

Strengthen yourself in the Lord

Acts 13:22

1 Samuel 22:2

1 Samuel 30:6

Ephesians 2:6

Proverbs 4:23

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Introduction: Sometimes **the only one to encourage you is you**. When **we learn how to strengthen ourselves, we will fulfil our God-born dreams, and be able to represent Jesus to the world**.

God saw **David** in his obscurity as a shepherd, but recognized him as **a man after God own heart**, willing to do everything God wanted him to do.

Acts 13:22 New King James Version (NKJV)

22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, **'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'**

Why did God say this about him?

Firstly, **when nobody was looking, or calling prayer meetings, David was pouring out his heart in worship and prayer to God** in the fields where he was tending his father's sheep. Although in his day worship was about the sacrifice of animals, his heart led him beyond the letter of the law, to the sacrifice of praise from the heart.

Secondly, **David's battles against the lion and the bear, showed that he relied completely on God** for victory.

- David's interim time:

Then **Samuel anointed him as king, but only 10-13 years later he actually became king**. In the interim years **David endured more difficulty, persecution and rejection than many of us** face in a lifetime.

King **Saul**, on the other hand, who did not face these tests, **lacked the strength of character that only comes by winning private battles**. His **weakness as well as his growing desire for popularity**, led him to **bring glory to himself, which ultimately destroyed him**.

We know the story of how **Saul persecuted David for more than 10 years**, chasing him as far from the throne as possible. This was a **test of David's ability to believe and walk in the Word over his life, even when the circumstances seemed to completely oppose his calling**.

- David and his followers:

1 Samuel 22:2 New King James Version (NKJV)

2 And **everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him**. So, he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him.

They were the rejects of society, and David demonstrated a true king's heart by embracing these men, and spent the next 10 years training them in life and in warfare. Under his leadership, these “rejects” became his “mighty men”.

- The Tragedy at Ziklag:

David and his men moved to Ziklag. From there he did raids against the enemies of Israel. But then coming home one day, he found the city burned and looted by the Amalekites; every wife, child and possession was gone. At the sight of this tragedy, even these men he had protected and provided for, now turned against him and talked about stoning him.

1 Samuel 30:6 New King James Version (NKJV)

6 Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

- David's Reaction to the Tragedy:

Instead of running for his life, or becoming indignant and defending himself as their leader, it says, “but David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.” And, God gave him the strength to master his own distress, to look past the offence of the men's rejection and to rally them together to get their families back.

So, they retrieved every person and possession that had been taken. His ability to strengthen himself, instead of collapsing under pressure, saved his life, but also enabled him to lead his men to victory. Only a short time later, Israel crowned David as king. His darkest moment prepared him for the throne.

- David's Legacy:

David went on to write the beautiful Psalms. He established an unprecedented form of worship in Jerusalem, he designed the Temple, and brought Israel into its Golden Age. But he was also named the forerunner of the Messiah, Jesus, who throughout eternity, will be identified as the Son of David, and will sit on David's throne. David was promoted to a place of such favor and influence with God that he altered the course of history forever.

- He was no Superhero:

Yet, David was not some kind of superhero, because we read the accounts of his sins. But if he who came into such favor with God, though he lived long before the blood of Jesus was shed, how much more should we, be able to come into an even greater purpose. Ephesians says that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places. (See Ephesians 2:6)

The blood of Jesus was shed not only to save us from our sins, but also to restore us to a relationship of partnering with God, being co-laborers with him as kings and priests.

- Ways to strengthen yourself in the Lord:

1. **Watch over your heart**

Proverbs 4:23 New King James Version (NKJV)

23 Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it *spring* the issues of life.

With our hearts, we need to strengthen ourselves in the Lord, and this is by establishing foundational truths in our thinking, because our hearts and our thinking are closely connected. The more we gaze on Jesus with the eyes of our heart, the more we see who we are becoming and what our purpose is. So, the more revelation we have of Jesus, the more we will understand our own identity and purpose.

