

Wait, and Don't Panic

Life has a way of throwing unexpected challenges our way - moments when everything feels overwhelming and beyond our ability to handle. In these times, we have a choice: we can panic and run into more trouble, or we can wait on the Lord and find His strength in our weakness.

When We're at Our Weakest, God is Strongest

The Apostle Paul understood something profound about God's grace. In 2 Corinthians 12, he explained that when he was at his weakest point - when everything around him was stronger and more overwhelming than his ability to handle - that's precisely when God's strength was most evident in his life.

This isn't just theological theory. Throughout history, believers have testified to experiencing God's presence most powerfully in their darkest moments. Whether in prison cells, hospital rooms, or seasons of loss, God's grace becomes strongest when we need it most.

The Panic Response: Running Into Traffic

Have you ever noticed how deer behave when they encounter car headlights? Despite having vast open spaces to escape to, they often dart directly into the path of oncoming vehicles. This seemingly irrational behavior illustrates something important about how fear operates in our lives.

Fear causes us to panic, and panic makes us run directly into our problems rather than away from them. When we're afraid, we often make hasty decisions that take us further from God's protection rather than closer to it.

Fear Runs From God

Just like Adam in the Garden of Eden, fear causes us to hide from the very One who can help us. When Adam sinned, his first instinct was to run and hide from God rather than run to Him for help. This pattern continues today - when we're afraid, we often try to solve problems on our own instead of seeking God's guidance.

The Red Sea Principle: Standing Still to See Salvation

When the Israelites found themselves trapped between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea, they began to panic. But Moses gave them powerful advice: "Stand still and see the deliverance of God."

This wasn't passive resignation - it was active faith. Standing still meant refusing to panic, refusing to run ahead of God's timing, and trusting that He would make a way where there seemed to be no way.

Faith vs. Attempting

Hebrews 11:29 reveals something crucial about the Red Sea crossing: "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned."

The Israelites crossed by faith, but the Egyptians were merely attempting to follow their example. There's a significant difference between faith and attempting. Faith is knowing and being convinced of God's leading. Attempting is hoping and wishing that what worked for someone else will work for you.

Following God, Not Man

The Egyptians made a fatal mistake - they followed the Israelites instead of following God. The same Moses who led Israel to deliverance led the Egyptians to disaster, not because Moses changed, but because God wasn't leading the Egyptians.

It's not enough to follow other Christians or even church leaders. We must be personally led by the Spirit of God. What God tells one person to do may be completely different from what He tells you to do in a similar situation.

Staying Flexible in God's Leading

Moses learned this lesson the hard way. After years of using his rod to perform miracles, God told him to simply speak to a rock instead of striking it. But Moses had become attached to his method and struck the rock anyway. Though water still came out, his disobedience cost him entry into the Promised Land.

We must remain flexible and teachable, ready to follow God's leading even when it differs from what worked before. God may lead us to use the "lifeboats" in one situation and tell us to "stay on the ship" in another.

As the Deer Pants: Thirsting for God

Psalms 42:1 gives us a beautiful picture of the right kind of spiritual hunger: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God."

Instead of being the panicking deer that runs into traffic, we should be the panting deer that desperately seeks God. This involves taking time to wait on Him, to know Him, and to receive His guidance for our lives.

The Power of Waiting on the Lord

When we wait on the Lord, He promises to renew our strength, give us wisdom, and provide guidance. Those who wait on Him will not be put to shame. He acts on behalf of those who wait for Him.

This doesn't mean passive inactivity. It means positioning ourselves to hear from God before we act, ensuring our steps are ordered by Him rather than driven by fear or panic.

Testing the Spirits: Not Every Light is God

First John 4:1 instructs us to "test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." Just because something appears good or bright doesn't mean it's from God.

Satan himself comes as an angel of light, offering attractive alternatives to God's plan. We must learn to discern between God's leading and the enemy's counterfeits.

