

Bible and mark them! Use them (by recalling them, speaking them, and trusting them) to combat the problems that confront you. Use the promises just like you would use a sword to defeat the enemy (Eph 6:17). If you want to be a strong Christian, then you must develop the habit of putting your faith in the promises of God's Word.



HABIT #5 – VISION. Strong Christians develop a sense of vision and purpose for their lives.

As you grow in your walk with Christ, you will have a growing sense that God has "assignments" for you to fulfill. It might be a temporary assignment like helping out in your church – or a lifelong assignment to be a missionary, nurse, or business person. In any event, you will have a growing desire to flow in God's plan for your life. Romans 12:2 says, *"Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove (discover and fulfill) the good, acceptable, and perfect WILL OF GOD."* **The best advice you can receive for finding your purpose is to start trusting God right now, right where you are.** You don't have to become a missionary to please God (though He may call you to the mission field – who knows!). Start being a blessing to others around you NOW. Start helping in a local church NOW. Step by step, you will discover God's assignments for your life. Start praying these prayers each day: Colossians 1:9-12 / Ephesians 1:16-23 / and Ephesians 3:14-21. If you want to be a strong Christian, then start asking God to reveal His purpose and plan for the remainder of your life.

HABIT #6 – AGAPE LOVE. Strong Christians have the habit of being quick to love and forgive.

This key involves what I call *"the love-walk."* The Greek word most often used for

God's kind of love is AGAPE. It is an unselfish kind of love that picks others up when they are down, forgives when offended, and believes the best about others. You can find these qualities of AGAPE LOVE clearly listed in 1 Corinthians 13. Over and over, the New Testament commands us to *"love, EVEN AS Christ loved us and forgave us"* (Eph 4:32). Let me ask you a couple of questions: *"Has your heavenly Father ever refused to forgive you or help you? Has he ever tried to hurt you or destroy you?"* On the contrary, He sent Jesus Christ to die for you! **Romans 5:8 says, "But God commends his love toward us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us."** **What amazing love!** In John 8:3 Jesus protected the woman caught in the act of adultery. The religious leaders wanted to stone her, but Jesus lifted her up. In Luke 15:11 Jesus told the story of a Prodigal Son who finally returned home to a father with arms opened wide. If you want to be a strong Christian, then make up your mind that you will be a representative of God's love and forgiveness.

7. HABIT #7 – GIVING. Strong Christians are givers in every sense of the word -- with their money, talents, and disposition of kindness.

God is a "giver" and He expects His children to be the same. When you think about it, "giving" is really a natural outflow of Agape love. John 3:16 says, *"For God so LOVED the world, that he GAVE his only begotten Son..."* Notice that God's love led to the gift of His Son. **Selfishness and stinginess will block God's flow. Show me a stingy person and I will show you someone that God has a hard time blessing.** It's not because God doesn't care -- He does! But their stinginess and selfishness act like a kink in a hose that shuts off God's supply. 2 Corinthians 9:7-12 makes it abundantly clear that "giving" opens the door for God's blessings. Start by being a generous person in your attitudes. Be ready to forgive and lift up those that others push down. Support your church with your finances. Support missionaries. If you want to be a strong Christian, then purpose to be a kind and giving person.

Dear friend, ask God to help you grow in these seven habits so that you can walk in His best for your life. **■ -- Jason Peebles**

Key Memory Verse:

"For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Philippians 2:13

Prayer to be a Stronger Christian

"Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I accept His sacrifice and commit my life to Him. I ask you to help me develop new habits and grow stronger in my walk with you. Teach me to abide in Christ and yield to His influence. Thank you for your great love. In Jesus Name – Amen."

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7 Habits of a Strong Christian

by Jason Peebles

This study will examine some of the habits that strong Christians seem to share in common. The habits of others who have succeeded can be like road-signs for your own success. This is true whether you want to excel in sports, business, or any other pursuit. Having said this, though, it is important to realize that being a strong Christian requires more than adopting habits. **Being a strong Christian centers first and foremost on your fellowship with Jesus Christ. My prayer is that this study will strengthen your walk with Him and help you succeed in His assignments and plans for your life.**

Yielding vs. Striving

To begin our study, let's identify an important difference between worldly success and God's kind of success. Romans 8:14 says, *"For as many as are LED BY THE SPIRIT, these are the sons of God."* Notice the focus is on being "led" vs. striving in your own power. **Call it grace vs. works, spirit vs. flesh, or whatever -- the point is that God has sent His Spirit to empower you to do what you are otherwise powerless to do.** The world prides itself in self-sufficiency and the *"I can do it on my own attitude."* Yet Jesus said, *"Abide in Me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit*

without the vine; nor more can you except you abide in Me” (Jn 15:4). **Jesus teaches us absolute dependency on Him. He wants us to lean on Him, trust Him, and allow His Spirit to empower us. This is the key to God’s kind of success.** It is the opposite of self-sufficiency. Believers are called to yield to His ability. And what results can we expect when we yield to Him? Ephesians 3:20 says, “Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly **ABOVE ALL** that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” What a fantastic promise! Christ can do abundantly **ABOVE** what you could ever accomplish on your own.

The principle of YIELDING vs. striving is an important foundation before we examine specific habits. Hebrews 4:9,10 says, “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he that has entered His rest has himself ceased from His own works as God did from His.” **Religion demands that you “try hard” in your own power – but God is calling you to CEASE from striving and learn to rest and YIELD.** Jesus Christ wants to live His life through you as you learn to yield to the Holy Spirit’s influence. That is very different than “you” trying hard in your own power. Thus, as we present some of the habits that strong Christians have in common, be on your guard against trying so hard in your own power that you end up frustrated. **You will find greater progress if you simply start asking God to help you develop these qualities in your life – and He will!** Philippians 2:13 says, “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” He will teach you the path of “yielding.”