2. **Give Thanks**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 New King James Version (NKJV)

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Thanksgiving keeps us close to the presence of God. Paul told us to “give thanks in everything”, which changes our perspective and makes us aware of God's amazing ability to invade the impossible. It isn't long before this focus on His goodness creates an opening for the joy of the Lord, that is our strength!

3. **Praise and Worship**

Our primary ministry is giving ourselves fully to him in praise and worship, and we find we walk away with the aroma of His presence and glory. Then our difficulties also seem smaller, as we now see them from heaven's point of view.

4. **Make war with Prophecies and the Rhema Word**

It is important to write down the prophetic words and promises spoken over our lives. And we need to listen to the voice of the Spirit, to deposit the words in the Bible into our hearts as a living Rhema word to us. Meditate on it, declare it over your life, and let it draw you into your eternal purpose. This word that resonates with the voice of the Spirit, creates life.

5. **Keep Testimonials**

Like Israel, we must build memorials that remind us of what God has done for us. We can start keeping a journal to record the answers to prayer we've had, and heard about, and the miracles we've witnessed. We owe it to our children and future generations – a record of all God's interventions in our generation. This also builds the faith of others who hear these testimonies, and remind us that God can do it again.

6. **Manage your Environment**

It is important to **manage our environment well because it influences our faith. Build friendships into your life that will strengthen your values, and be careful of people who can influence you to doubt or negativity. Don't be led by the needs of people, but by the heart of your Father. Remember to come apart to rest at times, and let God Himself be your most important Friend.**

7. Focus on the Spirit of life within you

We are to **take our focus off our weaknesses and instead of being paralysed by condemnation, we must choose to rejoice in Him and his promises. Focus on the Spirit of life within you that is greater than your weakness. Believe and hold onto His promises. Step out in faith. Then you will see the breakthroughs you long for, and heaven will begin to invade your earthly life.**

8. Take up your Cross

Taking up our cross **releases the strength and courage we need in the midst of the enemy attack. Jesus' obedience to the cross, released blessing for the whole human race. So also, the cross we embrace, will release a blessing to those who will also come to benefit from this salvation.**

Conclusion: **David's life shows us the ability to strengthen and minister to ourselves, is a vital skill that we must learn. It is going to develop our character to fulfil our potential as kings and priests.**

David as a leader took the initiative to seek God in the secret place. If we seek God's face and pursue our purpose for our lives when nobody is around, we will have the ability to strengthen ourselves. And if we learn to do this in times of testing, we will experience the breakthroughs that also release corporate blessing to others around us.

In testing, God often allows us to stand alone, without friends even, to depend on Him and to learn to minister to ourselves. It is our responsibility to strengthen ourselves in the Lord, and in doing this it will enable us to walk in victory.

Strengthen yourself in the Lord

Lockdown Bible Study Session 11: Guard your Heart

Proverbs 4:23 Proverbs 23:7 Romans 12:2	Hebrews 12:2 2 Peter 1:3 Romans 8:28
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Introduction: Yesterday we spoke about David in the OT, who took the initiative to seek God and worship Him when no-one else was there. If we seek God's face when nobody is around, we are strengthening ourselves in the Lord, like David did.

Doing this in times of testing, will let us experience breakthroughs that will also release corporate blessing to others around us.

- **Watch over your heart**

Proverbs 4:23 New King James Version (NKJV)

23 Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it *spring* the issues of life.

With our hearts, we strengthen ourselves in the Lord, and this is done by establishing foundational truths in our thinking, because our hearts and our thinking are closely connected.

Proverbs 23:7 New King James Version

7 For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he.

- **The Inner man**

The Hebrew word for "heart" is the whole "inner man". Your heart is the seat of your mind, imagination, will, desires, emotions, affections, memory and conscience.

It is also the center of your communications with the Spirit of God, and the heart is where we understand the unseen realm that governs the visible realm.

- **The Renewal of your Mind**

Romans 12:2 New King James Version (NKJV)

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Our mind must be renewed and must focus on the truth of God's Kingdom, or else it will focus on the destructive reality of the enemy's kingdom, and the lies of the devil. So, "Watch over your heart".

