

Spiritual Practice | *Eagle's Wings*

There's a book in the Bible written by a prophet named Isaiah. In it, he writes:

***God energizes those who get tired,
Gives fresh strength to dropouts.
For even young people tire and drop out,
Young people in their prime stumble and fall.
But those who wait upon God get fresh strength.
They spread their wings and soar like eagles,
They run and don't get tired,
They walk and don't lag behind.***

Isaiah 40:29-31 (MSG)

No matter your age, young or old, life can be exhausting. This pandemic has been exhausting – living in a constant state of change and uncertainty. It's exhausting to be surrounded by negative voices, to be bombarded by ads telling us what we're missing, hashtags announcing who's being cancelled next, politicians arguing over who's wrong, scientists saying we're destroying the planet, conspiracy theorists telling us we're clueless. It's exhausting to feel like you're never measuring up to expectations – whether the ones being placed on you, or ones we place on ourselves. Like no matter how hard you work and how much you try to be the right person and make everyone happy, we often feel we're still not enough.

And that can be especially true in our relationship with God. We try to have faith, live good lives, believe the right things and pray the right prayers, and still we can feel like spiritual failures. All this trying can make us want to *drop out*. We get tired. We stumble. We feel weak. And we fall.

But Isaiah gives us hope, that our capacity to *soar* doesn't depend on our ability to flap our wings faster, to keep pushing, to try harder and do more. It actually requires only one simple act of faith: to rest, to wait on God. To let go and let God carry us. That's the image here, of an eagle soaring. It doesn't soar because of its own strength and effort; it simply spreads out its wings and leans into the power of the air currents all around it. That's why it soars so high and so far; because it is accessing the power of something far greater than itself.

And that's what God is inviting us to do: to stop struggling and start soaring. To stop flapping our wings (and going nowhere!) and, instead, lean on the powerful current of God's Spirit to carry us to new heights, and fill us with new strength.

So right now, wherever you are, here's what I want you to do: Close your eyes and take a few slow, deep breaths.

Where do you feel like you've been flapping your wings and getting nowhere lately?

(Maybe in your relationships, your work, your classes, your spiritual life...)

What would it look like to let go, and let God?

Sometimes when we pray, we encourage you to take a certain “posture” – like kneeling or lifting your hands. It’s just a way of saying with our bodies what we mean in our hearts. So, keeping our eyes closed, I want to invite you to do exactly what Isaiah recommends, right now – and spread out your arms, like an eagle’s wings, and do it as a way of being open to receive new strength from God. As a way of leaning not on your own strength, but on the air current of God’s loving care for you.

And because the whole point is to NOT depend on what we can do, but what God wants to do in us... let’s just let this be a time of silent posture prayer. Continue to hold your arms out and just breathe in God’s presence. Put yourself out there, and be lifted up, right now.