



STRONG

[adjective: purer, purest]
free from anything of a different,
inferior, or contaminating kind;
free from extraneous matter

Think about it...

To be brave, you must be pure and strong. To be pure, you must be brave and strong, To be strong, you must be pure and brave. They all factor into, and depend upon each other.

Think about the integrity of a bridge. It cannot be strong without being solid -- solid design, and solid materials. Engineered and assembled the right way.

Your personal integrity is the same. Your heart must be completely committed, your mind utterly determined, and your feet solidly planted in truth that comes from seeking God and knowing His word.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS
YOU NEED TO BE STRONGER
ABOUT?



4 KEY POINTS ABOUT BEING STRONG

- I. A GODLY WOMAN MUST BE STRONG
- II. THERE ARE 2 WAYS OF BEING STRONG
- III. STRENGTH IS MADE REAL,
WHEN WE TAKE A STAND AGAINST WRONG
- IV. STRENGTH OF SPIRIT IS THE MARK
OF A GODLY WOMAN

4 KEY VERSES:

- 1 "If you fail under pressure, your strength is too small." (Proverbs 24:10)
- 2 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." 2 Timothy 1:7)
- 3 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." (Acts 1:8)
- 4 "Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness." (Ephesians 6:14)



STRONG

PROFILE:
A STRONG GODLY
WOMAN

SEE IF YOU CAN MATCH
ALL THESE TRAITS TO THE
VERSES AT THE RIGHT, IN
PROVERBS 31

- VALUABLE AND RARE
- TRUSTWORTHY, FAITHFUL
- A BLESSING TO OTHERS
- A HARD WORKER
- DEPENDABLE
- A PLANNER & STRATEGIST
- A BUSINESSWOMAN
- RESPECTED
- DILIGENT
- ENTREPRENEUR
- SKILLED
- CREATIVE
- CHARITABLE
- CONFIDENT
- TAKES CARE OF HER FAMILY
- TALENTED
- STRONG AND DIGNIFIED
- HONOURABLE
- HAPPY AND CONTENT
- WISE AND KIND
- A GOOD EXAMPLE
- RESPONSIBLE
- RESPECTED
- ADORED & LOVED
- HIGHLY REGARDED
- REPUTABLE
- HONORABLE
- BLESSED

YOUR INNER LIONESSE

I can remember one of my earliest treks to the zoo on an elementary school field trip. I was so excited. Our class would be touring the zoo to see the wild animals up close and personal. I remember seeing the monkeys, and the silver backed gorillas. There were birds of every kind. Zebras, giraffes, the whole spectrum was represented. But there was one beast that I was most anxious to see - the Lion.

This majestic brute was the king of the jungle. His roar would shake the ground and could be heard for miles. It would paralyze its victims with the sheer power of its ferocity. I had seen him on television and read about him in books.

The big moment came. I followed the signs that pointed to the area that housed the "King of the Jungle." When I looked up and saw the sign, I was really excited. It said "Lion" and pointed in the direction I should go.

I started running. I rounded the corner to see this Lion. I was not prepared for what I saw. I stopped in my tracks. Like a splash of cold water in the face, my expectations where sadly dampened.

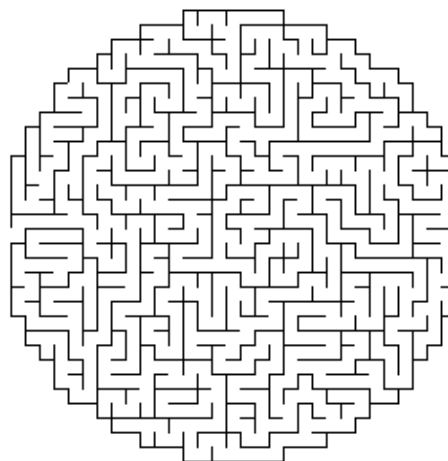
There, lying in a lazy mound of fur, was a pathetic excuse of a large cat. He looked half asleep and uninterested in

everyone around him. People were shouting and waving their arms to get the Lion to respond. After a few minutes, it became clear to me that this Lion was not like the ones I had seen before. Somehow, the captivity had drained him of his original glory. His eyes no longer looked fierce, piercing, or even alive. He had lost his roar.

