

Be Strong in the Lord

August 7, 2022

We've been talking about fearing the Lord, and today we'll look at being strong in the Lord. First, I want to share some general points about being strong in the Lord.

1. To be a healthy, solid, fruitful Christian, you need to be strong in the Lord.
2. I think of young children, and they are not physically strong, they are physically weak, and so too, young Christians aren't strong, they're weak, but God's desire is for every newly saved person to grow and become spiritually strong.
3. Christians who don't learn to be strong in the Lord will struggle. Life will be hard and difficult for them, and they won't be able to live in the way God wants. But those who learn to be strong in the Lord will please the Lord, and bring glory to Him, and will fulfill the work He wants them to do.
4. The whole Bible is filled with examples of believers who were strong in the Lord. Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, David, Esther, Mary, Peter, and Paul, and many more, were strong in the Lord. They did what God wanted them to do, they lived the life God wanted them to live because they were strong in the Lord.

Ephesians 6:10. This is a very important vs. about being strong in the Lord, and what do we learn from this verse?

1. God commands you to be strong in Him. Being strong in the Lord is a matter of obedience. And God tells you to be strong because He knows you need to be strong if you are to truly love and serve Him, and bring Him glory.
 2. This verse is in the present tense which means it's what you are to do every day of your life, and all day long. It's not a matter of being strong in the Lord once in a while, but being strong all the time.
- John 15:5. "*Apart from me you can do nothing.*" You can't do anything for God apart from His strength. And the key to having God's strength is abiding in Him, remaining in Him, continuing in Him, having this continual relationship with Him. Tomato

3. When we talk about being strong, we're talking about being spiritually strong. And being spiritually strong affects your physical, mental, and emotional strength. And so you should have a goal of being spiritually strong in the Lord. Mark 12:30
4. Now it says you're to be strong in the Lord which means you're not being strong in yourself. This strength we're talking about comes from the Lord, and that's why it says to be strong in the Lord, for your strength doesn't come from yourself. In fact, if you are strong in the Lord, then you're weak in yourself. Gideon

5. Being strong in the Lord is a general phrase, and means you are strong in specific areas of the Christian life. For example, you are to be strong in faith, to be strong in holiness, to be strong in love, to be strong in grace. 2 Tim. 2:1.
- You're not to have a little faith, a little holiness, a little love, a little grace. God wants you to have a lot of faith, a lot of holiness, a lot of love, a lot of grace, etc. And so God wants you to be a strong Christian in every area of the Christian life. One of the best examples in the Bible is Paul, and you should want to be like Paul.

6. Eph. 6:13-18. This gives us several keys to being strong in the Lord. And it is telling us about this spiritual armor God wants us to have on, and without this armor we will be weak, and more exposed and vulnerable to the attacks and schemes of the devil. Let's go over these:

1. First, there's the truth, and this is foundational, it's essential. Truth is like our skeletal frame - it's our bones that hold us together, that give our body its strength. It's like a house - it needs a foundation and the framing. Both are necessary to give a house the stability it needs, the shape it needs, and the strength it needs. Matt. 7:24-27
- And there are all kinds of truths you need to know and believe, that need to be part of your Christian life, truths about God, about Christ, about the Spirit, about salvation, about the church, the future, and your spiritual growth as a Christian. Epistles

2. There's the breastplate of righteousness. This means you know you're righteous in the Lord, that you are forgiven and loved by Him, and so you have a clear conscience. And being righteous gives you spiritual strength. Christians who don't have clear convictions about being forgiven and loved by God are weak Christians.

