

8 Steps to keep your spirit in shape

Single Message

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“Scripture quotations taken from the Amplified Bible.”

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It's easy to get lazy about spiritual things.

Have you ever noticed that? It's easy to get so preoccupied with the day-to-day business of life that you let the truths you've received from God slip away.

You don't have to jump into some kind of major sin to lose ground spiritually. You don't even have to get rebellious. All you have to do is nothing!

It's easy. It is also dangerous.

The truth is, it's usually not the great revelations you haven't heard yet that are causing you to be defeated in certain areas of your life. It's failing to live by the things you know.

If you want to live in victory, you have to keep yourself spiritually active. You have to keep feeding your spirit with the Word of God. You have to continually be filled with the Holy Spirit.

That's right, continually filled. It's not enough to get baptized in the Holy Ghost once and expect that one experience to keep you on fire for Jesus the rest of your life. That's why in Ephesians 5:18, the Apostle Paul says, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." In the Greek, that phrase says literally "be being filled with the Holy Spirit."

Be filled. Keep yourself overflowing. Sounds like a tall order, doesn't it?

It is, but in the book of 2 Timothy, Paul tells us how we can accomplish it. He outlines some very important steps that will keep us moving forward in the overcoming power of God.

1. Be strong in grace.

First of all, Paul instructs us to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:1). What is grace and what does it do? Titus 2:11-12 tells us, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

Grace teaches us. It teaches us how to live in freedom in this world.

Whenever the Spirit of God corrects you, whenever He points out a mistake you're making or speaks to you about something you're doing that is grieving Him, don't be mad. Be glad! It's the grace of God teaching you something to make your life better.

Grow strong in that grace by spending time every day in prayer. Live each day expecting the Spirit of God to

counsel and instruct you about the things in your life-big and small.

Expect to hear from Him. If you don't, you won't be listening for Him. And if you're not listening for Him, you're not likely to hear Him because He speaks in a still, small voice. His words are quiet words. They're not overwhelming words. If you don't have a spiritual ear tuned to heaven, you'll miss them.

So, every morning of your life spend time praying in the spirit, talking to the Father and reminding yourself the Holy Ghost is inside you, constantly teaching and guiding you. Become strong in the grace of God.

2. Endure hardness.

Next, Paul said, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:3). In other words, get tough.

Tests and trials will come your way in this life. Don't falter and quit when they do. Don't put down your shield of faith.

Instead, when the enemy puts pressure on you, get more aggressive with your faith than ever. Do more-not less. Spend more time in prayer, more time in the Word. Speak twice as many words of victory!

When hardship comes, endure it. Stand on your faith. And refuse to let the devil talk you out of believing God's Word.

3. Don't get entangled.

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:4).

You and I have been called to live the high life in Christ Jesus, not to be tied down to this natural realm. But all too often we allow ourselves to become tangled in the temporary affairs of this world instead. We allow those entanglements to drag us into defeat.

Don't let that happen to you. Simplify your life. If you don't have time for God, make time. Don't let your career, your family or anything else keep you from going on with God.

One thing I can promise you: Every part of your life will be more blessed if you take time to listen to God. There is nothing you can do that is better than hearing from heaven.

Before I consider taking on any new activity, I always ask myself, “Can I afford it?” Not can I afford it financially, but can I afford it spiritually? Can I give time to this activity and still keep my priority time with God? If not, I can't afford it.

There's only one thing you absolutely can't afford to do without-and that's your time spent in prayer and in the Word of God. It is your very life. It is where your victory lies. You may forget that, but Satan never does. He'll constantly be sending time-stealers your way. So be alert and don't get entangled in them. Make the time you spend with God your first priority every day.

4. Remember the Resurrection.

“Constantly keep in mind Jesus Christ, the Messiah, [as] risen from the dead...” (2 Timothy 2:8, The Amplified Bible).

When the devil starts telling you you’re defeated, turn the tables on him and say, “You’ve got that wrong, devil. I’m not defeated, you’re defeated. My faith is in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Satan can’t whip you if you keep in mind Christ Jesus is risen from the dead. So, never let yourself lose sight of Him. Continually remind yourself that the power Satan couldn’t keep in the grave is the very power that is operating inside you right now. If you’ll do that, the devil will never get the best of you.

5. Study the Word.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

Never quit studying God’s Word. Whenever you stop growing in spiritual revelation, you begin to lose what you’ve already received. It dwindles away on the inside of you.

Have you ever noticed that some people seem to live on a spiritual roller coaster? One day they’re on top of the world, excited about the Word, and full of faith...the next day they’re in a valley of discouragement. Don’t be like that. Instead, get up on the crest of the wave and stay there all the time.

Continual study of the Word of God will enable you to do that. It will keep you steady and consistent in your walk

with God because it will constantly feed your faith and keep you strong.

6. Avoid arguments.

“Avoid all empty (vain, useless, idle) talk, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness” (2 Timothy 2:16, The Amplified Bible).

Here Paul specifically cites the case of two men arguing over the Resurrection. Those kinds of useless arguments actually undermine faith and Paul warns us to stay away from them.

Don't get into conflicts with other believers over doctrine. Instead, fellowship with them over the fact Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and is Lord of the universe. If you can't agree on anything else, rejoice in that.

Don't argue with people. Just love them.

7. Fellowship with the faithful.

“Shun youthful lusts and flee from them, and aim at and pursue righteousness...faith, love, [and] peace...in fellowship with all who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22, The Amplified Bible).

If you want to live in victory, you need to fellowship with people who know God. Don't try to fellowship with the world and live like an overcomer. It won't work.

We get strength from one another. We also get weakness from one another. If you want to grow strong, find someone who is stronger in the Lord than you are and fellowship with them. They'll bring you up.

On the other hand, if you fellowship with people who don't live for God and trust His Word, they'll bring you

down. Don't go to a church, for example, where people tell you healing has passed away and then try to live in divine health. You can't do it.

Listen to me now. Your very life depends on whom you fellowship with and where you go to church. Fellowship with people who are strong and walk in power, who preach God's Word and get results when they pray. You'll end up living on a much higher plane.

8. Keep on keeping on.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Timothy 3:14).

The only way the devil can actually defeat you is by convincing you to quit. So, don't let him do it.

When Satan comes to knock you down and steal your hope and faith in the Word of God, don't let them go. Hang on. Continue to do the things you know to do. Keep on keeping on!

Remember this. All it takes to lose your grip on the power of God is to get lazy in spiritual things. You don't have to do anything dramatic-all you have to do is nothing.

So beware of taking it easy in the days ahead. Now is not the time to be a spiritual couch potato. It's time to move onward and upward in the overcoming power of God!