

*Volume 2
Fortifying Your
Spiritual
Foundation*



Daily
Strength
for the
Battle®

You,
God's Word,
5 minutes

By Scott McChrystal

***Daily Strength for the Battle:
Fortifying Your Spiritual Foundation***

By Scott McChrystal

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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.

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Endorsements

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

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

Chaplain Scott McChrystal served as one of the most beloved chaplains ever at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. This was a unique opportunity to garner experience, knowledge, and resources to produce this most inspirational devotional. Standing behind Chaplain McChrystal is a plethora of experiences in touching the lives of thousands of America's magnificent warriors. My personal experience with Chaplain McChrystal at West Point and during other opportunities verifies my confidence, for I have seen the excellence of his ministry in operation.

— Rev. Dave Roeber, Decorated Vietnam veteran;
military speaker

As a combat veteran, accountability is the key to a strong walk with God. Daily Strength for the Battle is a exceptional tool for continuing a warrior's journey closer to his King.

— Blake Leitch, US Army veteran and
Purple Heart recipient (Iraq)

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, Retired
Executive Director, CCCI Military Ministry

Scott McChrystal's Daily Strength for the Battle is a compact and inspiring volume. It connects the precious promises and truths of God's Word with the real world. This is straightforward talk from a soldier who has been in the heat of battle. But it is also the heart of a chaplain's message: encouragement and empowerment from God's unfailing love.

— Chaplain (Major General) Kermit D. Johnson, USA (Ret.)

Introduction

*“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”
(Matthew 7:24-27)*

Building on the right foundation is critical in life.

Jesus teaches a powerful truth in these verses. It’s a story about two builders, a wise builder and a foolish one. The wise builder built his house on rock. The foolish builder built his house on sand.

Both houses faced the same adversities — strong winds and water. The house built on rock stood. The house built on sand fell with a great crash. One house had a solid foundation. One did not.

Foundations matter. In January 2010, a devastating earthquake rocked Haiti, shattering much of the city of Port-au-Prince. About 200,000 people died. Many others were seriously injured. Damage to buildings and property was huge.

Many of the fatalities occurred as buildings and other structures collapsed. While this quake would have caused great destruction to any city, building engineers have reported that improper foundations and faulty construction unquestionably contributed to a higher death toll.

Apparently, most buildings in Haiti go up without engineers, standards, or inspections. The earthquake simply exposed the largely unregulated and haphazard construction long accepted on the island.

Metaphorically, spiritual earthquakes are rocking the lives of people today. People are struggling. Not one sector of the population, but all parts. Military service members and their families are affected like everyone else. In addition, they face the hardships that come with fighting a long war on two fronts.

Fortunately, some warriors and families are holding steady during these difficult times. Why? I believe they have built their lives on solid spiritual foundations.

Weak and strong spiritual foundations aren’t always obvious on the surface. But when the storms come, the differences readily appear. Spiritually grounded people endure the adversity, and even grow stronger. Strong families not only survive; they grow closer together.

Introduction

Fortifying Your Spiritual Foundation, Volume 2 of Daily Strength for the Battle, provides insights from Scripture that can help you strengthen your spiritual base. The devotionals cover key areas of spiritual life and provide reliable guidance because they come directly from God's Word.

- Knowing God's Word
- Controlling Your Thoughts
- Growing Through Prayer
- Learning Submission
- Serving Others
- Knowing Your Enemy
- Growing Through Relationships

Building and maintaining a strong spiritual foundation is not easy, especially if major repairs are in order. Similar to remodeling a house, it usually takes longer, costs more, and gets messy before it's over. And there are no shortcuts.

The Scriptures promise that tough times will only get tougher. Survival will not hinge on the size of your

bank account, your job title, or your reputation in the community. What matters will be your relationship with Christ and your foundation in God's Word.

Be assured of this. If you seek God through His Word, pray, and follow His ways to the best of your ability, the Lord promises you will see good results. You will mature and be effective in your Christian walk.

I pray that this devotional will be a blessing to you. ■

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 everyday. Reading time should take about five minutes.

Here's what you'll find in *Daily Strength for the Battle*:

- Each volume 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 devotion and then paraphrase it in your own words.
- Read the devotional.
- Try to answer the following questions:
What biblical truth does this devotion talk about?
How is the truth applied in the devotion?
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.

Also In This Volume:

What The Bible Tells Us About God

Some people have views about God that are far removed from what God says about Himself. This section shows what God is like, in His own words as they appear in Scripture.

Some Things You Should Know About the Bible

God's Word is divinely inspired, written for all people, and meant to be read, understood, and obeyed. Read other important facts about this incredible book.

