

# Forty Days of Purpose Devotional

## Day 35 "God works best when I admit my weakness."

If God gives each person abilities and gifts ("strengths"), and is glorified when we use them to serve Him and others, how is it that He is also happy about our weaknesses and asks us to be as well? It is important to understand the words "strength" and "weakness" in context. First of all, ALL of our "strengths" only appear strong in comparison with other people, but never with God:

*"For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength."* (1 Cor 1:25 [NIV])

Moreover, those things that we regard as our "strengths" may tempt us to feel foolishly self-sufficient, and then our "weaknesses" help remind us of our constant need for God. But if we carefully examine what Paul said in his classic statement about weaknesses we may learn still more:

*"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* (2Cor 12:9-10 [NIV])

We must learn to understand God's words from His perspective. When He says "My power is made perfect," He is not referring to His ability to create galaxies or restore life to dead bodies. As great as these powers are, they are small compared to His power to redeem lost souls. And how was this power manifested? God so LOVED the world that He GAVE His only begotten Son. But many people do not understand the sacrificial love of God unless they see sacrificial love in US. When we sacrifice for others, when we struggle against our weaknesses, when we overcome pain, when we give more than we really think we can afford – when we lay our lives down for others in an unmistakable way – people may truly encounter the love of God and begin to know and love Him. Our work and suffering actually completes ("perfects") the redemptive work of God (see Col 1:24 if this sounds unbelievable).

- God created the universe out of nothing, so our lack of excellent raw material for God to work with is not a problem for Him.
- God wants us to give everything to Him, both strengths and weaknesses. The difference between "strength" and "weakness" means little to Him, but the difference between yielding to Him and hiding from Him means everything.
- When God asks us to do things we are good at, our *work* blesses others. When God asks us to do things that make us struggle and even hurt, our *love* blesses others. God wants both.

There are many ministries that would be enormously blessed by a gift of \$100,000, and with that would be able to bless many in important ways. If a man who has \$1,000,000,000 provides a gift of \$100,000 then all of the blessings that come from the money can happen. The rich man would have used a huge gift given to him by God. If, on the other hand, a small congregation of believers who could barely pay their own bills gave money, beyond what they could afford, to provide the gift of \$100,000, then all of the blessings that come from the money would happen AND the ministry and people who received the money would also be blessed by the gift of sacrificial love. It is difficult to know which of the two is greater. It doesn't matter, because both the gifts and the love come from God. Write down things about yourself that you think God can't use – then confess your lack of faith. What is too hard for God?

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