

15.

Romans 16:25-27

Be Strengthened

It often surprises those new to the pastoral ministry just how tired they get in the course of their daily ministry duties, despite their relative lack of physical exertion. Weariness is not always caused by physical activity. Stress, relationship strain, work-pressure, exam-preparation, discouragement and disappointment, can all contribute to weariness (refer to 2 Corinthians 1:8). Similarly, *strength* does not always come from sleep, eating, training, or exercise.

1. In Paul's opening chapter, what did he say he hoped to do for the Romans and how did he plan to do this? (Romans 1:11)

2. Where does the Psalmist say that the believer's source of strength come from and how do they obtain it? (Psalm 105:4; compare with Ps. 119:28)

3. How might someone be confused about how to find strength when they are weary based on Christ's words in Luke 21:36 (ESV)? Select the correct answer-

- a) Since the Omnipotent God never sleeps or slumbers, Jesus must have assumed that people didn't really need sleep either.
- b) The expression "stay awake at all times" (ESV) meant to always be looking to God in prayer, and this is the true source of the believer's strength.

God has made each human being as a physical, intellectual, and spiritual beings – but God did not make us as *compartmentalised* people. This means that when we are spiritually *weak* we can feel *physically* weak. The reverse is also true. We may feel physically weak but when we are spiritually strengthened we can reinvigorated physically. Perhaps you have experienced this?

4. Read Romans 16:25. What two means has God ordained to strengthen His people according to this verse, and what does this tell us about the importance of not forsaking regular church attendance?

God has ordained that His people are to be strengthened by assembling together as His house and to look together to Christ in worship and have the Word of God *preached* to them (Romans 16:25). From Acts 15:41, we can also reasonably surmise that this is how Paul and Silas were able to strengthen the churches that Paul had recently planted.

5. There are good reasons for believing that all of the New Testament documents were written and published by A.D. 66, and that most of them had been written and published by A.D. 60. In Romans 16:26, Paul seems to refer to these New Testament documents. How does he refer to them, how would his Jewish audience have understood their value?

Paul concludes his epistle to the Romans with a summary of his life-prayer. I pray that his prayer becomes ours as well.

Amen.