

823 Can God Strengthen Me?

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God's Answers to Life's Questions

We live in such a crazy, busy world that it's easy to get spiritually run down. Maybe you've gone through a season where your spiritual life is sagging and needs a lift. Well, you won't want to miss this Bible study today. It will give you the help and strength you've been looking for!

Today we're asking the question, "Can God Strengthen Me?" Each of us at times gets down; we feel as if our spiritual batteries have run down. We find ourselves lacking interest and desire. We begin to allow ourselves to drift away from our devotion to Christ. Our prayer lives, Bible study, worship attendance lack any spiritual fervor. We lack the discipline to do the good deeds we once did. Paul cautions us against the problems of a sagging faith. The Bible says in Galatians 6:9-10, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." Paul urges us not to lose heart or faint. He does not want anyone to give up, let up, give out, or be unable to produce Christian fruit.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light." Jesus calls us to serve Him, but He does not call us to an impossible life. We can live the Christian life and can find rest to our souls. Jesus does not offer us chains; He offers us a yoke, and not just any yoke, but a yoke with Him. A yoke doesn't make our work harder; it makes the burdens easier. We can do far more with His yoke than we can without it. It could be the reason you're worn out is that you've been carrying all your burdens alone.

When Paul thought about the church at Ephesus and its burdens, he prayed for them. The Bible says in Eph. 3:14-21, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen." God strengthens us, establishes us in love, and is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or think He does what he does through the power that is at work within us.

What can you do to find that spiritual strength available to you? First, *renew your mind*. The apostle Paul urged the Christians at Rome to reset their thinking in Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." This same apostle told the Colossians in Colossians 3:1-4, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

So many folks have their minds set on everything but God. They spend hours with the television or games or the computer but know little about God and His will. That's why they

are so spiritually weak. The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:13, "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Have you spent much time thinking about the coming of the Lord or heaven? Have you counted your blessings? Have you considered the judgment lately? Have you taken time to look at the cross? Get your head together. Refocus on what matters; it will help your soul.

Second, *reconnect to spiritual people you love*. Get close to the congregation and to the Lord. Go back to church, where the spiritually strong people are. Every person has the need for a friend, counselor, and an occasional sounding board. Solomon said, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Prov. 27:17). If you want to be spiritually strong, be around people who are spiritually strong. They will help you grow. You can find spiritually strong people at the worship of the church. Oh I know there are others there, struggling to grow too; and I'm glad that there are struggling people there so that they too can grow. But you can find mature, good, strong people who love the Lord at church. Go find them and get to know them. Third, *return to your roots*. The Lord Jesus spoke straight to the church at Ephesus. While they remained sound in their teaching, Jesus told them in Revelation 2:4-5, "But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first." Do you remember when you obeyed the gospel? Do you remember how much you loved Jesus for dying on the cross for you? Do you recall how sorry you were that you had sinned? Do you remember when were baptized and became a Christian? Your heart was full of love and zeal for God! You wanted to do right, live right, help others and demonstrate to God your great gratitude for all He has done for you. The things that cause us to "fall in love" are the things that "keep" us loving. Go back to the love you had at first.

Fourth, *repent of any sin in your life*. *Sin interferes with loving God*. The Bible says in Romans 8:5-8, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot." Sin against God causes our hearts to grow cold toward God. A person with unresolved sin in his life can hardly go to worship without feeling guilty and ashamed of what he has done. Sin places a barrier between God and us, so that we can never have a loving, joyful relationship as long as sin stands in the way.

Fifth, *recapture your faith, hope and love by studying God's word*. Nothing will build your faith, your hope, and your love like serious Bible study. The apostle Paul said in Romans 10:17, "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Again the Bible says in Romans 15:4, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." The Scriptures teach us how God has interacted with us through the ages. When we see God in His love and His glory working to bless us in Christ, we are strengthened and renewed in our spirits.

When Paul said goodbye to the elders of the church at Ephesus, he told them this in Acts 20:32, "And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." The Bible can build you up like nothing else, because it is not merely a book. It is God's book, God's will, and God's

wisdom. It can make all the difference in the world in your life, if you will read and obey it. In John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him (one of the apostles), "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." God wants to make His home with you. The way He does that is through His word.

Sixth, *realize that God is working in you and through you.* Sometimes we think God couldn't be interested in me or in using me to do His will, but God cares about everyone. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:9-10, "For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me." God wisely sees not only who we are but also what we can become. God is at work in our lives shaping and molding us into the people He can use to do great things. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:1, "And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain." Don't ever take God's grace and His love toward you for granted.

Seventh, *"Be strengthened in the Lord."* The Bible says in Ephesians 6:10-13, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm." We are in a battle for our souls, a personal battle against a mighty opponent. The one standing at the end will survive and keep his soul. We are not fighting just for our own souls; we are fighting for our children

In 2 Chronicles 16:9 the prophet Hanani told King Asa when he was being tempted, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him." Have you ever considered that God is looking for people like you who will put Him first in their lives? Sometimes we think God is far removed from us and doesn't know anything about us. But just the opposite is true. God knows us inside and out. The psalmist David wrote in Psalm 139:1-5, "O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it." We should never imagine that God is not vitally interested in us. He wants each of us to live with Him forever in heaven. He sent His Son Jesus to the earth to provide a sacrifice for our sins, so that we could stand pure and blameless in His sight. He has given us His ear in prayer, His thoughts in the Bible, and His family in the church. Romans 8:32

and brethren. The devil knows the weaknesses of each of us; he has been fighting against Christians since the beginning. If we do not know how to fight, we will surely lose this personal battle with the devil. If we are unprepared in heart to fight, we will most likely lose our souls. If we do not wear God's armor, or if we are unwilling to fight, we will surely fall on that evil day. If we do not give this battle every ounce of strength and cunning we have, we will surely lose. If we fail to be strengthened by the Lord, we cannot stand. But God can make us stand! We aren't fighting alone. Be strengthened in the Lord! The Bible says in Philippians 4:1, "Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved." Stand with God and you will stand with Him in eternity. Again, the Bible says in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice." We can succeed with God's ever present help.

And last, *respond to the needs of others.* There will always be people around you who need your help, your counsel, your hand, and your heart. When you are busy serving others, you won't have time to feel sorry for yourself. The Bible says in Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Again Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." Get busy helping those who need your help. When your heart belongs to God, God will be at your side. God is able to strengthen us, but we must cooperate with Him and be willing to allow Him to work in our lives! Too often we close ourselves off from God, close our eyes to His goodness and willingness to bless us. Open your heart to His love, His strength, and His power!

says, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" God cares for you greatly.

Now the question is do you love Him the way He loves you. Is your heart completely His? Are you blameless toward Him? God loves you and is gracious toward you, but He has placed conditions on His grace. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). You must obey the will of the Father if you wish to enter heaven. To become a Christian, you must believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ. You must make Him your Lord by turning away from all sin and by hungering for righteousness. Confessing His name before others out of love and loyalty, you must be baptized, that is immerse in water, for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). In baptism you become a member of God's family, freed from sin, and a member of His church. My friend, why not act in love and obedience today.

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