

Your Isa. 40:31 Secret to Triumphant Victory

Feeling weak these days? We all do. We face those struggles. There's so much on our plate, so much to resolve and so little strength to keep going.

I was there many times. And it began when in my freshman year of high school while on that race track as I held the baton. But in my heart, I held anguish. Before me was the distance I'd have to run between the starting point and the next runner where I'd hand off the baton. In relay races, the distance is short. But for me, it ran the length of the world.

All eyes would be on me.

Dreadful thoughts would rumble like thunder—what if I should stumble, drop the baton, fall or cause my team to lag far behind? All of these visions would torment me just before every race began.

Have you ever felt that way when one more stretch of life is before you and wonder if you'll make it? All eyes are on you, observing your performance. Before long you are on a journey, painfully foreign to you. Sweat pours out and you wonder if you'll make it one more step.

That's when God makes an announcement only for your ears to hear. "Let me run by your side!" And, with the firmness of His Word, He whispers confidence to begin the race. With His grace, He lifts your burden to lighten the load. With His promises, He cheers you on. Should you stumble with His mighty Hand, He'll scoop you up. When anguish and pain sear and burn, His compassion will soothe calmness to your soul. And should fatigue run you dry; His grace will pour renewed hope. Should doubt flicker through, His lips will speak the reassurance to build your strength.

Strategies to Succeed Against Satan's Schemes

We all want to win, to triumph and reach success. But if you fail in these three areas, winning might not come your way.

I have a friend who is sweet as can be. But inside, there's a tenacious, driven woman. Not only is she a mechanical engineer with a successful career, but she happens to be a NASCAR driver.

"Tell me," I said, "what did you have to worry about the most while on that racetrack being the only woman driver?"

"Other drivers," she said. "I had to guard myself against drivers who were aggressive; against those who were vicious and against those who sometimes were spiteful."

Three Secrets

Not only that, but under her freckles and red hair is a wise woman who knew the three secrets of a winner:

1. Know your enemy.
2. Be prepared.
3. Be aware at all times.

With this simple strategy, she took home many trophies.

And so can we. During our own race of life, the Bible says, "Take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Eph. 6:11, NIV).

Devil's schemes? Goodness gracious, the battle isn't against that relationship that ended in heartache? It's not against the husband who walked away? It's not against the conflict that divides the family? It's not in the stress that drains us each day? Or the illness that brings on fear?

Not at all! “For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12, MEV).

Although this sounds intimidating, there’s no need to fear.

With a dance of reassurance in our step, we move forward as we know the enemy and his schemes, we’re prepared and we are aware. Thus, we go ahead and pick up our trophy.

Driving the vehicle of confidence when fighting against those forces of the dark world, God almighty and powerful, brings on the victory. As we battle against all the unseen evil forces, His power shields, protects and guards against the influences of fear, loneliness, worry and sorrow.

We then head to the finish line as winners—triumphant and victorious.

Let’s Pray

Lord, You are a good, good Father to us. Thank you for being with us in every battle we face. And that in You, we are triumphant and victorious. Amen.

No matter what you’re facing, are you boldly declaring your victory? {eoa}

Janet Perez Eckles *is an international speaker and the author of four books. She has helped thousands conquer fear and bring back joy.*

This article originally appeared at .

The Unfailing Hope That Will Calm Your Storms

“Good morning, everyone,” the TV announcer said. “Let me correct that. There is nothing *good* about this morning of Sept. 26, 2004.”

Trying to maintain composure, we tracked Charley’s path. At first, the action outside was not much different than the usual storms in Florida. But we knew that this was no ordinary storm. It was a preamble of a dangerous hurricane

“Everyone grab a pillow and a blanket,” I said. I made a mental note of the supplies we would need: a flashlight, water and our cell phones. Grabbing the small transistor radio with fresh batteries; a bit of reassurance trickled in while huddled in our confined shelter.

As expected, the lights went out. The TV was silenced. In the dark, the rage of the hurricane became more audible. As the wind howled, it whistled as if to announce, “I’ve arrived.” Its ominous nature intensified our vulnerability.

Charley had a vicious and unique personality. It was capricious, first giving the impression it was headed in one direction and then at the last minute, changing directions. It had its own madness as it ripped through neighborhoods mercilessly.

“Hush!” I ordered. I turned the volume up on the transistor radio I held on my lap. “Listen!” I added with urgency.

