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Finding Strength in the Lord

1 Samuel 30:1-25

In a chapter titled “The False Hope of Modern Christianity,” Larry Crabb writes, “Modern Christianity, in dramatic reversal of its biblical form, promises to relieve the pain of living in a fallen world. The message, whether it’s from fundamentalists requiring us to live by a favored set of rules or from charismatics urging a deeper surrender of the Spirit’s power, is too often the same: The promise of bliss is for NOW! Complete satisfaction can be ours this side of Heaven.” (*Inside Out* [Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 1988], p. 15).

GROUP DISCUSSION. The Christian life is often portrayed as a before-and-after story, with everything “after” being sweetness and light. How do you respond to that kind of portrayal?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. In what ways have you struggled or faced difficulties since becoming a Christian?

In this chapter David and his men experience a devastating crisis. Yet in the midst of the crisis, they also find strength and help in the Lord. *Read 1 Samuel 30:1-25.*

1. How does the mood of this chapter change from one scene to another?

2. When David and his men return to their home in Ziklag, what do they find (vv. 1-3)?

What are we told about the depths of their distress (vv. 4-6)?

3. Think of a time in your life when you felt overwhelmed by a problem. How did you respond—with tears, bitterness or in some other way? Explain.

4. In the midst of his distress, how do you think David “found strength in the LORD his God” (v. 6)?

5. In what ways can we find strength in the Lord during our times of distress?

6. After David has found strength in the Lord, how does he also find help from the Lord (vv. 7-20)?

7. What was wrong with the logic of those who said, “Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered” (v. 22)?

8. David declares that the Lord “has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us” (v. 23). If the Lord was able to do all that, why do you think he allowed the problem to arise in the first place?

9. How can David’s experience help us to have a realistic view of the difficulties we might face as Christians?

10. What difficulty or distress are you currently facing?

How can David’s experience give you hope?

Ask God for the strength you need in the midst of your difficulty.

Now or Later

In 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 the Lord says to Paul in the midst of his hardship, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Paul responds, “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” How has God’s grace been sufficient for you during difficult times? In what ways have you found God’s power “made perfect” in your weakness?