

Conduct in Weakness

Weakness is not something that any of us want to acknowledge. We have been taught by the world and by our culture that we should never show weakness, that people only respect strength. Of course, as with most things, the rules and the ways of the Kingdom of God are opposite to those of the world. It is particularly important that we conduct ourselves properly in the realm of spiritual reality.

A Heart of Flesh

The world through sin makes our hearts hard. As we become hardened, it sometimes appears to us that we are becoming strong. However, this is a deception.

Look how hard the hearts of Judah had become. It took an iron stylus with a diamond point in order to write on them.

Jer 17:1 NASB

- (1) The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; With a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart And on the horns of their altars,

The Lord has told us that under the New Covenant that He will write His laws on our hearts.

Jer 31:33 NASB

- (33) "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

For Him to do this requires that our hearts be malleable so that they can be written upon. To accomplish this God removes our stony heart and gives us a heart of flesh.

Eze 36:26-27 NASB

- (26) "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.
- (27) "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

What does it mean to have a "heart of flesh"? I believe that a heart of flesh is our heart with the hardness of sin removed leaving us in our natural state. It is where our weaknesses can become our strength.

This should be part of the new birth process and the sanctification process should begin to remove the habits of sin that have built up in our lives and cause us to deal with the "body of flesh" so as to reckon it as dead.

Weakness & Strength

The world only measures worldly or natural strength and weakness. We have to learn how to evaluate strength and weakness from a spiritual perspective if we want to walk in spiritual reality.

2Co 12:9-10 NASB

- (9) And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.
- (10) Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

In the context of these verses Paul was speaking of his “thorn in the flesh” and his prayers to have it removed. His answer from the Lord is in the verses above.

Weakness simply means that I can't do it—neither physically, mentally, nor emotionally. For it to be done, the Lord must demonstrate His power. Any “vision” that I can accomplish without the Lord is not a vision from the Lord; it is simply ambition on my part.

Without faith it is impossible to please Him. Faith is required when we can't do it ourselves. God takes our “heart of flesh” and out of its weakness He perfects strength—His strength revealed through us. He has given us the Holy Spirit to help us with this.

Rom 8:26-27 NASB

- (26) In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words;
- (27) and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

We should be asking God to use our weaknesses to reveal His glory. When the Lord does things through a person who doesn't have the strength to accomplish the work, His power is manifested and He receives the glory.

1Co 1:25-29 NASB

- (25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.
- (26) For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;
- (27) but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,
- (28) and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,
- (29) so that no man may boast before God.

Jesus is our example of weakness perfected through the power of God. We are crucified with Him that the power of God might be directed toward us.

2Co 13:4 NASB

- (4) For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God *directed* toward you.

If we desire to live in spiritual reality, we must begin at the cross. We must learn to embrace the weaknesses of our “heart of flesh” and allow the Lord to perfect His strength through us.

As we said in the previous lesson, “Treasure in Earthen Vessels”, it is not the treasure; it is not the vessel; it is the treasure in the vessel that brings glory to God. When we grasp this concept, we can say with Paul:

2Co 12:10 NASB

- (10) Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.