

# When is it dangerous to rest and relax? (24:10)

If you are slack in the day of distress, your strength is limited.

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## THE TEXT (NASB)

If you are slack in the day of distress, your strength is limited.

*If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. KJV - Proverbs 24:10*

## INTRODUCTION



There is a time for everything (Eccl. 3:1-8). Life is all about timing. There is a time for rest and relaxation. We must discern the appropriate time for the appropriate action.

Every hour and every day are not the same. Some are easy, others hard.

The **day of distress** is when we need our strength the most! We must be ready. Prepare for the storm, BEFORE the storm comes.



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## COMMENTARY



The day of distress is NOT the time to build **strength**. It reveals our strengths and weaknesses, but it's not the time to build stamina or muscle. A day of distress is perilous. It calls for valiant effort and assumes—or should we say, hopes?—that the fitness training is already done. Does the day of distress come at different times for different people? Most definitely, though sometimes it comes to a group of people at the same time, like a plane crash, flood, or... recession?

## Stating the Obvious

Before we consider the text, let's ask is it just stating the obvious? Many versions such as the Good News Bible, translated it accordingly: If you are weak in a crisis, you are weak indeed. Okay, so what? It does me no good to tell me that I am a weakling if I don't handle stress well. Others believe the comma in the text is misplaced, no need to state the obvious. They believe the text should be translated, "If you are slack, in the day of distress your strength is [will be] limited." They see it as a warning to reject laziness. Let's think about it.

## Translation: *Limited*

The Hebrew word for "**imited**," צר (tsar), pronounced "tsar"), can be translated as "small, cramped, and narrow," generally denoting weakness, insufficiency, and inadequacy. The English "limited" may be misleading, since even muscular Mr. Universe experiences limits to his strength. So "small" (as in the KJV and ESV) may be more precise.

## Translation: *Slack*



The English word for "**slack**," here is the Hebrew, רפה (rapha), pronounced "rah-pah"). The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT) says this comes from the Phoenician verb *rph*, with a variety of connotations, but usually means "to let



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drop” or “to abandon.” r?•p?h is used at Proverbs 18:9, warning that a lazy worker is really a saboteur. Rendering this as “faint” (as in the KJV) misses the full force of the word, by implying an involuntary weakness from illness or injury. It really points to something voluntary, half-hearted effort, or a laissez-faire attitude from a love of ease.

## Advantages of Adversity

Adversity and strife can make us stronger, if we respond appropriately and healthily. What does that take? It begins by recognizing our human limitations, and that takes humility. Many industries use stress tests to reveal points of weakness, so upgrades can be made, enabling key equipment to perform under greater loads.

## Classic Comments

Adam Clarke:

In times of trial we should endeavour to be doubly courageous; when a man loses his courage, his strength avails him nothing.

Matthew Henry:

In the day of adversity we are apt to faint, to droop and be discouraged, to desist from our work, and to despair of relief. Our spirits sink, and then our hands hang down and our knees grow feeble, and we become unfit for anything...This is evidence that our strength is small, and is a means of weakening it more... Some are so feeble that they can bear nothing; if a trouble does but touch them (Job 4:5), nay, if it does but threaten them, they faint immediately and are ready to give up all for gone...They render themselves unfit to grapple with their trouble and unable to help themselves.

Charles Bridges:



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Let this be a word of strengthening encouragement. ... Never believe, Christian, that your tender-hearted Savior, who knows the weakness of your constitution, will ever mix the cup of affliction with one ounce of poison.

I especially appreciate the insight from Charles Bridges. Indeed, as a Christian, courage comes by knowing that God is NOT against you. God has no malice toward his adopted children (Romans 8:1), though it may be otherwise for his rebellious creatures (John 1:11-12).

## Inner Strength



Describing a dogfight, Mark Twain once said, “It’s not the size of dog in the fight, it’s the size of the fight in the dog.” How true! In high-school football, I played defensive line-backer, and I loved to tackle. Our team’s offensive center, hiking the ball to the quarterback, weighed less anyone else, but the coach put him there, because of his incredible combativeness. The little guy was amazing, driving off big tackles like a wolverine driving off a grizzly bear.

