

Female Devotional Leader

Claire Hooi

Years at CCF: 1
Years as Christian: 1-3
Current Church: New City Church Toronto
Home Church: New City Church Toronto

Vision Statement

Standing Strong in Christ

Strength

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.” –Ephesians 6:10

One thinks of various things when it comes to the word ‘strength’ - but standing strong in Christ doesn’t mean you are strong because you’ve been hardened by life experiences, are genetically superior, or you work out twice a week.

Strength in the Lord is an inner strength – not of the body, but of the spirit – that is measured in faithfulness, trust, and perseverance.

This year has been a year of trials for me: a year where I endured one emotional blow after another – but it has also been a year where my inner self has been strengthened by God. He has been my Rock in whom I took refuge (Psalm 18:2). I have learnt to rely on His strength, to seek Jesus, and understand the weakness of my own human strength.

My vision for CCF:

We will learn to stand strong in God and His Holy Spirit. We will stand tall – with confidence and perseverance – when we have learnt to draw spiritual strength from God. We will learn to be filled with God’s Spirit and understand that we are strong in God, only when we are weak. 2 Corinthians 12:10 writes “for when I am weak, then I am strong”. We, if relying on our own strength, have limited power, but when relying on God’s strength, we are truly strong. It is my hope that we will humble ourselves continuously to ask to be filled by God’s Spirit – through prayer (1 Thess 5:17), worship, trust - in Him and His word - in order to allow Him to give us strength to endure through trials. For His power is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9)

The Adversity

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against [...] the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” –Ephesians 6:11

Illness, failure, pain. These are struggles we fight in this world. But, we also fight in the spiritual world – against Satan – who seeks to destroy us. Our true struggle is against his hatred. Through the trials Satan throws at us, we must stand strong in the Lord.

Carrying out this vision in CCF:

I hope to carry out my vision, by continuously encouraging my fellow brothers and sisters to be strong in these areas of our lives:

- **Worthiness**

Titus 3:5

Continuous reminders to emphasize that we are all precious in God’s eyes. Through knowing who we are, we understand that He loves us so. Trials we face are all a part of His purpose for us (Jeremiah 29:11-13) and we will then live by faith in His plans.

- **Praying together as a fellowship**

Psalm 55:17

Making prayer a permanent part of our lives gives us immense strength. I hope to make this a greater focus within IGs. We ask God to help us, and He listens. Through prayer, we surrender things to Him, and He sustains us through.

- **Being rooted in Scripture together**

2 Timothy 3:16

I hope to emphasize the importance of reading, studying, memorizing and repeating to ourselves God’s word. These processes will allow us to remain grounded in His word, which in turn makes us strong. Biblical knowledge will allow God to speak to us and allow us to use his Word to resist temptations.

- **Love for our fellow brothers and sisters**

John 13:34-35

I hope that CCF, especially through IGs, will have genuine, Christ-centered love for one another. We will intentionally care, reach out, encourage, pray for one another because these things will make us stand strong in Him, together.

- **Trusting together as a fellowship**

Romans 8:28

Standing strong means knowing God, trusting Him to do what He says He will (Jeremiah 1:5). Becoming strong in the Spirit does not happen overnight, nor automatically. Part of my vision is to remind our fellowship to trust in this process. Jesus once said, "Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" – to become strong in the Spirit, we must have childlike faith and trust that God is making us stronger in his Spirit through our trials. Trust that adversities can transform us and help us stand strong.

As female DL, I hope to:

- Be a living testament to my vision by standing strong through my own struggles
- Be approachable, reach out, and encourage my fellow sisters to share with one another when we lose sight of our strength in Him
- Foster the spiritual walks of my fellow sisters, learning together what it means to be women of God
- Run Women's group with a weekly study on Proverbs 31, in order to learn how to be women who fear the Lord.

