Dear Open Door Family,

Why is it that guys don't want to ask for directions? For many of us it is that we do not want to be seen as NOT knowing where we are going. We don't want to be seen as weak or incompetent. That is the same reason many of us (men and women) do not do things unless we have a reasonable chance of success. Why even try something if all it is going to do is point out our failure or our weakness. We don't want to take the car in when it makes that weird sound because it never makes it when the mechanic is listening. And then we feel dumb or incompetent. I could give many examples in my own life and hopefully most of them would be from years ago. Because I don't want to be someone who will only do those things which I'm good at. As a matter of fact, in my walk with God there have been many times that God has done amazing things because He was able to work from my weakness rather than my strength. That is why one of my favorite passages in all of scripture is this passage in 2 Corinthians. Let's look at it together.

2 Corinthians 12:7-*10* *(NLT) ...I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. [8] Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. [9] Each time he said, "My GRACE is all you need. My POWER works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. [10] That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Many people spend a lot of time trying to figure out what the "thorn" in Paul's flesh may have been. But the point of the passage is NOT the thorn. Paul says that three times he asked (past tense) God to take it away. The implication is that he is through asking. WHY? Because in each case God answered the same way. My Grace is what you need - My Power works best when you are weak. That must have been very hard for Paul to hear. He was an extraordinary man with amazing training and abilities. Yet the Lord was saying clearly, Paul you need ME, you need MY POWER, you need MY GRACE. Anytime you try to serve or minister to others without ME you are working from your own strength or giftedness. I want to WORK THROUGH you and for ME to do that your weakness and resulting dependence on ME are critical. This quote about grace says it well...***Grace does not make things easy but grace does make hard things possible. D. Harvey*** Paul got the message because he was able to say I take pleasure in MY weakness because when I am weak, I am STRONG - not in his own strength but in the strength and grace of God.

PRAYER: Lord, God help me to remember that YOU are the one who empowers me. Help me to remember You do not need my strength or my skill or my ability. You want my Dependence and my Weakness so that YOU can do Your work in me and through me.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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