

Lesson Six

Engaging Our Strength

As we come to the close of our study, I pray you have been encouraged by the Lord's invitation to know and love Him more through the study of His Word. I pray you have been challenged to engage your mind as you seek to understand God and His ways. I pray you have been encouraged to engage your heart and your soul as you seek to love Him more and to allow Him to stir your affection for Him on the pages of the Bible. And finally, today, I pray you will be encouraged to engage your strength—your might—as you seek to cooperate with the work of God in your life.

STRONG IN HIS STRENGTH

If we rely exclusively on our own strength to do the will of God, then we will fail. But if we learn to apply our strength as we cooperate with the work of Christ in our lives, then we will learn to walk confidently and securely in the power His Spirit supplies.

1. What is the invitation in Ephesians 6:10-11?
2. Consider what we discussed in our last session together. What do you think it means to be strong *in the Lord*?

THE OLD COVENANT: THE LAW

Under the Old Covenant, God gave His people the Law as instruction for how to live. It was up to them to keep the Law, to uphold the commands of God by their own strength.

3. In Mark 12:30, Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy 6:5. Write out Deuteronomy 6:5 in the space below.
4. What else did the Law command as it was continued through Deuteronomy 6:6-7?

5. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34.

- From verse 32, how does God summarize or describe the Israelites' ability to keep the Old Covenant?
- How would the New Covenant differ from the Old Covenant?

THE NEW COVENANT: THE HOLY SPIRIT

Under the New Covenant, God has written His Law in our hearts. And this is not just an instructive list of do's and don't's. Rather, God has poured out His Holy Spirit within our hearts to teach us and to empower us to walk in His ways.

6. Read the following verses and record the ways that the Holy Spirit guides, instructs, and empowers us:

- John 14:15-17
- John 16:8-11
- John 16:12-15
- Romans 8:26
- 1 Corinthians 12:3
- Galatians 4:6
- Acts 1:6-8
- Hebrews 2:4

In our session together, we discussed the reality that there is a balance between allowing God to do His work in and through us and cooperating with Him in that work. We are completely dependent on God's strength to transform and empower us. We are also called to cooperate with the work of God in our lives as we seek and follow Him.

7. Read James 1:22-25. How does James say we are to respond to the truths that God reveals in His Word?

We aren't just to read the Bible and intellectually agree that the ways of God are right. We're to actively pursue a life that aligns with the will, ways, and character of God. That means that as we read and study His Word, we will recognize places in our own lives where we are living outside of His ways. When we do, we are to repent—to turn from our ways and to turn back to the Lord.

8. Consider Ephesians 4:17-32.

- What does Paul instruct believers in Christ to do in verses 22-24?
- Recall that John 16:8 tells us that one role of the Holy Spirit is to convict us of sin. As you reflect on Ephesians 4:17-32, ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of any area in your life that does not align with God's ways as they are revealed in this passage.
- If something comes to mind, ask the Lord to forgive you.
- Now take it a step further—ask the Spirit to empower you to walk differently, to transform your heart by His strength as you seek to walk in His ways.

This is one way that we apply our own strength to the study of Scripture: We yield our will to Christ's will and ask Him to strengthen us to walk according to the *will* of God, filled with the *power* of God, which is poured out through the *Spirit* of God!

WRAP UP

We considered Moses' cooperation with the Lord as he stood on the shore of the Red Sea in Exodus 14:10-31. Reread that story now.

9. In this passage, what could only have been accomplished by God's power?

10. How did Moses cooperate with the work of God? How did Moses apply his own strength?

11. Where do you currently find yourself in a situation where you could be completely reliant on God to do His work and exercise His power? What do you need Him to do?

12. How might God be calling you to apply your own strength as you cooperate with Him in that work?

Thank you for the privilege of studying Scripture with you. I pray we would not be satisfied by anything less than God Himself.

May we apply our minds to *know* Him and submit our hearts to *love* Him.

May we yield our souls to be transformed by His Spirit.

May we use our strength to find His power.

May we rely on Christ alone—and find Him faithful to do far more than we could have imagined.

"For this reason I kneel before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. I pray that he may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us -- to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

Ephesians 3:14-21