

# THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE

**WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR?**

Rick Warren

## **God's Power in Your Weakness**

*We are weak...yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.*

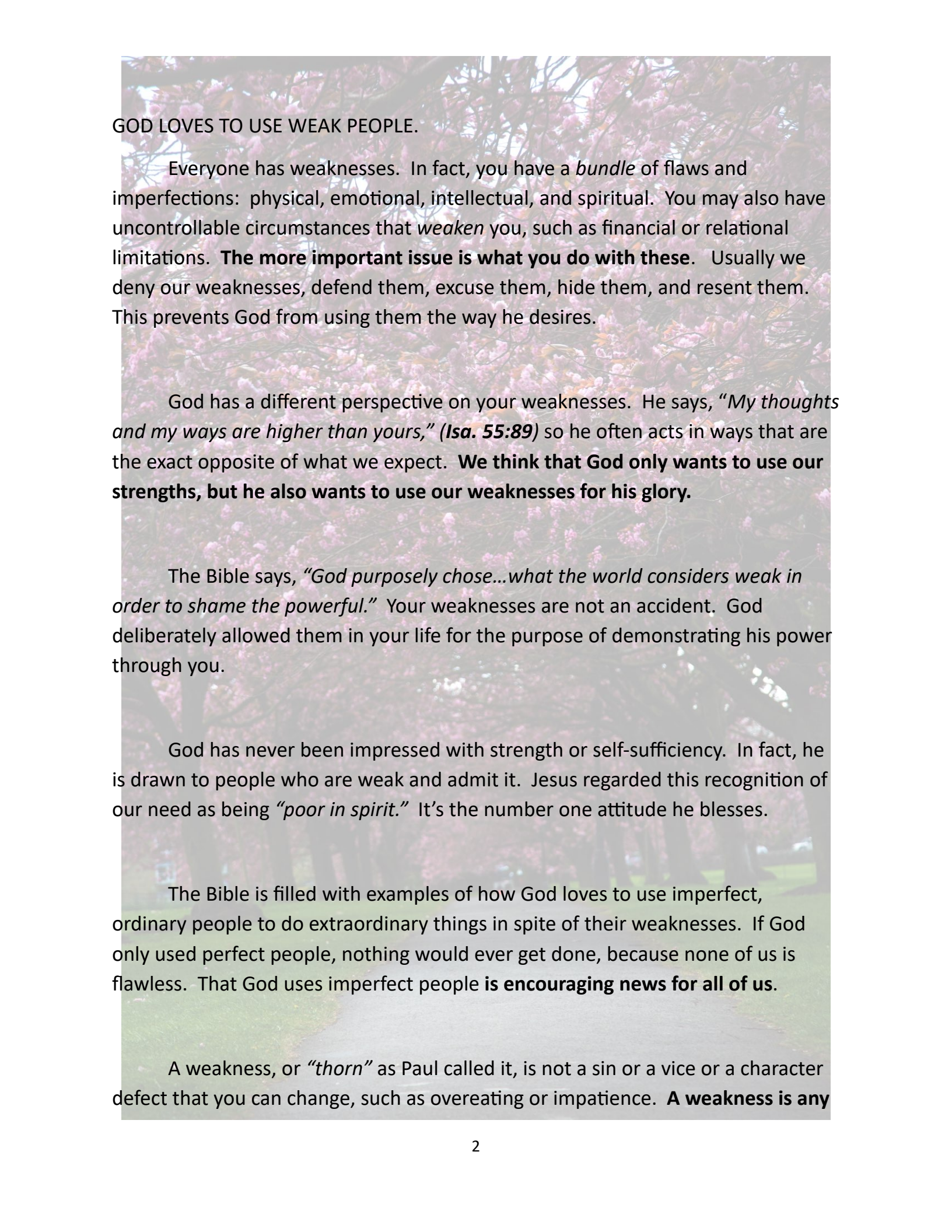
***2 Corinthians 13:4 (NIV)***

*I am with you; that is all you need. My power shows up best in weak people.*

***2 Corinthians 12:9A (LB)***

**DR. JEROME LEE JR.**





## GOD LOVES TO USE WEAK PEOPLE.

Everyone has weaknesses. In fact, you have a *bundle* of flaws and imperfections: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. You may also have uncontrollable circumstances that *weaken* you, such as financial or relational limitations. **The more important issue is what you do with these.** Usually we deny our weaknesses, defend them, excuse them, hide them, and resent them. This prevents God from using them the way he desires.