Our family huddled, attempting to tune out the loud roaring outside. We hung on each word coming from the radio, the only

device connecting us to the outside world: "It's headed for Orlando; the winds here are unbelievable. With the last moments of daylight, we could see the roaring winds snapping trees in half like pretzel sticks. In other areas, the trees were yanked with force, their roots entangled in blocks of cement tossed aside like toys." Static interrupted his description. Then he continued, trying to catch his breath: "The huge glass windows of buildings nearby moved in and out in a swaying motion, attempting to resist the fierce wind with no success."

Lord, I cried out in my thoughts, guard our family.

Then the silence of my prayer was interrupted with more reports. I appeared calm on the outside, but with every sound outside and every detail of the report, I wondered if God was indeed listening. I questioned whether He'd answer before the worst happened. I doubted if my words were appropriate enough to reach Him. And I was certain that my emotions were blocking my pleas to Him. The more I tried, the more the hurricane of doubt thrashed in my heart.

"Now the road is in total darkness," the reporter said. "Even some traffic lights are gone."

Without air-conditioning, our cozy area turned into a small oven. But safety replaced comfort. Charley's rage grew closer. The strong winds thrust sporadic bangs, rattling our garage door. The hurling debris against our front and back doors as well as those slamming against the large windows gave the same sensation as a "tick ... tick ... tick" of a bomb. We knew it would strike, but didn't know exactly when, nor did we know which window would burst or what part of the roof it would yank away first.

No one spoke. But suddenly I heard a strange noise.

"What is that scraping?" I asked.

"It's my yogurt cup," my mom said with her characteristic calmness. "It's my bedtime snack," she added with a matter-of-fact tone.

How can she eat at a time like this? Does she not realize the danger we're in?

"My hope is in the Lord," she said, "He will protect us. Do you think this hurricane is catching Him by surprise? He is always faithful. Hope in Him is all we have."

I had heard those same words from the pulpit. They brought mild reassurance as I sense no danger in that pew surrounded by painted glass windows.

But now what painted my mind was images of us under a rubble of destruction.

Outside noises emphasized my imagination. We heard more banging and crashing outside. I changed my pleas: "Lord, I know You're in control. I have the certainty that You will see us through. And I know that You will calm this storm in my heart and also outside."

But my words still echoed with doubt.

Charley's furious winds struck with more intensity in some areas, yanking off roofs like boxtops, and the roaring winds hurled traffic lights, smashing them to the ground. Some fatalities were reported.

"The tracking shows Charley is now in Orlando's downtown area," the radio reporter announced. We all went silent to make sure we'd heard the good news (for us, at least) correctly, and then it was confirmed. Charley had moved north; it had finally passed us.

God did show up, promptly and swiftly.

We breathed a sigh of relief. And I gave a silent, *Thank you.*

We stepped out of our stuffy room and headed outside, glancing with disbelief at the mess, the debris and broken pieces of items from tree branches to trashcan lids, to unidentifiable items.

While we all gasped at the destruction, a deep yawn slipped from my mom's lips, and she tossed her empty yogurt cup in the wastebasket. "There was no need to worry then; no need to worry now. God is in control. Good night everyone," she said.

"We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name." (Psalm 33:20-21, NIV). It was in the "waiting" that God worked in me—teaching me to trust in the midst of winds of fear. To be secure when I hear threatening sounds, and to rest secure when others blurt bad news, gloom or warnings of destruction.

With renewed faith, gratitude removed the last of the dark clouds of the storm and brought new meaning. My hope was in God, not in the circumstances or in those around me.

The next morning's sun uncovered the radiance of God's promises that He will answer our pleas, promptly and swiftly. His faithfulness becomes visible not so much in the calmness of my life, but during the storms and emotional hurricanes that test my faith.

Let's Pray

Father, as we face all storms that threaten our lives, we rest in the comfort of Your promises that You never abandon us, never leave us. But without fail, You shelter us with Your love and protection. In Jesus' name, I thank You. Amen.

What is testing your faith right now? {eoa}

Janet Perez Eckles is an international speaker and the author of four books. She has helped thousands conquer fear and bring back joy.

This article originally appeared at .

Learn more about facing storms when you listen to the podcasts included here.

Follow This Spirit-Led Advice to Move Beyond Failure

“I actually cut my bangs myself,” my dear friend wrote.

I was impressed.

“... made a huge mistake,” she continued, “by cutting $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch instead of $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch.”

Yikes, that sounded like me.

“I couldn’t believe I did that!” she said, “But I’ve had more compliments than ever before. Turns out I look good in very short bangs and think I will keep them that way.”

See? Some friends are just blessed that way. They mess up, and things still turn out well.

That was a lesson for me. In fact, it was a huge lesson because I learned many things about making mistakes, messing up things, failure in general and making foolish decisions.