- **Look unto Jesus**

Hebrews 12:2 New King James Version (NKJV)

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

When we **agree with spiritual truth**, we **will become what we are looking at**. So, our goal should be to **focus and fix our eyes on Jesus**, because **we will become like the One, we are looking at**. The thing you are **looking at the longest will become the strongest in your life**.

The more we gaze on Jesus with the eyes of our heart, the more we see who we are becoming and what our purpose is. So, the more revelation we have of Jesus, the more we will understand our own identity and purpose.

- **Fellowship with the Lord**

The Holy Spirit who lives in us, **gives us access to God's presence**. But we have to **take advantage of that access**, and we **do that by turning our focus on Him**. In that **place of communion with Him** we come to know Him.

As we agree with the revelation of who He is, His life starts to flow into our lives and transforms us into His likeness. All fruitfulness in our lives flows from this place of intimacy with the Lord. Fellowship with the Lord is the power source of our lives.

- **Dealing with the Enemy**

The **enemy knows our job is to destroy his works**, and that **we have the tools to do it**. So, he **will use lies of accusation and intimidation to make the problems and conflicts in our lives appear bigger than the solutions we carry**.

In every test, we will either choose to partner with God or with the enemy. We will either strengthen our character and faith to walk in our purpose, or we are tempted away from God into bitterness, doubt, anxiety and disappointment.

So, **jealously guard your intimacy with Him**, for **out of that you will understand your destiny**. Let us **choose to listen to Him in the midst of our difficult circumstances, more than to any other voice** of doubt or unbelief.

- **We Have what we need**

2 Peter 1:3 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC)

3 For His divine power has bestowed upon us **all things that [are requisite and suited] to life and godliness, through the [full, personal] knowledge of Him** Who called us by *and* to His own glory and excellence (virtue).

God always gives us the tools beforehand that we need in each test, to pass it. Remember, **nothing surprises God**, which is why **He prepares us for what's ahead**, and **He gives us the tools we need**. So let us **start using them when we come up against a challenge**.

As you become more and more convinced that you are **a person with a great identity and purpose**, you will be **prepared for the moment** you're standing in, knowing that **all of heaven is waiting to back you up for victory** in this moment.

- **All Things work together**

[Romans 8:28 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition](#)

28 We are assured *and* know that [God being a partner in their labor] **all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God** and are called according to [His] design *and* purpose.

So, **God not only prepares us for conflict**, but **He uses every situation to work together, to accomplish His purposes in our lives**.

- **Finished work on the Cross**

He has already won. Our job is to **align ourselves with the reality of the victory of the Cross**, then we can see his purposes around us.

Conclusion: With **this perspective** we will then know that **the test is our assignment**, our privilege and joy, to see impossibilities and problems bend their knees to the name of Jesus.

The safest place for us to be is in His presence and in His will.

Let us **not allow circumstances to distract us from tending and guarding the fire in our hearts**. Let us **strengthen ourselves in the Lord**. Then you can say, **"I am alive to burn for God, and to make Him known in this day."**

Strengthen yourself in the Lord

Lockdown Bible Study Session 12: Thankfulness

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 James 1:21 Romans 1:18-21	1 Timothy 4:1-5 Psalm 100:4 Psalm 28:7-9
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Introduction: The more we gaze on Jesus with the eyes of our heart, the more we see who we are becoming and what our destiny is. So, the more revelation we have of Jesus, the more we will understand our own identity and purpose.

Today we look at **thanksgiving that can disarm the powers of hell.**

[1 Thessalonians 5:16-18](#) New King James Version (NKJV)

16 Rejoice always, **17** pray without ceasing, **18** in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- **Thanksgiving is an act of the will**

Thanksgiving is an act of our own will, to do God's will. We rejoice, pray and thank Him, and that focuses us on God, so we can agree with His truth, no matter what we feel in that moment.

Rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving are tools for strengthening ourselves in the Lord, and are meant to be ongoing in our lives, and not merely for crises and difficulties. So, the things we practice as a lifestyle, equip us for difficulties when they come.