God has a different perspective on your weaknesses. He says, *“My thoughts and my ways are higher than yours,” (Isa. 55:89)* so he often acts in ways that are the exact opposite of what we expect. **We think that God only wants to use our strengths, but he also wants to use our weaknesses for his glory.**


The Bible says, *“God purposely chose...what the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful.”* Your weaknesses are not an accident. God deliberately allowed them in your life for the purpose of demonstrating his power through you.

God has never been impressed with strength or self-sufficiency. In fact, he is drawn to people who are weak and admit it. Jesus regarded this recognition of our need as being *“poor in spirit.”* It’s the number one attitude he blesses.

The Bible is filled with examples of how God loves to use imperfect, ordinary people to do extraordinary things in spite of their weaknesses. If God only used perfect people, nothing would ever get done, because none of us is flawless. That God uses imperfect people **is encouraging news for all of us.**

A weakness, or *“thorn”* as Paul called it, is not a sin or a vice or a character defect that you can change, such as overeating or impatience. **A weakness is any**





**limitation that you inherited or have no power to change.** It may be a *physical* limitation, like a handicap, a chronic illness, naturally low energy, or a disability. It may be an *emotional* limitation, such as a trauma scar, a hurtful memory, a personality quirk, or a hereditary disposition. Or it may be a *talent* or *intellectual* limitation. We're not all super bright or talented.

*"We are like clay jars in which this treasure is stored. The real power comes from God and not from us." (Eph. 4:7).* Like common pottery, we are fragile and flawed and break easily. But God will use us if we allow him to work through our weaknesses. For that to happen, we must follow the model of Paul.

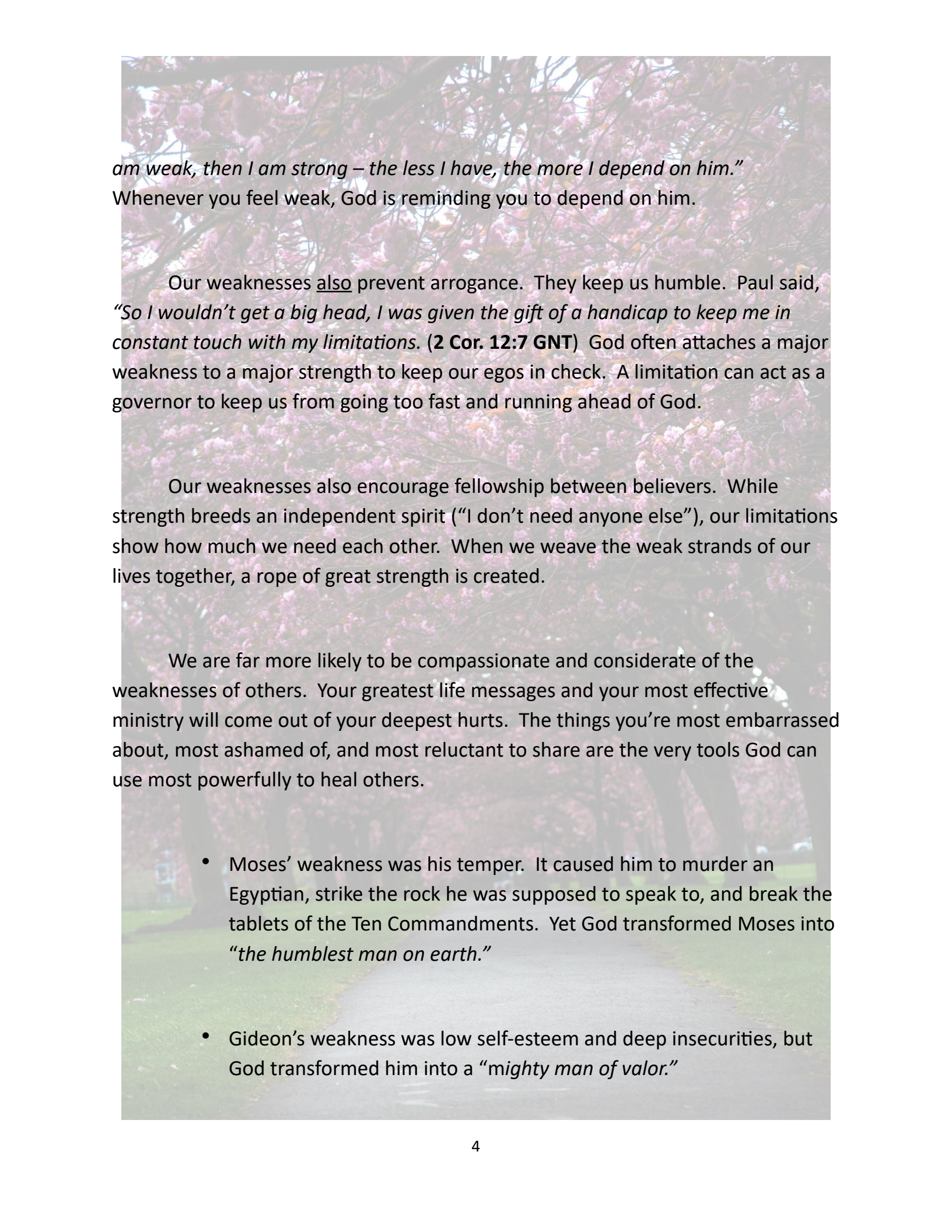
**Admit your weaknesses.** Own up to your imperfections. Stop pretending to have it all together, and be honest about yourself. Instead of living in denial or making excuses, take the time to identify your personal weaknesses. You might make a list of them.

