

Wholeness

Weekly Biblical reflections for looking after our Wellbeing

Reflection 8: Living a Life of Strength

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:13

Strength as a teacher or school leader has always been needed, every day different, never knowing what the day will bring, but at the moment this has never been truer. If you are like me, I always started off the term with promises to myself that I would rest, take time out and spend it with those closest to me, but after a couple of weeks that went by the wayside.

So how do we live a life of strength? Sometimes it's about learning to rely on others and not just ourselves. The Mental Health Foundation talks about the importance of having good quality relationships – this is not about a certain type of relationship but is defined as simply 'the way in which two or more people are connected'. They say;

'Extensive evidence shows that having good-quality relationships can help us live longer and happier lives with fewer mental health problems. Having close, positive relationships can give us a purpose and sense of belonging'ⁱ

Having a sense of belonging and a relationship that allows us to share our highs and our lows is good for us. The research shows what we've always known 'a problem shared is a problem halved'. Whether this is in a work sense and being able to delegate, or talk through the issues with a line manager or a trusted friend of the school – or personally, being able to offload the day, it gives us strength and allows us to know we are not on our own.

God has designed us to be in relationships, they are good for us, but we can also rely on him to give us strength. The verse above talks about relying on God, that it is he who can give us strength to get through the day, week and terms, but what does it actually mean to rely on

God's strength? It means taking our hands off the situation and giving it to God. Philippians 4:6-7 in The Passion translation explains this really well

Don't be pulled in different directions or worried about a thing. Be saturated in prayer throughout each day, offering your faith-filled requests before God with overflowing gratitude. Tell him every detail of your life, then God's wonderful peace that transcends human understanding, will make the answers known to you through Jesus Christ.

God isn't asking us to fix all our problems, but to bring every situation to him in prayer with gratitude and thanksgiving. God isn't asking us to just get on with it and fight our battles in our own strength, but to;

Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you

Psalm 55:22

Or as the The Message translation of the Bible states: 'Pile your troubles on GOD's shoulders - he'll carry your load, he'll help you out.' God is always in control even when things seem out of control and we can draw our strength from him.

We can live a life of strength by developing our relationships with each other and with God. We never need to feel weak and we never need to feel alone, we can reach out and find strength.

Questions for Reflection:

- Who are those trusted people you can rely on to talk through things and rest with?
- When feeling weak what is our initial response, do we think about 'piling our troubles on God' and gaining strength from him?
- What one thing can you do this term to live a life of strength?

Prayer:

Father, I thank you that you have designed us to be in relationship with others and with you. I thank you that we never need to be on our own. I pray you will be my strength when I need it, and I will remember to bring everything to you with gratitude and thanksgiving. Amen

ⁱ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/relationships-21st-century-forgotten-foundation-mental-health-and-wellbeing>