



DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS
Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
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Photo: Our Daily Bread

GROWING UP IN JESUS

My power is made perfect in weakness.
2 Corinthians 12:9

READ 2 Corinthians 12:6-10

As a child, I viewed grown-ups as wise and incapable of failure. *They always know what to do*, I'd think. *One day, when I'm grown up, I'll always know what to do too.* Well, "one day" came many years ago, and all it has taught me is that, many times, I still don't know what to do. Whether it's illness in the family, problems at work, or conflict in a relationship, such times have wrested all delusions of personal control and strength, simply leaving me one option—to close my eyes and whisper, "Lord, help. I don't know what to do."

The apostle Paul understood this feeling of helplessness. The "thorn" in his life, which may have been a physical ailment, caused him much frustration and pain. It was through this thorn, however, that Paul experienced God's love, promises, and blessings as sufficient for him to endure and overcome his difficulties (2 Corinthians 12:9). He learned that personal weakness and helplessness don't mean defeat. When surrendered to God in trust, they become tools for Him to work in and through these circumstances (vv. 9–10).

Our being a grown-up doesn't mean we're all-knowing. Sure, we grow wiser with age, but ultimately our weaknesses often reveal how truly powerless we are. Our true power is in Christ: "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (v. 10). Truly "growing up" means knowing, trusting, and obeying the power that comes when we realize we need God's help.

By **Karen Huang**

PRAY & REFLECT

Heavenly Father, thank You for being my help and strength. Amen

What trials make you realize your own helplessness? How can you obey God's leading?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

In 2 Corinthians 10-13, Paul defends his spiritual authority against accusations by false teachers (10:10; 11:12-14; 13:1-10). Describing himself as being forced by these critics to "boast in the Lord" (10:17), Paul details many ways in which God has confirmed the authenticity of his ministry. His goal was to convince Corinthian believers in Jesus of this so "that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority" "the authority the Lord gave me for building you up" (13:10).

Perhaps because false teachers were trying to base their authority on claims of divine visions, Paul reveals that he experienced a vision from God (12:1-4). But he emphasized he wasn't permitted to share the details (v. 4). Instead, the unidentified "thorn in [his] flesh" (v. 7) was God's way of teaching him that Christ's power is experienced not through arrogance but through suffering and weakness (vv. 9-10). —

By **Monica La Rose**

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