

How Churches Stay Strong (and Grow Weak) Through the Years





People are made strong in the Lord
through knowledge.

Acts 2:37, 42a

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching...



People are made strong in the Lord
through knowledge.



People are made strong in the Lord
through commitment.

Acts 2:42

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.




People are made strong in the Lord
through commitment.



People are made strong in the Lord
through time with each other.

Acts 2:46-47

⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.



People are made strong in the Lord through time with each other.



People are made strong in the Lord
through a spirit of generosity.

Acts 4:32

³² Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.



People are made strong in the Lord
through a spirit of generosity.



People are made strong in the Lord through the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:31

³¹ So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.



People are made strong in the Lord through the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit.



People are made strong in the Lord
through good works and acts of charity.


Acts 9:36-39

³⁶ Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. ³⁷ In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay."

People are made strong in the Lord through good works and acts of charity.

Acts 9:36-39

³⁹ So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them.



People are made strong in the Lord through good works and acts of charity.



People are made strong in the Lord through active concern for those who need to hear the gospel.

Acts 10:24

²⁴ And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.




People are made strong in the Lord through active concern for those who need to hear the gospel.



People are made strong in the Lord through a willingness to listen to each other.

Acts 11:1-2, 18

¹ Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him...



People are made strong in the Lord through a willingness to listen to each other.

Acts 11:1-2, 18

¹⁸ When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”



People are made strong in the Lord through a willingness to listen to each other.



People are made strong in the Lord
through steadfast purpose.

Acts 11:23

²³ When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose...



People are made strong in the Lord through steadfast purpose.



People are made strong in the Lord
through earnest prayer.

Acts 12:5, 12

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

¹² When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.



People are made strong in the Lord
through earnest prayer.



People are made strong in the Lord through a love for the Lord and the world that is bigger than themselves.

Acts 13:1-3

¹ Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.


People are made strong in the Lord through a love for the Lord and the world that is bigger than themselves.



People are made strong in the Lord through another generation that has been taught to take God seriously.

Acts 16:1-2

¹ Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. ² He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium.



People are made strong in the Lord through another generation that has been taught to take God seriously.





People become weak by abandoning
the love they had at first.

Revelation 2:4

⁴ “But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.”



People become weak by abandoning
the love they had at first.



People become weak by losing the fear of the Lord and compromising the message of the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 2:14

¹⁴ “But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.”




People become weak by losing the fear of the Lord and compromising the message of the Holy Spirit.



People become weak by a love for the world
that breeds a spirit of self-centeredness.

Revelation 2:20

²⁰ “But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.”



People become weak by a love for the world that breeds a spirit of self-centeredness.



People become weak by spiritual apathy
that rests in empty reputation.

Revelation 3:1-2

¹ “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.”



People become weak by spiritual apathy that rests in empty reputation.



People become weak by a failure
to see ourselves as God sees us.

Revelation 3:15-17

¹⁵ “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.”

People become weak by a failure
to see ourselves as God sees us.

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