Ten Things God's Word Can Do In Your Life

God's Word teaches the path to heaven, but it also provides wisdom and guidance for living here on earth. These ten things will help you maximize the effect of God's Word in strengthening your spiritual foundation during these challenging times. ■

Learning to Love God's Word

*Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.
(Psalm 119:18)*

The truth of this verse can become a reality in your life. But it won't happen automatically. It must be learned.

The writer of this verse was a man who loved God and loved His Word. Although we don't know who the author was, God obviously answered the cry of this writer's heart. He learned to see wonderful things in God's Law.

Many great military men and women cannot make this claim. They desire to know the Lord in a more personal way, they want to love and revere God's Word, but they are not there yet. They live busy and useful lives serving our nation, but somehow haven't been able to tap into the pages of Scripture and see wonderful things in God's Law.

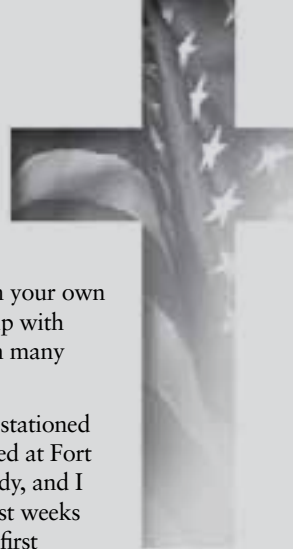
That can certainly change. It did for me. Today, I can report that the Lord has been gracious to me and opened my eyes to be able to see incredible things in His Word. I love reading and studying Scripture, and I have made it a consistent practice to do so for decades. But it is important that I shoot straight with you. It was not always this way — not even close.

The story you are about to read is true. It happens to be my story. On the surface there seems to be nothing extraordinary, nothing spectacular. But I trust it will encourage you as you search for meaning and purpose in your own life. God created us to be in relationship with Him. Getting to know Him happens in many ways, but mostly through His Word.

In 1973 I became a Christian. I was stationed with the 82nd Airborne Division located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. My fiancée, Judy, and I were going to premarital counseling just weeks prior to our wedding date. During my first session with the pastor, he asked me, "Scott, do you know Jesus as your personal Savior?"

My honest response: "Sir, I don't have a clue about what you have just asked." The pastor explained his question and how I could accept the Lord as my personal Savior. In my thinking, I realized two things. The pastor was not going to perform the wedding unless I became a Christian. Secondly, it was time for me to make some decisions about my spiritual life. I was about to become a husband, and hopefully a father one day as well.

I told the pastor I needed a couple of days to think about it and would get back to him. I phoned him a



couple of days later and told him of my decision. At the next meeting in the pastor's office, he led me in a prayer to ask God to forgive me for my sins and to invite Jesus Christ to become Savior and Lord of my life. I was 24 years old, within days of getting married to Judy, leaving the Army, and moving to another state to pursue a civilian career. Lots of change, but by far the biggest change was the conscious decision to follow Christ.

I was clueless about growing in my Christian walk. As with most military-trained people, I had learned a few things about “duty” and about “discipline.” I intended to carry this training into my efforts to follow Jesus. After relocating to Kingsport, Tennessee, Judy and I began attending First Broad Street United Methodist Church. We attended the worship service on Sunday mornings. After a few months we joined a Sunday school class. We started to grow, but very slowly.

After two years in the corporate world, I reapplied to the Army and was reinstated to active duty at the very place from where we left the Army — Fort Bragg. Trust me — I was no spiritual giant, but I was determined to integrate my young faith with my service as a soldier. I carried a small Gideon New Testament in my uniform pocket and would read it from time to time.

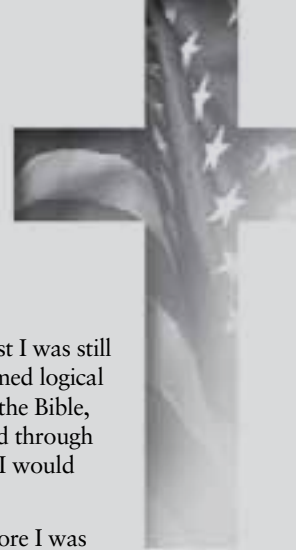
Early in 1976 the Lord apparently decided I needed take a bigger step. Our Battalion Command Sergeant

Major had organized our first-ever unit prayer breakfast. Apparently the intended speaker had to cancel. Just a few days prior to the event, he asked me to speak. With fear and trembling, I agreed.

The night before the prayer breakfast I was still frantically searching for a topic. It seemed logical that I should use some reference from the Bible, but I was woefully ignorant. I thumbed through the pages of my Gideon Bible, hoping I would find something I recognized.

Around 2 a.m., just a few hours before I was to speak, I stumbled upon a verse I actually recognized — Luke 6:31. It was the Golden Rule. In the New International Version, it reads, “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” I decided to speak from my own experiences, most of the material covering times when I didn't treat others as I should.

