

LIFE-GIVING CONFIDENCE

Karen Hodge, Guest Write

Today's Treasure

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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

I love spending time with young moms. Recently I went to breakfast with an expectant mother. She began to tell me about all the books she had been reading in preparation for the baby's arrival. "Do you think you are ready?" I sheepishly asked. I too thought I was good to go before the birth of my first child. I shared with her how days into parenthood the quote "all prayer is desperate prayer" became a reality in my life. I had been an inner-city first-grade teacher prior to becoming a mother to Anna Grace. One afternoon when my husband returned home I asked, "How can teaching twenty-five six-year-olds be easier than parenting this baby?" Parenting brought me to my knees. It offers us the occasion to examine exactly where our confidence lies.

The word confidence actually comes from the words "with" and "faith". When you put them together, you get the gist of confidence-with full faith or trust. As a parent, I often placed my full trust in my perceived skills or abilities. Other days it was merely my confidence that I was stubborn enough to endure. As a leader, I was looking inside instead of looking up. Paul tells us plainly, "Put no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians. 3:3). **The fundamental difference between life-taking and life-giving leadership is the object of our confidence. A life-giving leader has full confidence in God.**

Self-confidence clings to external assurances. Christ-confidence clings to grace. We cling there because His grace is sufficient. It means He is enough, so we don't have to try to be. His grace is sufficient to cover my sin of self-reliance and pride. I don't know about you but I don't want to appear weak, I want others to see me as strong. The act of full trust is bringing our weakness to Him as a sacrifice of praise. Our weakness is a platform where His strength shines. **It is as if the Lord is saying, "The weaker you are, the more evident My strength will be to a watching world as I deliver and sustain you."** It is hard to comprehend that His power is perfected in our weakness. Perfected means the goal, the purpose, or the aim. Can you believe it, God is actually

accomplishing His purposes in our weakness? If you are feeling weak and fearful friend, then praise God!

I first heard the words to the song "*His Strength Is Perfect*" by Stephen Curtis Chapman when I was a young mom. The lyrics would roll around in my head on those oh so weak days. "His strength is perfect when our strength is gone; He'll carry us when we can't carry on. Raised in His power, the weak become strong; His strength is perfect."

PRAYER

Father, it is no surprise to You that I am weak. Thank you for welcoming me in my weakness. Your grace is sufficient to cleanse me from my self-sufficient ways. Align my heart with Yours so that I will place my full trust in Your sovereignty. Keep me from independence and lead me to walk in full dependence. Let Your power rest on me until it is perfected in my life.

