



Building Spiritual Strength: The Secrets of Developing a Strong Spirit

Lesson 6: Enemies of the Spirit

1. Review

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.

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 getting and maintaining a strong spirit.

In order to develop and be strengthened, your spirit needs two things – _____

2. Living by faith

Hebrews 11 is called the “Chapter of Faith”.

Hebrews 12:1

We know that this verse is talking about the people in Hebrews 11.

All of those people were people of faith. They walked by faith. They lived by faith.

Hebrews 12:1

How are we going to run our race successfully? – _____

Hebrews 12:1 – Message Bible

Do you see what this means--all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running--and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins.

Hebrews 12:1 – Amplified Bible

. . . let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us,

In this lesson we are going to look at some enemies of developing a strong spirit – weights, hindrances, and drains.

The Bible here is talking about things that _____

Example: Gas Tank

- What if you have a hole in the gas tank of your car?
- You can have the nozzle at the gas pump going full force. But if you have a substantial hole while you are filling it, it is also running out.
- You will never get full that way.
- Your gas tank is being drained.

Example: Race cars

- In racing, it is not always the most powerful car that wins the race.
- Power is important, but it is not everything.
- One of the keys to winning the race is to make your car lighter than everyone else's cars.
- If a car has more power, but is heavy, the lighter car with less power can win the race.

Spiritual life is this way.

The solution to being a more victorious Christian is not necessarily more power.

Some people think – “I just need more power.” But what they do not realize is that they are carrying around a lot of stuff that is dragging them down.

God did not call us to carry a bunch of stuff around that weighs us down. He wants us to be free!

Example: Professional runners

- They wear light clothing and find the lightest sneakers.

Example: Horse racing

- Do you see big heavy men riding the horses? – No.
- Jockeys are little guys.
- What about the saddle? Is it huge leather saddle like a cowboy would use? – No
- The owners want the horse to hardly realize that it has anything on it.
- Why? – Because it can run faster.

We can be nourishing ourselves and exercising, but if we have all kinds of extra baggage pulling up on us, dragging us, and holding us back we will not be victorious like we ought to be.

We have to get rid of the extra baggage.

3. Things that will drain you, drag you, and hold you down:

- _____

You can try to walk in faith, but if you yield to fear, it drains your faith.

You can nourish yourself with faith, but if you allow fear into your life it will suck the faith right out of you.

You can go to church, hear the Word, and read the Word for yourself, but if you allow fear and worry into your life, you have more faith going out than you have coming in.

Ezekiel 21:7

Why are they sighing? Because of the news or the report that we just heard.

Why did they get this way? – _____

What happened to their spirits? – Their spirits grew faint.

Did this affect their bodies? – Yes. Their hands were feeble and their knees were weak as water.

Does what you think upon affect you? – Yes

Isaiah 26:3

Romans 8:6

If you think on the things of _____ it is a drain on you.

But if you put your mind on the things of God it _____

Can you stop yourself from worrying? Is it possible to not worry?

John 14:27

If your heart is troubled and afraid, how did it get that way? – _____

Did you have to let it get that way? – No

Worry and fear are the opposites of faith. It is your choice what you want to let in your heart.

Worry and fear drain you of faith.

_____. Worry and fear hold you back from advancement.

You cannot let yourself worry.

Worrying does not help any situation. When you worry, you are not standing in faith.

Faith is always up and positive. Faith is never crying in the corner in self-pity.

- _____

We have talked about walking in the spirit and how you have to exercise the fruits of the spirit. This builds you up and makes your spirit stronger.

But what happens when you walk in the flesh?

You can nourish your spirit with God’s Word and exercise your spirit, but if you keep yielding to the flesh you will be weak and defeated.

One of the greatest stories in the Bible that reveals this truth is the story of Samson and Delilah.

Was Samson strong? – Yes.

What was the source of his strength? – God! _____

The great man of God became weak. Why? – Because not only was he fighting and conquering the Philistines, he was sleeping with the Philistines.

You cannot overcome the world and sleep with the world.

You cannot just be anointed. _____

• _____

You can be feeding yourself, exercising yourself, and still remain weak because you are trying to do too much.

Luke 10:38-40

Definition of DISTRACTED: _____

Message Bible – *Martha was pulled away by all she had to do.*

Luke 10:40 *But Martha was distracted with much serving . . .*

Is it a bad thing to serve? – No. Actually it is a good thing!

So what is the problem here? – Martha was more concerned about what *she wanted* to do for Jesus than she was about what *Jesus wanted* her to do.

Was she doing all of those things because Jesus asked her to do it? – _____

Martha did not even make the effort to find out what Jesus really wanted.

She is doing everything by herself and it is in the flesh.

When you do things “for the Lord” in the flesh you will get weary.

Luke 10:40

Martha expected Jesus to support her and say, “Mary, you should be helping. Get up and go help your sister.”

Luke 10:41, 42

What is Jesus saying? – “Martha, you can learn something from Mary. Your priorities are wrong.”

It important to be responsible and be diligent, but it is more important to hear from the Lord and be led by the Spirit.

Before you make too many plans and get involved with a lot of different projects, you should ask the Lord – “What do you want?”

It is not just getting the job done that is important. It is also – what kind of a condition are you in when you are done?

Everything you do takes some kind of energy. You only have so much mental, physical, and spiritual energy for each day.

You need to watch how you _____

It is just like money. When you are out of money, it does not matter if you see something you want – you have spent all of it.

The devil would like you to run around doing a lot of things so that all of your energy is used up when the time comes for you to really do something for God.

- _____

Genesis 27:46

Rebekah was weary because of her daughters-in-law.

Rebekah said to Isaac, “These daughters-in-law are wearing me out. I am tired of living!”

Obviously there are some relationship problems in their family.

Let’s look at Samson again.

Samson was strong, not just physically, but by the power of God.

He got into a _____ with the wrong woman.

Instead of getting her over onto his side, she _____

She kept after him about the source of his power. Samson should have figured this out – every time he lied to her about the source of his power she tried to do something to him.

Living in sin makes you dull and dumb.

Judges 16:15, 16

Judges 16:16 – Holman Christian Standard Bible

. . . she wore him out.

Judges 16:16 – Today's NIV

. . . he was tired to death.

Satan will use relationships to wear you down. Be careful to make sure this is not happening to you.