Many people are much like that Lion. I see it in their eyes when I talk with them. The captivity of broken hearts, dull, comfortable, or beaten down lives have robbed them of their roar.

One of the things that defines a Proverbs 31 woman is strength. Not manly strength -- womanly strength.

It is important to develop strength in many different areas. Strength comes naturally for some people, or so it may seem. You may look at some women and see born heroes, but they did not all start out that way. They had to build their strength, and you can, too.



SYNONYMS: STURDY, UNBREAKABLE, POWERFUL

STRONG: ESPECIALLY ABLE, COMPETENT OR POWERFUL


STRONG = SOLID TO THE CORE

1. A GODLY WOMAN MUST BE STRONG

"You never know how strong you are, until being strong is the only choice you have."

The Proverbs 31 Woman

- 10 Who can find a virtuous and capable wife?
She is more precious than rubies.
- 11 Her husband can trust her,
and she will greatly enrich his life.
- 12 She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
- 13 She finds wool and flax
and busily spins it.
- 14 She is like a merchant's ship,
bringing her food from afar.
- 15 She gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for her household
and plan the day's work for her servant girls.
- 16 She goes to inspect a field and buys it;
with her earnings she plants a vineyard.
- 17 She is energetic and strong,
a hard worker.
- 18 She makes sure her dealings are profitable;
her lamp burns late into the night.
- 19 Her hands are busy spinning thread,
her fingers twisting fiber.
- 20 She extends a helping hand to the poor
and opens her arms to the needy.
- 21 She has no fear of winter for her household,
for everyone has warm[c] clothes.
- 22 She makes her own bedspreads.
She dresses in fine linen and purple gowns.
- 23 Her husband is well known at the city gates,
where he sits with the other civic leaders.
- 24 She makes belted linen garments
and sashes to sell to the merchants.
- 25 She is clothed with strength and dignity,
and she laughs without fear of the future.
- 26 When she speaks, her words are wise,
and she gives instructions with kindness.
- 27 She carefully watches everything in her household
and suffers nothing from laziness.
- 28 Her children stand and bless her.
Her husband praises her:
- 29 "There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!"
- 30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last;
but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised.
- 31 Reward her for all she has done.
Let her deeds publicly declare her praise.

A photograph of a person climbing a tall wooden wall with colorful handholds. The person is wearing a white helmet and a harness. The wall is made of vertical wooden planks. The background shows a blue sky with some clouds and a building structure.

**HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO
HEAR THE JOYFUL CALL
TO WORSHIP,
FOR THEY WILL WALK
IN THE LIGHT OF YOUR
PRESENCE, LORD.
THEY REJOICE ALL DAY
LONG IN YOUR
WONDERFUL REPUTATION.
THEY EXULT IN YOUR
RIGHTEOUSNESS.
YOU ARE THEIR
GLORIOUS STRENGTH.
IT PLEASES YOU TO
MAKE US STRONG.**

PSALM 89:15-17



STRONG

SYNONYMS: STURDY, UNBREAKABLE, POWERFUL

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2. THERE ARE 2 TYPES OF STRENGTH

PHYSICALLY STRONG

Being physically strong is a matter of health. We should take care of ourselves with healthy eating habits, and exercise to keep our bodies strong and able to pursue the purpose God has for us. Whether you are a runner or a writer, you cannot fulfill your mission if you're sick or so out of shape you're too tired to go do what you should do. For your happiness' sake, take care of your health. You have many missions ahead of you.

SPIRITUALLY STRONG

Another kind of strength is spiritual strength. You might be strong physically, but panic and run (on the inside) from a tough challenge. Spiritual strength is what keeps you going, even if you are sick, tired, or physically weak for some other reason.

"The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear a crushed spirit?"
(Proverbs 18:14)

It's in the difficult times - the horrible, awful times, the worst day ever, that when we seem physically unable to fight a battle, a strong spirit will make us get up and fight.

