

## My Strength Comes From The Lord

What is strength? Strength comes in many forms. There is physical strength, emotional strength, spiritual strength, and intellectual strength. In our lives this strength can show itself in many ways. Our physical strength can be seen in parents who wake up before their children to prepare breakfast, work all day in or out of the house, put the children to bed at night, and then finish their daily chores. It can be seen in a father working two or three jobs day in and day out to support his family. Emotional strength can be seen when a mother is at her wits' end after a long day of crying, fussy, screaming children and she is still able to caress them at the end of the day as she puts them to bed. Or it can be seen when a husband and wife are scared, angry, and at odds with each other but manage to come together in the end and forgive each other and Love each other through it all. Spiritual strength can be seen in a family that is in crisis or great need and stops long enough to pray to their Lord for strength and guidance. Intellectual strength can be seen in a person who looks beyond his or her fears and can see the truth of a situation.

In this world there are endless things that can test your strength. Family, work, long days, sleepless nights, annoying people, traumatic events, illness, death, lies, and outright evil. All of these things seem to have no limit and no end and we are limited and finite creatures. How can we overcome these things in our lives?

Psalm 28:6-7 Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

We can not depend on our own strength but we can depend on God's. The strength and power of God is at our disposal to overcome those things that are stronger than us and bigger than us. It is the great challenges in our lives that God can use to teach us to rely on His strength alone. And when we overcome those great challenges through strength of Faith we can truly praise Him knowing that only by His strength did we overcome the obstacles in front of us. We learn that all praise and glory belong to Him because without Him we are sure to lose.

Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

I would like to share a praise with you about the work God is doing in my family right now. As you know, Heather and I are in the process of adopting a 12 year old girl named Kayla. This has been a slow process because Kayla is afraid of being in a home with a man. Over the past few weeks Heather has

been able to spend an ever-increasing amount of time with Kayla but I have been restricted to brief glimpses and always with other people around. Kayla has been hard-pressed to look or talk directly at me. This has been difficult for everyone. For me, it has been hard because I have fallen in Love with this little girl as I've gotten to know more about her through Heather and through reading about her in her case file. But it hasn't been safe for me to show it in any of the usual ways. I haven't been able to hug her, tell her I love her, comfort her, or even just talk and laugh with her because she has been so uncomfortable in my presence. She has been in constant fear around me and I have been in a constant state of feeling like my heart is going to burst for the restraint and pain of the situation.

For Kayla this has been hard because she wants to be adopted and she knows that is our intent but she is faced with this fear that she has not been able to overcome. It is deep, pervasive, and a big part of her. She has been able to verbalize that it isn't a rational fear but it is out of her control. Her fear has been bigger than her.

For Heather this has been hard because she is caught in the middle loving both of us immensely and wanting us all to become a family where Kayla feels the safety and protection from me that Heather does. Heather and I have both been praying and I know Heather has asked many others to pray and many people have been praying for God to do something miraculous in Kayla's life.

Yesterday, we threw Kayla her 12<sup>th</sup> birthday party. It was a good day and a good time was had by all but the true miracle happened at the very end of the night. As Heather and I dropped Kayla back off at St. Joe's and Kayla gave Heather her goodbye hug, Kayla asked for a hug from me. There aren't words to express my joy and praise to God for this amazing gift. Of all the strength that God has given to all involved, He gave the greatest portion to Kayla and allowed her to see clearly and ask for a hug from someone she has been terrified of since she met him. God is truly amazing and truly all-powerful. All things are possible with God. It is His strength that will sustain us and His strength that will help each of us overcome our greatest fears and obstacles through prayer and through our Faith.

I would like us to each share a time God has helped overcome a great obstacle or given you strength beyond your own means so that we can praise and worship him for His amazing grace, Love, strength, and mercy on us all.