

*Let Your Weakness  
Become God's Strength*

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*All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.*

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## INTRODUCTION

God needs to bring every Christian to the end of his own natural strength. It was that way with the apostle Peter, who boasted at the Last Supper that even if it meant death, he would stay by Jesus Christ. Of course, after the Lord's arrest, and faced with arrest himself, Peter denied that he knew Jesus. Realizing that he had this weakness caused Peter to weep bitterly. But in this disciple's weakness, God became strong. Soon after, Peter was restored and equipped to serve as one of the great leaders of the early Church, even unto his own death.

This booklet reveals the freedom that comes when we keep our eyes upon the Lord. As believers, we have to realize that apart from God we have no might against the things that come against us. We must see God as more than sufficient in everything. Our natural ability does not impress God. He will expose our weaknesses so we will rely only upon His strength.

*Chapter One*

## LAYING ASIDE AREAS OF PRESERVATION

“O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee” (2 Chronicles 20:12).

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God” (2 Corinthians 3:5).

God uses weakness and brokenness to bring His treasure through the earthen vessel. His purpose is not only to bring His light out of darkness but also to stop self-destructive patterns and certain sins that have been concealed.

The effects of people hurting us, the effects of people’s sins, and the effects of our own sins bring such tremendous pain and heartache. Eventually, we come to the point where we can no longer depend upon ourselves. It is then that

God uses brokenness to establish new patterns and new relationships in our lives.

“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us” (2 Corinthians 1:9-10).

Although this passage relates to physical death, we can apply it to becoming spiritually broken. It is vital to realize that we can no longer preserve our weaknesses, which are areas of being tempted with personal sin, where we just cannot experience God’s victory (Romans 7). But God can use these areas to break us and fill us with His ability through grace.

### *The Limitations of Our Strength*

Though our natural strength is a tremendous hindrance, preserving our weakness is one of the greatest problems we face as Christians. The Word of God says we are to lay it all aside:

“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1).

The real meaning of the original Greek text of Hebrews 12:1 says, “Lay aside your areas of natural strength, and lay aside your areas of weakness.” Everyone has areas of strength, and everyone has areas of weakness. God sees an area of strength as one in which I might be able to function very well without God. In fact, I did exactly that when I was lost. But, He also sees areas of weakness that I must not preserve. I would enter into a downward progression, adding “sin to sin” (Isaiah 30:1). This is quite a process.

Sooner or later, a person can no longer preserve his weakness. Neither can he preserve his natural strength, which is outside of the Cross. God always sees areas in the life of every Christian where He wants us to come to Him, surrendering our strength to Him and not preserving our weakness.

Natural strength outside of the Cross is not always a “bad” thing; but because it is human goodness, it needs to be crucified. Some people grew up in Christian families. They were well trained and well taught by their parents.

Out of respect and honor for his parents, one Christian may stay away from certain negative behaviors. Still, his motivation is the natural

strength of respect for his parents. But, at some point, he may fail because he can no longer preserve his natural strength to be “good.” For a while, he was strong enough not to do certain things; now, he is not.

Another person believes with all of his heart that although he has a weakness of the mind or the flesh, he can somehow preserve that weakness so that it will not affect his behavior outwardly. Eventually, however, he will give in to sin because the weakness could no longer be preserved.

## *Chapter Two*

# LIVING BY THE POWER OF GOD

“For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you” (2 Corinthians 13:4).

God has clearly taught us in 2 Corinthians 13:4 that while Jesus Christ was crucified in weakness, He lived by the power of God. Think of that for a moment. God incarnate was crucified in weakness, but He lived by the power of God. That is the combination we need to understand. Jesus Christ was weak in His humanity—physically, emotionally, and even in His soul. In Gethsemane, the night before He was crucified, He said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matthew 26:38a).

His soul was sorrowful unto death; yet, He refused to live in His weakness. The Father’s plan for Him included the Cross. He would not

use the weakness in His soul and His physical body as an excuse to sin by coming short of the Cross. Instead, He used His weakness to trust in the power of God.

### *Overcoming the Old Sin Nature*

We have a different weakness than Christ had. We have an old sin nature; Jesus did not. But the greatest victories we have come when we refuse to use our weakness for the old sin nature. We are aware of the weakness, we sense the weakness, we are tempted in the weakness. Still, we don't use it for the old sin nature as an excuse to sin and to live in sin.

We also are weak in Him, but we shall live by the power of God toward others. Salvation doesn't make us stronger; it makes us weaker in our own ability. Once we are saved and begin to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, our old "self" actually grows weaker in its control over our lives. Yes, we become strong, but the strength is coming from Him (John 3:30).

"They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah" (Psalm 84:7-8). The children of Israel went from strength to strength, but they

had just been through the valley of Baca—a place of suffering and tears, a place where they were broken. Instead of drowning in their sorrows, they “[made] it a well; the rain also filleth the pools” (Psalm 84:6).