A great example of this is Bethany Hamilton. A beauti-

ful young surf champion who loved nothing more than to be out on her board in the ocean's waves. One day, she was brutally attacked by a shark. Somehow, she got away and survived, badly injured, but fighting for her life.

She was rescued from the shark, but what followed was an even greater fight. The shark attack left Bethany with only one arm. She was devastated. Not only did she have to learn to dress herself and do her hair with one arm, she couldn't surf anymore. So it would seem.

At her lowest time, bitter, angry and feeling sorry for herself, she was caught up and taken on a youth mission trip to help the victims of the massive tsunami in 2004. There, on the shore, looking past the wreckage to the beautiful ocean waves she loved so much, her heart was breaking over her lost dream -- to be a surf champion again. As she watched the waters, she noticed a little boy, crying. The tsunami had taken everything his family had, and some of his family, and left him terrified of the water.

Gently, she coaxed him into the shallow rippling waves, comforting and smiling and talking softly to him until, before long, he was laughing and splashing in the waves, too. She had helped him

overcome his fear, and onto the road of getting his little life back.

That day she realized that her problems, though crushing to her before, were not very big, in comparison to all the tragedy and heartache in the world. She knew that she had an inner strength with the power to help others, and she had a God-given duty to think of other people, instead just herself. That day, she began to reach out from her depression and love other people with a love deeper than she had ever known herself capable of. She had a new-found compassion that flowed to other people and inspired them to pry themselves out of their sadness, too.

From her broken body, came a mended spirit, stronger than ever, and she became a powerful influence of faith and hope to many people.

Bethany DID surf again, and she became a champion. Against all the odds, her strong spirit drove her body to be stronger, to fulfill her dreams.

And, as icing on the cake, she met and married a man who adores her and values her for the priceless strong woman that she is. And they lived happily ever after....

**"I don't need EASY...I just need POSSIBLE"
-- Bethany Hamilton**

STRONG SNAPSHOT: BETHANY HAMILTON

Bethany survived a shark attack and came back from her devastating injury and trail to become a champion surfer.

Along the way, she found a power to influence and inspire the whole world with her enormous faith in God.

"I have embraced more people with one arm," she said, "than I ever could with two."



Journal it! If you can overcome the challenges in your life (and you CAN, with faith and determination) how do you think it might inspire and help others? Talk about those challenges, and how it might related to some similar problems others may have.

SYNONYMS: STURDY, UNBREAKABLE, POWERFUL

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3. WHEN STRENGTH IS MADE "REAL..."



STRONG

STRENGTH TO STAND

No one knows the limits or abilities of her courage, or strength, until they have been tested.

Countless times in history, through pioneering, civil wars, slavery, tragedy and injustice, women have tapped into their inner strength -- that comes from their faith in God -- to survive and overcome unthinkable situations.

The foundations of every civilization are built upon the homes within them, and within those homes were the women who were the caretakers, the nurses, the cooks, the counselors, the prayer warriors, teachers, and sometimes even the providers, for their families.

As they protect their children from harm, they have a burning sense of justice, and the kind of right world they want their children to grow up in. Our mothers have been the heart and passion behind fighting for racial equality, human rights, and safe homes.

As women, we are wired for passionate pursuits, to dream, dream big, and to throw our energy into helping others, encouraging the sad, mending the broken, and putting things back in order.

One such woman was Florence Nightingale. She came to prominence while serving as a

manager of nurses trained by her during the Crimean War, where she organized the tending to wounded soldiers.

She gave nursing a highly favorable reputation and became an icon of Victorian culture, especially in the persona of "The Lady with the Lamp" making rounds of wounded soldiers at night.

Florence fought for social reform, and improved health-care for every level of British society. She also advocated hunger relief in India, where British rule was in authority, and worked to abolish laws that were overly harsh to women.

Can you name two women you admire, who have shown the strength to stand against injustice?

What were some attributes of the Proverbs 31 woman did they show, and how?



