

This is a most unusual verse if you really ponder on it. How can waiting - and by that, immediately the idea of dormancy and inactivity comes to mind - produce more energy?

Yet this idea is not an isolated one in this Old Prophet. Examples abound in the Bible.

Waiting is a rich word. It can mean being attentive and waiting for instructions, not unlike the way a waiter waits for the person he is serving to gesture. If you have been in a good restaurant before you may have noticed how a good waiter anticipates and reacts to your every gesture of hand, eye and body movement.

It can mean waiting in terms of time, a period of inactivity till one receives the signal to act, not unlike how an army captain waits for the general to give the signal before leading his charge in.



Waiting upon the Lord

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. Isaiah 40:31

It can also mean pausing to gather renewed strength in the midst of strenuous physical activity. A runner slows down or stops to recover his breath so that he can continue his journey and reach his destination. The proverbial story of the tortoise and the hare comes to mind.

In Church speak and tradition, generally it is taken to mean that one should pray and seek the Lord. This can conjure in your mind yet another activity. Attending the Church prayer meeting perhaps. Or doing your daily devotion, which is of course very important.

But the essence of this term is about one being in relationship with God. Being able to listen to God. Being aware of His presence. There is spiritual attention to Him. Your heart, as in your instincts and deepest affections as a sentient being, is aware of His presence and guidance. In fact, Jesus Himself taught that without Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5).

The modern, global and urban life – and all three terms describe Singapore well – does not make waiting easy. It is not just

the busyness, but a philosophy of life and work that drives you from one point to the other. Just as you finish one thing, you are preparing for the next. Your attention is shifting all the time, on the piece of work that needs to be done or an event which needs attending. There is little room to pause, pray and reflect. To be conscious of the presence of another, be it God or even your colleagues, friends and family member. For the latter, we can be physically there but disconnected in all sorts of ways as they are just objects to help get the next thing done.

You have heard of other similar terms used, such as slowing down, re-centering, pausing to reflect, reconnecting and so on. Whatever phrase you may use, it is about our Lord and being in relationship with Him. Build strongly on that and you will live and not get wearied. As some of you advance in years and your physical faculties begin to dim, your spirit is alive because life has been one big waiting upon God and you enjoy His presence (forevermore! - Psalm 16:11).

Let's encourage one another to wait upon Him.