



SPRING-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

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Photo: Our Daily Bread

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

The Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many men."

Judges 7:2

READ Judges 7:1–9

When my son was nearly three, I needed an operation that would require a month or more of recovery. Prior to the procedure, I imagined myself in bed while stacks of dirty dishes accumulated in the sink. I wasn't sure how I'd take care of an active toddler and couldn't picture myself standing in front of the stove to cook our meals. I dreaded the impact my weakness would have on the rhythm of our lives.

God intentionally weakened Gideon's forces before his troops confronted the Midianites. First, those who were afraid were allowed to leave—twenty-two thousand men went home (Judges 7:3). Then, of the ten thousand who remained, only those who scooped water into their hands to drink could stay. Just three hundred men were left, but this disadvantage prevented the Israelites from relying on themselves (vv. 5–6). They couldn't say, "My own strength has saved me" (v. 2).

Many of us experience times when we feel drained and powerless. When this happened to me, I realized how much I needed God. He encouraged me inwardly through His Spirit and outwardly through the helpfulness of friends and family. I had to let go of my independence for a while, but this taught me how to lean more fully on God. Because "[His] power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9), we can have hope when we can't meet our needs on our own.

By Jennifer Benson Schuldt

PRAY & REFLECT

God, I want my life to display Your power, even in weakness. Help me to depend more on You each day, and to feel Your strength when I struggle. Amen.

How have you experienced God's power made perfect in your weakness? How could you help someone who's experiencing weakness?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Some scholars suggest that the reason God chose the three hundred soldiers who lapped water from their hands like dogs to defeat the Midianites (Judges 7) is because they were the ones who kept their eyes up. Those who knelt to drink had to put their faces directly into the water and thus couldn't see around them. However, it was God who gave the victory. The way they drank water wasn't necessarily important; it was the number of men that was significant (v. 2). If it had been the smaller number who had stuck their faces in the water to drink rather than lapping, God would likely have used them instead. – By **J.R. Hudberg**

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