**PROFILE: STRONG
FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE**

| HOPE ALL IS WELL WITH YOU
AND THAT YOU ARE AS HEALTHY
IN BODY AS YOU ARE
STRONG IN SPIRIT.
--3 JOHN 1:2



Is there something wrong in your world that you wish you had the strength and courage to make right? What is it? What would you like to do? Why? Talk about how God could strengthen your spirit to take action, and change things.

✧ RECOMMENDED MOVIE:
SOUL SURFER



4. THE MARK OF A GODLY WOMAN



STRONG

BE STRONG FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH YOU!

You can be physically strong, but without spiritual strength, you will fail.

Simon, later renamed Peter by Jesus, was the head of a fishing operation. He ran boats, gave orders and fished the sea daily to make a living. He was a rough outdoorsman, to be sure. When he met Jesus, he dropped everything to follow Him. His commitment was real.

When Jesus came to the disciples, walking on the water, Peter was the first to step out of the boat to try to walk on water, too. His faith was fierce. But when he looked around him at the whitecapping waves, the churning waters, the lighting and the thunder filling his eyes and ears, his fear took over.

When the high priests and guards came to arrest Jesus, Peter was the first to draw his sword to try to defend him, but, soon after, denied three times that he even knew Jesus. Fear had won again. His spiritual strength was not enough to sustain the faith burning in his heart.

When it came time to make a stand, Peter was unable to do so. We will be faced with similar challenges. There will be times in our lives when we need REAL strength, and lasting courage.

Fast forward to a time, not long after that, when Peter stood in front of a crowd of over 3,000, proclaiming Jesus with a courage unlike any other. Where had this spiritual strength come from?

The answer to this question is in Acts, Chapter 2.

“On the day of Pentecost, all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.” (Acts 2:1-4)

Jesus had told his disciples that they would receive power after the Holy Spirit had been given to them. This is what gives us the strength and the power we need to stand for God and have the inner strength that we need to be godly women. It is not our own strength -- it is His, filling our hearts.

PRAYER FOR STRENGTH:

“Father, in Jesus’ name, I ask you to fill me with the Holy Spirit and power. Your Holy Word promises that if I ask, you will fill me. I believe and now I receive it. I thank you, now, in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

**"It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare --
American Author Mark Twain**

™I attribute my success to this - I never gave or took any excuse.

**Florence Nightingale
the Mother of Modern Nursing**



STRONG Habits



1. Prayer - One-on-one time with God, to pray to him, and listen, too. When we give God our undivided attention, he will speak to our hearts.

2. Scripture memorisation and personal devotional time - Study and read God's word as if you were a student trying to pass a very important test -- because you ARE, every single day. Don't be unprepared.

3. Mentoring, and being mentored - Find a godly woman whom you trust, and seek advice from her. Listen to what she has to say, study scriptures that go along with it, and improve your life with her wisdom. Next, as you learn and grow, find someone younger or at least younger in spirit whom you can influence in a positive way. Go out of your way to be kind to her, and help her grow.

4. Accountability buddies - Use the buddy system to keep one another accountable for growing and seeking God (See more info on pages 76-77)

5. Reading books - People are made and improved by two things - the people they meet (we have that covered with mentoring and Accountabilibuddies) and the books they read. You can grow stronger, wiser, and be better equipped by choosing and reading books that will improve your mind and soul, rather than filling it with trash like romances, and horror stories. A little clean leisure reading is relaxing, but pick some books that, when you read the title, you think, wow, I could use some help with that! Ask your mentor or LOH Leaders to recommend books for you.

6. Recharging - It's not a crime to enjoy some "down time." In fact, it is critical to women to set aside a little time each day to de-stress. Whether you like to read, play with your dogs, go skating, play a little pickup game of basketball, or catch a movie with some friends, don't neglect to recharge, so you can keep on going...and growing.



REMEDY: MAKING FRIENDS

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT YOU LIKE TO DO, THAT REALLY "RECHARGE" YOU? COMPARE THE LIST WITH SOME OF YOUR FELLOW LOH GIRLS. YOU MAY BE SURPRISED TO FIND SOMETHING IN COMMON WITH SOMEONE YOU HARDLY KNOW -- AND YOU CAN BUILD A GREAT FRIENDSHIP, AND MANY GREAT TIMES, ON THAT.

