



ROCK DEVOTIONAL

ISAIAH 26:4

“Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.”

EXPERIENCE

When rock climbing, putting your full trust in a foothold on a rock cliff is often difficult. Even though I tell beginner climbers that the more weight they entrust to their feet, the more their feet will stay secure—participants struggle to trust me and to trust that their feet will not slip off the rock face. Climbing shoes grab the cliff face extremely effectively, but it is so hard to overcome fear when you are high up, especially when you are new to the sport. The more you get used to entrusting your feet to the solid little ledges and nubs of rock on a cliff the easier it becomes.

Over the past twenty years, I have facilitated and overseen hundreds of young people as they top-rope climbed for the first time. I love watching their confidence grow over the course of a day on the rocks. A rock cliff is a wonderful place to grow trust. Often the whole

day of climbing is predicated upon trusting bolts that are screwed into the cliff edge or trusting the horn of a rock boulder as an anchor at the top of a cliff. Likely, for some of you who are afraid of heights, just reading these statements is enough to make you a bit queasy. The heights of rock cliffs is intimidating. Faith in the midst of climbing does not come easily, but it can be grown. My aim with all those I take rock climbing is to draw the analogy of trust in rocks to our faith in God.

CONTEMPLATION

The biblical authors use this analogy of God as a rock many times. In at least ten different places rock is even used as a personal pronoun for God. God says in Isaiah 44:8, "Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any." Taking time to consider the corresponding qualities of God and rocks is worthwhile. God is strong, sturdy, imposing, immoveable, and completely trustworthy. Have you ever sat on a massive cliff or boulder and felt the solidness beneath you and just thanked God for these qualities? We do not need the feeling of a rock beneath us to pray, but the physicality enhances our ability to grasp the truth and enlivens the experience of prayer.

We should never worship created elements like rocks, but experiences of them can point our mind and hearts to the spiritual truths that rocks represent. We should place our entire trust in Christ. Christ Jesus is a solid rock on which we can stand. He will not be shaken. He will not falter or fail us. His strength will hold us up. What burden do you need to trust him with today? If you have never fully trusted him. Now is the time. Now is the moment to put all your weight (both feet) and all the burdens you carry onto the Lord Jesus.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, the brokenness of my life is evident to me. I have sinned and fallen short of your perfect standards. You alone came to earth and lived the perfect life that I could not live. You were crucified so that sinners like me might be forgiven. You took the punishment I deserved and because of your grace I received the gift of eternal life that I do not deserve. You were buried and on the third day you rose from the grave in victory over sin and death. I am thankful that you made a way for me to no longer be separated from you but to live in right relationship with you.

I confess that too often I have sought to live life in my own strength and on my own terms. I have tried to muscle my way through issues and problems only to find myself in more of a mess. I sought my own solutions instead of seeking you. I no longer want to continue trying to do life on my own. I surrender to you. I desire to cast my burdens on you, to stand on you as the rock of my salvation, and to follow you. I want to trust in you forever, you are an everlasting rock. I pray this all in Jesus's name. Amen.

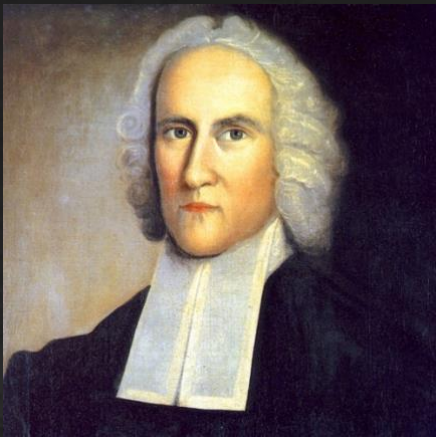
CONFIRMATION

Rocks, as evidenced by over 130 Scripture references, are a prolific emblem. This devotion highlights rocks as an emblem of God's strength, his unwavering character, and his trustworthiness. In 2 Samuel 22:1-51, David sings of God as a rock five times.¹ David goes on to unpack what he means. He has experienced in numerous ways God's rock-like qualities. Among other connections made between

¹ In Psalm 18 this song from 2 Samuel is repeated.

God and rock, David specifically refers to God's strength directly in v. 3 (stronghold), v. 33 (strong refuge), and indirectly in v. 30, vv.34-35 & vv.48-49 (he makes David strong). David says in v. 31, "This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true." God's perfect character is steadfast and sturdy as a rock. David is given the ability to climb such that he is set secure on the heights (v. 34). He is given a "wide place" where his feet will not slip (v. 37). David has learned that he can fully entrust himself to God.

Just like David, I long to learn for myself, and teach others, more of God's strength, his unwavering character, and his trustworthiness via the combined witness of God's world (climbing rock cliffs) and God's Word. Meditating on Word and world prove "there is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God" (1 Samuel 2:2).



Jonathan Edwards

Edwards compared Christ to a rock, outlining a number of qualities in a sermon entitled - *Honey from a Rock*: "Christ is compared to a rock for his strength and ability to defend his people; Psalms 62:7, 'In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength.' . . .

Christ is a rock for durability. Christ is everlasting. He is the eternal God, who only hath immortality; *Isaiah 26:4*, "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength"; in the Hebrew it is 'the Rock of Ages.' . . . Christ is as a rock upon the account of his faithfulness and immutability. A rock is stable and immovable; *Job 18:4*, 'Shall the rock be removed

out of its place?' So Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8)."²

² Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*. WJE 17:132-134.