

“STRONG IN THE LORD”

Dub McClish
Denton, TX

Paul commanded, “BE STRONG IN THE LORD” (**Ephesians 6:10**). The fact that we are ordered to be spiritually strong necessarily implies that it is possible for us to attain such strength. The Lord neither presses orders upon us that are beyond our accomplishment nor prohibits behavior that is beyond our control (despite the bogus claims of homosexuals).

The apostle tells us the way to be fully equipped for battle (**Ephesians 6:14-17**). Several of whom we read in the Bible became spiritually strong and apparently without miraculous assistance. Such was Abraham, who “WAXED STRONG THROUGH FAITH” (**Romans 4:20**). Some of the saints in Rome were “STRONG” (**Romans 15:1**), and those spiritually strong in the Galatian churches were to try to restore the erring (**Galatians 6:1**). The spiritual retardation of the Hebrew brethren was inexcusable (**Hebrews 5:12-14**) - as is that of modern saints. The sources of spiritual strength are available and the strength we all so badly need is assuredly attainable for every Christian soldier.

We must not overlook the fact that the matter of attaining spiritual strength is not optional. It is imperative. With almost the force of a military command, Paul wrote, “BE STRONG IN THE LORD.” Earlier he had told the Ephesians he was praying that they “MAY BE STRENGTHENED WITH POWER THROUGH HIS [God’s] SPIRIT IN THE INWARD MAN” (**3:16**). A few brethren have concluded that the answer to this prayer necessitates that Spirit’s immediate action on our spirits, apart from the His Word. This conclusion is utterly unwarranted, however. The fulfillment of the prayer for the Ephesian saints is quite fully attainable as He providentially brings us into contact with others who can strengthen us and as we seriously study and apply the Spirit’s Word.

Paul explained the means by which the Holy Spirit strengthens us when he listed our spiritual armament (**Ephesians 6:11, 13-17**). Note that **we** are to put it on and take it up in order to be strong, rather than expecting the Holy Spirit to mystically, directly help us. The ability of the Christian soldier to apply these sources of strength is without question.

It is tragic that so many in the Lord’s army feel no obligation to grow and mature in the faith so as to become spiritually strong. Few have done or can be motivated to do any serious study of God’s Word. They either never learned, or learning, they do not care about the trustworthy principle of **Psalms 119:11** “**THY WORD HAVE I LAID UP IN MY HEART, THAT I MIGHT NOT SIN AGAINST THEE.**” So many are unable to discern good from evil because “**WHEN BY REASON OF THE TIME [they] OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, [they] HAVE NEED AGAIN THAT SOME ONE TEACH [them] THE RUDIMENTS OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE ORACLES OF GOD**” (**Hebrews 5:12-14**). Such will be absolutely without excuse when they are called to Judgment.

“STRONG IN THE LORD”

Dub McClish
Denton, TX

Perhaps the one great curse of the Lord's spiritual army is ignorance of the Word of God. Because of such widespread ignorance, not only among the rank and file members, but among elders, deacons teachers, and even preachers the Lords people are grossly weak and sorely handicapped. They are at the same time rendered defenseless when the Truth is under attack and are unable to successfully press the battle upon the foe.

We must also admit with much sadness that the Lord's soldiers have in many cases become so much like the enemy troops that for them to oppose the enemy is to oppose themselves. Worldliness, impenitent adultery and fornication, a gadget and gimmick-oriented good time approach, and unauthorized fellowship practices are rampant in many congregations. Also, outright false doctrine has so infiltrated the ranks in many places that the cause has been all but surrendered to the enemy.

The prevailing challenge before the remaining faithful leaders of God's people is to encourage and inspire a hunger for Truth, which alone will provide the strength needed for the battle, in the final analysis however, each member must take this obligation seriously and personally: **“WHEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, BE YE STEDFAST, UNMOVABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD, FOR AS MUCH AS YE KNOW THAT YOUR LABOR IS NOT VAIN IN THE LORD” (I Corinthians 15:58).**