



**"HE MAY GRANT YOU TO BE STRENGTHENED WITH POWER
THROUGH HIS SPIRIT IN YOUR INNER BEING"**

EPHESIANS 3:16B

Strengthened;

LUKE 2:40

And the child grew and *became strong*, filled with wisdom...

The Spirit is the "Empower-er";

ACTS 1:8

But you will *receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...*

ROMANS 1:4

[Christ] and was declared to be the Son of God *in power according to the Spirit of holiness...*

ROMANS 15:19

...by the power of signs and wonders, by *the power of the Spirit of God...*

1 CORINTHIANS 2:4

...my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the *Spirit and of power...*

1 THESSALONIANS 1:5

...our gospel came to you not only in word, but also *in power and in the Holy Spirit...*

**What percentage of your time and effort in life is spent on your outer person?
On your inner person?**

What does it mean to 'strengthen'?

How does the New Testament teach that God strengthens?

Do you expect God's strengthening work in you to result in increased self-sufficiency, or increased dependency?

What do you want to most define your life?

Are you more interested in putting God's name on display, or in removing suffering and maximizing comfort and success?

Other key passages;

ROMANS 7:16-8:4

¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my

mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. ¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-9

For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. *But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10

⁷ So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

⁹ But he said to me, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."* Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

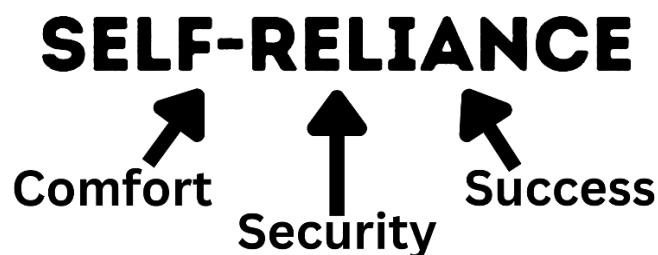
PHILIPPIANS 4:12-13

I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

How does the parable of the "Prodigal Son" teach the truth that the relationship that God desires with us cannot exist until we come to the end of ourselves (Luke 15:11-25)?

Why is it so hard for us to work and live outside of our ability? What makes resting in the power and working of the Spirit so unnatural for us?

God strengthens the inner man not by adding things that are strengthening, but by taking away things that are weakening; things which distract from or distort Christ. What strengthens the outer man can weaken the inner man.



Do you know that God is constantly giving you opportunities to trust Him, and by trusting Him, strengthening your inner being? And do you know that those opportunities *always* occur at times in which you don't want to trust Him, or do not understand how to trust Him, or both?

*God is working behind the scenes of your life to undermine any remaining self-reliance. The Bible knows this as: **dying to self**;*

LUKE 9:23 (cf: Galatians 2:20, 5:24; John 12:24; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Matthew 10:38, etc.)

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, *let him deny himself* and take up his cross daily and follow me..."

How influenced do you feel you have become by the *best life now* culture?

This can only be the Spirit's work. We cannot "kill to ourselves." We must "die to ourselves."

God is calling you to do what you cannot do, with the ability you do not have;

MATTHEW 14:19

...taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

LUKE 5:32

I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Can you look back on your past and genuinely thank the Lord for times in which He *did not* grant to you your earnest requests of Him?

God will not give you all the answers you desire. If you are a parent, can you think of a time in which you did not give a child all the answers he/she desired?