"Courage, sacrifice, determination, commitment, toughness, heart, talent, guts. That's what little girls are made of." -- Bethany Hamilton



STRONG

HABITS

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Prayer is connecting with God in a personal way, to thank Him, make your requests known to Him, and listen to Him speak to your heart.

How can He be your friend, if you never talk with Him? How can He be the Lord of your life, if you never make time to listen to Him?

Prayer is critical to the health of your spirit. Also, worship.

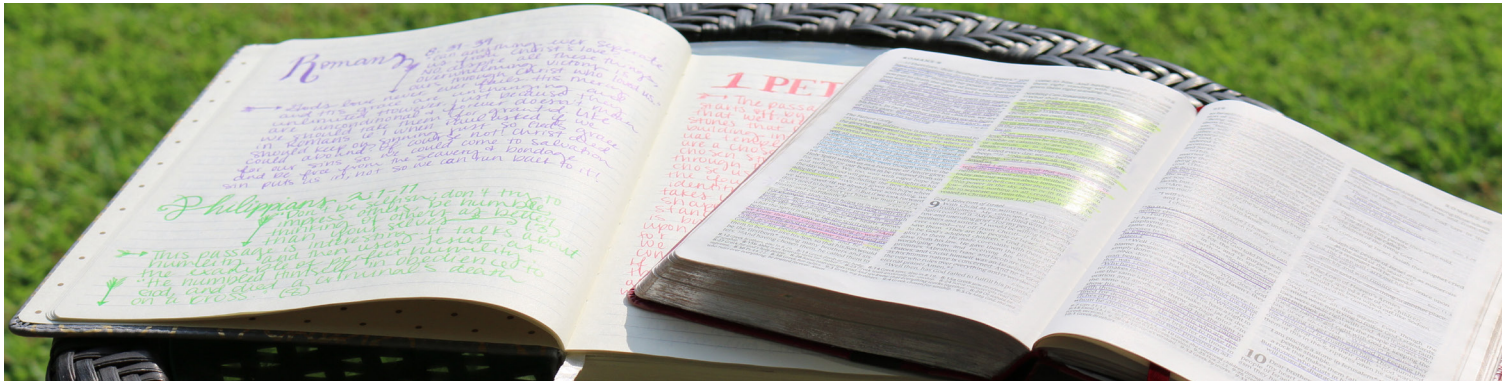
Worship is shutting everything else out, and focusing on God. Tell Him how much you love Him, how thankful you are for what He has done for you, how wonderful He is. It's that simple. But it has to be sincere. The word tells us that God is a spirit, and those who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. It's not a show, to see who is the best singer, it's just about you, and Him, and what He means to you.

Worship is a powerful way to overcome anything from a major trial in your life, to just having a bad day. Focusing on who He is, and understanding His love for you, will go a long way in cheering you, encouraging you, and getting your mind back on Philippians 4:8 things.

IF YOU COULD WRITE YOUR OWN SHORT WORSHIP SONG WHAT WOULD IT SAY? WRITE IT BELOW AND SING IT TO YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE FEELING LOW OR UPSET.



_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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DEVOTIONAL TIME

Devotional time -- time to read, study, and reflect on God's word, is another critical element to your spiritual health.

You absolutely must learn most things for yourself. Church won't do it for you. Even Ladies of Honor can't achieve this. It's a one-on-one thing. You have to seek, study and understand God's word on your own, if you ever want to grow.

If you've never done this, it may seem hard to get started. Don't get discouraged.

STEP ONE

Read the Proverb of the Day (there are 31 days in each month, so whatever the date is, that's the chapter you read).

Next, make some notes on it in your journal. What questions do you have? You can pray about these, look up other scriptures, or even ask your LOH leader or a mentor to help you understand. It helps to write them down, so you can pursue these answers later.