Have you been there lately?

If you’re in the “oops” phase of your journey and have looked in the mirror of life and find that you have messed up, then

smile. Why? Because there are many lessons we can learn from dealing with failure. Here are six keys to dealing with failure. Using these keys can help you navigate through each episode toward a fail-proof path to success.

Remember:

1. A lack of failure denotes we're splashing in stagnant water.
2. Failures bring added wisdom to help you take the next step.
3. Failures are a sign we're moving forward.
4. Failures bathed in faith never equal defeat.
5. Fear of failure comes when we let go God's hand.
6. Failure brings success when we trust in Him who never fails us.

Paul tasted the sadness of failed plans, tough roads, cold prisons and failed relationships, but he never stopped. He held his head high, his convictions deep and his resolve certain: "The Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But none of these things deter me. Nor do I count my life of value to myself, so that I may joyfully finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:23-24).

Let's Pray

Father, thank You that my failures are not the end, my mistakes are not the outcome nor are my flaws my destiny. In You, all my failures are ways to humble me and change my focus—to see You, Your hand at work and Your mighty power that helps me finish the race. In the name of Jesus, I thank you. Amen.

- What failure are you facing?
- What does success mean to you?

- What steps are you taking to move beyond failures? {eoa}

Janet Perez Eckles is an international speaker and the author of four books. She has helped thousands conquer fear and bring back joy.

This article originally appeared at .

For more about victory through failure, listen to the included podcasts!

Why You Should Let Holy Spirit's Narration Guide Your Life

I settled in the seat beside my son Jeff. We waited with anticipation in the large theater. The movie *Son of God* was about to begin. This is the life! I thought, grinning like a kid with a super-cool toy. Nothing like this has ever been available before—and there I was, about to try it for myself.

I slipped on the headphones. And as the movie began, so did the narration. This new gadget for the blind to hear the description of the action and silent scenes made me, well, giddy with joy.

Whenever there was no dialogue, the narration of the action whispered in my ear. And this *chica* enjoyed the featured movie as never before.

Whose Narration Are You Listening To?

How about you? I know, unlike me, you have eyes to see. But I bet you have listened to your own narration describing the scenery of your world—the things you did wrong, where you failed, what hurts and what isn't working in your life.

But what if we allowed God to whisper instead? He would relate His mighty strength when we're weak. His mercy when we fail. His nurturing when we feel lost. His comfort when loneliness eats our peace. And even at times when we feel unworthy, He would describe the portrait of us that He painted with His love.

The narration is sweet, the reassurance soothing. And the whisper to the soul sufficient to carry us through.

If we listen, really listen, His voice is gentle, yet carries the greatness of His power: "Though the Lord has given you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet He, your Teacher, will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it'" (Isa. 30:20-21a).

Let's Pray

Father, in those episodes of affliction, of restlessness and insecurity the whisper of your voice lifts my fear, dries my tears and brushes calmness into my days. In the name of Jesus, I thank you. Amen.

Whose voice will you listen to today? {eoa}

Janet Perez Eckles *is an international speaker and the author of four books. She has helped thousands conquer fear and bring back joy.*

This article originally appeared at .

The First Spirit-Led Step to Take in Calming Your Life-Storm

In Orlando, summer means more tourists, humid weather, tons of traffic and long lines for each attraction park.

It also means hurricanes, thunderstorms and high winds. Isn't life like that?

We enjoy attractions in life, but the storms come to disrupt our peace, the winds of uncertainty blow, and we're left wondering when calmness will reign again.

And it reigns again, but only when God's mercy first calms the storm that rage inside us. The winds of worry, fear and anxiety. The same emotions that rumbled inside the disciples.

"Then He entered the boat, and His disciples followed Him. Suddenly a great storm arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. His disciples went to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing'" (Matt. 8:23-25).

Did you read the important step they took? They first followed Jesus. Following Him was the first step and the first action plan.

To bring peace back, we must do that, too. To conquer the storms, we have to follow Him first. To calm our heart, we have to take steps toward Him first.

When we follow Him, storms may rage but Jesus will speak. Winds will cease. Waves will stop. Fear will vanish and the

sunshine of hope will appear.

If your storm is in full force right now, I pray you invite Jesus into your boat, into your problem and into your heart.
{eoa}

Janet Perez Eckles *is an international speaker and the author of four books. She has helped thousands conquer fear and bring back joy.*

This article originally appeared at .

This Godly Perspective Will Help You Find Victory in Failure

When will I learn? You'd think by now, aware of the limitations of my blindness, I'd be careful, really careful with the experiments and projects my young granddaughter and I do.

