

- **\*Luke 9:23-26\*** Humans love that “magic pill” cure. Whether it is losing weight, learning a new language, or mastering your golf swing people want that quick and easy fix. Sadly, that mythical magic pill doesn't exist. It takes hard work to lose weight and we've had some people here put a lot of effort into doing so. Learning a new language doesn't happen over night. Rosetta Stone takes time and effort. And the golf swing, well..... mine is still a work in progress. Yet, there is still something else that people wish they had a magic pill for.... their faith.
- Many Christians wish that they had a magic pill that they could take that would instantly strengthen their faith. Again, that pill just doesn't exist. Notice from our text we just read that our faith/discipleship/following of Jesus is NOT something that is bettered by a magic pill. Instead, it is a daily process. We must put forth that effort to be a strong disciple each and every day. So what can we do to be that disciple we need to be everyday? What can we do daily to build a stronger faith? I'd like to share 5 steps that we all can take on a daily basis to have a stronger faith.

### **I. Set aside time alone with God.**

- A. My friend Benjamin Lee of the Dowlen Road Church has coined this as TAG.
1. Ben came to realize that if we want to be a strong disciple then we need to know who it is that we are following. If we want to have faith, then we need to know who we have our faith in.
  2. Developing a strong relationship begins with communication and spending time with one another.
  3. None of our marital, familial, or friendly relationships would prosper and grow stronger if we never spent any time together, and the exact same thing is true for our relationship with our Heavenly Father.
  4. We must spend constant (not just every now and then), undistracted (not with a full mind on other things), and focused (not as your falling asleep) time alone with our God (prayer, study, or meditation) to truly develop that strong faith in Him.
- B. This type of thing was very common with great men of the Bible, especially in regards to their prayer.
1. Our Lord spent much time alone with His Father. **(Luke 5:16)**
  2. Daniel designated specific time alone with His God. **(Daniel 6:10)**
  3. Paul implored the Thessalonians to pray continually. **(I Thessalonians 5:17)**
  4. Every single one of these men and many other disciples have realized that a strong faith begins with a strong relationship and knowing of our our God and Savior and it all begins with time alone with them.

### **II. Take a Scripture with you.**

- A. Some Christians make the mistake of thinking that a simple cursory reading of the Bible is enough to strengthen their faith. Reading is necessary, but truly building a stronger faith requires us to really meditate on it.
1. By meditation I mean to *“think deeply or focus one's mind for a period of time.”*
  2. We often don't get much out of our Bible studying and reading because we read and then forget about what we were reading.
  3. To help us get better and grow stronger, we can take a Scripture with us for the day. We can think about it and ponder on it and the impact it can have on our lives throughout a day.
  4. Thinking on a Scripture for a longer period of time can help us to possibly see things that we hadn't seen before and it can help us grow both in faith and knowledge of God's word.
- B. This meditation shows our love for God and helps us to strengthen the foundation of our faith.
1. *“I will meditate on your precepts and regard your ways. I shall delight in Your statues; I shall not forget Your word.”* **(Psalm 119:15)**
  2. The importance of truly meditating and considering God's Word can be summed up for us from **Psalm 119:97-104.**

### **III. Pray in a variety of ways.**

- A. As has been said many times before, prayer is the lifeline of the Christian.
1. However, our prayers, much like our worship, can become routine and monotonous if we do not put thought and effort into it.
  2. As has already been pointed out, we should be in constant communication with our God, but that doesn't mean that we have to pray the exact say prayers or pray in the exact same way every single time.

- B. A way to be continually engaged in our prayers and to fulfill the admonition to pray continually (**I Thess. 5:17**) is to pray in different ways from time to time.
1. We don't always have the ability to offer up 10 minute prayers that include everything in our lives to God. This means that sometimes our prayers might be shorter and they might have a specific purpose. Paul mentions 4 different words for prayer in one verse in **I Timothy 2:1...entreaties, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings**. There obviously are different kinds of prayers.
  2. Throughout the day we might offer prayers that serve different purposes.
  3. We might pray different prayers of praise, of thanksgiving, prayers for others, prayers of special request, prayers for strength against temptation, and so on.
  4. Some of these prayers might be short and some might be longer, but both should be heart felt and engaged.
  5. Through this type of prayer life, we will be more attentive towards God and we will be strengthened in faith.

#### **IV. Cut the junk out of your life.**

- A. If our bodies are weak then we try to strengthen it through medication and proper dietary intake.
1. If we try to feed our bodies with nothing but junk then we will fill like junk.
  2. But if we nourish it with a proper diet of good nutritional foods then we will be balanced and strong in our health.
- B. The exact same thing is true in our lives as Christians and our spiritual health.
1. We oftentimes want to be stronger in our faith, yet we continue to feed our minds and souls the exact same junk as we did before.
  2. Instead of a proper intake of prayer, study, and meditation we are filling ourselves with junk, junk, and more junk.
  3. We never seem to have time to study or pray because we're stuck in front of the TV every spare second or we are constantly playing games on our phone or we are on Facebook.
  4. I'm not saying that we have to cut those things out completely. Sometimes those things can be useful for us as a way to unwind and relax from time to time, but they don't need to be the fullness of our diet.
  5. We need to be more like the man that is spoken of in **Psalms 1:1-6** and have a strong spiritual foundation that is rooted in God's Word and not in the junk of this world.

#### **V. Connect with other Christians.**

- A. A fatal mistake for God's people is to think that we are in this fight alone. This could not be further from the truth.
1. God has blessed His people with the church, a group of people who are fighting this spiritual war together.
  2. Each of us supplies the whole with what is necessary for this great work of God to grow, progress, and be strengthened in what we do.
  3. We are here to lean on each other and to find strength in one another.
- B. A great way for us to be strengthened in our faith is to connect with other Christians on a daily basis.
1. It can be so easy for us to get into the habit of only seeing or communicating with our brothers and sisters when we come together to study or worship.
  2. But we shouldn't allow that to be the only time we interact. Notice the words written by the Hebrew writer concerning our interactions with our spiritual family. (**Hebrews 3:13,14**)
  3. "*day by day*" we are to be encouraging one another to fight the good fight and become stronger. If you're wanting to become stronger in your faith then reach out to a fellow soldier and disciple who is fighting the same battle as you on a daily basis. Share your Scripture of the day with them or offer to pray with or for them as they go about their battles of the day.
  4. At one time Elijah thought that he was the only one still fighting for the Lord, yet God had 7,000 that had not yet bowed to the false God. (**I Kings 19:14-18**) Brethren, we have many soldiers fighting along side us, let's reach out and be strengthened by them, day by day.

There is no magic pill for a stronger faith, but with some effort and love for the Lord, we can all battle daily, grow stronger, and fight bravely against Satan and his evil ways. May God help us all to be resolved to use these Biblical actions to grow stronger and closer to Him in all that we do.