Ability, Force, Might, And Power

W. E. Vine defines the word strength as ability, force, might, and power. According to Google, strength is the quality or state of being physically strong. Both sources denote the physical ability of the human body. However, Vine applicably uses the physical, as presented by God in His word, to help the reader understand the importance of strength in relation to the spiritual body that resides within each of us.

Paul's choice of words in several passages presents the idea of spiritual strength by using a physical analogy. Paul states: "Thus I fight" (1 Corinthians 9:26); "I have fought" (2 Timothy 4:7); "I press toward" (Philippians 3:14); "You ran well" (Galatians 5:7); "You therefore must endure" (2 Timothy 2:3). In these passages, as in others, the idea of strength is implied in the language of Paul's presentation.

Just as physical strength is gained and achieved, so is spiritual strength. Just as our physical bodies require training to gain strength, our spiritual body does as well. Paul declares, "For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). Just as the physical body requires exercise to maintain its physical strength, such is true for the spiritual body.

The Christian must purpose to be strong in Jesus. Solomon says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe" (Proverbs 18:10). As Christians we begin by desiring the pure milk of the word (1 Peter 2:2). Nevertheless, just as a physical baby grows to need solid food for strength, so must

the Christian spiritually consuming the word deeply. "For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:13-14).

Just as physical strength will wane if not maintained, once we gain spiritual strength, we must maintain it to keep it growing. Like the physical body can become weak, so can the spiritual body. If the spiritual body is not properly maintained through a steady diet of study, prayer, and worship, it will become weak. Jesus reminds us to "Watch and pray, let you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38).