"It's a disaster," she groaned.

She was right. I had placed the hot iron on the paper covering the group of beads she creatively arranged on a pegboard. The iron was too hot? I pressed too hard? Or missed one step in the instructions?

Don't know. But after I lifted the iron, part of the melted beads had spread on the carpet, burning a baseball-size spot. Gulp.

Lesson Learned

After we dried her tears of disappointment, I took a deep breath, and then wisdom trickled in.

I knelt on the carpet and once the rug had cooled, I gently rubbed the palm of her hand on the scorched spot. "Feel this? This will help us remember that when we mess up, it's not a failure if the mess-ups teach us a lesson."

"What lesson?"

"To read instructions more carefully."

How many disasters have you have in life? Broken relationships, financial troubles, bad decisions, failed careers.

And the mess is there. They formed a rough spot in our heart, difficult to clean up. Heartache and regret melted in areas where they shouldn't.

What If We Didn't Consider Them Failures?

Instead, those very events can become God's powerful reminder that He still restores. Because of Him, we may stumble, but will never fall. Relationships end, but His love still remains vibrant. Finances crumble, but He still provides. Careers end, but He gives new beginnings. Illness wants to shake away our peace, but His hand stops the fear.

When embracing the lesson, life smiles again as we repeat "I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken" (-8, NIV 1984).

Let's Pray

Father, how often the failures, mistakes or calamities of life had threatened to shake me. But now, because you're near me, peace still sings in my soul. And I know each broken area is

the lesson that teaches me to wait in expectation for something new, something better, something richer and something worthy of your praise. In Jesus's name, amen.

- What has failed in your life lately?
- Where do you find the lesson?
- How will you allow God to turn it to good?
- Which of your problems can be turned to a blessing for you? {eoa}

Janet Perez Eckles is an international speaker and the author of four books. She has helped thousands conquer fear and bring back joy.

This article originally appeared at .

5 Purposeful Ways God May Be Turning Your Problem Into a Blessing

The Terminix rep sat at my kitchen table. "I have good news and not-so-good news," he said.

Gulp. I braced myself. I called him because I had some bites that could be from those pesky insects. And since I travel often, they could have hitched a ride in my suitcase.

"Good news," he said, "you don't have bedbugs. But not-so-good news is we inspected, and you have no protection against termites."

Yikes! Forget the bedbugs. Termites that could eat up my house are a bigger problem and a greater threat. I signed up for

their plan faster than you can say “bugs.”

Isn't that like life? We drown in tears because of an ugly situation, painful and unexpected. But God is in the background, using that very situation to work something beautiful. He's using it as a path to bring about greater changes, and before you know it, that problem was a blessing in disguise.

Five Ways

Here are five ways God might be crafting that transformation:

1. When relationships fall apart, God may not restore and heal. Instead, He might be in the process of a makeover of our heart. He might be cleaning stuff that tainted our life. He might be pointing ways to increase our wisdom and preparing us for something lasting and real.
2. When our children grow up and grow distant, following the wrong path, rather than bringing them back when we expect, our freedom might be what God has prepared instead. The freedom from worry by surrendering each child to Him and placing them in His capable hands.
3. When financial problems don't end, God might not wipe out our debt, but might invite us to bring to Him the first fruits of our labor and to see how much He can provide.
4. When life's losses devastate us, God might not bring back what we lost, but increase our dependence on Him to receive His comfort and peace.
5. When the doctor gives us bad news, God's healing might not happen yet. Instead, He might be working in us a deeper trust, a genuine confidence in Him and boldness to believe He has the answers when doctors don't.

God Has Answers That Are Eternal

Difficult circumstances demand solutions that are temporary, but God has the answers that are eternal. “Our light

affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:17-18).

Each problem is a blessing when we look for the lesson. When we hear His message. When we appreciate the change. And when we believe that, in Christ there is no problem without a purpose. No sorrow without His comfort, no setback without a solution and no tragedy without His triumph.

Let's Pray

Father, thank You for Your patience with me. Thank You for showing me to look beyond the circumstance and see Your mighty hand at work to bring greater things. In Jesus' name, amen.

Which of your problems can be turned to a blessing for you?
{eoa}

Janet Perez Eckles is an international speaker and the author of four books. She has helped thousands conquer fear and bring back joy.

This article originally appeared at .

Dance Your Way Out of the Darkness of Depression

Sometimes depression is the monster that can destroy our peace. But when we know where to find peace, freedom finds us.

I received this announcement in the mail. It read: “The

Foundation Fighting Blindness is sponsoring a dinner dance in the dark.”

A clever thing. Not only is it a fundraiser for research to find a cure for blindness, but also for sighted folks to catch a glimpse of the world of the blind. Thus, the event will be held in the dark.

Interesting, right? You can be sure hands will be in the mashed potatoes. Who knows how many glasses of water will be spilled? And, with no lights, wait till they have to visit the bathroom.

I've Been in Physical Darkness

Actually, I'm there now. Living for over 30 years without sight, I've grown accustomed to it. But the funny thing is, I often forget I'm blind. Okay, you can laugh. It's kind of silly, but I do forget. In fact, I even enjoy dancing. That's why that dinner dance in the dark is way too familiar to me.

Though it's familiar, the dance back then wasn't pleasant. When a retinal disease closed my eyesight, I danced with depression in the darkness of my misfortune.

The steps were awkward and clumsy. I slammed into obstacles while I groped, searching for healing. But fear, anxiety, pride, stubbornness and self-pity blocked my path to happiness. And instead, they took me to depression.

The depression made my world even darker. Seeking a cure, looking for freedom and answers only added to the emotional bruises, cuts and wounds.

But when the mess became too much, I became aware of what I was missing: the wisdom to reach out to God, who had the path out of my plight. He knew the source of my sadness. And He had the light to shine into my darkness.

Thank You, Lord

The day He turned on that light for me, the light of His Word, the splendor of His ways and the clarity of His path, life began for me. Like a flower blooming, my heart opened up to joy, and His reminder ever echoes in me:

For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light— for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth—proving what is pleasing to the Lord. And do not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; instead, expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things are exposed when they are revealed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light (Eph. 5:8-13).

And what became visible was the dance floor where Jesus leads the dance, step by step, day by day to the melody of His promises.

Let's Pray

Father, I confess the pride and anxiety that led me nowhere. Thank you for the light that showed me to the path of Your love and Your healing. In Jesus' name.

What leads your path out of darkness? {eoa}

Janet Perez Eckles is an international speaker and the author of four books. She has helped thousands conquer fear and bring back joy.

This article originally appeared at .

5 Lies You Need to Renounce to Begin Your Worry-Free Life

It was the big day. My parents, my brother, 16, and I, 17, sat in the courtroom. We dressed for the occasion, and our hearts wore unprecedented excitement.

My family worked hard to meet the requirements that led us to this event that would change our lives. The red, white and blue of the American flag covered the front wall of the large courtroom. Its majestic presence reminded us we were about to take a step filled with a unique honor.

“Raise your right hand,” the immigration officer said.

We did, and with unwavering conviction we renounced our allegiance to Bolivia and pledged our allegiance to the United States of America. In that ceremony, we officially became American citizens, fully committed to our allegiance. And that’s when the Fourth of July sent off fireworks of gratitude in us.

Not so when I pledged my allegiance to Christ. I became a Christian, but, unaware, I adopted dual citizenship—to God and, to the world, too.

On Sundays, I worshipped. During the week, I worried.

Have you been there? On Sundays we pledge to believe, to obey and follow God. We commit to embrace God’s Word and hold on to His promises. But when life brings ugly moments, our allegiance to negative emotions takes over.

How It Happens

God says not to worry, but we do. He repeats to trust in Him, but we doubt instead. He offers peace, and we forget that, too.

But freedom from worry comes when we remember that worry is a language, a specific way to communicate with God. Our worry repeats these five lies:

1. God is not capable to remove the anxiety in us.
2. God is not capable to bring answers to our solutions.
3. God is not aware of the details that bring on fear.
4. God is not able to put back the pieces of our broken heart.
5. God cannot change the path of our wrong choices.

That's the language of worry, unacceptable to Him and destructive to us. Worry-talk contradicts God's Word and dilutes His promises.

"Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter and from the deadly pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall find protection; His faithfulness shall be your shield and wall. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day; nor of the pestilence that pursues in darkness, nor of the destruction that strikes at noonday" (Matt. 6:34).

And with worry in the garbage disposal of life, we sing, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

So why do you doubt, shake or fret? When you know "Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday" (Ps. 91:3-6).

Let's Pray

Father, thank you for the reassurance that You have me and my family covered. Thank you for the sleep that comes at night as

you silence the lies. I praise You for the reassurance You whisper into my heart, removing worry from my mind. In Jesus' name.

When will you begin your worry-free life? {eoa}

Janet Perez Eckles *is an international speaker and the author of four books. She has helped thousands conquer fear and bring back joy.*

This article originally appeared at .

For more spiritual guidance on worrying, listen to the podcast included with this article!