Finally, pick out the verse in the chapter you like best, and journal a little bit about it. What does it mean to your life? How can you fix a problem you are having by using it?

STEP TWO:

Add something extra, at the end of your day. Read a chapter of Psalms each night, and go over the words a few times until you understand them. Make notes of questions, like with Proverbs. If you want to, you can just add this onto the beginning of your day, instead.

STEP THREE:

By the time you get used to reading a Proverb and a Psalm every day for three weeks (experts tell us it takes three weeks to build a habit), I promise you will want more!

Find a devotional book that appeals to you, or just start studying the book of Romans. If you've never read the whole New Testament, you can actually do it in a month, with very little trouble.

The possibilities are endless, and, the deeper you get into God's word, the more power you will begin to have over the challenges in your life.

Your attitude will change, as you begin to more clearly understand how God sees things. You begin to realize there is a much bigger plan out there than you ever dreamed of - and that God has placed you in an active role, somewhere in it. You have a mission!

My Devotional Plan:



STRONG HABITS

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

To be strong, you must know the truth. How else will you know it, unless you read and study it for yourself?

Even better: memorize it.

Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Truth will not only set you free; it's only the truth that you KNOW that will set you free.

King David wrote in a Psalm: "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against God."

The way that you hide the word in your heart is to memorize the scriptures. When you commit The Word to memory, you are on your way to becoming a world-changer!

The best way to memorize a scripture is to write the verse out on a piece of paper, or in your journal. Write them many times, and read over them each day.

Right now, pick out a few of the most helpful scriptures from this book, and write them all over the next page. Then copy them into different pages on your journal, leaving room for notes and thoughts in between. Begin to study the verses, and write about what they mean to you, what you are doing in your life to live them, and how they change you.

As you study God's word, always pray for the Lord to show your heart what the words mean. If you follow these steps, you will begin to see things changing in your life.

That's the power of God's word!

IF YOU ARE WISE AND UNDERSTAND GOD'S WAYS, PROVE IT BY LIVING AN HONOURABLE LIFE, DOING GOOD WORKS WITH THE HUMILITY THAT COMES FROM WISDOM. BUT THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE IS FIRST OF ALL PURE. IT IS ALSO PEACELOVING, GENTLE AT ALL TIMES, AND WILLING TO YIELD TO OTHERS. IT IS FULL OF MERCY AND THE FRUIT OF GOOD DEEDS. IT SHOWS NO FAVORITISM AND IS ALWAYS SINCERE. AND THOSE WHO ARE THE PEACEMAKERS WILL PLANT SEEDS OF PEACE AND WILL REAP A HARVEST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. (JAMES 3:13, 17-18)



WE DON'T HAVE TO WONDER WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG...IT'S ALL RIGHT HERE....

My Scriptures

to memorize

Research and pick 5 scriptures, just for you:
one to give you hope, one to keep you focused on your purpose, one to remind you of God's mercy, one to keep you away from your weaknesses, and one that just somehow makes you happy whenever you read it :)

Write them below. Doodle, color, whatever makes them real to you, and helps you remember what they say...



Twig Colored Pencils,
Set of 12, by worldmarket.com



STRONG



The Lost Recipe

Many recipes have been passed down from mother to daughter, but the most important one of all seems to have been lost somewhere along the way.

It's how to make lemonade. Not the chilly, refreshing drink you make with real lemons, sugar, and ice. It's how to make the best of things, with the sour things life sends your way.

Have we lost the recipe that makes every home worth living in? The lost recipe is Lemonade. Not the amazingly sweet, goopy frozen cylinder that pops out the paper can into your pitcher before you mix it up (although that sounds really good right now)...No, I'm talking about the kind of lemonade you make when life hands you "lemons"-- things that are sour.

Strong women knew how to take life's lemons and make lemonade, passing down the recipe from generation to generation...I'm sure it's one of the things that made our country a great, prosperous nation.

