

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR THRIVING LIFE

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OUR HERO

In what ways do you live differently than what you believe?

How would you think, speak, and act to live out that particular belief?

Knowing God's plan cannot be hindered, how can you more freely express His creative, sustaining, loving character than you previously have?

Isaiah 43:13 – I am God, and also henceforth I am He; there is no one who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder it?

1) Our Hero...

Telling our Hero's story through our lives means we know Him. We know His character, ability, and ways. We live according to these. If we know our Hero is reliable, we live boldly within His presence. If we know Him to have a weakness, we are anxious that we may not have His protection. Everything about our lives expresses some dimension of what we know to be true. The vast confusion about truth in the world is caused by people *claiming* some belief while living another known truth. Let's rise above this and live lives of faith. Our Hero wants us to know Him, so we tell His story faithfully. That's the Bible's purpose. He tells us who He is and invites us to test Him so that He may convince each other of His truth. Then we are ready to be His storytellers.

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◆**Supreme:** “I am God (Isaiah 43:13).” He claims to be supreme. There is no ambiguity, conditionality, or space for competition. He is not one of many gods. He is God. One and only. Anything else we experience is subject to His authority. He is Creator, Sustainer, Provider, and Savior. These are not embodied in some council in which dissent sows uncertainty. He is the One upon whom we can always depend in all things. The buck stops with Him. Test this. Take everything with you into prayer. Gratitude for what you enjoy. Inquiry for what you do not understand. Emotion for what grieves you. Let Him prove the truth that your Hero is Almighty God.

◆**Immortal:** “Also henceforth I am He (v13).” He appends to His claim of superiority the element of time. He is not God to be overthrown one day. His is not a history that we might explore in a museum. His is a story continuing to unfold today. One that will continue until the end of the age and beyond. He claims immortality as supreme being. We do not have the power to inspect this into the future. Instead, we reexamine our past looking for evidence of God’s character expressing itself. In the moment, our emotions are often grounded on a misunderstanding of the situation. A removed perspective often permits us to see God working where before we misperceived His absence. Our past builds faith into our future.

II) Inescapable...

Human history is one of tumult. The constant is impermanence. Dominant powers rise, seem immortal, decay, then fall. Sometimes these are generational eras, imperceptible to most due to the slowness of change. Others are rapid, the cauldron of change roiling. We have learned that no power is invincible. Our Hero is unlike us. He challenges us to examine His history for any moment when He wearied, and another overtook Him. His is a story of unrivaled power.

◆**Alone:** “There is no one who can deliver... (v13).” We hear things like this from others regularly. People who, in their domain, are unbeatable. Always this is in the moment. We debate generational greatness because no one is eternally dominant. We rise, glory, diminish, and fade. Our Hero, speaking from an eternal perspective, declares that no one can take from Him what He is unwilling to give. Ever. There will not be a time when He diminishes while a villain rises enough to rival Him. Relative to Him, we are alone. Those who choose to oppose Him are alone in fear of His power. Those choosing Him as Hero, alone to freely live His story of invincibility.

◆**Overwhelming:** “There is no one who can deliver from my hand (v13).” The essence of this attribute of God is that none are powerful enough to take anything He is unwilling to release. Deliverance is usually thought of positively. This view of His power is the basis of the instruction to fear the Lord. His ultimate power cannot be escaped if we choose to oppose Him. We will be subject to whatever repercussions He decides. We each have a tale of the consequences of sin that we could not evade. When we think positively of His presence, we can live confidently with the assurance that none can take us from it. He will overwhelm any that attempts to separate us from His presence, power, and love. We are His for all time.

III) Unstoppable...

Our Hero claims superiority, immortality, and invincibility. He also claims irresistibility. He is active and will remain so. We know others who seemed tireless. Age weakens even these. Not our Hero. God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He is eternally constant. This dimension provokes a particular response from His storytellers. We are to tell His story of constant creation knowing that any seemingly contrary acts are redeemed by His regeneration.

◆**Relentlessly creating:** “I work... (v13).” It is in God’s nature to work. His work is creative and sustaining. He caused everything that is and continues creating through the cycles of life He instituted. He refreshes and renews within the context of life. He reclaims and regenerates from what has died. He created the world and then formed it, shaped it, prepared it as the perfect environment from which to bring life and sustain it. He constantly tends it for this purpose. So should we. This is the essential of His story revealed in ours. Expressing His character by our lives is to live with the purpose of creating environments that promote abundant life, health, and wellbeing. We work toward a world in which we all thrive.

◆**His reality:** “I work and who can hinder it (v13)?” This question is already answered. No one can. His creative, sustaining, saving acts are unstoppable. If we want to live unstoppable lives of purpose that express His story, we are invited to participate by creating and sustaining each other. We are free from fear that we can somehow deliver one deserving punishment from His hand. We can’t. Instead, we get to relentlessly create and sustain within the scope of our influence. No, we will not fix all the problems of the world. If we know our Hero, we know He will if He desires. In the meantime, we bring life in the name of Jesus, telling His story to the audience He gathers.