Before I gave my life to Christ—and even during my early, immature days in faith—I believed that spiritual strength was measured by how much “anointing” one had. By “anointing” I meant supernatural gifts: miracles, visions, discerning spirits, speaking in tongues, and other signs. I believed that someone without these was weak in spirit, while someone who manifested them abundantly was spiritually powerful and feared by Satan.

Yet as I studied Scripture more deeply, I discovered that the Bible’s standard for spiritual strength is not necessarily the external manifestation of gifts, but the depth of one’s relationship with Christ, the measure of one’s revelation of Jesus, and perseverance in faith. In this revised version, I’ll integrate some theological clarifications—especially from a Reformed / evangelical perspective—to help ground the message more solidly theologically. I will use the New International Version (NIV) for most Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted.

What Is Spiritual Strength?

To define spiritual strength, we must first see how “strength” appears in other domains:

- A physically strong creature (like a lion) conquers or dominates.
- Someone economically powerful influences markets and decisions.
- A political leader uses influence to govern.
- Technological power shapes societies.

By analogy, spiritual strength is the ability to take ground, resist the powers of darkness, and advance the reign of Christ—in one’s life, in one’s sphere, and spiritually. It is not simply about *spectacular manifestations*, but about spiritual authority,

maturity, and perseverance.

Jesus alluded to this when He said:

> “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and violent people have been taking it by force.”
> *(Matthew 11:12, NIV) (YouVersion | The Bible App | Bible.com)*

The Greek word translated “suffers violence” or “is subjected to violence” is biazetai (from *biazō*), and “violent people” is *biastai* (those who use force). The imagery suggests that the Kingdom of God is under contest, being advanced with urgency and spiritual intensity (not physical brute force). Theologically, this has been interpreted in various ways:

- Some see it as conflict: spiritual warfare in which the forces of darkness oppose the spread of the Kingdom.

- Others see “the violent” as those who press *earnestly* into the Kingdom—who will not be passive but are relentless in pursuit of God’s purposes. (In Luke 16:16, a parallel passage, Jesus says: “the Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached.”)

- The Church Father Augustine and others interpreted it as the internal struggle of the believer: to take hold of what grace offers.

In other words, strength in the spiritual life involves fervent pursuit, endurance, resistance to evil, and faithful advance of Christ’s reign.

Why John the Baptist? What Spiritual Example Does He Offer?

Jesus says, *“From the days of John the Baptist…”* rather than “from Abraham” or “Moses.” Why does John serve as the threshold for this kind of spiritual struggle and Kingdom advance?

John’s Spiritual Growth

Luke tells us:

> “The child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.”
> *(Luke 1:80, NIV)*

From childhood, John was “strong in spirit” — that is, his inner life, devotion, and communion with God were being built from an early age.

Yet John did not perform miracles in his ministry. The Gospel of John states:

> “Though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true.”
> *(John 10:41, NIV) (Christianity.com)*

This is significant: John’s credibility did not lie in miraculous displays, but in truthfulness, integrity, and the faithful testimony to Christ. This challenges the idea that spiritual authority always depends on spectacular signs.

John as the Preparer and Prophet

John understood deeply the typology and pattern of God’s redemptive work in Israel: the Passover lamb, the pillar of fire, and the crossing of the Red Sea (blood, fire/Spirit, water). He saw that the Messiah would accomplish what Israel could not. He called people to repentance, to prepare “the way of the Lord” (Isaiah 40 imagery), and baptized them as a visible sign of the need for cleansing (water) while pointing toward One who would baptize with the Spirit (fire). In John 1:29, he introduces Jesus as the “Lamb of God.” He recognized the link between old covenant patterns and new covenant fulfillment.

Thus, John’s life is an example of spiritual formation, inner preparation, and kingdom vision, rather than external power-seeking.

Theological Foundations for Growing Spiritual Strength

Here are some important theological truths to embed in your thinking as you pursue spiritual strength:

1. Union with Christ is foundational
   Paul teaches that all spiritual blessings come through union with Christ. Spiritual strength flows from abiding in Him (John 15). Growth in Christlikeness (sanctification) is what produces mature spiritual influence.

2. Scripture and the Spirit work together
   Knowledge of God through Scripture, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, is how we grow. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). The Spirit reveals Christ to us (1 Corinthians 2).