The Daily Bread Principle

God gives us fresh guidance each day, just as He provided fresh manna for the Israelites. What was good yesterday may not be God's plan for today. We must stay sensitive to His current leading rather than relying on past experiences or methods.

Our 1% and God's 99%

Jesus said that if we have faith the size of a mustard seed, we can move mountains. This represents our small part - perhaps just 1% - combined with God's overwhelming power and provision - the other 99%.

God doesn't need us to be strong or capable. He needs us to be faithful with our small part while trusting Him for everything else. When we bring our 1% faith to His 99% power, we have everything we need to overcome any obstacle.

Life Application

This week, practice being the "panting deer" rather than the "panicking deer." When challenges arise, resist the urge to immediately react or try to solve everything yourself. Instead, take time to wait on God, seek His guidance, and test any solutions against His Word and the leading of His Spirit.

Start each day by spending time with God, positioning yourself to hear His voice and receive His direction. When you feel overwhelmed, remember that your weakness is the perfect opportunity for God's strength to be displayed in your life.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Am I running toward God or away from Him when problems arise?
- Am I following God's leading or just copying what others are doing?
- Do I take time to wait on God before making important decisions?
- Am I flexible enough to follow God's guidance even when it differs from my expectations?

Remember, you're not alone in whatever you're facing. God is with you in the fire, in the storm, and in every challenge. Trust Him with your 1% and watch Him provide His 99%. You're going to make it through this because there's Someone in the fire with you.

Quotes

1. "When I'm at my weakest point—when everything around me feels stronger, overwhelming, and beyond my ability—that's when God shows Himself strongest."
2. "That's what fear does—it drives you directly into the very problem you're trying to avoid."
3. "We don't have to panic when life's storms hit—when pressure rises or terrifying things stand before us—because the Greater One is with us right in the middle of it all."
4. "Fear panics and runs from God deeper into the problem."
5. "Stand still and see the deliverance of God—the salvation, the rescue, of your God. Stand still. Don't run into traffic. Don't panic. Don't lose control."

6. “Faith is knowing. Faith is being convinced. Faith is absolute belief. Simply attempting something isn’t faith—it’s hoping and wishing things turn out okay.”
7. “The Israelites were following God. The Egyptians were only following the Israelites. Likewise, it’s not enough to follow a church, a pastor, or other Christians. You must be following God Himself.”
8. “We want to be pliable and moldable—people God can direct one way today and lead in a completely different direction tomorrow.”
9. “Confidence in self will fail—you don’t know what you’re doing. God does.”
10. “Don’t walk into your day hoping everything goes well. Life is full of challenges. You can’t enter the day merely wishing things will work out.”
11. “We’re not meant to hope and wish our way through the day; we’re meant to walk through it by faith. That’s why we spend time with the Lord in the morning.”
12. “Stop running into trouble. Stop panicking. Stop following people. Follow the Holy Spirit. Be led by God. Take time. Wait on Him. He will renew your strength.”
13. “‘He who loves his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for My sake will find it.’ This is a spiritual law and principle Jesus gave us.”
14. “The world is full of bright ideas that aren’t God ideas.”
15. “God is the 99%, but your 1%—your little faith—matters. If you leave out that 1%, you miss the miracle 100%.”

Verses

1. 2 Corinthians 12
2. Hebrews 11:29
3. 1 John 4:1
4. Psalm 42:1-3

Summary

Life often presents overwhelming challenges that leave us feeling helpless and afraid. When faced with these moments, we have a choice: panic and run into more trouble, or wait on the Lord and find His strength in our weakness. Like deer caught in headlights that run directly into traffic, fear causes us to make hasty decisions that take us further from God's protection. The Israelites at the Red Sea learned to stand still and see God's deliverance, crossing by faith while the Egyptians merely attempted to follow and were destroyed. We must learn to be the panting deer that desperately seeks God rather than the panicking deer that runs into danger. When we bring our small faith to God's overwhelming power, we have everything needed to overcome any obstacle.