



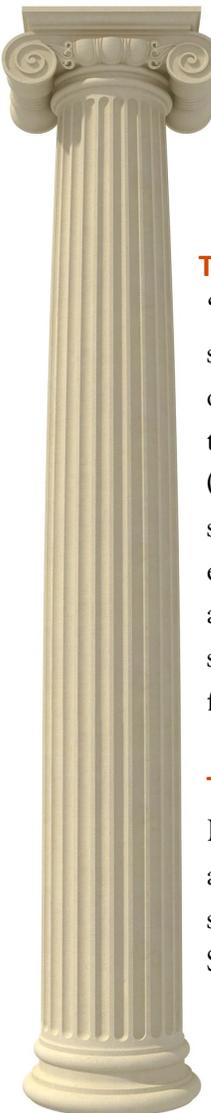
PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

May 14, 2017

Sources of Strength

by Frank Himmel



All of us face discouragement from time to time, even in our service to the Lord. We need strengthening. The Bible identifies a number of sources that provide needed reinforcement.

The Lord

"But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one" (2 Thessalonians 3:3). "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). The Lord's means of strengthening us include His grace, His example, His word, and His promises and assurances. Ephesians 1:19-21 says the same divine power which raised Christ from the dead is available to us all.

The Spirit

Paul prayed that God "would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Ephesians 3:17-17a). We receive the Spirit by hearing with faith (Galatians

3:2). Faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). Both Christ and the Spirit dwell in our hearts when we take to heart God's precious word.

Preaching

At the end of their first preaching tour, Paul and Barnabas revisited the cities where they had established churches, "strengthening the souls of the disciples and encouraging them to continue in the faith..." (Acts 14:22). Hearing the gospel again and again reinforces our faith. By the way, have you ever noticed that Acts 15:32 says Judas and Silas "strengthened the brethren with a *lengthy* message"?!

Prayer

Warning about the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus advised, "But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of God" (Luke 22:36). The "power of prayer" is not so much in prayer itself but in the Lord's gracious response to the pleas of His people. That said, prayer does make us focus; it prompts us to discern what is and is not important; and it draws us near to God in such a way that by faith we rise with a renewed sense of confidence.

Brethren

Jesus warned overconfident Peter, "But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32). Hebrews 12:12 charges us, "Therefore, ►

strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble.” 1 Thessalonians 5:14 records a similar admonition. Faithful brethren can do much to strengthen us by their good examples and words of encouragement. As in Peter’s case, even a brother who stumbles may provide strength through his example of not giving up, repenting, and going on to do his best in God’s service.

Ourselves

“You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near” (James 5:8). This is the same word used of Jesus when He “set his face” to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). In addition to these other sources, strength comes when we resolve to do right—regardless of the circumstances, regardless of the consequences, and regardless of what others around us are doing.

Conclusion

Do you own a treadmill, an exercise bike, weights, or other devices for strengthening the body? How often do you use them? If you are like most people, not all that often. Having helpful tools available is one thing; using them is another. Let’s make the best use of these means God has provided to strengthen our spirits. “Exercise yourself toward godliness” (1 Timothy 4:7, NKJV). ■

A Mourner

by Frank Himmel



“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4).

Long ago the Preacher observed, “It is better to go the house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, because that is the end of every man, and the living takes it to heart” (Ecclesiastes 7:2). Mourning and sorrow have a way of making us think soberly. They push our thoughts to God, and that is always a good thing.

Our text may have special reference to mourning over sin: it follows a blessing on the poor in spirit and precedes blessings on those who are meek and hungering for righteousness.

Some people laugh about their sins; the whole concept of right and wrong is little more than a joke to them. Some people boast about their sins; their accomplishments in drunkenness, fornication, dishonesty, and other wrongs are a source of pride. Some try to hide their sins, minimize them, or blame them on others.

The blessed man mourns over his sins. His is a godly sorrow, a sorrow that he has hurt his heavenly Father. That kind of sorrow leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10), and repentance leads to blessed forgiveness (Psalm 32:1-5). ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Josh Baucom	Mark Clifton	Carlos Garcia
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Carlos Garcia	John Baucom
OPENING PRAYER	Greg Winget	Albert Harrison Sr	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Steven Turner	Steven Turner	
CUP	Ron Cunningham	Ron Cunningham	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Albert Lee Harrison		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Steven Turner
CLOSING PRAYER	John Baucom	Don Rapp	Adam Wilson