*“We Are Weak, but He Is Strong”*

In 2 Corinthians 13:4, Paul wrote that “we also are weak in Him.” Then he added, “but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.”

First, I thank God that we are in Him. Next, I thank God we are weak. Then, I thank God that we are weak in Him. Seeing it all together, our weakness is in the right place. As long as we are in Him, we can live by the power of God expressed toward us and to each other. We simply recognize our weakness, and we rely on His strength.

Therefore “let the weak say, I am strong” (Joel 3:10b). We can say it and mean it because our weakness is no longer hindering His strength. We are using His strength now, not our own. We are so weak that we have to use His strength. That is a great place to be. Therefore, He can say of us, “My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

### *Chapter Three*

## THE STRENGTH OF UNLIMITED GRACE

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

What strength is this verse talking about? It is the strength of grace. God is saying that His grace is unlimited, and, because it is unlimited, it is perfect. If God’s grace were limited, it would not be perfect. But the truth is, we cannot limit God’s grace toward us. Even if we were to refuse to let grace teach us, it would *wait* to teach us:

“And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him” (Isaiah 30:18).

If a believer will not let God's grace help him, and he continues to live in serious sin, God could just take him home (1 John 5:16).<sup>\*</sup> That way, he could be out of his body of death, with no old sin nature, happy in heaven. Even then, God's grace remains unlimited toward him. God would never take a believer home early unless He knows that one will absolutely refuse to receive grace to overcome his sins.

My strength, which is God's grace, is made perfect in my weakness, because grace is unlimited. If I didn't have the weakness, I wouldn't need the grace. And if I didn't have the grace, I wouldn't have His strength.

"Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands" (Job 4:3).

"In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;

"And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever" (Micah 4:6-7).

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

God makes weak hands strong spiritually.

He gathers the “halt,” those who are lame and afflicted, whose flesh is weak. At times we have confrontations with people. Even if we were right, the fact remains that the flesh is weak and it reacts—no matter whose flesh it is. The point is, though the flesh is weak, the spirit is willing. We need to let Him be our strength in our relationship to others.

### *The Willing Spirit*

The key to spiritual growth is to have a willing spirit. Don't give up because your flesh is weak. God already knows it is and has said that it is. But He also says that our spirit is willing. Every spiritual Christian has been there, struggling with flesh that is weak, but having a spirit that is willing. If I have willing spirit, then God's strength will be made perfect in my weak flesh.

Hebrews 11:34 speaks of faith heroes who “out of weakness were made strong.” Paul didn't write, “When I am strong, then I am strong.” He wrote, “When I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10). Paul recognized his weakness, and he also recognized God's strength. So instead of trying to preserve his weakness to make it grow, he just received grace. The result? God's strength was made perfect in his weakness.

I thank God for this. With all we face each day—the responsibilities and heavy schedules—it would be easy to feel overwhelmed. The more we become involved with God’s desire for lost souls, and as we take on new challenges, these things make us see how weak we are. Yet, the weaker we are and the more we trust God and depend on Him, the greater His strength is made manifest in us.

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10). Think of it: When Paul was weak, it was then that he began to be strong.

### *No Glory for the Flesh*

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

“And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things

that are:

“That no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

God has chosen the weak things to confound the things that are mighty. He uses the foolish things to confound the wise, and the base things to bring to nothing the things that are. No flesh can glory in God’s presence.

It is wonderful when, instead of letting our weakness destroy us, we let it become a means to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). Our weakness then becomes a means of trusting Him with all of our hearts, using rebound when we fail.

Instead of letting weakness give us a poor self-image, it becomes a means of giving us a new-creation self-image in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). With a new-creation self-image, we have new-creation self-esteem because of the love of God. Then comes a new-creation self-destiny in the plan of God. We are destined to become perfect as He is perfect, and we are destined to always have Christ’s strength made perfect in our weakness.

*\*To learn more about this, we suggest reading The Great Detective: Sin, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.*

## CONCLUSION

God's eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those who fear Him (see 2 Chronicles 16:9). He is not looking for strong people, because He cannot use them. They have too much strength.

Perhaps you have heard of someone attempting to rescue another who is drowning. Often, the one who is in trouble will fight the one who is there to save him. He can become so strong that the rescuer needs to knock him out in order to safely bring him ashore. In other words, it is necessary to make a "strong" man weak to save his life.

God is looking for weak people who don't live in self-denial, people who are not hypocrites with God. He is looking for weak people who really know that they are weak. They don't preserve their weakness, but they let God knock them out at the Cross. When we let God crucify our strengths and weaknesses at the Cross, His

life comes in through resurrection power (Galatians 2:20).

Keep drawing near to God in your weakness, and let His strength and power be yours.