Now that you know how a literal definition is used, let's move on to the figurative. The figurative definition of the word *dead* is “lacking animation or excitement or activity.” In the sentence: *The church we attended was dead*, we understand that the **figurative** meaning of the word *dead* is being used. We understand from this sentence that the congregation lacks interest or excitement. Since the word *dead* is being used figuratively, we understand that the church is filled with unenthusiastic or even lethargic people. When you read that sentence, your brain automatically understood that the figurative meaning of the word *dead* was being utilized. You didn't even have to think about it. That is how we use a word with its figurative meaning.

Now let's take a look at the literal and figurative definitions of the Hebrew word “qavah” which is translated as “wait” in Isaiah 40:31. The **literal** meaning of the word is “to bind together like a cord.” To bind together like a cord; what does that mean? First let me explain what “to bind together like a cord” does **not** mean. It does not mean to tie a cord around a bundle of sticks to keep them together. Instead, picture in your mind the process of making a rope (cord) by twisting or weaving (binding) thin threads together to form the rope. The more strands that are twisted or woven together in a rope, the greater is its strength. Ah, there is that word *strength* again. Ecclesiastes 4:12 says “... a cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

A piece of string cannot lift very much weight because it does not have very many strands in it. A piece of

rope however can lift hundreds of pounds because it is made up of many strands. When a rope lifts or pulls a load, it stretches a little while it is working. As it stretches, the individual strands are pulled closer together. While this “stress” is on the rope, the individual strands work together to lift or pull the load. No one individual strand does all the work. If it did, it would snap. A rope's **strength** comes from all the strands working together.

The **literal** definition of “qavah” implies strength through numbers. The more strands in your rope, the greater its strength. Just as a rope's strength comes from being made of many strands, so our strength comes through being united with Christ. The “rope” of our lives gains strength by being twisted or woven or bound together with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In a couple more paragraphs I will show you some more strands that should be in your rope.

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The **figurative** definition of the word “qavah” is “to wait, to hope, to expect.” The figurative meaning of “qavah” conveys anticipation. It is the same type of waiting that children do on Christmas morning while *waiting* for mom and dad to get out of bed so they can open presents. All of the translations of the Bible that I have read, chose to translate “qavah” figuratively and not literally.

Why did the translators use the figurative definition of “qavah” instead of the literal definition? I don't really know; other than the figurative definition uses far fewer words than the literal translation. So what does the figurative definition of “qavah” (to wait) have to do with strength as it is listed in Isaiah 40:31? How does this tie in with our analogy of a rope? Remember that a rope's strength comes from the amount of strands it is composed of. A rope's strength remains constant even when it is not being used. As strange as that last sentence may sound, it is actually the key to this verse. When a rope is not being used, what is it doing? The rope is “waiting.” It “waits” for its owner to put it to use. When the rope is attached to a load, it draws its strength from all the strands and goes to work.

So how exactly do we “wait” upon the Lord? The best analogy that I can think of is the one we have been using of the rope. A rope is made up of many strands and so is our relationship with God. The more “strands” that we weave into our relationship with God, the more strength He gives to us. Let's look at some more strands that make up this rope.

- **Keep your focus on God. Hebrews 12:3**
- **Study the Bible daily. Psalm 119:11, 2Timothy 2:15**
- **Pray daily. 1 Thessalonians 5:17**
- **Attend church regularly. Hebrews 10:25**
- **Learn from Christian friends. Proverbs 13:20**
- **Tell others about your faith in Jesus Christ. Mark 16:15**

These are just a few of the strands that should be in our rope. You can probably think of quite a few more. When you twist all of these strands together you get a rope whose strength comes from God. Personally, I would have translated Isaiah 40:31 to read like this; “**They that have their lives intertwined with the Lord, like threads are twisted into a rope, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not become weary, they shall walk and not become faint.**” (Please remember that the previous sentence is my own translation; you will not find that in any version of the Bible that I know of.)

This is how you renew and gain new strength. This is how you rise up with wings like an eagle's. This is how

you run through life and not get weary. This is how you walk through problems and adversity without fainting. By weaving all the strands together, you “wait” upon the Lord. May you gain new strength in and from the Lord.

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Have a question or comment about “Wait upon the Lord?”

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