

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Increasing in Strength

(Michael Baker)

**W**e live in a society that desires more strength. People sometimes will do whatever it takes to achieve greater strength physically, mentally, and emotionally. That's not always a bad thing either to show that kind of dedication for self-improvement. Those who are strong are the most likely to survive the trials in this life. Those who are strong are also able to achieve greater things. We should see the need to increase in a certain kind of strength. *Acts 9:22* says “*Saul increased all the more in strength...*” What kind of strength was Saul augmenting himself in? It wasn't any of the three we listed above, but rather it was spiritual strength. In the same way he grew stronger in spiritual things, let us consider how we can grow in spiritual things.

To increase in strength spiritually we must grow in knowledge. The basic principles regarding spiritual things all have to start with God. Jesus says in *John 17:3* that eternal life comes through knowing the “*only true God.*” He is the only one we need to be looking toward for spiritual strength. But how is it that we can find out more about Him and gain strength? His Word has been revealed to us and specifically tells

us of His love, character, and demands. Simply reading His Words will not be enough to become stronger. We must develop in the Word of God so that we are able to discern the situations we are in. *Hebrews 5:12-14* reveals some Jewish Christians who had not grown as they needed to. They had to be reminded of what had been taught before so they could grow properly and then “*discern both good and evil.*” When we grow in the Word of God it will provide us spiritual nourishment so we can know what we need to do. But if action is lacking, then it will have been for nothing.

To increase in strength spiritually, we must also grow in practice. No weightlifter ever went to the gym one day, and then expected to see massive improvement the next. Paul said in *Phil. 2:9-11* that he prayed that this church would continue to in “*knowledge and all discernment*” They needed to continue seeing what was right and wrong. There were no immediate results from only discerning good and evil on one occasion. We must continue growing in faith and love as we are “*remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love...*” in *1 Thess. 1:3*. By discerning what is good and evil we will strive to do what is good

according to God's Word. By conditioning ourselves spiritually through our good works we will see spiritual growth.

If we desire to increase in strength, we must also grow in the enjoyment of spiritual things. Many folks who train and go through different process to gain strength of different nature do not always enjoy the process. But with spiritual strength it is very different. We should always “*rejoice in the Lord always... Phil. 4:4*” because we can be saved by God's mercy. While working to grow in spiritual strength is by far more difficult with its trials, it is also the most rewarding goal.

This is how we can grow in strength spiritually. We must desire for it. We must work for it. Let us strive to grow in the knowledge of God's Word, and put it into practice by discerning good and evil. By discerning what is good for gaining spiritual strength we will not shy away from doing good works for our brethren. Let us also realize we can only gain strength spiritually by focusing on God and rejoicing in the fact we can be saved. The reward of being with God forever is worth the process, hard work, and dedication to a spiritual strength.