Two great confessions in the New Testament illustrate what we need for healthy living. The first was Peter's, who said to Jesus, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Matt. 16:16)* The second confession was Paul's, who said to an idolizing crowd, *"We are only human beings like you."* **If you want God to use you, you must know who God is and know who you are.**

**Be content with your weaknesses.** *"I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may work through me. Since I know it is all for Christ's good, I am quite content with my weaknesses." (2 Cor. 12:9)*

Paul gives us several reasons to be content with our inborn weaknesses. First, they cause us to depend on God. Referring to his own weakness, which God refused to take away, Paul said, *"I am quite happy about 'the throne,'...for when I*





*am weak, then I am strong – the less I have, the more I depend on him.”*

Whenever you feel weak, God is reminding you to depend on him.

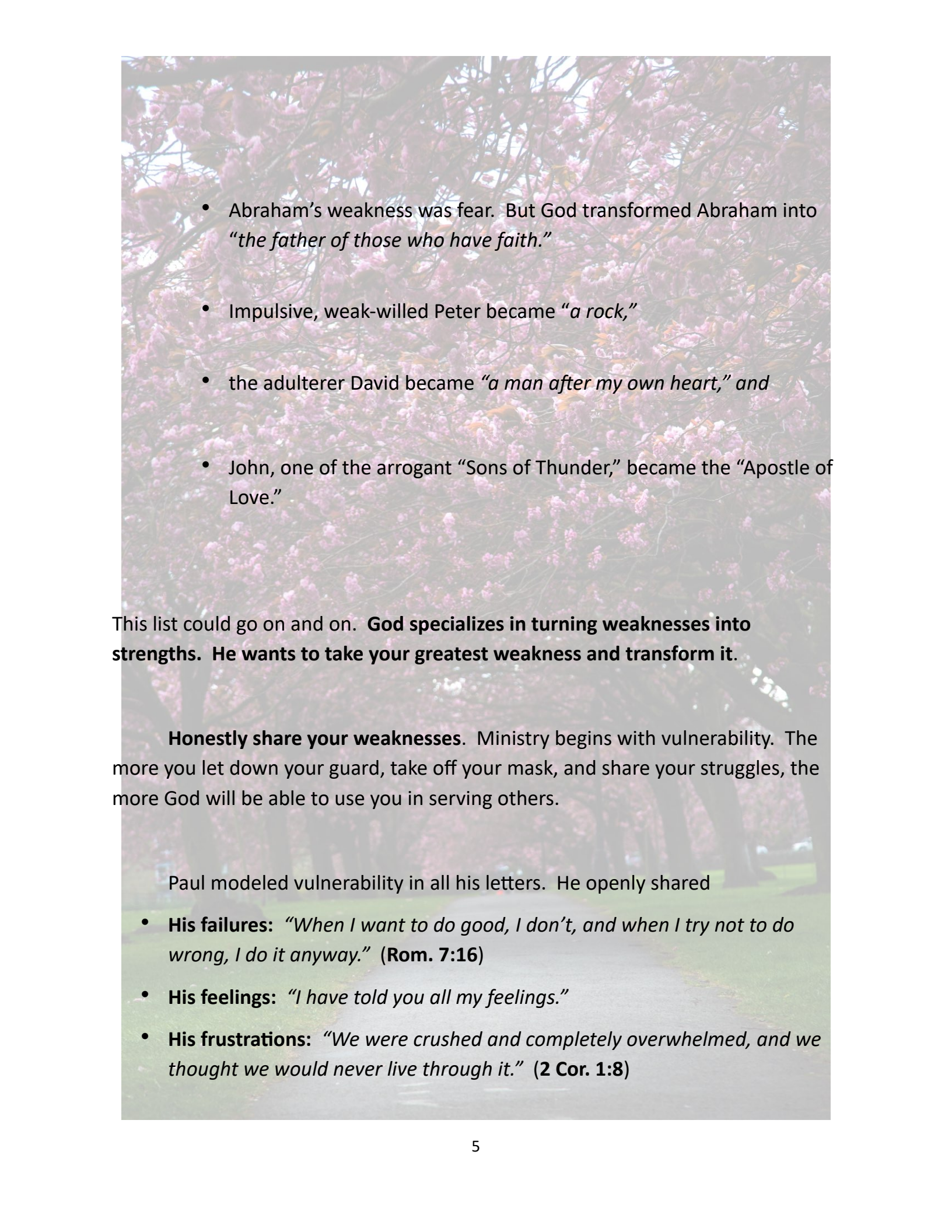
Our weaknesses also prevent arrogance. They keep us humble. Paul said, *“So I wouldn’t get a big head, I was given the gift of a handicap to keep me in constant touch with my limitations. (2 Cor. 12:7 GNT)* God often attaches a major weakness to a major strength to keep our egos in check. A limitation can act as a governor to keep us from going too fast and running ahead of God.

