

Is It Right to Embrace Weakness Like the Apostle Paul Did?

Understanding 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

(All Scripture references are from the NIV unless otherwise stated)

QUESTION:

Should we accept weakness as something good? The Apostle Paul seems to not only accept it, but even **boasts** in it. How are we to understand this?

Paul's Perspective on Weakness: A Spiritual Paradox

Let's look at what Paul says:

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

[9] 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.

[10] 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.

This passage comes after Paul describes his mysterious **"thorn in the flesh"** — a personal affliction that he pleaded with the Lord to remove (2 Corinthians 12:7-8). Instead of removing it, God responded with something greater: **grace** — and the revelation that **divine power is perfected not in human strength, but in human weakness.**

This is not to say that Paul celebrates weakness as a virtue in itself. He does **not** say, "Weakness is good because it is weakness." Rather, he teaches that weakness becomes **a spiritual advantage** when it causes us to depend more fully on God.

Weakness as a Gateway to God's Power

In other words, weakness isn't the goal — **dependency on God is**. Weakness simply creates the environment where God's **grace**, **presence**, and **power** can be more clearly seen.

Paul did not possess the eloquence or commanding presence that others admired in religious leaders. He admits this openly:

2 Corinthians 10:10

"For some say, 'His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.'"

Despite these limitations, God used Paul to establish churches, write inspired Scripture, and perform miracles (Acts 19:11-12). His weakness ensured that God, not Paul, received the glory.

This echoes the principle taught by the Lord throughout Scripture — that **God chooses the humble, the lowly, and the dependent**:

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

[26] Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

[27] But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

[28] God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, [29] so that no one may boast before him.

Biblical Examples: Moses and the Power of Humility

This principle is consistent with the way God used Moses. When God called him at the burning bush, Moses hesitated and said:

Exodus 4:10

“Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent... I am slow of speech and tongue.”

Yet despite his insecurity, God used Moses to confront Pharaoh, lead Israel out of Egypt, and deliver the Law. His humility is noted in:

Numbers 12:3

“Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.”

God doesn't depend on our natural talents or strengths. Instead, He often chooses those who are least likely to succeed by worldly standards, so that the results clearly reveal **His power**, not ours.

A Word of Encouragement: Weakness Doesn't Disqualify You

You may feel inadequate — in your speech, your knowledge, your physical ability, or your circumstances. But don't let that discourage you. In God's economy, **your weakness is not a disqualifier — it's an opportunity for God to display His strength** through your life.

Even physical or emotional limitations — such as disability, illness, or lack of education — are not barriers to being used by God. The only real limitation is a heart that refuses to trust and obey Him.

When you bring your weakness to God, you're not offering failure — you're offering **space** for His power to work.

Philippians 4:13

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

Testimony: Ricky - Can My Weakness Stop the Gospel?

Like many, Ricky struggled with feelings of inadequacy. He wondered: *"Can my weakness prevent the gospel from going forward?"*

But through personal experience, he realized that God wasn't limited by his lack of strength. In fact, the very areas where Ricky felt weak became the places where God's presence was most evident. His life became a testimony that **God doesn't call the qualified — He qualifies the called.**

Conclusion: Embrace Grace, Not Just Weakness

Paul's message isn't that we should seek out suffering or celebrate

weakness for its own sake. It's that **when weakness comes — and it will — we have a choice:**

- We can fight it and live frustrated lives of self-effort.
- Or we can surrender to God, lean into His grace, and discover a power that doesn't come from us, but from Him.

Romans 8:26

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness..."

So don't disqualify yourself. Trust God. Obey His call. Let your weakness become the stage on which His strength is made visible.

May the Lord bless you and strengthen you.

Feel free to share this message with others who need encouragement.

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