3. There's the gospel of peace and this relates to the feet. And feet have to do with having purpose, that you are going places for God, and are doing the work God wants you to do – and it's all centered around the gospel. Strong Christians have direction in life and are fulfilling God's will for their life. When you read in the Bible about being strong in the Lord, it usually relates to someone doing the work of God. Joshua – Joshua 1:9, Solomon – 1 Kings 2:2

4. There's the shield of faith. And this shield is a defensive piece of armor protecting you from the "*flaming arrows of the evil one.*" And having your shield protecting you means you are trusting God, you are relying on Him and His promises – and you're not succumbing to doubts, to fears, to the lies of the devil. Again, we see the importance of faith. And Jesus kept encouraging the believers to not be weak in faith, to not have a little faith, but to have a strong faith, to have a great faith. And there's no doubt that Paul was strong in faith which is one of the main reasons he was a strong Christian. Moses

5. There's the helmet of salvation. This word salvation is referring to our hope, the truth that, at the coming of Christ, we will be fully saved, we will be glorified. Having hope, knowing that God has a wonderful and perfect future for us is soul-strengthening, gives us spiritual strength, and helps us to keep going for the Lord. A great place to learn about hope is Hebrews 11 - all these godly saints are doing God's work and are facing persecution. And they had hope and they endured. They knew God would get them through life, and glorify them, and eternally bless them. Heb. 11:24-25

6. There's the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. That it says sword means this is not really a defensive weapon, but an offensive weapon, one that is necessary to attack the enemy, and to fight spiritual battles. That it says the sword is God's word means you need God's word to be spiritually strong. Psalm 119:28

Matt. 4:4. Now God's word is like food, and if you don't eat physical food, then you'll get physically weak and die. Many Christians live by their feelings and emotions, and their experiences, and not by God's word, and therefore, they're not strong in the Lord. - Josh. 1:6-9. Three different times God tells Joshua to be strong and courageous. But in the middle of His instructions, God tells Joshua that he needs to meditate on God's word, for that is an essential key to spiritual strength and success.

And so to be spiritually strong in the Lord, a person must first know God's word, be founded and grounded in God's word. God's word tells us what we are to do, and how we're to live. And the primary key for our Christian life is meditating on God's word, is thinking deeply about God's word.

Now the physical food we eat needs to be chewed, and then digested in the stomach and intestines and then, by means of the blood, distributed to cells all over our bodies. This physical food strengthens and repairs our cells, and helps them to grow. And God's word, our spiritual food, needs to be spiritually digested. And it's digested as we think about it, and as the Spirit helps us understand it in our own spirit, our own soul. - Then God's word, His truth, becomes part of our thinking, our spiritual make up, part of our life, and the means by which we grow and live and do God's work. Psalm 51:4

The main point today is being strong in the Lord, and what we're saying is that God's word, through His Spirit, needs to be established in you, to become part of who you are. Eph. 6:17 says the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. And so we see this connection, this close relationship between God's Spirit, God's word, and you. Job 21:21-22

A Christian who effectively uses the sword of the Spirit knows the word of God, and uses the word of God, and is a mature Christian, a mature Christian soldier. In the military, soldiers have their equipment, their armor on, and the only way they can be strong is by using their armor, and then they can defeat the enemy and win. And so too, every piece of this spiritual armor described in Eph. 6 is needed.

But now we're talking about the sword, the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word. God has given us the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is powerful and effective in us and through us as we know and obey the word of God. Only then can we be truly strong Christians. Spiritually strong Christian – God's word
- Acts 6:7, 12:24, 13:49, 19:20. We read about the effectiveness of God's word in the early church. The church was growing because God's word was being taught, believed, and was transforming people's lives. 1 Thess. 2:13

And when we say "word", we're talking about every word in the Bible. Matt. 4:4. As a Christian, you're to know and believe the truths about God, about Jesus, and about the church. You're to know and obey commands like love one another, be holy, and go and make disciples. You're to believe and hold on to promises like the Lord is with you, that He will protect you from your enemies, or that Christ is coming back.

God's word is a very big subject, and it covers every single aspect of your Christian life. And so you need to listen to good teachers, and you need to study, learn, believe, and obey God's word. And so God's word is the most important thing to being strong in the Lord. Heb. 4:12 - When God's word is living and active in your life, then you will be a strong Christian, a prosperous and successful Christian. Psalm 1:2

We'll talk more about being a strong Christian next week, but here are 3 closing verses.

- Psalm 18:1 – *"I love You, O Lord, my strength."*

- Psalm 28:7 - *"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. Therefore, my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him. The Lord is the strength of His people."*

- Psalm 31:23-24 - *"Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord."*