

The ONE
YEAR®

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DAILY MOMENTS OF

STRENGTH

INSPIRATION FOR MEN

WALK THRU THE BIBLE®

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The One Year® Daily Moments of Strength: Inspiration for Men

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Designed by Mark Anthony Lane II

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INTRODUCTION

AS MEN, WE OFTEN FEEL challenged to prove our worth to the people around us, whether it's at home (perhaps as husbands and fathers), at work (as employees or supervisors), or on the basketball court or golf course with our friends. But with all the demands on our time, energy, and resources—not to mention our relationships—we can feel weak, overwhelmed, and exhausted. Thankfully, God never intended for us to go it alone, in our own power. He designed us to draw our strength and direction from Him, and to find encouragement and inspiration in community with our families and with other men. In fact, God tells us, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9, HCSB) and “[we] can do everything through Christ, who gives [us] strength” (Philippians 4:13).

This book of daily devotions is an invitation for you to spend a few minutes each day in quiet conversation with God—whether it's first thing in the morning, during your lunch break, or just before bed. God designed us to function best (and be strongest) when we regularly take time to connect with Him through His Word and in prayer. As God told the Israelites, “Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength” (Isaiah 30:15).

The One Year Daily Moments of Strength devotional can be your means of connecting with God for a few minutes each day throughout the coming year. It will also serve as a daily reminder that all our strength comes from God, and that He uses His strength to work through the weakness of our lives to accomplish His purpose and plan on earth. Written from a variety of perspectives and in a variety of styles, each devotion will encourage you to place your trust in the hands of the all-powerful God of the universe, in whom is found all we need to live our lives for Him.

You can use the Moment of Strength Scripture passage at the end of each reading to take a deeper look at what God's Word says about that day's topic,

and to initiate a conversation with God about the situations and people you encounter in your day-to-day life.

This resource from Walk Thru the Bible is designed to inspire you to fully embrace your relationship with God and to walk in the strength of His love, mercy, and grace. For “His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness” (2 Peter 1:3, HCSB).

JANUARY 1

GOOD GRIEF

For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

2 Corinthians 7:10

AT THE BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR, many people look back at the previous twelve months with some regrets. A relationship that went bad. Words that should—or shouldn't—have been said. A risk not taken. These regrets may turn into grief and affect the way we live.

Grief is a common emotion as we face the difficulties of life. But grief can either be *helpful* or *harmful*.

Godly grief, as the apostle Paul calls it, brings about repentance and change for the better as we live for God. Godly grief doesn't last long, but its impact can be life changing. Grappling with godly sorrow can help to deepen our resolve to live right and give us a greater appreciation for God's grace.

Feelings of guilt induced by Satan last longer and only bring us down. We know that our sorrow is “worldly” when we struggle to move out of it. When you just feel like you're in a slump or like you're worthless, that's a sign that your enemy the devil is at work.

Paul puts it this way in 2 Corinthians 7:10: “For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.” God doesn't want us to get caught up in guilt and regrets. Sure, we need to learn from the past. But instead of dwelling on past failures, we should look forward to godly successes. God doesn't hold a grudge against us.

BOTTOM LINE

What regrets are bogging you down? Ask God to help you learn from those mistakes and serve Him with renewed energy and confidence.

Moment of Strength: Philippians 3:12-14

JANUARY 2

IN AND OUT OF SEASON

He never left them without evidence of himself and his goodness. For instance, he sends you rain and good crops and gives you food and joyful hearts.

Acts 14:17

SO THE CHRISTMAS SEASON IS OVER, and though you may be glad that the world can get back to normal, you at least have to admit that there is an increase of spiritual awareness or openness during December. It's easy to invite a coworker to church for the special music, or to a Christmas Eve service. But now that it's January, are there no more opportunities to witness to people?

All times are God's seasons. A discerning Christian can learn many ways to sow seeds of God's love. But like good farmers, we need to know whether it's time to plant, whether the crop needs some watering or sunshine, whether it needs to be weeded a little, or whether it is ripe for harvest. All of these are critical points in the timeline of someone's journey toward Christ. So, what seasons of opportunity are coming up soon?

- *Super Bowl.* Though it's great to be a champion on the field, it can sometimes be a struggle to be a champion off the field. Start a conversation with a coworker or a friend about the importance of being consistent in all areas of our lives.
- *Daytona 500.* Reflect with a colleague about the endurance that NASCAR drivers must have and how the real-life race can be even tougher.
- *March Madness.* Google the story of basketball stars Jack Twyman and Maurice Stokes, and discuss with a friend the kind of love it took for Jack to adopt Maurice.

BOTTOM LINE

Ask God to give you the words and the heart to share His love with others.

Moment of Strength: 1 Peter 3:15

JANUARY 3

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

*Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite,
but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.*

Leviticus 19:18

THE WORD *NEIGHBOR* IS mentioned more than 130 times in the Bible. Among other things, we're told not to give false witness against our neighbors (Exodus 20:16) or covet our neighbor's house or wife (Deuteronomy 5:21), and we're instructed to build up our neighbors for their good (Romans 15:2) and love our neighbors as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18). That last one is probably the most famous. Jesus even used those words when He was asked about the greatest command in all of the Old Testament law (Matthew 22:39).

Yet despite the importance the Bible places on how we treat our neighbors, research shows that many of us don't really know our neighbors. How can we love our neighbors if we don't even know them?

The Bible describes a neighbor in broad terms—including people in need whom we come across—not just people who live on our street. When we concentrate on knowing and loving the people in our community, we, too, are blessed. Studies show that when we know our neighbors, we build a safer, stronger, healthier environment to live in. And the best part is that it doesn't take a lot of effort to get to know our neighbors. We just need to be friendly and say hello. Taking the initiative may stretch our comfort level a little, but it's the right thing to do. We may even make some new friends and find opportunities to share the gospel in the process.

