

On Your Mark, Get Set...Start Working Out!

By Parah Israel

Building strength, especially spiritual strength, is a rigorous workout and a daily one at that! You can't skip days. You can't cheat.

Ughhhh...it's hard, but there is no way around it. I'm always looking for a way to make it easier, but at the end of the day and just like when you want to lose weight, there is no easy way out. You have to want it and work on it e-v-e-r-y d-a-y!

There are a few exercises that a person must do daily to build the strength and endurance needed to walk on the path towards the Lord:

1. **EMBRACE YOUR TRIALS** That's right, these are your times to actually shine! Learn from your errors, your tears, your hard times. They are your tests. How else can you gauge how strong you really are if you don't have a trial to test it out?

JOB 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

ECCLESIASTICUS 34-5 ⁴ Whatsoever is brought upon thee take cheerfully, and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate. ⁵ For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.

I PETER 4:12-13 ¹² Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: ¹³ But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

2. **DON'T DEPEND ON OTHERS TO MAKE YOU HAPPY** Happiness comes from within. Think on all that you have been blessed with and be content. You are the only one with the power to switch on and off your happy light.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-8, 11 ⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. ¹¹ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

3. **FIND THE POSITIVE IN THE NEGATIVE** All is in balance, even the difficult. Life is to be lived healthfully. The glass of life should always be half full, not half empty. If you truly believe the Most High created you to be happy, abound, flourish and be content, then you must find the good in every situation, no matter how difficult it may seem.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 1:13-14 ¹³ For God made not death: neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living. ¹⁴ For he created all things, that they might have their being: and the generations of the world were healthful; and there is no poison of destruction in them, nor the kingdom of death upon the earth.

I CORINTHIANS 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

4. **FACE YOUR FEARS** It's the only way to conquer them.

JOSHUA 1:9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

ISAIAH 43:1 But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

5. **CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS** Lose control and your emotions will beat you down. Never trust your emotions. Never let them guide you. Put them far from you!

ECCLESIASTICUS 30:21-24 ²¹ Give not over thy mind to heaviness, and afflict not thyself in thine own counsel. ²² The gladness of the heart is the life of man, and the joyfulness of a man longeth his days. ²³ Love thine own soul, and comfort thy heart, remove sorrow far from thee; for sorrow hath killed many, and there is no profit therein. ²⁴ Envy and wrath shorten the life, and carefulness bringeth age before the time.

6. **HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR POTENTIAL** Even when times seem bleak, when you think all is above what you can take or tolerate, when you are downtrodden, just remember who created you. He meticulously chose every detail that makes you "you"...from the color of your eyes, to each mole you find throughout your body. Some he made eloquent speakers, others organizers and others cooks, but each uniquely and beautifully put together to serve him. The Most High made you after his own image and if you are repenting, his spirit dwells in you. When you feel weak, remember who you belong to and the strength that is embedded in your physical and spiritual DNA.

I CORINTHIANS 6:19-20 ¹⁹ What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰ For ye are bought with a price therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

I PETER 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

PSALM 139:13-17 ¹³ For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. ¹⁵ My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶ Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. ¹⁷ How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

7. **KEEP AT BAY OR REMOVE COMPLETELY TOXIC PEOPLE FROM YOUR LIFE** This is a BIG one and an important one. Some are friends, some are family, but regardless of which, if they are not likeminded, if they don't want to repent and keep the commandments, keep them at bay where they cannot harm you or remove them all together if they give you doubtful pause. They are dead-weight that can potentially bring you down and out of grace. I know it's hard, but so very needful. I can't stress this one enough. This doesn't mean you don't love your parents or your siblings or your best friends. It simply means that you have chosen to make those that desire to follow Christ your first family just as Christ did. It means that you are focused and unwilling to compromise your faith. It means that you surround yourself with them whom walk with you on the path to righteousness, rebuke you if you fall short and love you when you may be weak and show you by example the right way.

MATTHEW 12:46-50 ⁴⁶ While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. ⁴⁷ Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. ⁴⁸ But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? ⁴⁹ And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! ⁵⁰ For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

PHILIPPIANS 2:2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

I CORINTHIANS 15:33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

8. **REMEMBER YOU ARE OWED NOTHING** Yet you owe a whole lot. We are the ones that have broken our end of the bargain with the Most High, not him. Let's see how much you have been given:

- Who has ALWAYS kept his end of the covenant even when you haven't?
- Who has given his only Son to die for your sins?

- Who gave you life?
- Who gave you air to breathe?
- Who gave you food to eat?
- Who gave you the means to support yourself?
- Who gave you true love, knowledge, wisdom and understanding?
- Who gave you the beauty of the world?
- Who has patiently waited for you even when you have failed?

Now, do you still dare ask the question what The Most High and Christ might owe you? It is crucial that we continue to build our strength to be able to finish our immense task of repaying all that we owe.

JEREMIAH 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

ECCLESIASTES 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

These are but a few exercises that work you out to be a "strong" person. There are many more, but this is a good start. Put on your tennis shoes, get your water bottle, and let's get to working out our spiritual muscles. On your mark, get set, go!