

40 Weeks of Purpose

Week 35

God's Power in Your Weakness

POINT TO MEDITATE ABOUT FROM LAST WEEK:

To be a Servant, I must think like a Servant.

Five Characteristics of a Servant:

- 1) **Servants think more about others than about themselves**
- 2) **Servants think like stewards, not owners**
- 3) **Servants think about their work, not what others are doing**
- 4) **Servants base their identity in Christ**
- 5) **Servants think of serving as an opportunity, not an obligation**

VERSE TO MEMORIZE FROM LAST WEEK:

- Philippians 2:5 (NIV)

5) *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.”*

Who had it ALL going for him, and instead chose to be a servant...

QUESTION TO CONSIDER FROM LAST WEEK:

Am I usually more concerned about being served or serving others?

In this world, the greater you are, the more people you have serving you. In Christ, the greater you are, the more people you serve.

- God LOVES to use Weak People
- Everyone has weaknesses
 - In fact, you probably have a BUNCH of weaknesses, flaws and imperfections
- It's not that important to God that you have weaknesses
 - It's important to God what you do with them
- Usually we deny our weaknesses, defend them, excuse them, and hide them

- This prevents God from using them the way that He wants to
- God has a different perspective on your weaknesses
- Isaiah 55:9 (NLT)
 - 9) For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.
- God often acts in ways that are the opposite of what we would do
 - We think that God only wants to use our strengths, but he also wants to use our weaknesses for His glory
- 2nd Corinthians 12:9 (NLT)
 - 9) Each time he said, “My gracious favor is all you need. My power works best in your weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may work through me.
- Your weaknesses are not an accident
 - God deliberately allowed them into your life for the purpose of demonstrating His power through you
- God has never been impressed with strength
 - He is drawn to people who are weak and admit it
- Some of his best work was done through people who felt that they were too weak to do it
 - Abraham told God that he was too old
 - Sarah told God that she was barren
 - Jacob told God that he was scared
 - Moses told God that he stuttered
 - Gideon told God that he was scared
 - Hannah told God that she was barren
 - Jonah told God that he was scared
- The Bible is filled with stories about how God loves to use imperfect, ordinary people to do extraordinary things in spite of their own weaknesses
- If God only used perfect people, nothing would ever get done, because none of us are perfect
- A weakness is a “thorn in the flesh” as Paul calls it
 - It is not a sin or a character defect you can change

- A weakness is something that you have no power to change
 - It might be physical, like a handicap
 - It might be emotional, like a personality quirk
 - It might be intellectual, like not being the brightest light in the chandelier
 - It might even be spiritual, like not being naturally warm and hospitable
- Whatever your weakness, you CAN be used by God, if you:

1) **Admit your weaknesses**

- Own up to your imperfections
- Stop pretending you have it all together, and be honest about yourself
- Instead of living in denial and making excuses, take the time to identify your weaknesses
- For God to use you, He needs you to be able to admit that you are only human
- It might take a crisis to get you to admit that
 - God won't hesitate to allow one in your life, because He loves you

2) **Be content with your weaknesses**

- 2nd Corinthians 12:10 (NLT)

10) Since I know it is all for Christ's good, I am quite content with my weaknesses and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- Contentment is an expression of faith in the goodness of God
 - Contentment says that you believe that God knows what is best for you
- Your weaknesses teach you five things:
 - a) Your weaknesses cause you to depend more on God, and that is what He wants
 - b) Your weaknesses also prevent arrogance and pride
 - c) Your weaknesses also encourage fellowship among believers, as they show how much we do need each other

d) Your weaknesses increase your capacity for sympathy and compassion

e) Your weaknesses create more opportunities for service, as we generally serve in the areas that we have the deepest hurts... But, only if you...

3) Honestly share your weaknesses

- Service begins with vulnerability
- The more you let down your guard and share your struggles, the more God will be able to use you in serving others
- In Paul's letters we see him sharing his failures, his feelings, his frustrations, and his fears
- Vulnerability is risky...
 - When you reveal your weaknesses you risk rejection
- But, the benefits are worth the risk
- Last week we talked about the benefits of humility
- Humility isn't putting yourself down or denying your strengths
 - Humility is being honest about your weaknesses
- Pretentiousness repels people
 - Authenticity attracts people
- When people see your strengths, they think, "Good for them. But, I will never be able to do that."
- When people see God using you in spite of your weaknesses, they think, "Maybe God can use me somehow also!"
- Our strengths create competition
 - Our weaknesses create community

4) Glory in your weaknesses

• 2nd Corinthians 12:5 (NLT)

5) That experience is something worth boasting about, but I am not going to do it. I am going to boast only about my weaknesses.

- Instead of posing as self-confident

- See yourself as reclaimed
- God can use you better if you admit your weaknesses, so why be ashamed of them?

POINT TO MEDITATE ABOUT THIS WEEK:

God works best when I admit my weaknesses.

VERSE TO MEMORIZE THIS WEEK:

- 2nd Corinthians 12:9 (NIV)

9) “*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*”

QUESTION TO CONSIDER THIS WEEK:

In what area am I limiting God's power by trying to hide my weaknesses?