BOTTOM LINE

Make it one of your resolutions this year to know your neighbors better. It's not complicated; it just takes a little intentional effort.

Moment of Strength: Matthew 22:36-40

JANUARY 4

FUNERAL FINANCES

*Then he said, "Beware! Guard against every kind of greed.
Life is not measured by how much you own."*

Luke 12:15

IT'S INTERESTING what nobody ever says at a funeral. You rarely hear statements like these: "But most of all, he had an airtight 401(k)" or "I just can't get over how awesome his pool was" or "Can you believe this guy's car?"

At a funeral, people don't comment on the deceased's possessions, because when someone dies, what remains of his life is what he invested—not in stocks or mutual funds or real estate but in the eternal and precious commodity of people. Some of the most well-attended funerals memorialize people with few earthly possessions. And yet their lives touched many other lives. They served the Lord by giving all they had and all they could to the people God called them to serve.

Whether you realize it or not, you have already begun to plan your funeral. The statement of your life—what will be remembered—is being written today in the choices you make. Will you abandon yourself and live for your Creator, or will you live for yourself? Will you build up a nest egg of temporary treasures, or will you send your wealth on ahead to the Bank of Heaven?

God has gifted you with one life, one chance to display His glory in the circle of influence you have today. What are you doing with this chance? Are you making "the most of every opportunity in these evil days" (Ephesians 5:16)? Every day counts. Every choice matters. Choose wisely.

BOTTOM LINE

Financial security is important, but eternal reward is much, much more important.

Moment of Strength: Matthew 6:19-20

JANUARY 5

TELEPHONE GAME

Discipline your children, and they will give you peace of mind and will make your heart glad.

Proverbs 29:17

REMEMBER THE GAME you played in school where everybody formed a line and the teacher whispered a message into the first person's ear? As the message was passed along, it usually got messed up and garbled before it reached the last person.

That same thing is true today with kids and cell phones—the message is getting garbled. Trends show that parents are buying their children cell phones at younger and younger ages. However, many parents aren't united in how to handle the challenges that a cell phone brings into their home.

As parents, it's our responsibility to establish boundaries. When our children hit different milestones (first cell phone, first date, getting a driver's license), we should already have a plan worked out about the rules. Some parents even come up with a contract that everybody signs before allowing their children certain privileges, such as a cell phone.

The Bible tells us to “discipline your children, and they will bring you peace of mind and will make your heart glad” (Proverbs 29:17). Discipline, whether in the sense of punishment or in a careful and deliberate approach to a situation, brings stability. Our children need to know where the boundaries are and what the consequences will be for stepping over the line. Make sure your children get the message loud and clear—not like kids at the end of the line in the telephone game.

BOTTOM LINE

Having discipline in your home brings peace of mind for you and your child. Are there areas where you need to provide better boundaries?

Moment of Strength: Proverbs 16:21

JANUARY 6

THE VALUE OF MARRIAGE

Guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth.

Malachi 2:15

YOU CAN'T BUY HAPPINESS. But happiness can pay dividends, especially in your marriage. Economists David Blanchflower and Andrew Oswald calculated the “compensation value” of marriage by surveying 100,000 American and British couples from the 1970s to the 1990s. After compiling mounds of data and working through complex equations, they found that a happy marriage was worth \$100,000 annually. As you can see, working toward a happy marriage makes a lot of sense (and cents)!

God doesn't mince words when it comes to marriage. He wants you to love and honor your wife in a lifelong covenant relationship. Yet many times we find ourselves frustrated in our most important relationship. Those frustrations can bubble over into hurtful words or neglectful actions.

Being in a marriage isn't easy. We must watch ourselves carefully so that we “do not act treacherously against the wife of [our] youth” (Malachi 2:15, HCSB). “Acting treacherously” doesn't necessarily mean having an affair or emotionally checking out of the marriage. A treacherous act is anything that undermines the relationship, and it can be as simple as not honoring your wife's opinion. Instead of taking little bits out of your wife's heart, invest in building her up. God urges men to treat their wives well for many reasons. Happiness is just one of them.

BOTTOM LINE

Watch yourself carefully so that you treat your wife the way God wants you to. It's not always easy, but it's always the right thing to do.

Moment of Strength: Ephesians 5:25

JANUARY 7

DAD: TEACHER, MENTOR, TRAINER

*Teach a youth about the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Proverbs 22:6, HCSB

IT'S EASY TO READ the principles and adages expressed in Proverbs—especially one like today's verse—and assume they're promises that God will always fulfill. But more often than not, proverbs and principles are just that—principles that *usually* work out that way in our lives.

Many a dad has viewed today's verse as God's promise that even if his children rebel and abandon their faith, it's a certainty that they will return. We need to understand that it's a *principle*, not an absolute promise. The Bible is filled with both promises and principles; and it's crucial to understand the difference, or we could experience great disappointment.

So what's a dad to do? One thing is to always try to be moving ahead, encouraging your children in their faith and setting a good example.

One couple who had three boys agreed on four godly principles to instill in their sons. First, they would prepare their sons for the path, not prepare the path for their sons. Second, they would prepare their sons to do their best. Third, they would train them to be leaders. And fourth, they would teach them to deal with both open and closed doors. A boy who learns those principles is likely to hang on to his faith, even through tough times.

BOTTOM LINE

Prayerfully decide what principles you want to teach your children, and implement a plan that will help them stay strong in their faith.

Moment of Strength: Ephesians 6:1-4