

Be Strong In The Grace

You, then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1)

The first truth one learns from this verse is you are responsible. You are responsible to be strong. Not strong in your own strength, but in grace, in grace that is in Christ Jesus. Paul says, be strong, yourself, in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

This is fundamental to help others. You can only pass on to others what you yourself have received. If you merely pass on a knowledge of the truth—teaching people the various doctrines of strength from grace—you have done little to help them. Unless they can see that that truth has changed you and made you different, that you speak out of the experience of having been altered by the truth you believe, you will never do anything to help someone else stand in the hour of danger. If you want to strengthen others, Paul's advice is to start with yourself.

That which strengthens God's child is grace. A peculiar thing about grace is it is never available to strong people. That is what makes it difficult for us to get hold of it sometimes. We are continually assaulted today with a barrage of false teaching that the way to be strong is to develop some quality about ourselves, some hidden thing we appreciate about who we are. If you believe the Bible, these teachings are the way to be weak—and that is what proves to be the case. God's grace alone is strong enough to handle the pressures of our fallen world, but the only way you can lay hold of the grace of God is to acknowledge that you are so weak you do not have anything else that will hold you.

Many today are unable to become strong. They do not stand in the day of pressure, although they give great testimony about how they are going to follow Christ and stand for Him. They quote verses to others about God's strength in Christ, but they haven't experienced that strength themselves. In the moment of pressure, they go down—almost instantly. They have bought the lie of the world that if they just make up their mind, that if by their will and effort by focusing on natural gifts, they can stand. Paul's word is that the way to strength is to discover the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Recognize your own weakness and then embrace God's promise to work with you and through you in your state of weakness. That confidence in Christ's work, His gift, will yield strength the ability to keep from being crushed by the pressures of your life. That is how it works.

Christians should continually be learning to say, I can't live up to the demand to be strong. I can't do this thing that is asked of me. But Christ and His gifts can; therefore I can. Take the action based upon the expectation that God is in you, and He will enable you to do what you otherwise cannot do. That is authentic Christianity. It is supernatural living. Natural gifts and strength are one's greatest enemy. When we learn that, we can be strong in the grace, in the gifts that come with having Christ Jesus.