Our weaknesses also encourage fellowship between believers. While strength breeds an independent spirit (“I don’t need anyone else”), our limitations show how much we need each other. When we weave the weak strands of our lives together, a rope of great strength is created.

We are far more likely to be compassionate and considerate of the weaknesses of others. Your greatest life messages and your most effective ministry will come out of your deepest hurts. The things you’re most embarrassed about, most ashamed of, and most reluctant to share are the very tools God can use most powerfully to heal others.

- Moses’ weakness was his temper. It caused him to murder an Egyptian, strike the rock he was supposed to speak to, and break the tablets of the Ten Commandments. Yet God transformed Moses into *“the humblest man on earth.”*
- Gideon’s weakness was low self-esteem and deep insecurities, but God transformed him into a *“mighty man of valor.”*



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- Abraham's weakness was fear. But God transformed Abraham into *"the father of those who have faith."*
  - Impulsive, weak-willed Peter became *"a rock,"*
  - the adulterer David became *"a man after my own heart,"* and
  - John, one of the arrogant "Sons of Thunder," became the "Apostle of Love."

This list could go on and on. **God specializes in turning weaknesses into strengths. He wants to take your greatest weakness and transform it.**

**Honestly share your weaknesses.** Ministry begins with vulnerability. The more you let down your guard, take off your mask, and share your struggles, the more God will be able to use you in serving others.

Paul modeled vulnerability in all his letters. He openly shared

- **His failures:** *"When I want to do good, I don't, and when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway." (Rom. 7:16)*
- **His feelings:** *"I have told you all my feelings."*
- **His frustrations:** *"We were crushed and completely overwhelmed, and we thought we would never live through it." (2 Cor. 1:8)*



- **His fears:** *“When I came to you, I was weak and fearful and trembling.”* (1 Cor. 2:31)

Of course, vulnerability is risky. It can be scary to lower your defenses and open up your life to others. When you reveal your failures, feelings, frustrations, and fears, you risk rejection.

Our strengths create competition, but our weaknesses create community.

At some point in your life you must decide whether you want to *impress* people or *influence* people. The most essential quality for leadership is not perfection, but credibility. People must be able to trust you, or they won't follow you. How do you build credibility? Not by pretending to be perfect, but by being honest.

**Glory in your weaknesses.** Paul said, *“I am going to boast only about how weak I am and how great God is to use such weakness for his glory.”* Instead of posing as self-confident and invincible, see yourself as a trophy of grace. When Satan points out your weaknesses, agree with him and fill your heart with praise for Jesus, who *“understands every weakness of ours,”* and for the Holy Spirit, who *“helps us in our weakness.”*

Sometimes, however, God turns a strength into a weakness in order use us ever more. Jacob was a manipulator who spent his life scheming and then running from the consequences.

<sup>22</sup> That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup> After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. <sup>24</sup> So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. <sup>25</sup> When



the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. <sup>26</sup> Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

<sup>27</sup> The man asked him, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

<sup>28</sup> Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel,<sup>[a]</sup> because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

If you want God to bless you and use you greatly, you must be willing to walk with a limp the rest of your life, because God uses weak people.

## THINKING ABOUT MY PURPOSE

**POINT TO PONDER:** God works best when I admit my weakness.

**VERSE TO REMEMBER:** *"My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness."* **2 CORINTHIANS 12:9a (NIV)**

**QUESTION TO CONSIDER:** Am I limiting God's power in my life by trying to hide my weaknesses? What do I need to be honest about in order to help others?

**MESSAGE TO HEAR:** [www.purposedriven.com/day 35](http://www.purposedriven.com/day 35)

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