

“Strong in the Lord”

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Paul commanded, "Be strong in the Lord" (Eph. 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 does not press orders upon His people that are beyond our accomplishment. The apostle tells us how to be fully equipped for battle:

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil... Stand therefore, **having girded your loins with truth**, and **having put on the breastplate of righteousness**, and **having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace**; withal **taking up the shield of faith**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And **take the helmet of salvation**, and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God... (Eph. 6:11-17, emph. DM).

Several of whom we read in the Bible became spiritually strong and apparently without miraculous assistance. Such was Abraham (Rom. 4:20), as were some of the saints in Rome (Rom. 15:1) and Galatia (Gal. 6:1). The Hebrew brethren were without excuse in their spiritual retardation (Heb. 5:12-14)—and so are we. The sources of spiritual strength are available and the strength we all so badly need in this topsy-turvy world is assuredly attainable for **every** Christian soldier.

We must not overlook the fact that the matter of our personal spiritual growth is not optional. It is imperative. With the force of a military command, Paul wrote, "Be strong in the Lord." Our Commander-in-chief makes the sources of strength readily available. 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 and become spiritually strong. Few have done or can be motivated to do any serious study of God's Word. Such will be absolutely without excuse when they are called to the Judgment.

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 Lord's people are 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 own 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 fornication, a gadget and gimmick-oriented "good time"

approach is rampant in many congregations. Also, outright false doctrine has so infiltrated the ranks in many places that the cause has been 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 steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, April 4, 2010, of which I was editor.]

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