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*“I write to you, young men, because you are strong,
and the word of God abides in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.”*

(1 John 2:14b, ESV)

Introduction

This study was written primarily for young men. Young men have abundant strength and energy, but we don't usually have an over-abundance of wisdom. In order for our strength to be effective, it must be coupled with wisdom from the Word of God. The strength we have is a gift from God, which must be used for His glory. Studying the Scriptures will draw us closer to God. It will also help us wisely exercise and direct every ounce of physical, mental, and spiritual strength He's given to us.

This book will help you accomplish two important things:

The first goal is to *gain a biblical understanding of strength*. God created us with strength, and we need to understand His design for that strength. As young men, we have great strength and potential. We have great abilities that can be used either foolishly, to our destruction, or wisely, for God's glory.

The second goal is to *learn and practice Bible study skills*. This book is designed to give you experience in many different types of Bible study. When you've finished this book, you can take the study methods you've practiced here and continue using them to study any book, chapter, verse, word, person, or topic in the Bible. The ability to study Scripture will serve you well throughout your life, no matter what callings and responsibilities God gives you. If you know God's Word, you'll be prepared to stand strong.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." God's Word tells us how to live and how to please God. We can learn biblical wisdom from pastors and teachers, but we also need to learn through direct, personal interaction with God's Word.

Daily personal Bible reading is important. But we also need to slow down and really *study* God's Word. Personal Bible study brings the Bible to life, and there's no substitute for discovering the depths and riches of God's Word through your own personal study.

It is important, however, that we study what God *actually* says, not what we *think* God says. We need to pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit. In addition, we need to follow sound study practices and use proven resources as we study. Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture, not by other men or the ideas we might read into it. Here are some examples of sound methods you can use while studying the Bible:

- Study original Hebrew or Greek words as they are used throughout Scripture.
- Compare one passage of Scripture with another.
- Observe repeated words and themes in a passage.
- Outline the content of a passage.
- Gather all that Scripture says on a particular topic.
- Study the lives of people in the Bible, noting how their attitudes and actions portray biblical truths.

How this book works:

This book consists of ten studies, with a short review study at the end. Each study is divided into daily

assignments which take from five to twenty minutes each. The book contains 74 days worth of study (about 15 weeks if you do five studies a week). You may complete more than one assignment per day if you want to finish faster. Ideas for additional study are given at the end of each study (a total of 40), giving enough direction for up to a whole year of meaningful Bible study.

Using Computers for Bible study:

Digital Bible study tools are becoming more available and affordable, and if you use the Internet, you can find most of the study tools that you'll need for free. These tools can help you study more thoroughly and efficiently. The studies in this book are based on printed study tools, but each study gives optional instructions for using digital Bible study tools (in the gray boxes in the sidebar).

Recommended materials:

To fully benefit from these studies, you will need **Nave's Topical Bible** and **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance**. Both books are valuable study tools that you will use over and over again, and they are worth the investment. You can find these books online, at most Christian bookstores, or possibly from your church library. We also offer inexpensive hardbound editions at www.doorposts.com.

Several studies require you to mark words or verses in your Bible, so you will need a Bible that you don't mind marking in and some colored pencils or non-bleeding highlighters.

Bible translations:

The studies in this book use primarily the King James translation of the Bible, because of the many study tools available for this translation. If you prefer to study in a different translation, search for study tools like a concordance and a topical Bible that are designed for your translation. These are becoming increasingly available.

Recommended age levels:

The studies in this book are designed for ages 10-12 and up. Younger boys may be able to complete the studies with help from a parent, older brother, or teacher.

For families with girls:

This study is written primarily for young men, but it's also appropriate for young ladies. Much of what Scripture says about strength applies to women just as much as it does to men. Young ladies can encourage young men towards true, biblical strength. They also need wisdom to discern between true and false strength in their relationships and as they consider marriage. In a few places, alternate questions for young ladies are indicated with “*”. These alternate questions are found in the back of the book.

Study 1

Strength for the Race

Meditating on Hebrews 11-12

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us...” (Hebrews 12:1)

This first study will be the simplest form of Bible study: reading a portion of Scripture, meditating on it, and finding application for your life. This is sometimes called the “devotional” method of Bible study. Since meditation and application is a key part of any Bible study, the steps we follow in this first study will serve you well through the rest of this book.

Hebrews 11 contains the “hall of faith,” a recounting of faithful deeds by the Old Testament saints, who now make up our “cloud of witnesses.” Chapter 12 has specific instructions for us, showing how and why we should imitate Jesus, the One these saints placed their faith in.

These chapters of Hebrews give us *reasons* for being strong along with *examples* of godly men and women who spent their strength in the cause of Christ. From Christian history and from Jesus’ example, we can gain the strength to *run with endurance* the race that is set before us, just like these men and women of faith.

Day 1 - Pray and read

A. Pray before you begin reading. You want the Holy Spirit to give you insight and help you see what God is teaching you from His Word as you read.

B. Read chapters 11 and 12 of Hebrews. What are these chapters talking about?

Devotional study:

1. Pray
2. Read the passage of Scripture.
3. Meditate on the passage or selected verses from the passage.
4. Memorize and contemplate verses from the passage.
5. Look at the passage from different angles by asking questions (who, what, where, when, why and how).
6. Pray again and look for specific application to your life.

What you will need:

- Bible
- Colored pencils or highlighters (at least five different colors)

D. Why did they do these things? **How** did they remain strong in these trials? You've probably noticed a key word that occurs repeatedly in chapter 11.

This word is _____.

Mark every instance of this word with BLUE.

Day 4 - More questions

A. When did the events in Hebrews 11 take place?

B. What does Jesus do? Read Hebrews 12:1-4 and mark everything Jesus does with the color RED. List these actions below:

C. What are we encouraged to do? Read chapter 12 and mark anything this chapter says we should **do** with the color GREEN. List everything you mark here:
