

# LOVE THE LORD



## Lesson Fifteen - How can I make up for my weaknesses?

August 2023

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### Summary of key points

- The world teaches us to see our weaknesses as personal defects.
- This affects how we feel about ourselves.
- God chose the foolish, weak, low, and despised, to shame the wise, the strong, and the respected so that no one can boast in His presence.
- We need to be careful to not allow our weaknesses to define our identity and who we are.
- Our weaknesses can teach us many things, with the most important being to rely on God's power.
- God's power works best through our weaknesses so that people see God's glory.

### Watch the lesson online

<https://youtu.be/Pi4jOaDddY4>

### Transcript

Welcome to lesson 15 of Love the Lord where we discuss the purpose of our weaknesses and why they are worth boasting about.

We will begin by inviting God to speak to us personally through this study. Please follow along as we pray together. Click pause at any point if you need more time

First, let's thank God for His perfect character and will for us.

Next, please tell Him about the things that have been stressful and ask for His help and guidance.

Let us put down our burdens of sin and confess the ways we have sinned against God and against others, and ask for His forgiveness.

Please confess the ways others have sinned against us, and forgive them in Jesus' name.

Next, let us ask God to purify and open our hearts to receive His teaching.

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Finally, please repeat these words, “In Jesus’ name, I silence all distractions and voices that are not from God. Amen.”

Let us begin the lesson for today. How can I make up for my weaknesses?

We live in a world that teaches us to see our weaknesses as personal defects. If something is defective, we need to fix it and even worse, discard it.

Therefore, we feel the need to:

1. Improve ourselves through self-help books or courses
2. Compensate for our shortcomings
3. Disguise or hide our weaknesses
4. Lie about our weaknesses

This world attaches a lot of shame to being weak. People tend to apply labels such as “loser, good-for-nothing, disgraceful” to anyone they see as weak. What about you?

1. What do you see as your weaknesses?
2. How do you feel about them?
3. Now, how do you see yourself? What have people said about you and your weaknesses? Have they put any labels on you? How have all these made you feel in general ?

Let's slow down here and give you time to reflect. Click pause if you need the time to write down some notes for yourself.

Welcome back.

The world tells us that it is good to be smart, strong, and popular and to hold high positions, and we do not want to be seen as foolish, weak, and despised, and holding low positions. But God’s Word shows us a completely different picture.

God knows that our human heart is weak and prone to become proud and boastful. Therefore, He deliberately chooses those whom the world labels as foolish, weak, low, and despised to shame the wise, strong, and respected, so that no human being will be able to boast in the presence of God.

Let’s read 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verses 27 to 29 together, “... *God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised ... so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.*” (1 Corinthians 1:27-29 ESV)

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*2 Corinthians 12:9-10 ... I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 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. (NLT)*

The Bible explains that God's power works best in weakness. The apostle Paul went so far as to say he would even boast of his weaknesses so that people could see the power of God working through him. Paul took pleasure in his weaknesses.

*2 Corinthians 13:4 Although he was crucified in weakness, he now lives by the power of God. We, too, are weak, just as Christ was, but when we deal with you we will be alive with him and will have God's power. (NLT)*

Let us not forget that Jesus Christ was also crucified in weakness so that He could be glorified in power. When we live a life with Jesus, we will have God's power to overcome anything too. Let's look at some examples of how God's power works through some other people and their weaknesses.

First, let's start with Gideon. Gideon labelled himself as the least in his family and as the weakest in his tribe in Israel. But God promised to be with Gideon. God said, *"I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man."* As a result, Gideon was able to defeat an army of 135,000 men with just a crew of 300 men.

*Judges 6:15-16 "But Lord," Gideon replied, "how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!" The Lord said to him, "I will be with you. And you will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man." (NLT)*

Next, let's look at Moses. Moses labelled himself as being *"not very good with words."* He didn't have the confidence to tell the pharaoh of Egypt to release the Israelites from slavery. But God promised to be with Moses. God said, *"I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say."* Moses went on to confront pharaoh, pronounce great miracles, and eventually lead over 1 million Israelites out to the Promised Land.

*Exodus 4:10-12 But Moses pleaded with the Lord, "O Lord, I'm not very good with words... I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled." Then the Lord asked Moses... I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say." (NLT)*

Then we have the example of Peter. Peter, the apostle, was a professional fisherman but he became afraid when the waves around the boat that he was in became very rough. Jesus promised to be with him. Jesus said, *"Take courage. I am here!"* As a result, Peter was able to fearlessly step out of the boat and miraculously walk on water.

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*Matthew 14:27,29 But Jesus spoke to them at once. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “Take courage. I am here!” ... So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. (NLT)*

These are just three examples of how anyone can overcome anything when God is with them, rather than to be overwhelmed by their weaknesses.

God is not held back by our social, physical, or emotional shortcomings. But it does take faith to believe and trust that the Lord will be with us and walk with us through our weaknesses. The real weakness we need to overcome is our lack of faith.

*Matthew 21:21-22 Then Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don’t doubt, you can do things like this and much more... You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it.” (NLT)*

Jesus has promised, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don’t doubt, you can do things like this and much more... You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it.” (Matthew 21:21-22 NLT) Jesus will help us to prosper and succeed in all that we do when we obey His instructions.

The reality is that God has made everything, even our weaknesses, for a purpose.

*Proverbs 16:4 The LORD has made everything for his own purposes, even the wicked for a day of disaster. (NLT)*

Our weaknesses can teach us many things.

1. For one, we learn to identify with other people’s weaknesses and grow in compassion. | *Hebrews 5:2 And he is able to deal gently with ignorant and wayward people because he himself is subject to the same weaknesses. (NLT)*
2. We also learn to be more tender-hearted to care for and encourage those we can relate to. | *1 Thessalonians 5:14 ... Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. (NLT)*
3. As a result, we will recognise that we need each other because each one of us has their own strengths and weaknesses and we can complement one another. | *1 Corinthians 12:21-22 The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.” In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. (NLT)*
4. And finally, our weaknesses teach us to rely on God’s power. | *Isaiah 40:28-29 ... The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can*

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*measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. (NLT)*

On the other hand, the world sets us up to see our weaknesses as personal failings, not as opportunities.

Let's say we were weak in Science at school and constantly scored D's. If we were often told at home that we should only score A's and B's, and that D's were unacceptable, we might feel like failures even though we technically did not fail. We only felt this way because of the pressures we felt at home and as a result, we might even adopt labels on ourselves that are not from God.

Let's go back to our three examples and look at the labels God gave Gideon, Moses, and Peter.

- Gideon called himself the lowest socially, but God called him "mighty hero and warrior" (Judges 6:12).
- Moses called himself a stutterer, but God called him His friend (Exodus 33:11).
- Peter was prone to fear and failure, but God built his church upon Peter, whom He called His rock (Matthew 16:18).

It seems that we should not define ourselves by our weaknesses. Rather our identities should be defined by God and what He calls us.

Unfortunately, many of us have learned to label ourselves based on what the world says about our weaknesses. This will lead us down a road of self-doubt and self-destruction.

1. Firstly, we can start to reject ourselves because we can't accept feeling weak.
2. This gives Satan an opportunity to torment us, he will constantly accuse us and remind us of our weaknesses.
3. We can begin to see ourselves as unworthy of God's love and His acceptance.
4. This breeds anxiety and stress in our hearts and minds.
5. We wonder why God didn't give us the strengths we need in order to be fully accepted in this world, doesn't He love and care for us?
6. We may start to envy others for their strengths and strive to compensate for our weaknesses using our own methods, when we really should be going to God for His help and enabling.

When we turn to God in the midst of our weaknesses, He promises to

1. Be with us wherever we go | *Joshua 1:9 This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.* (NLT)

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2. He will strengthen and help us as we place our trust in Him | *Isaiah 41:10 Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. (NLT)*
  3. He will give us His power to stand as His witnesses | *Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere... (NLT)*
  4. He will be generous with His wisdom when we ask | *James 1:5 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (NLT)*
  5. He will teach us what to say | *Luke 12:11-12 ... don't worry about how to defend yourself or what to say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what needs to be said." (NLT)*

It is important that we understand that our weaknesses are not a mistake and we are not a mistake. God made every one of us for His glory.

*Isaiah 43:7 Bring all who claim me as their God, for I have made them for my glory. It was I who created them." (NLT)*

Each one of us is fearfully and wonderfully made.

*Psalms 139:13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. (NLT)*

But none of us is created perfect or strong in everything because we are designed to be perfected and made new through Jesus Christ. Then we will see the masterpiece that God created us to be as we move in perfect unison with the Holy Spirit.

*Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (NLT)*

We all need to renew our minds and understand that our weaknesses are an opportunity for God's mighty glory to shine through us. Here is what the apostle Paul said. Let's read it together. *"I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling ... I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God."* (1 Corinthians 2:3-5 NLT) The apostle Paul did many great things for God but he chose to be weak so that God's power could work through him. This is the same opportunity for us too.

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If you realise you have been rejecting your weaknesses rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to work through you so you can bear great fruit through His power, this is a time to rededicate your weaknesses to God for His glory. Are you ready?

1. First, let us start off by thanking God for creating us just the way we are, all our strengths and with all our weaknesses.
2. Next, please renounce all the world's labels that you have put on yourself.
3. If you have ever rejected a part of yourself or hated yourself, please repent. In God's eyes, you are perfectly made. He never makes mistakes.
4. If you have tried your own ways to compensate or cover up your weaknesses, please turn to God and ask for forgiveness for coping on your own strength. We are meant to give God all our anxieties and allow His power to work through us.
5. Next, let us forgive those who rejected us because of our weaknesses. Let us bless them because they are ignorant of God's view of us
6. Finally, let us invite the Holy Spirit to use our weakness for His glory

We encourage you to take the time to go through this prayer and sit in God's presence. Celebrate who you are and who God has made you to be. Listen to the Holy Spirit and welcome His comfort, assurance, and strengthening. Click pause and take as much time as you need.

We finish today's lesson with two reflection questions for you to prepare answers to for your small group discussion. Please also take the time to watch the testimony. We pray that you will be blessed. See you next time.

### **Time for reflection**

1. Have you judged anyone based on their weaknesses and condemned them?
2. What motivates you to judge others this way?

### **Watch the testimony for this lesson**



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**Personal notes**