

SCRIPTURES ON WEAKNESS

Ken Williams, Ph.D.

God has a great deal to say about weakness in His Word. Much of what western culture and even American Christianity say about human weakness runs contrary to God's view. So here are most of the Scriptures that give His view. I hope this encourages you as you see how our Lord views our weakness, and our weaknesses. Note that he never condemns us for being weak, or says that weakness is sin. Also notice how God wants us to respond to weak people.

Old Testament Scriptures

Judges 6:15: "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."

2 Samuel 3:39: And today, though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds!" (David, grieving over Abner's murder).

2 Chronicles 20:12: O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you."

Job 12:21: He pours contempt on nobles and weakens the strength of the mighty.

Psalms 10:2: In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak, who are caught in the schemes he devises.

Psalms 12:5: "Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise," says the LORD. "I will protect them from those who malign them."

Psalms 41:1: Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of

trouble.

Psalms 72:13: He [Christ] will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.

Psalms 82:3: Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Isaiah 40:29-31: He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Ezekiel 34:4: You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured... (The context indicates they should have done so.)

Ezekiel 34:16: I (the Sovereign Lord) will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

Ezekiel 34:20-21: "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away...

Joel 3:10: ...Let the weakling say, 'I am strong!'

New Testament Scriptures

Matthew 26:41, Mark 14:28: The spirit is willing, but the body is weak. (Jesus was disappointed in their ability to stay awake with

Him, but He didn't condemn them).

Acts 20:35: In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak...

Romans 6:19: I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. (No condemnation is implied here).

Romans 8:26: In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness...

Romans 14:1,2: Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.

Romans 15:1: We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29: Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things__and the things that are not__to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

1 Corinthians 2:3: I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.

1 Corinthians 4:10: We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored!

1 Corinthians 8:9, 11: Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak... So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. (Speaking of one with a weak conscience. A weak conscience is discussed in 1 Corinthians 8:7-13. God doesn't

condemn those with a weak conscience, but they are described as having a very sensitive conscience which doesn't give them the freedom other Christians have.)

1 Corinthians 9:22: To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

1 Corinthians 12:22: On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable...

1 Corinthians 15:43: [The body] is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

2 Corinthians 11:21: To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that! (To exploit them).

2 Corinthians 11:29-30: Who is weak, and I do not feel weak?... If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

2 Corinthians 12:5: ...I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10: But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 13:4: ...he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.

2 Corinthians 13:9: We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your perfection.

1 Thessalonians 5:14: And we urge you, brothers... help the weak...

Hebrews 4:15: For we do not have a high

priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

Hebrews 5:2: He (the High Priest) is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness.

Hebrews 7:28: For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak...

Hebrews 11:34: ...whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.

Hebrews 12:12-13: Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Related Scriptures

The concept of strength relates closely to weakness in the Word. Here are some passages dealing with strength, which are relevant to our weakness.

Exodus 15:2: The Lord is my strength... (This is the first of at least 15 Scriptures which say Note: There are at least 32 "Be strong" commands in Scripture. Most of these are based on God's presence and strength, and relate to being courageous and not afraid in battle. In Ephesians 6:10 we are commanded to "be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." Timothy (2 Timothy 2:1) was

that the Lord Himself is our strength).

1 Samuel 2:9: It is not by strength that one prevails...

2 Samuel 22:33: It is God who arms me with strength... (Many Scriptures say that God strengthens us. See Psalm 18:32, 29:22, 68:35).

Nehemiah 8:10: For the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Proverbs 24:5: A man of knowledge increases strength.

Isaiah 30:15: In quietness and trust is your strength.

Habakkuk 1:11: ...guilty men, whose own strength is their god.

Revelation 3:8: I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. (Though weak, the church at Philadelphia was one of the two which were not called to repent. The other, at Smyrna, was obviously weak and despised also).

commanded to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. These commands to be strong do not imply having no weaknesses, but finding our strength and courage in the Lord's power and grace.