## Productivity is Important

Sometimes we must run full-bore, but other times we can throttle back. Then we can rest and save our strength. Take a sabbatical—one year out of seven. Get refreshed with the Sabbath—one day out of seven. We need to assess differing situations and vary our output accordingly—easier said than done. We need to remember that laziness in good times makes us weak during the bad times. Saving our strength is different from weakening ourselves.

## Supernatural External Aid

How can we be sure that we will not be slack in the day of distress? Is it just a matter of sheer determination and personal will-power? Or is it a matter of optimal rest and relaxation, trying to tune in to our own inner strength and biorhythms? Is there real, external, invisible strength we can access? Are we willing to ask God for help?



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## OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND



Jesus said, "Come to Me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and **learn from Me** [emphasis added]," Matthew 11:28,29. Jesus prayed to gain strength before His greatest test. Before He was betrayed, arrested, interrogated, ridiculed, illegally tried, tortured, publicly humiliated, and finally crucified, Jesus spent an entire night in personal prayer (Matthew 26:36-47). An angel strengthened Him (Luke 22:43)..

Despite being told to watch and pray (Mark 10:38), Jesus' disciples ignored His command and his example. Yes Jesus finished His work, victoriously enduring the greatest day of distress in human history. When He died on the cross, He did not say, "I am finishised," He said, "It is finished." He died, not a victim, but as a conqueror, as the Roman centurion in charge of the crucifixion witnessed (Mark 15:37-39).

## APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Vary your performance to fit the need; blitz, cruise, and rest as circumstances demand. Work hard. Play hard. Rest hard. Pray hard. Do each with gusto in its time and avoid partial effort in all endeavors.
- Work to improve your personal productivity and that includes recognizing true opportunities and discerning distractions.
- Pray for help; for more wisdom and more courage and strength. Don't live under the self-delusion that you are invincible. Read Rick Warren's article: ["How to Stay Motivated When Feeling Fatigued."](#)

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



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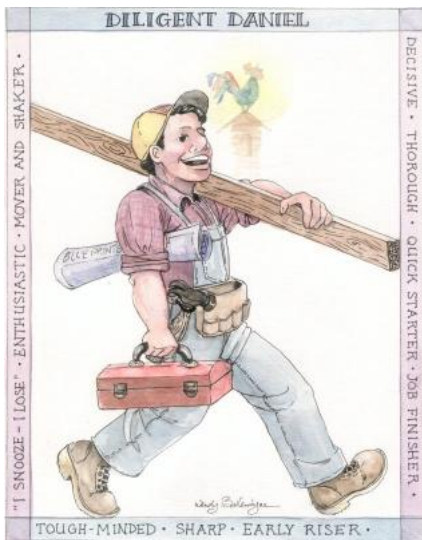
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## KEY WORDS

diligence, productivity, distress, strength, laziness, trouble, humility, stress, prayer, bf serving others

## ILLUSTRATION

### Who is Diligent Daniel?



Diligent Daniel is a friend of Steady Eddie. Whereas Steady Eddie is known for his staying power, Diligent Daniel is known for his decisiveness and thoroughness. He is an early riser, a quick starter, and a job finisher. There's no room for procrastination here.

Daniel is tough-minded and sharp. He tells himself each day, "I snooze- I lose." He pushes himself and calls himself lazy. He is tough on himself—not rough.

He's the one Benjamin Franklin was thinking about two hundred years ago when he came up with the maxim, "Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, WEALTHY, and wise." Daniel's also the one the author Oswald Chambers described with the words, "The heights by great men reached and kept, were not attained by sudden flight, but they while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night."

Daniel is more of a thinker than Steady Eddie, but is known for his enthusiastic work capacity, not his brilliance. He's a mover and a shaker. He's not afraid to get his hands dirty and is in good physical condition. He's a builder. He starts the job right away and gets it DONE. He doesn't flip-flop in this thinking. He is not double-minded. He remains humble while exuding confidence.



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One of his favourite financial tools is the Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).