Think of the warrior's hearts and spirits of the pioneer women, the women who lovingly bandaged fallen soldiers on both sides of the civil war. Later, this same quality

of woman kept the assembly lines running while our men were at war, then raised a baby-boom generation that would change world with its technological and industrial advancements. You've heard it said, behind every great man, there is a great woman...time and again... Actually there were two--one was a mother who knew how to take lemons and make lemonade. What happened to that recipe? Have we lost it?

Every time triumph was born from adversity, it came about through a strength of spirit and attitude. No one ever triumphed with a "woe is me" life symphony. No one ever boo-hoo'd their way to the finish line to win. There was never a victory party that followed a pity party.

Yes, life is hard, and bad things happen, but we need to recognize that it's hard for everyone. You're not the first one to have a rough day, or a rough life, so get down off your soapbox and see what's going on with the people around you. Are you using every forum to shine a little light for others, or to throw a spotlight on yourself and your troubles?

Start fresh today. Get those lemons and make some lemonade. Whatever you have left that's good in your life--focus on it, stir up until it's sweet, and pour it out for others.

Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious, but fools are consumed by their own lips.
-- Ecclesiastes 10:12

BECAUSE STRONG IS THE NEW "BEAUTIFUL"

In a corrupted, drug-ravaged city on the border of Mexico, a young woman is making an astronomical impact. Lety Salazar, the mayor of Matamoros, Mexico, is a full-blown revolutionary, overthrowing the power of drug cartels and corrupt government officials, fearlessly defying the powers that have held the city and country captive for years.

While other candidates were holding political rallies in the mayor's race, Lety held prayer meetings across the city. Lety won the office of Mayor of Matamoros, a city of about one million. She declared that her office was not behind closed doors but in the streets of the city with the people. Her custom is to walk the streets for part of each day to stay in tune with those who need her most.

Lety serves her city and its residents in true Christlike leadership, fighting for godly principles, taking a stand against injustice and abuse, and generously showing the love of Jesus.



**STRONG
SNAPSHOT:
LETICIA SALAZAR**

During the city's monthly open meetings, where they conduct business with all city departments having tables set up, Lety has a table, too, and listens to the many concerns of her people, to see how she can help. The number one thing they ask for, however, is for her to pray for them. And she does -- right there.

Equally strong is her right-hand person, her sister. This young woman is a cancer survivor, forever disfigured by the disease that destroyed the thing we are most conscious of--her face. Yet she has no qualms about appearing in public or on camera, boldly articulating their vision for change and peace in their city. She is not held back by her appearance, shocking as it may be to some people. She does not seem to care.

Both women are defying the odds--taking a stand, and standing out, to pursue Christ and lead others, as well, without fear of losing public approval, or even their own lives.

Lety has escaped ambushes, and lives with constant threats against her life by the drug cartel.

Don't let concerns about your looks, or your popularity, stand in the way of your purpose for God. You have a mission that is greater than anything to do with your appearance or your social activities, and, if you pursue your purpose, you will find a power and sense of fulfillment that are more satisfying and more lasting than anything else.

JOURNAL IT: WRITE ABOUT SOME OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE PROVERBS 31 WOMAN YOU SEE IN LETICIA SALAZAR. HOW DO THESE TRAITS MAKE HER A HERO IN HER COMMUNITY?

"Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant." -- Galatians 1:10



OH,
THE
SILLY
LITTLE
THINGS
WE
SAY...

SMH (SHAKING MY HEAD)

Read through the book of Numbers, and you will be shaking your head at the nonstop whining and complaining among the Israelites. Imagine how irritated Moses was! Have you ever had to work with a group of classmates on a project, when they were all a bunch of whiners? It's amazing how just a few of them can absolutely suck the life out of the whole place!... Perhaps even the whole galaxy, if they weren't limited by atmospheric forces.

Today, we (and I mean the royal "we") might have a legitimate, documented, witnessed, recorded, notarized, TMZ-grade Titanic-size boatload of complaints, but how much does it REALLY help to make your problems the center of your attention? The Lord knows we all need to vent a little, once in awhile, but this should be done in very limited quantities, and with a

very private audience--someone you trust implicitly. That would NOT be your Instagram or Twitter audience, ladies ...

