

Awareness Of Weakness Is The Key To Strength

The world has it all backwards. Most seem to think that we can accomplish great things when we become the strongest, wisest, smartest, and most beautiful. Worldly achievement may well depend on some of these things to some degree. Even there, however, there is room for using the principles that we will discuss here.

Our work for the Lord is not in the same category and the approach that we take in that work is altogether different from what many would commend in worldly pursuits. Here, the principle might be stated something like this: Recognize that you are weak and unable to do it alone, trust God, and set out to do it.

The notion that we ought to wait until we, ourselves, are wise enough or strong enough before we set out to obey God is simply unbiblical. Although it is right and reasonable to obtain training and to prepare ourselves as best we can, it is also true that the time to begin doing the will of God is the moment we learn what that will is regarding any matter. God will guide, strengthen, and comfort us by His word, assist us by His providence, and bless our efforts with success. He will give the increase.

When God told Moses leave the desert to go back to Egypt and lead the children of Israel out, Moses protested that he was not equal to the task. God did not argue with that point. Instead, He promised to go with him and assured him of success. In effect He said, "I will meet you back here with My people!"

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain" (Exodus 3:11, 12).

Joshua, as great a man as he no doubt was in his person, was not equal to the task of conquering the land when that assignment was given to him. God seems to have suggested that inherent in the command to act is the promise of aid.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9).

Jeremiah could not get away with declaring that his personal weakness disqualified him.

Then said I: "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth." But the Lord said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord. Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my

mouth, and the Lord said to me: "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth (Jeremiah 1:6-9).

Paul so relied upon God's guidance, and so looked beyond passing difficulties that he could declare that his work was actually God's work being done through his willing hands.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God (2 Corinthians 3:5).

Isaiah gave a command and a principle that will hold true for all time and under every covenant. Are we listening?

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you" (Isaiah 35:3, 4).

He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:29-31).

Paul actually reached the point at which he was able to see that he could only be strong when he was weak.

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Now how about you? Are you aware of your own weaknesses? Good! You have reason to be genuinely humble. Are you allowing these weaknesses to keep you out of God's service? If so, then you need to trust God and proceed, in spite of what you may see as personal inability, to attempt what you know you cannot do -- by yourself.

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