
Secrets to Staying Spiritually Strong *(2 Corinthians 4:16-18)*

The key to the believer's spiritual stability is his personal relationship with the Lord (John 5:4-5; Rom. 8:16; Eph. 3:16; Col. 2:7). Spiritual stability comes as believers learn to endure their trials and difficulties (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Job 5:7; 14:1; Romans 12:12; 2 Cor. 7:4; 2 Tim. 2:3). In spite of the severity of His pain and suffering (1 Cor. 4:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:4-10; 11:23-27) Paul was able to endure them. He never complained and he never abandoned his ministry. And he shares three reasons for staying spiritually strong.

1. When we learn to value _____

The term “outward man” refers to the *body* and the “inward man” refers to the *soul*. Paul was aware that his body is aging and weakening but he was more concerned with the growth and maturity of his soul (Matt. 16:26) because his soul is who he truly is (Col. 3:10; Eph. 3:16). ***God uses the trials in your physical life to lead you to spiritual growth*** (1 Peter 5:10).

2. When we learn to value _____

Instead of crushing Paul down, defeating and discouraging him and working against him, Paul's afflictions worked for him (2 Cor. 4:17). As he puts all his afflictions, sufferings, pains, and troubles on one side, he saw that his eternal glory and reward outweighed all these (Rom. 8:18). Paul saw beyond the present pain and hardships of life. He saw his future rewards (Matt. 5:11-12; 1 Peter 4:13) that it was far beyond all comparison.

3. When we learn to value _____

Our endurance depends on how we view things and situations. We must learn not to fix our eyes on the things which are seen but on the things that are not seen. And the only way we can focus our eyes on what you cannot see is when we look at the invisible with the eyes of faith (Heb. 11:1,10, 13-14,27).

We are all simply earthen vessels, jars of clay (2 Cor. 4:7). But we carry in us the most precious treasure - the brightness of the glory of God in Christ (v.6). The most brilliant, glorious and precious gift that God could give anyone is held in jars of clay in order that God's splendor will all the more be apparent through poor, unworthy vessels like us. So when faced with difficulties, we can only endure because of God's work in us and through us (Phil. 2:13).

Personal Reflection

- What struggles, trials and hardships am I going through right now? Do I see God being involved in all these?

- Do I believe that as much as God cares for my (temporal) physical body, that He cares even much more for my (eternal) spiritual welfare?

- By God's grace, I will focus my life to the things that have eternal value (things that matter most and things that would last) like:
