



Healthy Living

Charles F. Stanley - In Touch Ministries



*For everything,
a season,
and in everything,
prayer.*



SEASONS OF PRAYER

REJOICING IN TODAY

The life you'll remember is not the life you're living. Think about it. How much have you forgotten already? Consider the stories of the Old Testament where years pass between one verse and the next. Like a Dickens novel, we'll only remember the best and worst of times—the stories we tell ourselves about the things that have happened to us.

As time passes, the things that were once so important to us will be forgotten and the things we once took for granted will be missed. The years of waiting will be reduced to a few words: "We waited years until it happened" As the book of Ecclesiastes reminds us, life rarely meets our expectations, but it is still a beautiful thing to be cherished and celebrated—in our memories, in the present moment, and as we anticipate the future.

So, what kind of story are you living? What will you remember? And what will others remember about you? Are you preoccupied with worries about the future? Are you struggling with physical or emotional health? Are relational conflicts consuming your life? If you have accepted God's gift of salvation, you are not a victim of your circumstances. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Even if God doesn't answer our prayers the way we want Him to, He keeps His promises. And whether in this mortal life or in the rest of our eternal one, He will meet our every need and take care of His children.

That's why we've compiled this booklet full of Dr. Stanley's teachings on living a joy-filled, fruitful life. We hope the Lord uses this booklet to help you pray through every aspect of your well-being and blesses you with the abundant life He longs to give to all who call Him Father.

From your friends at
In Touch Ministries

ECCLESIASTES 11:7-10

Living in the Light

The light is pleasant, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun. Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. Everything that is to come will be futility. Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things. So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.

A STRONG LIFE

Everyone is building their life on something—either the firm foundation of the Scripture or the unstable sands of this world.

No one can accurately determine if someone is strong by simply observing external appearances. That's because a physically fit body is not necessarily a sign of inner fortitude. In Matthew 7:24–29, Jesus told a story that vividly demonstrates the difference between a strong and a weak life. He said those who are wise build their lives upon the rock-like foundation of hearing and applying God's Word.

However, a person who hears the Word—yet doesn't obey it—is basically building his life on shifting sand. The true test of strength occurs when storms come into our lives.

But no matter what you've done in the past or how old you are, it's never too late to begin building on the rock. This is one building project that won't end until the Lord takes you home. As you think about the following characteristics, ask yourself if these are true of you.


A PERSON WITH A STRONG LIFE:

- **TRUSTS IN JESUS CHRIST AS HIS PERSONAL SAVIOR.** This is the starting point and the very foundation for a strong life that cannot be ignored if you wish to grow stronger in faith.
- **FOLLOWS THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.** At the moment of our salvation, Christ sent His Holy Spirit to live within us. His job is to empower us to obey, direct our path, and wisely guide our decisions.
- **PRIORITIZES TIME ALONE IN PRAYER.** This is our connecting point with God and the means for strengthening our relationship with Him. A person with a strong life is committed to the daily discipline of prayer and knows how to communicate with the Lord about everything.
- **BUILDS HIS LIFE UPON THE TEACHINGS AND APPLICATION OF GOD'S WORD.** The Bible is our most treasured possession because it's the voice of the Lord speaking directly to us. Obeying its truths should be the norm in our lives, not the exception. When we consistently feed on His Word, He'll give us scriptures to strengthen us in our trials and sufferings.



- **SEES THE LORD JESUS AS THE STRENGTH OF HIS LIFE.** When the apostle Paul was in jail, he wrote these words: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). His foundation of obedience to Christ was so firm that nothing stopped or discouraged him from completing the work God had appointed for him. He knew his strength didn’t come from within himself but flowed from His relationship with Christ.
- **WALKS CONFIDENTLY IN THE WILL OF GOD.** A strong life has a sense of purpose. Every activity and situation is seen as an opportunity to be useful to the Lord. Even aging and illness shouldn’t hinder us because they simply offer new and different ways of serving Him.
- **WITHSTANDS STORMS AND LEARNS FROM THEM.** Many Christians complain and question God’s love when they experience hardship and pain. But those who are strong understand that the Lord’s purpose is not to remove us from all trials but to use them to strengthen us, transform us into godly people, and equip us to accomplish His will for our lives.
- **SEEKS EVERY OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH.** When a strong life is tested, it comes through the trials with greater faith. Wise men and women recognize that there’s a lesson in every difficult situation, and they want each experience to increase their faith.
- **POSSESSES COURAGE.** We all need courage to handle the difficulties and challenges of life, but courage only grows when we follow Joshua’s example of trusting in the Lord (Josh. 1:9). As he obeyed the Lord and observed His faithfulness, he received inner strength to courageously face all his challenges.
- **REMAINS HOPEFUL.** Since God is the one who controls and guides our lives, we can be optimistic about our future no matter what uncertainties surround us.
- **DEVELOPS FRIENDSHIPS WITH PEOPLE WHO ENRICH HIS LIFE.** Strong people surround themselves with godly friends who help and love them.
- **EXPRESSES LOVE AND CARE FOR OTHERS.** Those who are strong are willing to give themselves away to others by making themselves available, offering encouragement, and making a difference in their lives.
- **SERVES GOD WITH HIS SPIRITUAL GIFTS.** The Lord gives spiritual gifts to believers that enable them to serve exceptionally well in a particular area. When we operate from within our area of giftedness, we’ll have the strength to accomplish whatever God has called us to do.
- **FORGIVES QUICKLY.** An unforgiving spirit affects our emotions, relationships, and even our bodies. It also hinders every aspect of our walk with Christ. We’re strong when we realize how much we’ve been forgiven by God and can more readily forgive others.
- **PURSUES INNER PEACE.** When our relationship with the Lord is right, He gives us an inner sense of peace regardless of our situations.
- **USES MONEY WISELY.** A person with a strong life isn’t worried about money because he trusts God. He knows that the Lord promises to bless and care for those who give the first part of their income to Him (Luke 6:38).
- **BELONGS TO A BIBLE-TEACHING CHURCH.** No one ever outgrows the need to be taught Scripture. That’s why we all need to belong to a church where we can grow in our knowledge of the Word, participate in worship, and become fruitful for the kingdom of God.
- **WORKS TO BUILD A STRONG FAMILY.** If we have a strong life, we’ll want to be a godly example for our children and train them in the faith.
- **DEMONSTRATES A SERVANT SPIRIT.** Someone with inner strength delights in serving and helping others.
- **SETS AND PURSUES GOALS.** Since the Lord has a purpose for our lives, we need to set goals for ourselves in accordance with His will so we can live productively and accomplish what He desires.



- **SHOWS CONFIDENCE.** Godly confidence isn't egotistical. It's self-assurance based on our relationship with the Lord. We know that whatever He's called us to do, He'll help us accomplish it.
- **BEARS FRUIT.** If we're strong, others will see how God has transformed our character, conduct, and conversation, and they'll want Him to do the same in their lives.
- **IMPACTS THE LIVES OF OTHERS.** Strong people positively influence other people by their examples and words. 

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FRUITFUL LIVING

Aging is inevitable, but it doesn't stop us from living fruitful lives.

The secret to living a productive life is not found in a pill, a drink, or an exercise routine—but in heeding what the Lord says. None of us know how long we'll live, but while we have breath we should desire to be useful and fruitful for God. He is the one who ultimately determines the number of our days, but we have the responsibility of doing what we can to live long and productive lives.

THE KEY TO MAKING THIS A REALITY IN OUR LIVES IS FOUND IN 10 ESSENTIAL ATTITUDES.

1. **KEEP LEARNING.** When we cease to learn, we stop growing because a lazy brain is an aging brain. So much has changed over the years. As technology advances, we must continually learn skills our parents and grandparents never had to know. But the most important pursuits in life are learning the Word of God and memorizing Scripture.

2. **KEEP LOVING.** The first and foremost commandment is to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and might (Deut. 6:5). And Jesus taught and modeled love for one another as well. When we stop loving God and other people, bitterness, resentment, hostility, and hatred take up residence within us and damage our emotional, mental, and spiritual health. God created us to love Him and others. That's why maintaining a loving spirit promotes good health within us.



3. **KEEP LAUGHING.** Laughter affects every part of our body, including our nervous system, and sets us free from discontentment and grumbling. Of all the people in the world, Christians should be the happiest because we have the joy of the Lord within us and the greatest reasons to be grateful.

4. **KEEP LEAVING.** To stay youthful and productive, we must leave yesterday's cares and problems behind us instead of dragging them with us into the next day. Since past experiences and situations have the potential to discourage and pull us backwards, we must learn to cast all our anxieties on the Lord, knowing that He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7). Hanging on to past hurts, disappointments, and discouragements negatively affects our bodies, minds, and emotions. And if we're anxious about the future, we must also leave these concerns with Jesus and trust Him to handle them.

5. **KEEP LONGING.** As we get older, we must keep dreaming about the future. Instead of looking at all the things we can't do, we should concentrate on what we can accomplish and look forward to what awaits us in the future. As children of God, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who empowers us to do whatever He desires. Though we may not feel adequate, we should never underestimate what the Lord can do through us when we're willing and obedient.

6. **KEEP LOOKING AHEAD.** We should plan for tomorrow even if we don't think we have many active years left. Looking forward to what God would have us do and pursuing activities we enjoy energizes us to continue being useful and productive.

7. **KEEP LOOKING OUR BEST.** There's something about looking and doing our best that stimulates and encourages us to keep going.

8. **KEEP LABORING.** Although we may not be able to do what we once did, retirement from a career is not a time to cease working. It may be a time to change what we do, but telling ourselves that we no longer have to

work sends a message to our bodies that they can stop functioning. In the Christian life there is no need for retirement because we can still bear spiritual fruit and make a difference in people's lives until the day we die.

IN PSALM 92:12-15, THE LORD EXPLAINS HOW TO STAY YOUNG AND USEFUL THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES, HOWEVER LONG WE MAY LIVE.

“THE RIGHTEOUS MAN WILL FLOURISH LIKE THE PALM TREE” (V. 12).

This passage doesn't apply to everyone but only to those who are righteous and godly. To flourish signifies abundance of growth and fruit. The palm trees in this passage are date palms, which not only produced fruit, but whose leaves were used for fences and roofs.

“HE WILL GROW LIKE A CEDAR IN LEBANON” (V. 12)

These trees grow as high as 120 feet, and their branches extend straight out to a circumference of 30 feet. They are truly a majestic sight that symbolizes great strength.


“PLANTED IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, THEY WILL FLOURISH IN THE COURTS OF OUR GOD” (V. 13).

Spiritual abundance comes to those who stay close to the Lord.

“THEY WILL STILL YIELD FRUIT IN OLD AGE; THEY SHALL BE FULL OF SAP AND VERY GREEN, TO DECLARE THAT THE LORD IS UPRIGHT” (VV. 14-15).

Instead of being dry and of little use, the righteous person can continue to produce fruit throughout his or her life.

9. **KEEP LEANING ON THE LORD.** Each day should be lived in dependence upon and trust in God. He's the one we rely upon for wisdom, direction, and provision. There is no need to fret when we lean on the Lord in prayer. We can trust Him with all our concerns, knowing that He is always present and faithful. Hudson Taylor, the head of the China Inland Mission, once put it this way, as if God was saying, “Bear not a single care thyself; one is too much for thee. Thy work is Mine and Mine alone; thy work is to rest in Me.”

10. **KEEP LISTENING.** The most important thing we can do is listen to the Lord. Though we cannot hear Him audibly, He speaks to us in our hearts through His Word and His Spirit. As we open the Scripture and pray for guidance and wisdom, He'll answer us. But if we don't listen to Him, we'll be spiritually crippled throughout our lives and unable to discern His will. However, if we heed His voice, He will help us make wise decisions, guide us into the right relationships, empower us to avoid temptations, and convict us when we sin. 



A PRAYER FOR OUR WELL-BEING

DEAR HEAVENLY FATHER,

We recognize that while our physical health is limited by our fallen world, our lives can still flourish in the light of Your Son. Your Word is a rich, fertile ground of truth in which our roots can run deep. As we grow, may we learn to bend with the winds of the storms that pass overhead, and as the years go by, may Your legacy of faithfulness grow in us like a tree's expanding rings. While our physical strength may one day leave us, our lives can still bear the sweet fruit of Your Spirit in us, enriching the lives of those around us. This requires nothing of us other than to abide in You, to soak in the living water only You can provide, and be nothing more or less than who You've created each of us to be. We shout with the earth, rocks, and sky of Your goodness, love, and mercy, and we praise You as the sun rises and again when it sets, recognizing that each day is an opportunity to proclaim Your glory where You plant us. Amen.



THERE'S MORE

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HEALTH & HAPPINESS QUIZ

On a scale of 0-10, how do you feel about these areas of your well-being? If you score low in some areas, don't worry. We all have things we can do better. Just pick a place to begin and think of ways you can make improvements in that area of your life. You might consider asking a friend or even hiring a professional to help you achieve your goals. Retake the test in about six months to see how you have improved or what new areas you might need to work on.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

STRESS/ANXIETY

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

DAILY QUIET TIME

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CHURCH ENGAGEMENT

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

EVANGELISM

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

FINANCIAL HEALTH

DEBT

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SAVINGS

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

GIVING

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

POSSESSIONS

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PHYSICAL HEALTH

FLEXIBILITY

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

STRENGTH

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

FOOD & DRINK

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SLEEP

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

RELATIONAL HEALTH

FAMILY

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

FRIENDSHIPS

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

STRIFE/CONFLICT

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

MEANINGFUL WORK/SERVICE

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10