- **Receive with Meekness**

[James 1:21](#) New King James Version (NKJV)

21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Thankfulness carries an attitude of humility. It is the only way to receive what God has given us, because it honors our relationship with Him and shows our trust in His good intentions towards us.

So, let's practice thanksgiving as a lifestyle, because it sets us on a course to knowing God and to finding His plan for our lives.

- **Acknowledge the truth**

Thankfulness acknowledges the truth about our lives, that will set us free to see His greatness in us. When we withhold thanks from God, we actually cut ourselves off from who we are in Him.

- **Futile and darkened minds**

Romans 1:18-21 New King James Version (NKJV)

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **suppress the truth** in unrighteousness, **19** because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. **20** For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, **so that they are without excuse**, **21** because, **although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.**

Paul is saying that **knowing God is not hard**. All you have to do is **glorify Him as God and be thankful**. When we **fail to be thankful, our minds become futile and darkened; we are cut off from our purpose** in Him. **A dark heart is unmoved by things of the Lord, and cannot respond to his love**, which is the very source of life.

Paul instructs us to “**give thanks in everything**”, as thanksgiving keeps us sane and alive, not darkened in our minds.

- **Power of Thankfulness**

Being thankful in times of difficulty and adversity, is even more powerful:

1 Timothy 4:1-5 New King James Version (NKJV)

4 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, **3** forbidding to marry, *and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving* by those who believe and know the truth. **4** For **every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving**; **5** for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Dedication of foods or anything else to idols or demonic spirits, makes it defiled. But Paul says that combining thanksgiving with the Word and prayer is powerful enough to de-authorize this demonic power. Thanksgiving now creates a stronger consecration to the Lord.

This extends to every situation in your life in which you find other powers at work beside the power of God. Thanksgiving can change that.

When we give thanks, the weapon the enemy used to try to dislodge us from our divine purpose, now becomes the very thing that brings us closer to God. Thanksgiving cancels and destroys the very thing the enemy intended to use for our destruction.

- **Thanksgiving is an entry point**

Psalm 100:4 New King James Version

4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

Thanksgiving brings us into the presence of God and connects us with what He is doing and saying in our lives. It helps us **shift our focus on Him**, and that **releases heaven into our circumstances**.

Live in a way that nothing ever gets to be bigger than your consciousness of God's presence in your life. **God is bigger** than that which weighs heavily on your heart. **Other forces easily become the things that influence our lives** and we **begin to live defensively** (meaning protecting ourselves) **instead of offensively** (meaning being on the advance).

When we **stay close to the presence of God through thanksgiving**, we become aware of **His amazing ability to invade the impossible**, and **his radical love and delight in us**.

Conclusion: The wonderful thing is that when we simply begin to give thanks, even when it seems our problems outnumber the blessings, it isn't long before this **focus on His goodness, creates an opening for the Lord's joy!** And it is **the joy of the Lord that is our strength!**

Psalm 28:7-9 New King James Version (NKJV)

**7 The LORD is my strength and my shield;
My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped;
Therefore, my heart greatly rejoices,
And with my song I will praise Him.**

**8 The LORD is their strength,
And He is the saving refuge of His anointed.**

**9 Save Your people,
And bless Your inheritance;
Shepherd them also,
And bear them up forever.**

It is really hard to stay depressed when we're filled with the awareness of God's love and goodness in our lives.

Thanksgiving reminds us of answered prayers. So, when difficulty comes along, we have a long list of blessings to bring into His presence.

When we learn to live in this place, nothing can deflect us from our purpose.

From heaven's point of view, it is good to give thanks "in everything"! This will build strength into our lives.

Strengthen yourself in the Lord

Lockdown Bible Study Session 13: Praise and Worship

Psalm 33:3 Psalm 47:1 Psalm 149:3 Zephaniah 3:17 Psalm 9:2	Hebrews 11:4 Psalm 2:11 Psalm 22:3 Isaiah 42:12-13 Romans 12:1
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Introduction: Yesterday we spoke about thanksgiving that keeps us close to the presence of God. Paul told us to “give thanks in everything”, which changes our perspective and makes us aware of God's amazing ability to invade the impossible.

Our identity as believers is primarily to be worshippers of the Lord. And everything in our lives should be an overflow of that first ministry to the Lord.

- **Biblical pattern of worship**

The definition and description of praise and worship in the Psalms, is a physical expression, like dancing, shouting, clapping, and making a joyful noise with singing and instruments.

Psalm 33:3 New King James Version (NKJV)

3 Sing to Him a new song;

Play skillfully with a shout of joy.

Psalm 47:1 New King James Version (NKJV)

47 Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples!

Shout to God with the voice of triumph!

Psalm 149:3 New King James Version (NKJV)

3 Let them praise His name with the dance;

Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp

- **Not Pleasing to the Flesh**

Many may feel awkward at such displays, or could see them as silly and childish. But, God commanded us to do it, and He also put into our new nature and personality in Christ, the ability to show our love for God this way.

Praise isn't pleasing to the flesh, and that is one reason why praise is so powerful in removing oppression. Praise, with rejoicing, will cancel the agreement with the enemy, who wants to keep us in a place of despair and darkness. Praise should become our default position when we feel ourselves slide into the fog of confusion or depression.

Put some worship music on and find a private place to shout or even dance before Lord, bringing your soul and even your body into submission to the purposes of God.

- **The Intensity of our Praise**

The intensity of our praise should be equal in proportion to the size and intensity of the circumstances we face. You will come to understand that the issues we fight isn't just external; it is inside you!

So, focusing on yourself instead of on the greatness of God in your life, is actually agreeing with the enemy, saying your problems are bigger than God's promises.

To break that agreement with the enemy, we need to repent and feed our minds with the truth of God's nature and power. This brings us into agreement with heaven, and the reality will start to show in our lives. Then through praise and worship we line our bodies up with what the Word says, brings our whole being into agreement with the truth.

Physical obedience brings spiritual breakthrough! Right actions will release right emotions and a right spirit. Spiritual matters have nothing to do with feelings.

- **The reason why?**

Why does God want these radical expressions of singing, dancing, shouting and leaping, more than silent, awed reverence? Well His very actions and thoughts towards us are extravagant expressions of His love, kindness and goodness.

He delights in us, so He wants us to delight in Him. He rejoices over us with singing, so He want us to rejoice in Him with singing. When we give to Him what He gives to us, we step into a deeper relationship with Him

[Zephaniah 3:17](#) New King James Version (NKJV)

17 The LORD your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet *you* with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing.

When we do what He is doing, we align our bodies as well as our spirits and souls with Him, and there is a release of his nature that flows into us in that place of intimacy.

[Psalm 9:2](#) New King James Version (NKJV)

2 I will be **glad and rejoice in You;**
I will sing **praise to Your name, O Most High.**

To **praise effectively**, we must rejoice, with our body, soul and spirit in an expression of celebration. Let's make it a lifestyle.

- **Parise will cost you something**

Firstly, **praise should cost us something**. It is **the proper response to the God** who has **given us the costly gift of His own Son**. We **step beyond what is convenient** and **beyond all the pressures and stresses we are facing**.

- **Praise requires Faith**

[Hebrews 11:4 New King James Version \(NKJV\)](#)

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

And secondly, a **sacrifice of praise should always require faith**. It certainly **requires faith** to rejoice **when that's the last thing you feel like doing** in the face of your present circumstances. **Praise agrees with God's perspective** on our situation.

- **We are the Sacrifice**

[Psalm 2:11 New King James Version \(NKJV\)](#)

11 Serve the LORD **with fear**,
And **rejoice with trembling**.

Sometimes, **there are no feelings to start with**, but **we need to obey**, to **take that step and rejoice**. **Thanksgiving and praise reconnect us to our primary purpose – to minister to Him in worship**. In worship, **the sacrifice is no longer just a physical expression or verbal declarations**, but **WE ARE the sacrifice**.

