

Strengthen Yourself In The Lord: Points to Ponder

Week 3

Hi friends, here are some points to meditate on this coming week. Please don't rush through them. Partner with Holy Spirit as you honestly answer each question. Maybe consider only answering 1 or 2 questions a day. This is where non-judgemental self-awareness is crucial. To be honest with yourself and God about what your thoughts, feelings and beliefs really are, is an incredibly empowering step to becoming the strong, courageous, powerful, loving and free person you were designed to be:

1. 1 Thess 5:16-18 is such a great scripture: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is **the will of God** in Christ Jesus for you."

A couple of things stand out in statement. Firstly its important to note that rejoicing, praying and thanking God **always and in everything** has to do with our heart posture. So, the will of God is focused here on what we do to **position our hearts** in relationship to Him **at all times, and in all circumstances**. How truly intentional are you about keeping your heart postured before God, in both good and bad times? Is it something you do as a regular practice?

2. "If you want to discover the ability of thankfulness to bring you strength in difficulty, you need to keep taking an inventory of God's gifts in your life... (so that you are) filled with the awareness of the love and goodness of God that surrounds and infuses your life... There is a level of life we can reach where we practice thanksgiving as a lifestyle... When difficulty comes along, we have a huge inventory of blessings instantly accessible to bring us into His presence... The things we practice as lifestyle equip us for difficulties." Is thanksgiving something you practice as a lifestyle? How good are you at storing up an inventory of blessings to access when you need reminding

about the goodness and faithfulness of God?

3. Many of us were taught a form of spiritual warfare that was very devil-focussed, and there is a place for that. However, Bill says “we don’t battle by focusing on the devil. We keep our focus on the King and His Kingdom, and the devil cannot help but be unseated by God’s ever increasing government released through our lives.” Thanksgiving helps facilitate exactly that, which is why it is so powerful in times of adversity. It keeps our focus in the right place. When you find yourself in situations in your life where it feels like other powers are at work besides the power of God, where do you usually put your focus? Do you feel there is an increasing government of God through your life due to your focus on Him?

4. Bill says this: “I have purposed to try and live in such a way that nothing ever gets bigger than my consciousness of God’s presence... If something starts to weigh on my heart and grow bigger than my awareness of God, I consciously turn my affection towards Him to become more aware of His presence... I can’t just know in my head that He’s bigger; I have to have my entire being in a position where I am aware of His presence and expect His world to invade my life and circumstances. If I don’t sustain this expectation, I will expect other forces to be the prime movers in my life and will begin to live defensively instead of offensively. When I stay close to the presence of God through thanksgiving, I not only become aware of His absolute ability to invade the impossible, but I present convincing evidence that He is for me, and His opinion pretty much cancels out all the others.” What do you feel God might be saying to you through what Bill has to say here?

5. “The Psalmist, David, wrote 'Bless the Lord O my soul.' He commands his own soul to come into order and give God glory. It’s important that we learn

how to bring our soul, and even our bodies into submission to the purposes of God.” Bill says he would make sure the intensity of praise was in equal proportion to the size of the cloud over his head. And every time there would come a time when something inside of him would shift, and he was no longer making an effort. His mind, will, emotions and body were completely filled with conviction of what he was declaring to the Lord. When you consider the authority you have over your soul and body, how practiced are you at commanding them to come into order? How successful are you at shifting the atmospheres in your mind, will, and emotions, and bringing them into submission to the purposes of God? What might God be encouraging you to do in this regard?

6. “Only the rejoicing that requires you to agree with God’s perspective on your situation is the sacrifice of praise that pleases Him and has the power to transform you. Our goal should be to sustain thanks and praise UNTIL our whole being is alive to His presence. We can’t be with Him without having our heads lifted to see Him. And you can’t look at Him and then look back at your circumstances with the same perspective.” So how about spending time this week putting this into practice, and taking note of the shift that takes place when you do?
