



**Building Spiritual Strength: The Secrets of Developing a Strong Spirit**  
**Lesson 4: Exercise for the Spirit – Part 1**

**1. Review and more study of Proverbs 4**

**Proverbs 4:20 – 23**

**Proverbs 4:23 – Amplified Bible**

*Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life.*

Verses 20-22 are talking about immersing yourself in the Word of God.

**Proverbs 4:20**

Your ear is listening to the Word of God.

**Proverbs 4:21**

Your eyes are \_\_\_\_\_ on the Word of God.

Your heart is \_\_\_\_\_ on the Word of God.

*THEN – Look at the next verse . . .*

**Proverbs 4:22**

What does it mean to “find” the Word of God?

Definition of FIND: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the Word of God there before? – Yes

What does it mean that the Word of God appears?

Answer: You are keeping the Word of God before your eyes. You are keeping the Word of God before your ears. You are keeping it in your heart until you “find” it. Until it appears.

“Find” also means: \_\_\_\_\_

It means there will be a time, after meditating on the Word of God, that the light will go on for you.

### **Isaiah 58:8**

#### **Isaiah 58:8 – Message Bible**

*Do this and the lights will turn on, and your lives will turn around at once.*

Just because you can quote chapters and verses does not mean that you have revelation.

Did the Word of God “exist” before? – Yes

You are keeping the Word of God before your eyes. You are keeping the Word of God before your ears. You are keeping it in your heart until you “find” it. Until it exists for you.

The word “find” also means: \_\_\_\_\_

You are keeping the Word of God before your eyes. You are keeping the Word of God before your ears. You are keeping it in your heart until you acquire it and you take hold of it for yourself.

### **Proverbs 18:14**

#### **Proverbs 18:14 (Amplified Bible)**

*The strong spirit of a man sustains him in bodily pain or trouble, but a weak and broken spirit who can raise up or bear?*

According to this, a strong spirit is going to get you through physical attack and even life-threatening problems.

A strong spirit will get you through anything.

If this is true, then we ought to be interested in \_\_\_\_\_  
a strong spirit.

### **Proverbs 24:10**

When you quit or give up, it is because you were weak.

### **2 Corinthians 4:16**

## **2 Corinthians 4:16 (Amplified Bible)**

*Therefore we do not become discouraged (utterly spiritless, exhausted, and wearied out through fear). Though our outer man is [progressively] decaying and wasting away, yet our inner self is being [progressively] renewed day after day.*

If a spirit of a person can be renewed, it stands to reason that a spirit can also be depleted.

We looked in 1 Timothy 4 and saw that your spirit needs nourishment and rest.

Paul compared \_\_\_\_\_ development with \_\_\_\_\_ development.

If you want your body to be healthy and strong you need to feed it, rest it, and you need to exercise.

The same is true spiritually. If you want to be strong in your spirit you need to feed your spirit rest it, and exercise it.

## **2. Why do you need to be spiritually strong?**

There are two reasons why you need a strong spirit:

- You need a strong spirit to receive what God has for you. Strong faith comes from a strong spirit.
- \_\_\_\_\_

## **3. A strong spirit never gives up.**

### **1 Timothy 4:6, 7 –Amplified Bible**

*If you lay all these instructions before the brethren, you will be a worthy steward and a good minister of Christ Jesus, ever nourishing your own self on the truths of the faith and of the good [Christian] instruction which you have closely followed.*

*But refuse and avoid irreverent legends (profane and impure and godless fictions, mere grandmothers' tales) and silly myths, and express your disapproval of them. Train yourself toward godliness (piety), [keeping yourself spiritually fit].*

It is easy to think that you are in better spiritual strength than you really are.

If we have a weak spirit, we will give up on things.

What does God do when you are standing in faith but you give up? – Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

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What about if you keep standing and moving on? What about if it seems like there is no reason for you to keep trying but you keep trying anyway? – God likes that! He likes faith.

There is never a time to quit as long as God is on the throne.

#### **4. Keeping yourself spiritually fit takes exercise.**

Just because you are eating does not mean you are spiritually developing.

It takes more than eating.

It is only as you \_\_\_\_\_ that you develop spiritually.