When **we are the sacrifice**, we cannot help but be changed! We **can't look at Him and then look back at our circumstances with the same perspective**, because **when we enter His glory**, we will be receiving a measure of His grace and strength.

- **New Perspective**

In order to give God praise, we have to **renew our perspective and ignore the problems** around us or in us. That is **not irresponsible**. If we **keep thinking about the problem, trying to find a solution**, we are **being drawn away from the Lord**, and we let other voices speak louder than His, and **that is actually irresponsible!**

We need to learn to ignore the problems just enough so they don't become a threat to the affections of our hearts. That does not mean we are **not giving attention to problems** – it means we are addressing them from **God's perspective**.

- **God fights for us**

Psalm 22:3 New King James Version (NKJV)

3 But You *are* holy,
Enthroned in the praises of Israel.

Our **praises actually enthrone the King**, and **release the reality of His Kingdom**, in our circumstances. And **where the King sits on His throne**, He **always destroys the kingdom of darkness**.

Isaiah 42:12-13 New King James Version (NKJV)

12 Let them give glory to the LORD,
And declare His praise in the coastlands.
13 **The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man;**
He shall stir up *His* zeal like a man of war.
He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud;
He shall prevail against His enemies.

It is saying that **while Israel is celebrating and praising God**, he is taking it upon Himself to go out and destroy their enemies.

- **Worship is Giving**

Let our **primary focus not be on getting, but on giving**. Times of difficulty give us the opportunity to **demonstrate sacrificial love** to Him **by ministering to Him**, instead of attending to our present needs.

So, take time each day, to look past the problems and needs around you, long enough to give God an extravagant expression of praise and rejoicing. He is the greatest blessing of all! God is in a good mood. If we hang around him, his joy is bound to rub off!

- **Body Knows it's Creator**

Our **body knows its Creator**, so we should allow our body to worship the Lord. We have been limiting our body in worship, and our brain has been the master of our body for too long. So, let's release our body to praise and worship its Creator.

Romans 12:1 New King James Version (NKJV)

12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God**, *which is* your reasonable service.

It means we **literally use our bodies as a means to glorify and praise and worship Him** – as our “**spiritual act of worship**” we **worship with dancing and singing and movement**, engaging our whole being.

Conclusion: **Our ministry to him is giving ourselves fully to him**, and we find **we walk away with that aroma of His presence** and glory, and **our difficulties seem smaller, as we now see them from heaven's point of view.**

He is worthy of our praise, and **He Himself will defeat our enemies** while we minister to Him.

Strengthen yourself in the Lord

Lockdown Bible Study Session 14: Make war with Prophecies and Rhema words

2 Peter 1:4 1 Timothy 1:18 Mark 7:13 Joshua 1:8	Romans 10:17 Hebrews 11:32-33 Matthew 4:4
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Introduction: We spoke about **praising God with our whole being** in difficult circumstances. We said that **our primary ministry is giving ourselves fully to him in praise and worship**, and we find we **walk away with the aroma of His presence** and glory. **Then our difficulties also seem smaller**, as we **now see them from heaven's point of view**.

Today we want to speak about **learning how God's words over our lives, can completely cancel our old beliefs** about who we are.

- **Begins with Prophetic Word**

Looking at **David** again - his **destiny to be king did not begin with his ascent to the throne**, but it **began with God's declaration of that destiny** through the prophet Samuel.

That is **what he held onto**. When he was in the wilderness, there must have been days when the **only thing he had to go on was the memory of what Samuel said**.

Like Abraham, David also **“considered God faithful who had made the promise”** (See **Hebrews 11:11**)

- **Promises received**

2 Peter 1:4 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition (AMPC)

4 By means of these He has **bestowed on us His precious and exceedingly great promises**, so that **through them** you may escape [by flight] from the moral decay (rottenness and corruption) that is in the world because of covetousness (lust and greed), and **become sharers (partakers) of the divine nature**.

When we are born again, we inherit every promise of God for the believer. **Through these “very great and precious promises”, we may “participate in the divine nature.”** These promises **unlock our potential to become like Christ**.