Personal Evaluation

1. Name 2 weaknesses that you possess, and please indicate if and how you are addressing each weakness.

The first weakness that I have is my tendency to shut people out and disappear when I undergo trials/problems. This stems from having high expectations of love and comfort, from being disappointed when people fail to meet these expectations by slowly forgetting my struggles even as they still prevailed in my life. This made me believe that there was no point in sharing my struggles. I have been changing this tendency of mine, by relying on God for courage to share my struggles (displayed through my public sharing with CCF), by understanding that He has blessed me with wonderful people who do love me through my struggles, by relying on His strength to reach out to people even when I am afraid to do so. I have been humbled by God, and know that if I expect comfort from people, I am idolizing them. God is the One who comforts me, and I know that my problems are merely a means to glorify Him, are a part of His plan for me, and that keeping them to myself is due to my own pride.

The second weakness that I have is my inability to deal with things that do not go according to the way I have planned them out - when this happens, I am overcome with a great deal of anxiety and fear. This stems from my constant worrying about my future, and my need for control over the things in my life. I have sought to address this problem by consistently surrendering situations that do not go according to plan to the Lord, and by reminding myself that He is sovereign, and in control, that He has plans to prosper me, and not to harm me (Jeremiah 29:11-13). Psalm 37:4 tells us that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our hearts. I used to think that this meant that if I was a good person and followed His commandments, He would give me whatever I wanted, but I have since learnt

that it is not about my will but about God changing my dreams into His dreams for my life, making His will my heart's desire. I am slowly learning to accept that I have a God who has plans for my life that are infinitely better than my own.

2. Name 2 strengths that you possess, and please indicate how you believe it will benefit the CCF family.

The first strength I have is that I stick to what I believe in. This is a trait that weaves itself throughout my entire life: if I see injustice, I speak out about it. If I believe something is morally wrong, I am not afraid to confront it, step on it, shatter it. This trait also helps me to possess unwavering faith in the Lord and to incorporate Him into every part of my life. I believe that this will be beneficial to the CCF community because it stems from a great passion to serve Him, and to be righteous in Him. I believe that the Lord will use this trait of mine to show the works that can be achieved for Him if one stands firm in their beliefs.

The second strength that I have is my ability to reach out and relate to people. My background is one of extreme versatility: I have lived in various countries, gone through many problems, and learnt to adapt. This allows me to better envision myself in other people's shoes, and I believe that the ability to relate to one's struggles can be very encouraging, particularly in troubling times. I believe that this will benefit the CCF community because I hope to reach out and share in the struggles of my fellow brothers and sisters, with the hope that I may be able to allow God to use me to lighten their burdens.

3. Critically evaluate your ability to work alongside others and provide an example.

I have always believed that we were created for relationships: with God, with other people. I have been a part of various teams, from working on yearbooks, being a prefect, to being a part of my residence's house council and working as a sponsorship coordinator for a non-profit organization. Whatever work is assigned to me, I always am sure to finish it to the best of my ability. In the past, I have managed to complement others in areas where they are flawed, and in turn have had other people help me with work that I am struggling with. I have learnt the importance of compromise. As part of a committee, I believe that we will be able to work together to build up the fellowship, and hope that I will constantly hold tight to the love, grace and forgiveness of the Lord and in turn pour this out unto the people around me.

4. Critically evaluate your openness towards receiving criticism and provide an example.

I tend to accept criticism with a very heavy heart, because I have always been of the opinion that I am flawed and unworthy. I tended to work on these criticism to a point where I become fixated on fixing myself, but God has taught me my own limits, and I have learnt to lean on Him to fix my flaws and to shape me into becoming more like Jesus. I believe that criticism is a very necessary part of growth in our

lives and spiritual walks and am always willing to take it, but I do wish it to be said out of love rather than out of judgment.

I have always been very skeptical whenever given praise, stemming once again from my view of myself as flawed and unworthy. However, I have since learnt that God does place it in the hearts of my fellow brothers and sisters to praise me at certain times in order for me to be encouraged as I grow closer to Him. Whenever I am given praise, I know to credit it to God - for it is only through Him that I can do all things.