HABIT #1 – ABIDING. Strong Christians have the habit of making their first goal each day to “abide in Christ.”

The master key for your success is learning to fellowship with Christ throughout the day. You must stay “connected.” As you do, He will empower you and lead you. In John 15:5 Jesus said: “I am the vine, you are the branches. He that abides in me and I in him brings forth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” **Jesus uses the vine and branch illustration to emphasize the principle of dependency.** Obviously, a branch is totally dependent on the vine. If the branch

becomes disconnected it immediately starts withering. Why? It no longer has the flow of water and nutrients essential for life and fruit-bearing. Likewise, your fellowship with Christ is your master key for fruit-bearing and success. As you stay connected, He will help you succeed in all that you do.

The problem is that we all tend to put the “fruit” before the “root.” In other words, we get up each day with our To-Do list and head out the door to produce results in our own efforts. We go after the “fruit” and often forget the “root.” We try to tackle the challenges of life without any thought of what our Lord may want. **But what would happen if you made ABIDING IN CHRIST your top priority each day? What would happen if you put the “root” before the fruit?** Why not pause during the day to ask your Lord what HE wants? Start asking Him for HIS wisdom and guidance. Try whispering quick prayers throughout the day that basically say, “Lord, how would you have me deal with this? Do you want me to act now or wait?” Remember the verse we quoted earlier? Romans 8:14 says, “For as many as are LED BY THE SPIRIT, these are the sons of God.” As you abide in the vine, the Holy Spirit will lead you, prompt you, and give you the right contacts. And what kind of results can you expect? John 15:7 says, “If you abide in Me, and my Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.” Jesus promises success! If you want to be a strong Christian, then you must make ABIDING IN CHRIST your first goal each day.

HABIT #2 – PRAYER. Strong Christians have the habit of praying throughout the day and committing their situations over to the Lord.

Prayer will be your primary tool for abiding in Christ. Through prayer you can cast your cares on Him, ask for His wisdom, and listen to the still small voice in your heart. Prayer (which is simply talking with God) is as important in your walk with God as communication is in a marriage. Without it there can be no progress. Some people fail to pray because they think that God is too busy to “bother” with their prayers – as if He is some kind of computer that gets overloaded! **But the Bible teaches that God longs for us to pray because it’s an expression of our trust in Him.**

Philippians 4:6 says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in **EVERYTHING** by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving **LET YOUR REQUESTS** be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Prayer is the cure for anxiety. Therefore, pray for your family members; pray for your friends; pray for your work, business, school, problems, and on and on. PRAY! When you do, you bring God’s influence to bear on the situation. **As you develop in prayer, you will discover that prayer involves speaking AND listening – so pause and listen to your heart.** Prayer also involves decreeing God’s will and conveying His influence into the lives of others. With prayer, you can win your spiritual battles (Eph 6:18). Dear friend, what an awesome privilege you have in prayer! Think of it. Because of the atonement of Jesus Christ, you have 24/7 access to the God of the universe (Heb 4:16). If you want to be a strong Christian, then prayer must become as natural as breathing.



HABIT #3 -- GOD’S WORD. Strong Christians make reading and studying God’s Word a top priority in their lives.

Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4). Just as your physical body needs food, so your spiritual life needs nourishment. As you study God’s Word, many wonderful things are set in motion: a) World View – the way that you view right and wrong, and the world in general, will be shaped by God’s principles. Without the Word, you will only have a secular world view. b) Renewed Mind – your mind

will be renewed and strengthened by the stories of victory in the Bible and the awesome promises that God has given us. c) Guidance – the Holy Spirit will use the verses you read to lead you and guide you. d) Transformation – the Word will change you from the inside-out. Your personality will take on the fruit of the Spirit as you are changed more into the image of Christ. e) Success motivation - the Bible is very clear that God promises success if you will meditate in His Word. Read Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1. God says that your life can be like a fruitful tree that produces success. **Jesus said in John 15:7, “If you abide in Me, and MY WORDS abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.” What an awesome promise of success!** I encourage you to make a habit of keeping a Bible by your bed. Read the Bible before you retire at night. Additionally, you should keep a Bible with you on your job. It’s easy to read one of the Psalms during a 5-10 minute break. If you want to be a strong Christian, then you absolutely must make reading and studying God’s Word a top priority in life.

HABIT #4 – FAITH. Strong Christians have the habit of exercising faith in the promises of God’s Word.

As you read God’s Word, more faith will be generated in your heart. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Look at this verse closely. How is “faith” produced? It is produced by the Word of God. The divine formula for increasing faith in your life is GOD’S WORD → FAITH. As you read God’s Word, it will become easier and easier for you to believe in His ability. When you read about how God helped David defeat Goliath, you will have more faith for your own life. 2 Peter 1:4 says, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious **PROMISES; that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature.**” The way to “partake” of God’s provision is to start trusting in His promises. There are promises for safety – Psalm 91. Promises for overcoming fear – 2 Timothy 1:7. Promises for success in business – Psalm 112. Promises for healing – Psalm 103:1-3. And on and on and on! In fact, 2 Peter 1:3 says that God has given us ALL THINGS for life and godliness. Therefore, discover the promises in your