3. Spiritual warfare is real
   Ephesians 6:12 warns that our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual powers. Strength includes resisting

temptation, discerning evil, and standing firm in the armor of God.

4. Gifts are secondary to character
   The New Testament warns against emphasizing gifts over maturity (1 Corinthians 13:1–3; Galatians 5:22–23). A person may have gifts yet lack fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace). True strength is fruit-laden and grounded in humility, obedience, and love.

5. Perseverance and suffering refine strength
   Trials test and mature us (James 1:2–4; Romans 5:3–5). Many believers gain real spiritual authority and wisdom through suffering, not just through ecstatic experiences.

6. Revelation of Christ is key
   Colossians 2:2–3 says, *“in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”* Jesus is not just one among many; He is the fullness of deity (Colossians 1:19; 2:9). The more we see Christ’s excellence, the more our strength becomes anchored in

Him.

7. The Kingdom advances through faithful witness
   Spiritual strength also shows in boldness, obedience, and service. It is not self-glorifying, but Kingdom-seeking.

A Revised, Theologically Enriched Version of Your Message

Below is a polished version of your message, now with theological detail and biblical versions indicated:

How Can You Increase Your Spiritual Strength?

In my early Christian days, I wrongly believed that the ultimate measure of spiritual strength was anointing—the capacity to perform miracles, see visions, discern spirits, and speak in tongues. I assumed that anyone without those signs was spiritually weak, and anyone with them was powerful. Yet Scripture reveals a deeper standard: knowing Christ deeply, walking in obedience, enduring trials, and allowing the Spirit to transform your character.

Spiritual Strength: What It Really Means

Strength in the spiritual realm is not about spectacle; it’s about authority, endurance, intimacy, and advancing God’s reign in your heart, community, and circumstances. Just as physical strength conquers, spiritual strength binds demonic powers, resists temptation, and pushes forward the Kingdom of God.

Jesus said:

> “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and violent people have been taking it by force.”
> *(Matthew 11:12, NIV)*

This verse describes the spiritual intensity with which the Kingdom is entered and advanced—not by passive faith but by those who press in with purpose and boldness.

Why His Reference to John Matters

Jesus deliberately begins this Kingdom advance from the time of

John the Baptist. Unlike Abraham or Moses, John represents the threshold of Messiah's coming, and his example is instructive for how spiritual strength grows.

- Scripture says: *"the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel."* (Luke 1:80, NIV)

- And though John "never performed a sign," people acknowledged that *"everything John said about this man [Jesus] was true."* (John 10:41, NIV)

John's strength was inner, rooted in truth, confession, and preparation, not in external signs. His ministry was one of pointing to Christ, preparing hearts, and urging repentance.

Theological Principles for Cultivating Strength

- Union with Christ is the source. Spiritual strength is not about us, but about abiding in Him (John 15; Galatians 2:20).

- The Word of God (Scripture) and the Holy Spirit together build and strengthen (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Corinthians 2).

- Spiritual warfare is real; we must put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10–18).

- Character matters more than gifts. A person without love, humility, and faith may have gifts but lack strength (1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5).

- Endurance and suffering often refine spiritual strength (James 1; Romans 5).

- Revelation of Christ is central. The deeper your understanding of who Jesus is—the fullness of God revealed in flesh—the stronger your foundation (Colossians 2:2–3; John 1:14).

A Call to Focus on Christ, Not Just Gifts

Don’t settle for mere salvation or the routines of religion. Jesus is far more glorious than you may imagine. He is the Wisdom and Power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24), and in Him are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2–3)

If you commit yourself to knowing Christ daily, your spiritual strength will flourish—even when you are unaware of it. Over time, you’ll find yourself walking with authority, resisting darkness, and advancing the Kingdom.

But be warned: Satan’s greatest defense is keeping people from truly knowing who Christ is. If he can make Jesus seem “ordinary” in your eyes, he weakens your spiritual resolve. Once you truly grasp the identity and power of Jesus, you become a force for God’s Kingdom.

Begin today: stop chasing after signs, gifts, or experiences. Instead, seek Christ. Use any gifts God gives you, but let your primary aim be deepening your knowledge of Jesus. Let each Bible reading, prayer time, or trial point you to Him.

> “Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”
> *(Ephesians 4:13, NIV)*

When your perspective is Christ-centered, your spiritual strength will be real, sustainable, and rooted in God’s revealed truth.

Be blessed as you walk this path in Christ.

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