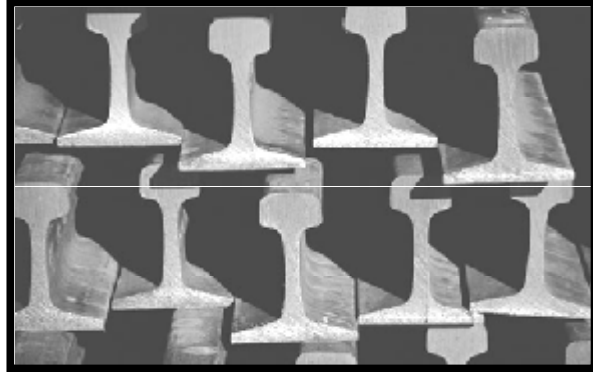


## STRENGTH

When I was in college, one of the courses that I had to take was called “strength of materials”. From my recollection, this course provided some understanding of the molecular structure of materials such as iron, steel, aluminum and other metals and similar materials. Metals, such as iron, are extracted from iron ore using intense heat; the liquid metal is cooled and formed into a solid through a process called annealing; and the process continues to produce a strong material defined by its molecular structure.



The strength of a material or substance is usually measured in terms of physical or chemical properties; but the strength of a person is measured in terms of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual abilities. An athlete is most identified to physical strength but certainly must possess the mental and emotional strength to focus on the game or event. Often, the athlete or sports in general are applied to the idea of dedication, discipline, training, and success.

In the Bible, Paul describes his relationship with the Lord as being like an athlete in that he buffets or conditions his body to the degree as though to *win the prize*. Like the metal described above, human strength is developed through processes that take time, energy, control, precision, and great attention. As the blacksmith or steelworker processes metal, so the Lord processes us – it is through the development of our faith, that his strength is enabled within us.

Whereas processed metal is used to construct buildings, ships, and all sundries of products, we are used by the Lord to glorify him through the strength he supplies to us. Understand that the products of metal can be durable; but the products resulting from you strength can be eternal for you are *storing treasures in heaven whereby moth and rust cannot destroy*.

You may have heard the saying, “testing your metal” – which means to test your strength, will or determination. I pray that your metal may be found strong having been refined through fire. Remember, that *as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another* (Proverbs 27:17).

In a **WORD**