These promises must be spoken over our lives. These promises **may have come to you** through another person **prophesying** it over you, or through an **anointed prayer**, or a **passage of Scripture**, a **dream or vision**, or the **still small voice of the Spirit**. Yet for it to have its way in us we must believe those promises.

The freshly spoken word from God contains its own ability to perform it but we activate the promise received by simply receiving the Word as truth. Your faith in the promise must then be tested and proven.

- **War with Prophecies**

1 Timothy 1:18 New King James Version (NKJV)

18 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.

So, when the Holy Spirit declares a promise into your account, He has also put a weapon into your arsenal. This means that we will often have to fight for that Word against the enemy, who will try to steal it from you. The only way to see the promises fulfilled, is to refuse anything other than what God has said.

- **Making the Word of no effect**

Mark 7:13 New King James Version (NKJV)

13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

The most powerful thing in the universe, the Word of God, can be made powerless by us. We can shut off our access to that power by choosing religion, our own thoughts, or tradition, as more important than what God has said.

- **Agreement with the Word**

We have to constantly train our minds to think in agreement with that Word, which means that we have to remind ourselves of those promises often. We must learn to meditate on them.

Joshua 1:8 New King James Version (NKJV)

8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

One of the Hebrew words for “meditate” is to “mutter”, so it means saying the words God has said, out loud, like a mutter. The verse says that when we do this, we are actually making our way prosperous.

We can't afford to have thoughts in our heads about ourselves that God doesn't have for us. We have to continually train our minds to think of ourselves in agreement with what God says about us. Declare that Rhema word that God spoke over your life, often.

Romans 10:17 New King James Version (NKJV)

17 So then **faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

Hebrews 11:32-33 New King James Version (NKJV)

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who **through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.**

When we believe these promises, the Holy Spirit will transfer even more of them to us, as we have an ongoing relationship with Him.

Matthew 4:4 New King James Version (NKJV)

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'

Conclusion: When we **take what we hear and meditate on it, training our thinking, our affections, our behavior, it becomes a word remaining/abiding in us. This word that resonates with the voice of the Spirit, creates life.**

Likewise, **when we fail to listen to and live by that Word, we cut ourselves off from life.** So, let us **write down the prophetic words and promises spoken over our lives. Let Him breathe on them, so that they become life to you.**

Review them often. And listen to the voice of the Spirit to take the words in the Bible and deposit them into your heart as a personal living Rhema word to you. Receive it, write it down, meditate on it, declare it over your life, and let it draw you into your eternal purpose.

Strengthen yourself in the Lord

Lockdown Bible Study Session 15: Do not Focus on your Weaknesses

Introduction: The last time we spoke about **writing down the prophetic words and promises spoken over our lives**. And we were **encouraged to listen to the voice of the Spirit**, to deposit the words in the Bible into your heart as a **living Rhema word** to you. **Meditate on it, declare it over your life**, and let it draw you into your eternal purpose. This word that **resonates with the voice of the Spirit, creates life**.

Today we look at how we are to **walk in victory, when we still see defeat in our lives**.

- **Skewed Perspectives**

Sometimes we may **see areas of sin or weakness in us**, and we **convince ourselves that we are hopeless cases**. We might also **feel that we need to weep over the fact that we don't measure up** to God's standard, and **that weeping is a sign of conviction and repentance**. We think that **holiness is something usually associated with somberness and tears**.

[Nehemiah 8:9-12 New King James Version](#)

9 And Nehemiah, who *was* the governor, Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day *is* holy to the LORD your God; **do not mourn nor weep.**" For all the people **wept, when they heard the words** of the Law. **10** Then he said to them, "**Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength*.**" **11** So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day *is* holy; do not be grieved." **12** And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.

The priest **read God's Word publicly** and Israel **realized that they fell far short of what God required** of them, and **began to weep**. But Israel was told, **this day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep**. Instead, they were told, go and **enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared**. This **day is holy to our Lord**. Do not grieve, for **the joy of the Lord is your strength**.

