

STRENGTH

How often have you prayed, “Lord, give me strength to carry on.” I’m sure we’ve all prayed this prayer when we have felt a need for supernatural strength to deal with the insurmountable circumstances confronting us. However, at the same time, we have a way of wanting to discount, hide or deny anything about ourselves that might communicate a sense of weakness. We want only to present a sense of strength. The truth is, according to the Bible, we should not be ashamed of our weaknesses or human frailties. In 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 Jesus said to the apostle Paul, **“My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.”** And Paul’s response was, **“Therefore now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong”** (New Living Translation). It would seem from Paul’s experience and mature reflection that Christ’s *power* and *strength* are ironically tethered to weakness!

More often than not we look for *strength* in the wrong places. We live in a culture that prizes strength, and it was no different in Paul’s time. He had been given phenomenal revelations from God and his remarkable comprehension of spiritual matters should have caused him to hide behind his authority and mask his weaknesses. Yet, he said he would boast only of his weaknesses. Like Paul, we need to realize that our weaknesses can lead to strength. Our weaknesses, struggles and shortcomings, though they are painful, make us ‘more open’ to Christ, and as a result, make us ‘more open’ to embracing His grace. Notice that Jesus said, **“My grace is all you need.”** We should gladly receive this truth when we are feeling weak and helpless. Why? Because Christ promised that His power works best in our weakness. In fact, when we are weak, then we are strong! So remember, it is only the presence of Christ and His amazing grace that will carry us through the most difficult of situations.

It is my hope that anyone battling relentless struggles will recover to go from glory to glory. And I pray that the boundless love of God will be present among you through everything. Paul prayed in such a way for the church in Corinth; that they might realize that God’s grace was sufficient for them. In the midst of his own emotional pain, Paul reveals his sincere desire for the members of that church to open their hearts and to accept their weaknesses. Paul’s yearning was for the Corinthians to make a place for **Christ to dwell within them**. May it be so for each one of us. Let us be able to boldly declare... *“I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”*