

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2025.03.23

Website: oakgrovecofc.org

Facebook: facebook.com/oakgrovecofc

Sermon recordings

Scan the QR code below with your phone's cam, or visit oakgrovecofc.org/sermons.

Speaker-AM: Josh Vinyard

Title: God's Woman

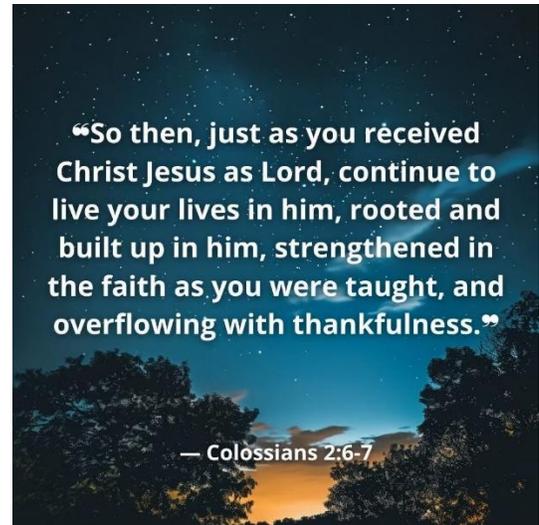
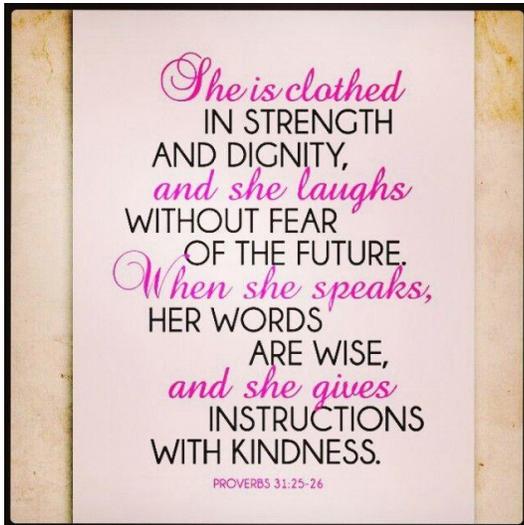
Recording:



Speaker-PM: Patrick Hite

Title: Single Christians

Recording:



Articles

Strength in Christ, by Dudley Ross Spears 9/30/1990

Christians need much more strength than those who make no pretense of serving the Lord. The life Christians are called on to live is not the easiest life. While it offers the greatest rewards and provides the greatest blessings here and hereafter, Jesus said it is the "strait way" with the "narrow gate" that leads to life. (Matthew 7:13-14). The word "strait" is translated by "difficult" or "narrow" in more recent translations. You might imagine a mountain climber who must pass through narrow clefts of rocks, pull himself upward toward the top, and know why strength is important to those who want to reach the top.

The illustration is not too good, for God does not expect us to pull ourselves to the top without His help. But we cannot expect God to pull us to the top when we make little effort. God promises us that He will strengthen us. Paul wrote, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might through his spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). But, in the same epistle, Paul urged Christians to, "...be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might" (Ephesians 6:19). Strength comes from God. Still, we have to avail ourselves of it. And the question remains: How do I do that? Some basic rules must be followed to become a stronger Christian. This is true of anything worth doing or getting, or a Christian can become stronger. Let's consider some of them.

Develop resistance against sin.

Recognize what sin is, and know that it is the main thing that saps strength from a Christian. Christians can and do sin, tragically. Those who refuse to correct their sins become weaker and weaker the older they get. Notice Peter's statement. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world" (I Peter 5:8-9). Weaklings are gobbled up by Satan like babes at the mercy of a vicious, wild, ravenous lion on the loose. The more sin and Satan are resisted, the stronger the Christian becomes.

Cultivate a desire to serve God.

It does not seem to be the "natural" thing for a human being to want to serve God faithfully. That seems to require cultivation. It may be like learning to eat or drink some nourishing food that initially did not taste good. But every one of God's children can learn the sweet taste of faithful and loyal service. Study this next verse thoughtfully. "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift...and have tasted the good word of God..." (Hebrews 6:4-5). These expressions are lifted from the text deliberately to focus attention on them. The taste may have been less than appealing initially, but the longer one serves the Lord, the sweeter the experience becomes. Never making the effort often keeps people from great enjoyment. There is a song that describes it well and is "sweeter as the years go by."

Engage in exercise.

Athletes and others who want strength make it a regular practice to exercise. I am told that irregular exercise is the same as no exercise, if not worse. Paul wrote the young preacher, Timothy, as follows. "For bodily exercise profits a little, but Godliness is profitable for all things, 'having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.'" (I Timothy 4:8). A practical way to exercise is to establish the habit of regular Bible study, a special time for prayer and the routine of attending Bible studies and worship. Those who have done this become markedly stronger in Christ.

One final thing to consider is that we need to know what we need to strengthen. Some may need to strengthen their ability to control their temper, while others need to strengthen their resistance to temptation. Whatever the weakness, the rules studied in this lesson will work when taken seriously and applied.