

Honoring God in Our Strengths

Norbert Bohnert—March 9, 2024

At times, and it is not a bad thing, we are always studying the Word of God—and we must do that—and focus on our weaknesses, and do that!

We all possess weaknesses, and that is something that we all recognize. Yes, it is a fact, and we all know it. We know that we have weaknesses galore. Sometimes more than we can fully comprehend and/or grasp.

We, in our Christian lives and walk with God, need to constantly work on these weaknesses. Work on them daily so that we can qualify and have a part in the coming of the Kingdom of God.

- How about the strengths that each one of us possess?
- Have we ever given any thought to that part of our character?

This may seem peculiar to some. As we sometimes have entrained in our minds, and I'm not saying that in a bad way, that in our Christian walk with God we should be concentrating on the faults that we have. We have that, and that is true. That should be a full effort in some of our eyes; I'm not denying that.

But it is a continuing process to work on our weaknesses, one that we must always remain vigilant. As we overcome the cracks, the less than stellar issues in our character, has it ever occurred to us that is our talents, our strengths, our abilities, and many of us have abilities. At times, we don't even recognize them, and someone else indicates those abilities and talents that we possess.

They also need our attention. Has that ever crossed your mind? Today let us briefly look at our strengths, the strong points in our character, to make sure that these points do not cause us to get into another area of concern; that concern I believe you already know what it is; it is ***being proud!***

Proverbs 16:18: "Pride *goes* before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. *It is better to be* of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud" (vs 18-19).

2-Corinthians 10:3: "For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds, casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ**" (vs 3-5).

I have read these verses countless times, and as I am sure you have, too. But I must admit

personally that I have sometimes focused on the thoughts that I had that might not have been positive.

But Paul does not really direct us to just one type of thought. He says that we should "**...bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**"

So, we are just not to bring wrong thoughts, but rather also right thoughts and creative thoughts into the captivity that we now exist. God expects us, in every aspect of our thinking, to have our lives under His authority. Not just those that we admit and acknowledge that we have.

We, as God's people, are converted people who, hopefully, accept correction and realignment in overcoming our faults. But we must also take issue in how we respond to our strong points.

Have you ever thought of that? Could failure to examine all points of our character turn into pride? *Perhaps!* God did not do it as a personal favor to us, because we were gifted with some special power or character. On the contrary, we know God did not choose the wise, He did not choose the mighty ones, but the weaker ones of mankind.

1-Corinthians 1:26: "For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are highborn *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the lowborn of the world, and the despised has God chosen—*even* the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; so that no flesh might glory in His presence." (vs 26-29).

God is giving us a head start now on salvation, because He has something for us to show to the world so that the others may glorify God, and because he wants to use us in the future. That is what God has in mind for each one of us.

Mathew 25:14: "For *the Kingdom of Heaven is* like a man leaving the country, who called his own servants and delivered to them his property. Now, to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one; he *gave* to each one according to his own ability, and immediately left the country" (vs 14-15).

I won't read the rest of this parable, we're very familiar with it, but I would encourage you to

read it again later; vs 16-31. Please note in v 15 that the man gave responsibilities out according to the individual's ability, according to their talents, to their strengths.

So, as we look at ourselves and examine ourselves, what would we say are our talents? What would you say is your talent? Your strong point? We each have talents. They are great talents to God, and we must also realize that God wants to use those talents in us for the future.

I know people who can listen to others very well. In how they explain things, and they understand the problems that that person has. The person listening can actually feel the pain and understand the situation. That in itself is a very, very good talent to possess. The person that you are listening to feels much better afterwards, because you as a person listening truly listen to what they have to say.

That is a strength in itself. It may seem to be trivial, but it is a strength. Yet, many times the person cannot even relate to that being strength.

Sadly, unfortunately, sometimes truly gifted and creative individuals *fail to bring their strengths into the captivity of the obedience of Christ!* The Apostle Paul said in:

1-Corinthians 10:31: "Therefore, whether you eat, or you drink, or you do anything, do all things to the glory of God."

That whatever we do ***we must do it all to the glory of God!*** We all have to come to that point. This should be clearly seen by us when we interact and engage in the world today. People should be able to say of us, 'There is something unique, something special about that individual.'

I don't know exactly what it is, but it is something that they really, really become aware of after meeting you and possibly interacting with you. It seems to be consistent. That person is different. The world should see a difference in the people of God, and that's what we must portray. They have to see a difference. That is something that God works with in each one of us.

God cannot use the spirit of pride or vanity, as Paul relayed to the Church in Philippi, that 'nothing should be done through selfish ambition or conceit.'

Philippians 2:3: "*Let nothing be done through contention or vainglory, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself.*"

Brethren, each one of us should be looking to use the talents we have, the strengths that God has given us to serve others, *not to glorify and gloat over ourselves*; that is Satan's way!

If we are serving others, ***then*** God could indeed enhance that strength that much more. He would be making good even better. We can see that in an example:

Exodus 31:1: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Behold, I, I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all workmanship, to devise designs; to work in gold, and in silver, and in bronze, and in cutting of stones, to set *them*, and in carving of timber, to work in all workmanship'" (vs 1-5).

