

Your Strength Comes from God

Through God's Word, we are allowed the opportunity to see several Bible characters go through difficult times in their lives. Even Jesus, Himself, experienced challenging times during His life, and in His horrible death, He endured being crucified on the Cross. No wonder that we, too, can expect to deal with tough times and difficult situations in our lives. Christ suffered, Bible characters suffered—and yes, during points in our lives, we shall suffer too.

Because we can expect a storm every now and then in life, we must know where to gain our strength to endure the trials we face. Examples from the Bible show us that our strength doesn't come from within—rather, *our strength comes from God.*

Strength

- When we think of having strength as a Christian, we, first, think of the strength to endure personal difficulties. Having strength as a Christian can mean many things. For example,
 - The **Strength** to Avoid Sin
 - The **Strength** to Carry Out God's Will
 - **Strength** During Terrible Times in the World
 - **Strength** in God's Word

Are you strong?

James 1: 2-4

Perseverance is steady persistence or a **strong** will in spite of difficulties, obstacles or discouragement

Ever felt like giving up?

If we are honest with ourselves, we can all point to a place in our lives or a situation that was so difficult that we didn't know if we would have the strength to endure it. A divorce, the death of a loved one, financial difficulties, seeing someone you love go down the wrong path, problems on the job, conflict in the household—and these are just a few examples of troublesome times in our lives. Sometimes, the uncertainty and pain of life is enough to make one question whether or not they can make it through the difficulty.



The Apostle Paul

Paul, who was called Saul before his conversion to Christianity, had been a persecutor of Christians and spoke out against the Lord. After the Lord came to him and he was converted (Acts 9: 1-6), Paul traveled and preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of his efforts, Paul, himself, was beaten and put in prison. Paul endured much difficulty and suffering for the cause of Christ. Paul knew what it was like to face trouble.

As he was preparing for his death, Paul mentored a young man named Timothy to continue the work of spreading the Gospel. Two letters that Paul wrote to Timothy are recorded in I Timothy and II Timothy in the Bible. Paul, having known the trouble he faced in life, knew the difficulty that was ahead for Timothy. He writes Timothy, in effect, to tell him to *Be Strong!*

Paul Spreads the Gospel



Paul passes his wisdom on to Timothy.

It is reasonable to conclude that much of what Paul wrote to Timothy is what he might say to us as disciples of Christ today.



What can we learn about strength from the Apostle Paul?

– I Timothy 1: 12-16

- Verse 12: Strength comes from God.
- When we are weak—who should we go to for strength? **Clearly stated, we should go to God.**

– Matthew 11: 28-30

I Timothy 4: 9-16

- Our hope comes from God
- Be strong and don't worry about what others say
- Be diligent about your work for God. Work hard. Get the job done (even though it will be difficult). Give it everything you've got
- V. 16 **Perseverance** in getting to heaven will require **strength**

Suffering in the Faith

- 1 Timothy 6: 3-12
 - Godliness with contentment will bring great gain
 - The Bible is telling us that if we are Godly and have a sense of contentment (despite our difficult circumstances) that it will bring us great gain. *We must try to be content with what we have and at peace despite our difficulties. We will benefit when we implement this principle in our lives.*
- 2 Timothy 1: 8-12
 - Paul tells Timothy to *join with him in suffering for the gospel*. Paul was willing to suffer and sacrifice for the Lord. *We, too, must make certain sacrifices in our life to follow Christ. Sometimes, those sacrifices will require strength from us.*

A soldier, an athlete and a farmer...

- 2 Timothy 2: 1-7
 - A soldier wants to please his commanding officer. *Our focus should be on pleasing our commanding officer, who is God. Often times, we allow our personal difficulties and temptations to take our attention away from the Lord.*
 - Anyone who competes as an athlete doesn't receive the crown unless they compete according to the rules. *If we expect to make Heaven our eternal home, we must follow God's rules which are in His Word, the Bible. If we don't do our best to follow the rules, we can't expect our "crown," which is Heaven.*
 - The hardworking farmer gets the first crop. *When we work hard to "plant" that which is good, we can expect to benefit at harvest time, which is the day when we meet the Lord.*

Have Strength

- 2 Timothy 2: 22-26
 - Paul instructs Timothy to flee sin and pursue faith, love and peace. He also tells him not to participate in foolish arguments with others. *We need strength to flee from sin and other ungodly acts.*
- 2 Timothy 3: 1-6
 - Paul notes that the last days will be terrible and that people will give in to worldly pleasures and rebel against God. Kind of sounds like the world today, doesn't it? *We must have strength to hang on to God's Word in the midst of so much trouble in the World.*

Paul Reflects on His Life

- 2 Timothy 3: 10-17
 - Paul acknowledges all the troubles he faced in life, but he says that the Lord rescued him from all of them. **Despite what you're going through, if you hold on to God and His Word, He will rescue you.**
- 2 Timothy 4: 6
 - Paul faces His own death. He seems to be at peace with dying because he knows that he has a crown of righteousness waiting on him because he didn't give up his "fight" for the Lord.
 - Life is hard, but you, too, shouldn't give up the "fight". **Despite the difficulty you are facing, hold on to God's Word, obey His plan of salvation and continue to do His Will and like Paul, you will inherit a crown in Heaven.**
 - **When you feel like giving up during your life-long journey to Heaven, be sure to go to God for more strength.**

Paul Near the End of His Race



Your suffering is temporary.

Ask God for the Strength to Endure...