

# The Duty of Being Always Strong

by J.R. Miller

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*It is our duty to be strong, not because strength is a virtue, but because it allows us to access God's strength and achieve our God-given potentials.*

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 12:9

**Topics:** "Strength in Weakness", "Divine Help"

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## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the duty of being strong, asserting that while weakness is not a virtue, it draws God's special sympathy and help. He illustrates that divine strength is available to those who recognize their own weakness and turn to God for support, as exemplified by the Apostle Paul. Miller encourages individuals to awaken their inner potential and strive for strength, likening it to an eagle realizing its ability to soar rather than remaining grounded like a chicken. He warns against complacency and urges believers to actively seek strength to fulfill their God-given purpose. Ultimately, he calls for a proactive approach to life, encouraging believers to face struggles with courage and determination.

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## Transcript

It is always a duty to be strong. Weakness is never set down as a virtue. Yet there is abundant proof of divine sympathy with weakness. God is the friend of the weak. Weakness draws his help in an especial degree. It is so in the realm of human affection. A child that is hurt or sick or blind, is watched over far more carefully than the one that is strong and well, and draws to itself a larger measure of sympathy and help. The whole household contributes of its strength to make up for the weakness of the invalid. This is an illustration of the way the love of God discriminates, giving help, not according to men's strength, but according to their weakness.

We may be sure, therefore, if we are weak, that we can get all the more of God's strength, because of our lack of strength of our own. This is what Paul meant when he said, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Indeed, the consciousness of weakness is the secret of strength, for it opens the way for God to help. However a man may have failed in his efforts, when at last he learns his own hopelessness of the struggle in his own strength -- he is ready for victory if only he turns to God. Self-confidence is weakness, because it asks no help from God. Self-distrust is strength when it casts itself upon the divine power.

Thus weakness is redeemed from the despair into which it would sink, if it had no resources beyond itself. It could then only be trampled down and crushed into the dust. It is one of the glories of divine love, that it reaches after human hopelessness, that it seeks to save the lost, that it brings its help to the broken and

defeated -- rather than to the whole and the unconquered.

This is a secret which all who are in the grip of temptation should hasten to learn. Mr. Drummond on one occasion was asked to use his influence with a man who had become addicted to the use of alcohol. Mr. Drummond was riding with the man and asked him, "Suppose your horses ran away and you lost control of them and they turned a steep hill, what would you do?" The man replied that he could do nothing. "But suppose," added Mr. Drummond, "that someone sat by your side who was stronger than you?" The man said promptly, "I would give him the reins."

Mr. Drummond pointed out to his friend the peril in which his life stood, because alcohol had gained the mastery. Then, reminding him of the nearness and helpfulness of Christ, he urged him to put the reins into his hands. Always the divine strength is ready to take hold of human weakness, and change it into power.

While this is the law of divine grace, it still remains true that it is our duty to seek always to be strong. Weakness is never to be desired or sought after as something beautiful, as a quality in a noble character. We need strength in order to make anything of our life. Nothing worthy is ever attained or achieved, by a drone. Thousands of men with fine possibilities never come to anything, because of their lack of energy.

There is a great deal of senseless condemnation of ambition. No doubt there are ambitions which are not good, because they set only an earthly goal before them. But the young man who has no ambition, is not worthy of the place he occupies in this world. He is here not merely to exist as if he were a worm -- but to make something noble and radiant of his life. In every human soul there is a life with immortal possibilities. It is the duty of every one to wake up this, that it may find itself and put on its beauty and strength.

A man had an eagle which had grown up among the barnyard hens. For a time the bird seemed content to be only a chicken. But one day it looked up into the sky and something in it, sleeping until now, awoke. Flapping its wings, it soared away toward the sun and came back again no more. Just so, too many men meant for the eagle-life, content themselves with a barnyard existence. Now and then they feel something divine stirring within them -- but they are too indolent to make the effort necessary to take their place in the upper air and among the mountain crags. So they spend all their days down in the dust, among the lower things, never waking up to their God-given potentials.

It is strength which we need -- strength at the heart of us, to stir within us the divine life that sleeps there, and to lead us out to become all that God would have us become, to do what he made us to do. Dr. Babcock's lines strike the right note:

Be strong! We are not here to play, to dream, to drift.

We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.

Shun not the struggle; face it. 'Tis God's gift.

Be strong! Say not the days are evil -- Who's to blame?

And fold the hands and acquiesce -- O shame!

Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's Name.

Be strong! It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,

How hard the battle goes, the day, how long. Faint not, fight on!

Tomorrow comes the song!

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