Bezaleel obviously had been blessed by God with some degree of prior talents. But God enhanced those talents he had and that of others in the camp, as He gave these gifts to other people as well.

What we do not see here in Exodus is that there was a haughty or vain attitude in those God blessed with these talents. God can do the same for each one of us in varying degrees provided, of course, we are humble and willing to overcome our own pride and vanity.

We must remember we are instruments of God. We are instruments for God. Here is an example:

Let us say for whatever reason, and I don't know what that particular reason would be, but let us say you could not go to the grocery store one day. You decided to call a neighbor and ask them if they were going shopping. 'Yes,' they said that they would be going shopping, and you asked them if they would mind bringing you back a quart of milk. Now, this is a very simplistic example, but it brings the point across. The neighbor says, "Of course,' I can do that for you.' The neighbor gets the milk and brings it to the door, and you rush right past the neighbor as you open the door, go out to the car, hug the car and say, 'Thank you so much for bringing me the quart of milk.'

This may seem very far-fetched, and I hope that you realize that I had to come up with something so that you could get the point. Now who would do this? Who would run past the individual, run up to the car, kiss the car and thank the car for bringing the milk? It sounds so ridiculous!

The point is here that the car is the instrument in this case, and the neighbor is the one who brought the milk. In like manner, we should think this way with God. All praise should go to the Almighty.

- Are your strong points under control?

- Do we use them to bring to others rather than getting glory for ourselves?

If God does use our strong points, whatever they may be:

- Do we actually give God the credit for the strong points that we possess?

Christ is a wonderful example of this principle. His wisdom, His understanding, along with the miracles that people of the day witnessed, kept all in amazement of what was actually being done. With all of that, with all of that, Christ never took the credit. We can read repeatedly where Christ would say, ***‘Of Myself I can do nothing. Of Myself I can do nothing.’***

Christ would always give the credit to God the Father, acknowledging and understanding that it was God’s strength—working through Christ—that was doing the work that Christ was doing.

If Christ did that, how much more should we be doing the similar thing? David also showed this same trait as he prayed this way:

Psalm 19:12: “Who can understand his errors? Oh, cleanse me from *my* secret faults; and keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; do not let them rule over me; then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression” (vs 12-13). *David shows the same trait, and he showed it in this prayer.*

Both examples that I have gone through are in sharp contrast to see how Nebuchadnezzar initially felt in:

Daniel 4:28: “All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he *was* walking on the roof of the royal palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spoke and said, ‘*Is this not great Babylon that I have built for a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?’*” (vs 28-30).

Verse 31: “While the word was *yet* in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven, saying, ‘O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken. The kingdom has departed from you. And you shall be driven from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like oxen, and seven times shall pass over you until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He wills.’” (vs 31-32).

Verse 33: “The same hour the thing was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar. And he was driven from men, and ate grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of the heavens until his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’

claws.” *Quite astounding, isn’t it?*

Verse 34: “And at the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him Who lives forever, for His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing; and He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. And none can stay His hand, or say to Him, ‘What are You doing?’” (vs34-35).

Verse 36: “At that time my reason returned to me. And the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. And my advisers and my lords sought me out, and I was established in my kingdom, and surpassing greatness was added to me. Now, I Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are Truth and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to abase” (vs 36-37).

What a change of heart you see in Nebuchadnezzar, and he felt much differently. In some ways it is easier to see our faults. That is true, and we must be motivated to work on those faults, correcting them. Because it is our weak points that obviously get us, usually, into trouble. Most of the time, anyway.

But also remember our strong points, the good traits that we possess, our strengths. Those can also get us into another kind of trouble. They can make us vain; they can puff us up. ***They can make us prideful and less effective as tools in God’s almighty plan!***

So, as we pray, meditate, and grow closer to God, and build on our personal relationship with Him, to help us overcome all our weaknesses, ***we should always remember and ask God for help in bringing our strengths under subjection!***

Let us be thankful for those strengths. Let us be thankful for the gifts that we receive; all given to us, of course, by God.

- remember, let us use these strengths for the benefit of others! That is so important as a tool for God to use in the future
- remember that all praise and glory must go to God the Father and Jesus Christ
 - ✓ let us serve
 - ✓ let us use those good qualities that we possess

Each one of us may possess a different trait, a different character trait, a different strength, but let us use those qualities to the betterment of ourselves spiritually and to others in service. Total service to

God, first of all, and also total service to our brothers and sisters.

Let us honor God the Father and Jesus Christ for the blessings, the many strengths that They have given us. Let us use those talents as God would want us to use them.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 16:18-19
- 2) 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- 3) 1 Corinthians 1:26-29
- 4) Matthew 25:14-15
- 5) 1 Corinthians 10:31
- 6) Philippians 2:3
- 7) Exodus 31:1-5
- 8) Psalm 19:12-13
- 9) Daniel 4:28-37

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Matthew 25:16-31

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