

Volume 1
Training for
Spiritual
Excellence



Daily
Strength
for the
Battle®

You,
God's Word,
5 minutes

By Scott McChrystal

Daily Strength for the Battle: Training for Spiritual Excellence

By Scott McChrystal

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To my Dad, MG Herbert J. McChrystal, Jr., USA (Ret) whose life inspired me to join the military and whose personal example set the standard for selfless service as member of the Profession of Arms.

To my loving wife of 36 years, Judy, for her love, support, and encouragement to serve the Lord with all my heart.

To all military veterans, past and present, and their families who have served God and Country so nobly and selflessly. Only the Lord and those who have walked that path can fully grasp the incredible commitment, dedication, and sacrifices you have made. Thank you. The prayers and support of our nation are with you.

Contents

Endorsements..... 10

Introduction..... 12

Maximizing Your Minutes..... 14

Trials:

Overcoming Giants in your Life..... 16

Knowing Our Limits..... 19

Hanging Tough..... 20

Counting the Cost..... 21

Avoiding Sin..... 22

Carry Your Cross..... 23

Tough Demands..... 24

Facing Your Battles..... 25

Wisdom and Guidance:

Crossroad Experiences..... 26

Are You Listening?..... 33

Seeking Guidance..... 34

Essential Information..... 35

Guidance for the Future..... 36

Listening to Advice..... 37

Obtaining Wisdom..... 38

Choices Matter..... 39

Obedience:

Doing the Harder Right..... 40

God's Authority..... 45

Consequences of Disobedience..... 46

Broken Ranks..... 47

Walking with God..... 48

Submitting to Your Commander..... 49

Walking in His Light..... 50

Following Orders..... 51

Salvation:

Not in My Strength..... 52

Bad News, Good News..... 57

Saved through Acceptance..... 58

Taking the Right Step..... 59

Living Water..... 60

ENDEX..... 61

The Lord's Army..... 62

Safety in God..... 63

Contents

Standing Strong:

Onward, Christian Soldier!	64
<i>Spiritual Fitness</i>	69
<i>Fit to Fight</i>	70
<i>Spiritual Battlefield</i>	71
<i>Armor of God</i>	72
<i>Standing through Truth</i>	73
<i>Training in Prayer</i>	74
<i>Resist the Devil</i>	75

Setting the Example:

Faithful to the End	76
<i>Up for the Challenge</i>	81
<i>God's Command</i>	82
<i>A Few Good Men</i>	83
<i>Honor His Name</i>	84
<i>Trash Talk</i>	85
<i>Credible Leadership</i>	86
<i>It's All about Team</i>	87

Caring for Others:

The Buck Stops Here	88
<i>More Than Just Noise</i>	93
<i>Encouragement in Spite of Difficulties</i>	94
<i>Feed My Sheep</i>	95
<i>Taking Action</i>	96
<i>Compassion Means Action</i>	97
<i>Show Some Kindness</i>	98
<i>Love Gives Encouragement</i>	99

What God Says

About the Author	100
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A Message from Scott.....

Notes	132
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Endorsements

“Scott McChrystal knows God and he knows military personnel. Strength for the Battle brings the two together in a powerful way. Scott’s 30 plus years of military leadership enables him to speak with biblical authority into the minds of veterans. This is an excellent tool for bringing veterans into the transformational presence of God.”

— George O. Wood, General Superintendent,
Assemblies of God General Council

“The stresses of military training and combat heighten spiritual awareness. Scott McChrystal’s book hits that mark beautifully! These stories and devotions are solidly focused on God’s Word, and written in a way that uniquely connect with the military. The Lord prepared him for this work: first as an infantry platoon leader in Vietnam, a master parachutist and Ranger; then as an Army chaplain serving soldiers and families across the Army; he is father of two soldiers.”

— Kenneth L. Farmer, Jr., M.D., MG, USA (Ret)

“Daily Strength for the Battle is a daily devotional that combines spiritual wisdom and practical insights in a readily accessible manner that is sure to appeal to persons both in and outside of the military environment. I highly recommend this new book.”

