

2 Corinthians 4:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

Analysis

For which cause we faint not (dio ouk enkakōmen, διὸ οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν)—Paul repeats v. 1's declaration, now grounded in resurrection hope (vv. 14-15). Dio (διό, 'therefore, for this reason') points back to all he's established: ministry flows from mercy, death produces life, resurrection is certain, all things serve God's glory. With such foundations, losing heart is impossible.

But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (all' ei kai ho exō hēmōn anthrōpos diaphtheiretai, alla ho esō hēmōn anakainoutai hēmera kai hēmera, ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται, ἀλλὰ ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν ἀνακαينوῦται ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα)—diaphtheirō (διαφθείρω, 'to destroy, corrupt, waste away') is present passive: ongoing external decay. But anakainōō (ἀνακαινώω, 'to renew, make new again') is also present passive: ongoing internal renewal. Hēmera kai hēmera (ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα, 'day by day') emphasizes daily, continuous renewal. Aging bodies house regenerating souls.

Historical Context

The 'outward man'/'inward man' dichotomy isn't Greek dualism (soul good, body bad) but Hebrew holism recognizing physical decline concurrent with spiritual growth. Paul isn't denigrating the body (he affirms bodily resurrection!). He's acknowledging that mortal flesh wastes while the regenerate spirit strengthens—a reality every aging believer experiences.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do you experience the tension between outward physical decline and inward spiritual renewal?
2. What practices facilitate 'day by day' renewal of the inner person in your life?
3. How does this verse comfort those facing chronic illness, aging, or physical limitations?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| Διὸ | οὐκ | ἐκκακοῦμεν, | ἀλλ' | εἰ | καὶ | ὁ | ἔξω |
| For which cause G1352 | not G3756 | we faint G1573 | but G235 | G1487 | by G2532 | G3588 | outward G1854 |
| ἡμῶν | ἄνθρωπος | διαφθείρεται | ἀλλ' | ὁ | ἔσωθεν | | |
| our G2257 | man G444 | perish G1311 | but G235 | G3588 | the inward G2081 | | |
| ἀνακαινοῦται | ἡμέρα | καὶ | ἡμέρα | | | | |
| man is renewed G341 | day G2250 | by G2532 | day G2250 | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 40:31 (Parallel theme): But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Colossians 3:10 (Parallel theme): And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Isaiah 40:29 (Parallel theme): He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

Romans 12:2 (Parallel theme): And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Ephesians 3:16 (Parallel theme): That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Romans 7:22 (Parallel theme): For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

Psalms 73:26 (Parallel theme): My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

2 Corinthians 4:1 (Parallel theme): Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

Titus 3:5 (Parallel theme): Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Psalms 27:13 (Parallel theme): I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.