

BE STRONG IN THE LORD!

A big part of my life was lived under the bondage of fear, shame and anger as a child of abuse and left to my own devices; I set in place some destructive behaviors. Throughout my childhood, youth and young adult life they appeared to be helpful; my anger to protect myself, the manipulation to keep people at arms distance, and the *tell tell* lies that I used to gain what I thought would make me happy. But, sad to say, these behaviors that I thought were designed to protect me were instead used by the great deceiver Satan, with clever intent to destroy me. His work in the lives of abused and hurting people is devious, subtle, and often not detected until untold suffering and damage is done.

So much of my life was a struggle. A dark cloud seemed to hang over my life; it followed me everywhere I went. I felt trapped by feelings of abandonment and betrayal. Severe hopelessness and chronic loneliness kept me paralyzed and *despair* was my middle name. Now add to all that the daily self-doubt and a persistent sense of overwhelming inferiority and it's not hard to tell where I was heading; that dark cloud over my head was ever pushing me toward the pit of hell. And yet in my heart of hearts I was silently crying out—*how do I escape—who can set me free?*

Then one Sunday morning, in a little wooden Pentecostal church in Central Point, Oregon, I answered the call to come forward and I asked Jesus to come into my heart. My life from the moment I said, *Jesus, I am a terrible person; a sinner. I am full of anger and hate, and I don't understand how You could love me, but this pastor is saying that you came to earth for such as I, and if that be true, then I open my heart to you right now and I welcome you in.* (Luke 19:10)

Since the day of my salvation when the Lord came into my heart, we have been working on casting out the old destructive behaviors and setting positives ones in their place. I thank the Lord that I am strong and able to do all that is in His will for me to do as I walk in His wisdom and His strength. I know that I can now reject Satan's accusations that I am hopelessly weak and defeated. I love the fact that I am now an OVERCOMER in my Lord. John 16:33 gives us this hope—*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but **be of good cheer**, I have overcome the world.* Therefore, even in the midst of persecution there is joyful peace in the certainty of Christ's victory. In Jesus, we are overcomers too. We will be strong in the Lord!

I continue to reject Satan's lies of deception that I have lost my peace, and lost my joy and that my life is rendered void, empty and without power. I choose to see myself as God sees me, and I choose to focus my attention upon the awesome majesty, power, and sovereign greatness of my heavenly Father, who can do anything but fail. Help me Lord Jesus to remember that I am an heir with God, and a joint

heir with You. Therefore, I am more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37) in everything that I attempt to accomplish according to Your will for my life.

What a joy it is to be able to freely say the words—*I am bought and paid for with the blood of Christ. Jesus lovingly and willingly paid the price and He gave me new life. Therefore, I no longer have to fear the enemy, but instead I will take authority over the enemy of my soul. I am freed, by the work Jesus completed upon the cross and I will remind Satan of that precious truth every time he rears his head in my direction. He doesn't own me any long. He cannot rule over my life. I belong forever to my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. My truth is now—Whom the Son shall set free is free indeed* (John 8:36).

As we turn our life over to Jesus and become partners with Him we learn to take authority over our thought life. We learn to walk according to His leading; and not carrying on our warfare according to the flesh, using mere human weapons. The Bible tells us that the weapons of our warfare are not physical, but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of stronghold. We can reject, refute arguments, lies, false reasoning, deception and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the (true) knowledge of God; and we can take every thought and purpose captive into the obedience of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but might in God for pulling down stronghold, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

As we reflect over our past, grief and negative thoughts/feelings can fill our hearts and if we are not settled, rooted, in right relationship with God. We can get into the “*If onlys*”, or “*I wish I had of*”, or “*I could have, should have, needed to*” mentality, and the enemy is right there to try and take us down that old familiar road. Don't let the enemy take you there. Stand strong in the Lord, for He has released you from that road of darkness. The *poor me* road is one that I do not choose to walk upon ever again. It is filled with lies, pain, sorrow, hurts, condemnations, past failures and etc. and that is not my life now.

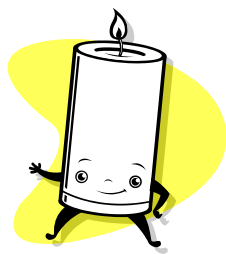
As children of God, let us recognize that it is chiefly our own sin and failure that has brought us to the severe trials and testing that we go through. We ask that the Holy Spirit alert us to watch for the fiery darts and to apply 1 John 1:9 to all sins, that we may confess, repent and receive God's forgiveness as we are cleansed in the blood of Jesus. We will take back all ground that we have given to Satan by our sins and transgressions as the Holy Spirit reveals each weakness to us. We will not allow our minds to wander out of the presence of God. Let us remember that the sufferings of this present life are not worth being

compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us and conferred on us. One of the most wonderful promises of the Bible is that when Jesus returns, he will wipe away pain and suffering; there will be no cause for grief or tears. In God's kingdom there is no hurting or mourning or tears. In His kingdom, He will comfort us, wipe away our tears, and heal our deepest wounds. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy* Psalm 126:5.

PRAYER

Help me Father, each day, to stand in the Lord; to be invincibly strong in my spiritual warfare. Help me to pray before I act, to resist the enemy and to take authority over him at all times. Help me to be open to the ministry of others in my life. Help me to maintain relationships at all cost, that I may build up the kingdom of God, not tear it down. Help me to stand strong in my faith. Help me to not waver or lose sight of Your vision and plans for my life. You are my confidence, my salvation, my strength and my maturity.

I will use the Bible not as a book, but as a powerful sword. I will exercise the power of the Holy Spirit that gives me the ability to carry out authority. I declare the blood of Jesus to bring defeat to the enemy in each and every situation I encounter. The word of my testimony is a declaration of the great acts and character of God. I proclaim the mighty heart and deeds of God. I proclaim the positive truths of God's Word, and they shall shatter the intimidation and accusations of the enemy. I declare His steadfast love, His faithfulness, His righteousness as mine. I declare myself a child of God, born of the Spirit of God, filled with the Spirit of God and led by the Spirit of God. I confidently and boldly say that my heart is fixed and established on the solid foundation—the living Word of God. Amen!



My spirit is the candle of the Lord, and He will direct my paths.