- **Godly Sorrow**

[2 Corinthians 7:10 New King James Version](#)

10 For **godly sorrow produces repentance *leading to salvation***, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

There is a place for tears, as we also read that godly sorrow leads us to repentance. But when we have a **wrong view of God** as **a legalistic father**, who is **unhappy with our every move, we distort** what was **supposed to lead us to a life-changing encounter** with Him.

- **The Fullness of Grace**

We should understand the fullness of His grace. **Grace does not only forgive our sin, but empowers us to live like Him.** If we **don't understand this, the accuser, the devil, will convince us that because of areas of sin or weakness, we are hopeless cases.**

The **problem is not our weaknesses, but how we respond to God.** If we are **focusing on our weaknesses more than on God's answers,** it should be a clear **sign that we are really dealing with condemnation.** So, **focus on God's answers.**

The **Holy Spirit's conviction,** on the other hand **will turn our focus away from our sin** and our limitations, and **will draw us to Him and allow His grace to change our lives.** **Conviction is a turning towards while condemnations is a turning away from.** The **convictions of the Holy Spirit** are actually a **call to turn our focus away from our sin and put it on Him.**

- **Exposing Weaknesses**

We must remember that the real **tests do not challenge our strengths, but they expose our weaknesses.** Most of the **warfare we deal with in the Christian life is really internal.**

Remember: **When our weaknesses are exposed; God has already given us the tools we need to overcome them.**

- **The Joy of the Lord**

The joy of the Lord is our strength. It is **the Lord's joy that gives us the strength needed to step toward Him** and our future **despite our weaknesses.**

- **Give what you already received**

Strengthening ourselves is about being prepared to receive and **give out what we have received.** With our **eyes off ourselves, we walk by faith.**

At **Pentecost in Acts** the disciples all joined together **constantly in prayer, in constant readiness for the promise of the Holy Spirit.** They **did not go about business as usual, but stayed in one place and continued in prayer.** Their **persistent prayer of faith** for the promise of the Holy Spirit, **prepared them to receive it.**

Now for those who are born-again the **Holy Spirit came to dwell within us, equipping us with the same Christ-anointing** Jesus had. This was **in order to release Heaven's answer's to earth's problems.**

The question is; **how do we use what God has given us? Increase comes to those who are faithful with what they've been given.** So, focus on what you already have received instead of focusing on your weaknesses.

- **The desire of your Heart**

When God gives us a glimpse into His future for us, we must **peruse it with all our hearts.**

It is like Hannah, who wanted the very thing that her barrenness prevented her from having – a child. But instead of giving in to bitterness and disappointment, she cried out to the Lord. In her cry of faith, even before God answered, she resolved to set apart her desired son completely to the Lord. We must also be so consumed by our desire that we lose all consciousness of what others think of us.

We don't know however, how long we need to keep praying in expectation for the promise to be fulfilled. Our hearts must be set in the pursuit of the promise and each day will bring us closer to God's breakthrough. Let's set our hearts on the end goal, and not on our weaknesses.

Conclusion:

Let's not despise the day of small beginnings. Remember: No one else can possess my promises. Only as I step out to do the supernatural things, He has asked of me, can I appropriate the supernatural power He's already given me to achieve these impossible tasks.

Refuse to let circumstances and areas of personal weakness determine your level of faith and passion, and you will discover the secret of victory in every situation. The Holy Spirit has already been poured out into our lives, and Jesus promised that rivers of living water would flow from our hearts.

[John 7:38 New King James Version \(NKJV\)](#)

38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, **out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**”

Despite the barren areas of our lives, the areas of great disappointment, we need to step out in faith. He will draw the springs of life from our own hearts, and by His Spirit, the rivers will begin to flow.

So, take your focus off your weaknesses, and instead of paralyzing condemnation, choose to rejoice in him and his promises. Focus on the Spirit of life within you. Believe and hold onto His promises. Step out in faith. Then you will see the breakthroughs you long for, and heaven will begin to invade your earthly life.