#### **5. Examples of spiritual exercise (We will look at the first one in this lesson and then continue looking at other examples in Lesson 5.)**

- **Walking in the spirit**

##### **Galatians 5:16**

If you are stronger spiritually, you are less likely to yield to temptation.

A sign of a weak spirit is that you are \_\_\_\_\_

We will come back to Galatians 5 in a moment. First look at Matthew 26. Jesus was in the garden praying before his crucifixion.

##### **Matthew 26:41**

A lot people have the “want to”, but do not follow through.

Being “willing” is a far cry from being “able”.

For example – Physically I might “want to” bench press 250 pounds. But that doesn’t mean I am “able” to do it.

“Wanting” to do something and being “able” to do it are two different things. However, the will is good. If I have the will to do something it keeps me motivated and exercising myself to reach my goal.

*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

What if their spirit was more than willing? What if their spirit was strong too?

As your spirit gets stronger, \_\_\_\_\_

Instead of being controlled by your flesh, your spirit grabs ahold of your flesh and says – NO!

The stronger your spirit becomes the easier it is to overcome temptation.

### **Galatians 5:16**

Then the next few verses talk about the pull between the flesh and the spirit.

### **Galatians 5:22-25**

Just because you are alive in the spirit, doesn't mean you are \_\_\_\_\_  
in these things.

If you are going to develop spiritually, you are going to develop in the fruit of the spirit.

What is the definition of walking in the spirit? – \_\_\_\_\_

When you exercise it requires effort. Every fruit of the spirit requires effort.

For example, you are not going to walk in love automatically.

You are going to develop in love two ways:

- You will develop in love by feeding yourself the Word of God.
- \_\_\_\_\_

You are going to develop in joy because you exercise yourself in joy.

You are going to develop in peace because you exercise yourself in peace.

You are going to develop in all of these areas because you exercise them.

Your biceps:

- If you have weak biceps, why are they weak?
- How long have you had biceps? – Since you have been born.
- Why are they weak? – \_\_\_\_\_

Patience:

- If you are an impatient person, why are you that way?
- How long have you had patience? – Ever since you have been born again.

- If you are born again you have at least the seed of that fruit in you.
- If you exercise your patience, you will develop in it.

It is possible to exercise two or three of these fruits, but be weak in the other ones.

But God intended that we would be fully developed in every area.

- But will you develop in these areas by wishing?
- How about by watching someone else?
- What about by reading books on the subject?
- What about reading the Bible on the subject?

The answer is – \_\_\_\_\_

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How do you exercise patience?

- Opportunities come to exercise patience. When you get the opportunity, you have to take it.
- When you do that, you will be “working out your patience muscle”.
- If you have never worked on a certain muscle, and then you start, you know that it can be tough. You get sore and can hardly do it.

When do you get a chance to exercise patience?

- When someone is standing there talking to you about nothing . . . going on and on and on.
- When you are sitting in traffic.
- When you are waiting in line at the store.

When you put the flesh under and stand there and smile – it takes effort. You are exercising your spirit.

- It takes effort and energy to walk in love.
- It takes effort and energy to be joyful even when you don’t feel like it.
- It takes effort and energy to walk in peace when you are tempted to worry.

- It takes effort and energy to walk in gentleness and kindness when you are tempted to be harsh.

When you are making an effort – \_\_\_\_\_

Your spirit will get stronger and stronger and stronger.

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Sometimes we look at people who are more spiritual or have greater faith than us and think – “God has really blessed them. I wish I had that.”

But that is not the way it is. What have they done? – \_\_\_\_\_

Faith:

- When it comes to faith, you have to exercise it. All that means is – you have to use it.
- It does not matter if you have the smallest muscles in town. If you decide to use them they will grow.
- The same is true with our faith. We have to use it. Use what you have and it will grow.

Some pastors and people in the ministry have never had to use their faith. They had everything handed to them.

Their faith was not used – so it didn’t grow.

It is better to not have everything and use your faith. Then your faith has an opportunity to develop.

How do you exercise love?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- When you give (especially when you need it) to someone else who needs it, that is love.

You exercise all of the fruits this way.

But you got to start. You have to use what you have.

It you start where you are right now – \_\_\_\_\_