My memory is quite foggy about the prayer breakfast itself, but a lot of soldiers showed up. Somehow I made it through my talk that day, and amazingly what I shared seemed to resonate with the audience. I distinctly remember two outcomes of this event. First, I felt very relieved to have it over. I had never spoken publicly about the Lord before that time. Secondly, and more importantly,



I felt emboldened to share my faith with others.

We left the 82nd and Fort Bragg about two and a half years later and went to Fort Benning, Georgia, Home of the Infantry. While there, we found a good church and also joined a midweek Bible study. We continued to grow, Judy progressing much faster than I. Truthfully, I was still approaching my Christian growth as a duty. It wasn't fun, and I tended to look forward to the dessert we would have at the end of the study more than I did the study of God's Word. But the Lord was merciful.

In the summer of 1979, we moved to Charleston, South Carolina. I had no hint, nor did Judy, that God was about to launch me into an accelerated time of growth. It began when we started attending a little church of about 60 people. Pastor Gary preached joyful sermons, and something about the people made me think they were actually having fun in church. I started volunteering around the church, mostly custodial kinds of things. But one day Pastor Gary asked Judy and me to teach an adult Sunday school class.

We accepted, knowing full well this was well out of our comfort range. There was a licensed minister in the class, which made it even more intimidating. To our amazement, God showed His faithfulness with each passing week. We did our part in preparing; God took our efforts and turned the class into a wonderful, growing experience.

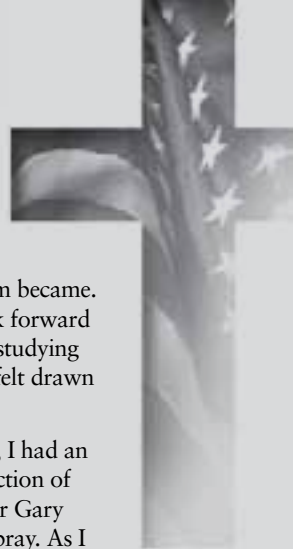
We learned from each other. All of us learned from the Lord and His Word.

The more I studied God's Word, the more real my relationship with Him became. Before even realizing it, I began to look forward to my quiet times each morning spent studying His Word and praying. Increasingly, I felt drawn to read and study the Bible.

On a Sunday night in January 1980, I had an experience that was to change the direction of my life. Following a sermon that Pastor Gary preached, I went down to the altar to pray. As I was praying, I sensed the Lord was speaking to my heart, telling me I was supposed to go into full-time ministry. I left the altar, quite stunned by what I thought I had heard from God. I said nothing to Judy about this.

Several weeks later, I dared to tell Judy that I thought God might be calling me to full-time ministry. She didn't faint, but was definitely surprised. We agreed to pray and seek God for confirmation. Since I had a 3-year commitment to the Army for graduation education, we didn't need to do anything quickly.

The one step I did take was to begin working toward a preaching license. I signed up for the required correspondence courses, all focused around reading and



learning the Bible. For the next year, I spent extensive time almost every day reading God's Word.

A year later, I learned that I could only become a military chaplain on active duty if I did so as a Captain. The choice was clear. Do I continue as an Infantry officer, or did the Lord want me to resign my commission, go to seminary, and reapply to come back in as a chaplain?

The rest is history. The Lord opened the door for me to serve as an Army chaplain for more than two decades.

Looking back, I fully believe God would have honored my choice to remain as an Infantry officer versus pursuing the military chaplaincy. What was important was not the career I chose, but rather the decision to make my relationship with God my top priority. Central to that decision was to make God's Word my priority.

Like a lensatic compass used for land navigation, God's Word is a sure guide for life. The Lord has created you for His pleasure and purpose. He certainly doesn't want you guessing as to which direction to go.

On the authority of God's Word, I firmly believe that you can become like this Psalmist. You can delight in God's Word and find many wonderful things that will enhance your relationship with God and provide the guidance and assurance that you are spending your life doing what He has planned. ■

Taking Inventory

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

(1 John 5:11,12)

Good leaders know that communicating truth is extremely important if your followers are to trust you. Shooting straight with them is definitely the way to go.

Our Heavenly Commander knows this and has chosen to communicate truth through His Word. In these verses, the apostle John testifies that God has made a way for every person to have eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ. But John doesn't stop there. He plainly states that those who have Christ have eternal life. Those who do not have Christ do not have eternal life. There is no middle ground.

In the midst of busy lives, it's tempting to think only about the here and now. But Jesus spoke many times about the afterlife and the importance of preparing for it.

The Lord is not speaking in riddles. Isn't it time for some honest assessment? Have you committed your life to Christ?

Jesus wants you on His team. ■