William Shakespeare wrote: "Mind your speech a little lest you should mar your fortunes."

Translated, he meant, watch what you say, unless you mess up your destiny.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH - TOO FREE!

Freedom of speech is such a horribly abused practice. So many potentially powerful women destroy their overall message by the stream of complaints coming from their lips -- they air their dirty laundry with everyone, harping on how cruelly and consistently they have been wronged, how awful the world is, and so-on. In the background, picture their beautiful, healthy children, nice clothes, a roof over their heads, the ability

to read, write and sit down to a hearty meal---much more than the majority of the world will ever have the opportunity to enjoy.

Ask yourself--how much energy, time, and effort am I wasting on petty complaints? Could that time be better spent quietly developing and deploying solutions instead of stirring up discontent and playing the victim? I never read anything, from biography to fairy tale, where the hero emerged victorious with a defeatist attitude, and I'm pretty sure if the Queen of England (every girl's gold standard of good conduct) had an Instagram account, she would not be plastering it with complaints about how mean her family is, how ill-treated and misunderstood she is, how she can't enjoy a cup of tea anywhere in society because everyone is so fake and deceitful...

How can we possibly expect our

"ACCOUNTABILI-BUDDY: a best friend who keeps you on track with wise, godly advice when you need it."

friends, who don't know Jesus, to look to us as leaders, to have the healthy, vibrant outlook that the challenges of life require, if we conduct ourselves with so little dignity? We are supposed to be salt and light to a tasteless and dark world, and our words determine how well we season and illuminate the people around us.

If we have to zip our lips and zip-tie our hands to keep from blabbing and tweeting all our wounds and woes, maybe we should. Not everything that's true needs to be said (certainly not broadcast).

Author Stephen Covey, who has unlocked so many secrets to personal and professional success, wrote: "Stop being a critic and be light; don't be a judge, be a model."

We all have spheres of influence much larger than we suspect--instead of being a black hole in the middle of it, be the sun!

IT MATTERS!

How much do your words matter?

The Bible tells us that death and life are in the power of the tongue. (Proverbs 18:21)

Jesus himself said, "35 A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things

from the treasury of an evil heart. 36 And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. 37 The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you." (Matthew 12:35-37)

The book of James chapter one, verse 26 wraps it all up in this one sentence:

"If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless."

Ouch. Learn to control your words, before you do too much damage to your future.



REMEDY:

IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BE HAVING TROUBLE CONTROLLING YOUR WORDS, CHECK YOURSELF. STOP A FEW TIMES DURING THE DAY AND MAKE SOME NOTES ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE SAID, JUST AS IF YOU WERE TAKING NOTES ON A BOOK. WHAT WOULD BE YOUR MESSAGE? TRY USING THE RECORDER ON YOUR PHONE TO RECORD SOME OF THE THINGS YOU TALK ABOUT DURING THE DAY. PLAY IT BACK -- WOULD YOU BE ASHAMED OF ANYTHING?

DEAR HONOR GUARD

Dear Honor Guard,

I want to change -- I know I need to make lots of changes -- but I don't know how to stay on track. Every day, I try to change some of my old habits, but I seem to forget myself through the day. How can I get stronger?

*Signed,
Challenged with Changes*

Dear Challenged with Changes,

The Lord knows you can't do this alone. The book of Proverbs gives us some great advice. It tells us "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend." (Proverbs 27:17)

As you begin to follow the Lord, it is important to choose some very reliable, close friends, who are following Christ, too (so that you have the same goals and perspectives). As your friendship grows stronger, you can confide in each other, advise each other, and trust each other enough to take the truth from them. The Honor guards call such a friend an "Accountabili-buddy," because they have authorized each other, to hold each other accountable for their actions. If you start gossiping, and your Accountabili-buddy says, "hey, remember you set a goal not to gossip anymore," you have an obligation to listen to what she has to say, and take action based on it. On the other side, the Accountabili-buddy giving the correction must always do it with love, privately. It's a trust relationship that grows stronger, as you both grow sharper.