

58: THE TEST OF A MAN IS FOUND ON THE ASCENT

By John Leavy

In Week 12: Discipleship Under Pressure

3 Min read



“fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” — Isaiah 41:10

Most men think the test comes at the summit. They imagine the defining moment happens when everyone can see the accomplishment, the victory, or the result. But anyone who has spent time in the mountains knows the real test happens long before the view appears.

The test is found on the ascent.

The climb reveals what level ground conceals. It exposes endurance, attitude, motives, and character. When the trail steepens, excuses become easier to find. Complaints come naturally. Quitting starts to sound reasonable. The ascent has a way of uncovering what is really happening inside a man.

Isaiah 41:10 speaks directly into those moments: “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

One of the things rarely discussed is that God’s promise of strength is usually given to people who are already climbing. Scripture is not a collection of promises for comfortable men sitting at the trailhead. It is filled with promises for people facing opposition, uncertainty, hardship, and fear.

The ascent is where faith moves from theory to reality. It is where beliefs become convictions and convictions become character. The climb itself becomes the proving ground where God develops the man He intends us to become.

APPLICATION

Many men spend their lives trying to avoid difficult climbs. They look for shortcuts, easier routes, or ways around hardship altogether. Yet the very challenges we try to avoid are often the places where God does His greatest work.

What often goes unsaid is that the ascent is not primarily about reaching the destination. It is about who you become on the way there.

A man discovers very little about himself when everything is going according to plan. Success can hide weaknesses. Comfort can disguise spiritual drift. Ease can create the illusion of strength. The climb removes those illusions. The ascent turns the casual hiker into the seasoned veteran.

When pressure increases, what is in the heart begins to surface. Fear appears. Pride emerges. Impatience shows itself. Self-reliance is exposed. The ascent reveals what still needs God’s transforming work.

That is why Isaiah 41:10 matters so much. God does not simply promise a better trail. He promises His presence on the difficult one. “I am with you.” “I will strengthen you.” “I will help you.” Those promises become deeply personal when the climb grows difficult.

The strongest men are not those who never struggle. They are the men who continue upward while depending on God instead of themselves. They learn that faith is not confidence in their own ability to finish the climb. It is confidence that God will provide the strength for the next step.

The ascent becomes a classroom where dependence replaces self-sufficiency and trust grows deeper with every difficult mile.

LIVE IT OUT

Identify a difficult climb in your life today. Instead of focusing on reaching the summit, pay attention to what God is developing in you along the way. Ask Him for strength for the next step, not the next hundred. Faithfulness is built one step at a time.

PRAY THIS...

“Lord, help me to rely on Your strength, Your presence as the climbs get steeper.”

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Practice builds the man.*

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