**What To Do When Struggling Spiritually**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. I am thankful to be a Christian, because (among other things) I know that every spiritual blessing can only be found in Christ. Not only that, I enjoy working for Christ—laboring for the Lord brings me great joy.
2. But, having said that, I am still not immune to spiritual slumps, to going through times when my faith, love, and hope are weaker than what they ought to be. Can YOU relate? Do YOU know what I’m talking about?
3. What we all need to understand, though, is that these times of spiritual weakness can be especially dangerous.
	1. Read 1 Peter 5:8. Times of weakness make us more vulnerable to Satan, and he may very well take advantage of that opportunity. He may do a lot of damage before we can get turned back in the right direction—and that’s assuming we do.
	2. Warning in Hebrews 2:1. If we don’t take the proper measures during these times of weakness, we may just slowly drift away from the Lord.
4. Let’s look, then, at some things we can do when we’re struggling spiritually.

**BODY:**

1. We can immediately seek help from those who are spiritually minded.
	1. When going through periods of spiritual weakness, we certainly don’t want to be around those who might weaken us even more.
		1. In fact, times like these may be a good time to examine the influences in our lives. We might need to make changes in the amount of time we spend with certain people.
		2. “The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray” (Proverbs 12:26).
	2. Times of spiritual weakness should cause us to be even more thankful that we are in the family of God.
		1. We have brothers and sisters in Christ that we can turn to, and they should be able and willing to help.
			1. Galatians 6:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14.
		2. Yes, this could involve a long time with them, or just being around them more and being encouraged by their example.
		3. Even Paul needed a “pick me up” at various times—several times he mentions those who “refreshed his spirit.”
		4. Hebrews 3:12-13. Sometimes this involves us being courageous enough to ask for help, and our brothers and sisters being caring enough and patient enough to listen.
2. We can gain strength and encouragement from the examples in the Bible, and of course, this involves continuing to read and study.
	1. Doesn’t it help to read about people who have faced the same struggles, and who have persevered through those struggles?
		1. Hebrews was written to people who were struggling, who were in a weakened condition, who were at least in some cases on the verge of abandoning the Lord.
			1. And so the writer, inspired by the Holy Spirit, tells them about people who experienced a wide range of struggles, but who because of their faith in God were able to overcome.
			2. Read about these men and women especially in chapter 11.
		2. Let’s notice one example in particular the Hebrews writer uses—Heb. 12:1-4.
			1. Endurance—a key theme in the book.
			2. “for the joy set before Him”—does that not apply to us?
			3. “lest you become weary and discouraged”—isn’t that what we’re trying to prevent?
			4. “You have not yet resisted to bloodshed”—and yet that’s exactly what happened to Jesus.
		3. When going through times of spiritual weakness, let’s turn to these examples in the Bible and draw strength from them.
3. We can attend services faithfully, consistently.
	1. Often when a person begins to grow weaker, it can have an effect on his/her attendance.
		1. May not quit altogether, but the headaches get a little more serious, the aches and pains become a little more severe, etc. It becomes easier and easier to talk ourselves out of coming.
		2. Hebrews 10:24-25.
		3. “If I have to force myself to go, then I have no business going.”
			1. Who really agrees with that?
			2. Commit to coming every single time and it may just be that it becomes much less a drudgery to you.
		4. “Let all things be done for edification” (1 Corinthians 14:26)—although our worship is directed to God, it benefits us; it gives our spiritual battery the charge it needs.
4. We can humble ourselves in prayer to God.
	1. Hebrews 4:14-16.
		1. If our High Priest can understand and sympathize with our weaknesses, then when we go to God in prayer, let’s be frank with Him about our weaknesses and ask for help in those specific areas.
	2. Think Peter wished later he would have prayed when Jesus told him to in the Garden of Gethsemane?
		1. Read Matthew 26:31-35, 40-41, 69-75.
		2. What we do know is that Peter did much better on a later occasion.
			1. Acts 4:29-31, after Peter and John had been threatened, told not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus.
		3. As we said at the beginning of the lesson, times of spiritual weakness make us very vulnerable, and if we don’t turn to God in prayer, our situation will become much worse.
		4. But even beyond the specific action of prayer, we need to live with a constant realization of God’s presence:
			1. “A truly godly man is one who lives with a constant realization of God’s divine presence. He is God-conscious. When he awakes in the morning, there is God. As he dresses for work, there is God. As he goes into breakfast with his family, as he drives to work, as he works through the day, as he drives home, as he spends the evening hours, as he lies down on his bed at the close of the day, there is God” (Bill Hall, **Two Men**).