— Rich Hammar, church law authority, writer, speaker

“Chaplain Scott McChrystal is a combat veteran and spiritual warrior who has captured the essence of winning the daily fight against mankind’s spiritual enemy. This is a good field manual for every Christian who wants to be prepared for battle”

— LTG Jerry Boykin, USA (RET), former Commander of
Delta Force and Commander of USASOC

“Chaplain Scott McChrystal served as one of the most beloved chaplains ever at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and throughout the Army. A former infantry officer and Vietnam veteran, Chaplain McChrystal’s overall military service have enabled him to touch thousands of America’s magnificent warriors. He will influence many more through this powerful devotional book.”

— Dave Roeber, decorated Vietnam veteran, Military speaker

“Every man, particularly a warrior, needs time every day with his King. Focused, purposeful, gripping time. And if he’s a busy man (know any warrior who’s not?), the punch of that time is served well by a directed devotional book like this one offered by my friend, Scott McChrystal, who is himself a tested warrior. And a busy, focused, and purposeful man. Enjoy the journey with him. Drive on!”

— Stu Weber, Former Special Forces Officer and
Vietnam veteran, author, speaker, pastor

“Given the multitude of challenges faced by our nation’s service members, Chaplain Scott McChrystal’s Daily Strength for the Battle is a powerful devotional tool for military men, women, and families. This inspirational guide, drawn from Chaplain McChrystal’s significant experience as a infantry leader and a chaplain spiritual leader, is a very practical means by which we might all ‘put on the armor of God’ on a daily basis. I truly applaud this powerful spiritual ammunition to promote ‘Faith in the Foxhole and Hope on the Home Front’ for military men and women around the globe.”

— Major General Bob Dees, US Army (Ret),
Executive Director, CCCI Military Ministry

Introduction

People come from all different backgrounds. I come from a military background and consider it a great privilege to have been associated with the military community for 35 years. I can never repay the debt I owe the military for the opportunity it afforded me to serve as a member of the profession of arms.

My years of service with the United States Army (31 years active duty) ended in 2005, but I hope my most significant contributions to this community lie ahead. I want to contribute to the spiritual life and vitality of service members and their families who serve our Armed Forces so courageously and selflessly. Included with this group are the multiplied millions who are military veterans and their families.

The term *veteran* actually encompasses all military folks, past and present. Perhaps the best definition of a veteran I've ever seen comes from an anonymous source:

A “veteran” — whether active duty, discharged, retired or reserve — is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to the “United States of America,” for an amount “up to and including his/her life.”

The public at large doesn't understand the hardships and sacrifices unique to the military

community. I'm not sure they ever will. This is not a criticism, but an observation worth consideration as America tries to support the community of warriors who keep our nation free.

As my act of support, I offer this devotional book because I firmly believe that hope for the military community — past and present — rests in a relationship with the living God through His Son Jesus Christ.

This little book is the first in a series of manuals for Christian growth, written with content that is biblically based and carefully applied to life within the military community. The attempt has been to make these messages brief, practical and relevant.

The first volume, *Strength for the Battle: Training for Spiritual Excellence*, rests on the conviction that growth in the Christian life does not happen by accident, but rather by diligence and effort in seeking God. Military people understand commitment and hard work. They also comprehend words like *training* and *excellence*. The Bible provides indisputable evidence that applying oneself to growing in Christ will produce positive results.

I trust that you will find encouragement, strength, wisdom and motivation toward excellence in your Christian walk as you read this book. ■

Maximizing Your Minutes

Christian growth and maturity take effort on a consistent basis. With consistency noted as a key principle, this book is most useful when read on a daily basis. Reading time should take about five minutes.

Each volume of *Daily Strength for the Battle*:

- Contains seven weeks of devotions, with one devotion per day
- Each week relates to one theme
- Each weekly theme begins with a practical illustration designed to demonstrate the relevance and importance of each theme
- All daily devotions incorporate topics related to the weekly theme
- All daily devotions begin with a Bible verse related to the topic

A suggested way to approach your devotional time could include the following:

- Prayer — ask the Lord to open your heart and mind to the truth of His Word.
- Read the verse at the beginning of the devotional and then paraphrase it in your own words
- Read the devotional

- Try to answer the following questions:
- What biblical truth does this devotional talk about?
- How is the truth applied in the devotional?
- Do I believe this truth could be important for my own life?
- How can I apply this truth to my own life?
- Close in prayer: ask God to help you integrate this truth into your own life.

Five minutes a day may not seem like much, but you can experience wonderful growth in your Christian life and walk by consistently having these short devotions. The Lord will honor your efforts to honor Him.

What God Says

At the back of this book, I've included a section called "What God Says" (pages 100–129). It contains a list of issues and topics that most people just assume they understand. But in His Word, the Bible, God has addressed each of these issues of life in a way that is both clear and relevant to your life. The verses listed under each topic are just a start, but if you want to know more, the Bible contains many other verses related to these topics. ■

Overcoming the Giants in Your Life

*The Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.
(1 Samuel 17:10,11)*

Trials are as old as humanity. They are part of life, and all of us will face them. Some trials are giants. While there are many questions we could ask about life's difficult seasons, the most relevant question is this: When trials come, how will I respond?

The verses cited above refer to a time in ancient Israel when a giant named Goliath single-handedly defied the armies of Israel and the God they served.

How did Israel respond? The Bible tells us that King Saul and the Israelite army were dismayed and terrified. Fortunately for Israel, one man had a different response. His name was David.

David didn't run from this trial. He stood and embraced it. He sought the Lord's help as he challenged the 9-foot giant in a fight to the death. With God's help, David prevailed and won a tremendous victory for Saul and the nation of Israel.

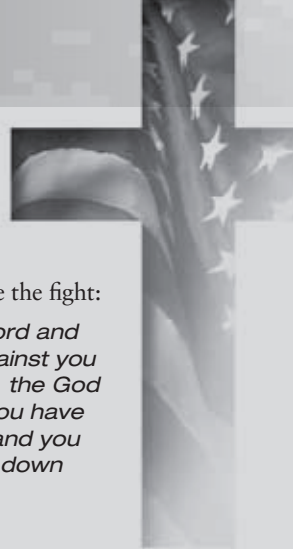
David did several things that worked together to give him victory. But nothing was more crucial than placing his trust in the Lord. Consider his words spoken to Goliath immediately before the fight:

*You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head.
(1 Samuel 17:45,46)*

When trials come, and they surely will, place your trust in the Lord to help you.

In the early 1980s my family and I traveled to Alton, Mo., to preach at a Palm Sunday morning service. Following church, we were invited to have lunch with a Vietnam veteran, a Marine. I don't recall his name, but I'll never forget him or the dinner we had with them that day.

This Marine had faced many trials in his life, but his response to one particular challenge has impacted me until this day. You see, this Marine has lost both legs in combat. He had only stumps, so short that prostheses were out of the question. At church I had seen him in



a wheelchair. When we drove to his home following church, we saw something quite different.

As we arrived at his home, his wife greeted us warmly. About five minutes later the Marine appeared, his body and clothes wet with perspiration. We quickly learned why. He had just climbed down from the roof of his house where he had been putting finishing touches on the new roof he had installed during the previous week. Yes, he had shingled his entire roof by himself! This man without legs was hardly a disabled veteran.

He quickly excused himself to get cleaned up. Looking like an Olympic gymnast, he shot up the stairs on his hands. His heavily muscled arms propelled him up the stairs as easily as most normal people climb stairs with their legs.

Over dinner, this veteran exuded thanksgiving to God for his life, never once mentioning a word about the loss of his legs. He faced this trial with faith and courage. Through God's strength, he was a champion.

Let David's example and the example of this brave Marine encourage you to face your trials squarely by turning to God for strength. You can trust Him with your cares. God helped David conquer a giant. He helped a veteran Marine gain victory over his wounds. He will surely help you. ■

Knowing Our Limits

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.
(1 Corinthians 10:13)

Effective leaders have the knack for challenging soldiers to the limit without breaking their spirit. Even before the outcome has occurred, they somehow know that the experience will be beneficial — for individual soldiers and for the unit.

In the midst of the trial it is easy to doubt the outcome. It helps when soldiers can trust that their leaders know what they are doing.

Life has its trials. This verse assures us that God is a leader who knows what He is doing. He knows your strengths. He knows your weaknesses. He knows your limits. He'll never overextend you. He will provide a way for you to make it!

But that's not all. He uses trials to grow you physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Bottom line: God knows your full potential and He wants to take you to the very limits. ■