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Recently I faced a particularly difficult challenge when there was a health crisis in my family—one that couldn't be overcome in a day, or even weeks or months, as it turned out. Eventually the situation caused me to reexamine my approach to life's difficulties in general. How much did God expect *me* to do, and how much did He want me to trust *Him* to do in answer to my prayers? Did I need to work harder or pray more?

I try to live by the maxim, "Do what you can, and God will do what you can't," but the truth is that it's usually easier for me to work a little harder at what I think I can do than it is to wait patiently for God to do His part. So in this case I worked a little harder. Pretty soon I got the idea that God could use some help with His part, and that I was just the man for the job. So I worked a little harder still, and wound up worn out, frustrated, discouraged, and wondering where I had gone wrong. Finally I got the point: My own plans, carried out in my own strength, could only take me so far—which was nowhere, really, compared to how far God could take me if I would follow His plan and let Him do what He alone could do.

Yes, God does expect us to do what we can, but even in that we must learn to rely on *His* strength. We need to make sure that our works aren't *self-works*, but rather that we're letting God decide what needs to be done and how it needs to be done, and then depending on Him to do it through us. "Not by [your] might nor by [your] power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6). That's the secret to both happiness and success!

Keith Phillips

FOR THE ACTIVATED FAMILY

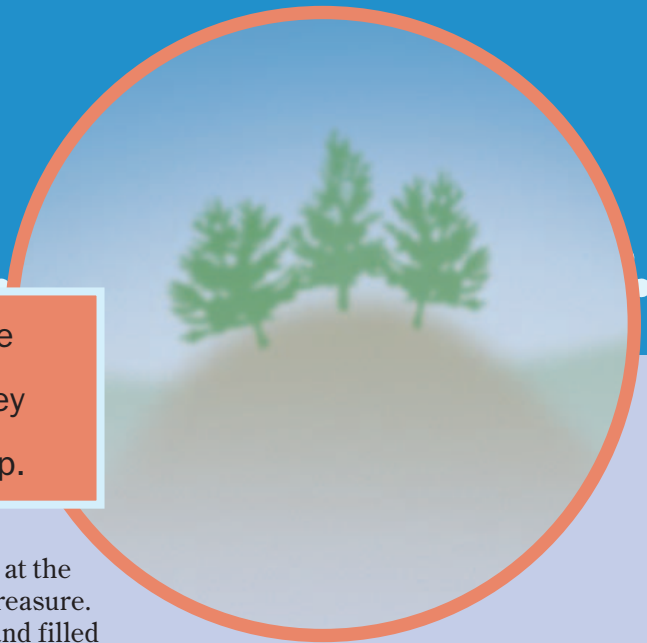
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The three trees

Once upon a mountaintop, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.



THE THIRD
TREE FELT
HER HEART
SINK WHEN
THE LAST
WOODCUTTER
LOOKED HER
WAY.

The first little tree looked up at the stars and said: “I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I’ll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!”

The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. “I want to travel mighty waters and carry powerful kings. I’ll be the strongest ship in the world!”

The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. “I don’t want to leave the mountaintop at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me, they’ll raise their eyes to Heaven and think of God.”

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain.

The first woodcutter looked at the first tree and said, “This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me.” With a swoop of his shining ax, the first tree fell.

“Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest! I shall hold wonderful treasures!” the first tree said.

The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, “This tree is strong. It is perfect for me.” With a swoop of his shining ax, the second tree fell.

“Now I shall sail mighty waters!” thought the second tree. “I shall be a strong ship for great kings!”

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last woodcutter looked her way. She stood straight, tall, and pointed bravely to Heaven. But the woodcutter never even looked up. “Any kind of tree will do for me,” he muttered. With a swoop of his shining ax, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought her to a carpenter’s shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feed box for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold or filled with treasure. She was coated with sawdust and filled with hay for hungry livestock.

**GOD'S
LOVE HAD
CHANGED
EVERYTHING**

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead the once strong tree was sawed and hammered into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail an ocean. Instead she was taken to a lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into heavy beams and left her in a lumberyard. “What happened?” the once tall tree wondered. “All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountaintop and point to God.”

Many, many days passed, and the three trees eventually forgot their dreams.

But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feed box. “I wish I could make a cradle for him,” her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and sturdy wood.

“This manger is beautiful,” she said. And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening 30 years later a tired traveler and a few friends crowded into an old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through the storm. The tired man awakened. He stood up, stretched out a hand, and said, “Peace.” The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the King of kings.

One morning the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry, jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a condemned man’s hands and feet to her. She felt ugly, harsh, and cruel. But three days later, when the Son of God rose from the dead, the third tree knew that God’s love had changed everything. And from that day until this, every time people have thought of the third tree, they have thought of God. ■

FEEL LIKE NOTHING...?

If you sometimes feel like nothing, cheer up! God can use you. Little is much if God is in it. In fact, God doesn’t have to have anything to begin with. He made the world out of nothing (Hebrews 11:3). Pretty good old world, isn’t it? He hung it on nothing (Job 26:7). Hangs pretty good, doesn’t it? And He can make something out of nothing—even you—if you will let Him.

God doesn’t go very much for greatness after the manner of this world. In fact, He specializes in using people who seem most likely *not* to succeed; yet by the miraculous power and grace of God they become shining lights to others. God only makes great people out of little people, to show *His* greatness (1 Corinthians 1:26–29).

Dare to trust Him in spite of yourself, and give Him all the credit when He does the miracle—what you couldn’t do. If you can believe in God, everything is possible, because He makes everything out of nothing. We’re all nothing and can do nothing good of ourselves (Galatians 6:3; John 15:5). God is like the circle around the nothing that makes it something. With God all around you, even your nothing can be something. In fact, you can be almost anything!

—DAVID BRANDT BERG

THE “EXQUISITE EXPERIENCE”

By Sunita Andrews

IT WAS JANUARY 2001, AND DAD WAS 81 AND BENDING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF HIS GRIEF. Mum had left us less than two months earlier. In his weak state, a harsh viral infection paralyzed a vocal cord and reduced his voice to a faint whisper. He couldn't call out if he needed help, so he had to carry a bell with him wherever he went. Dad is by nature very sociable, so not being able to talk was difficult in more ways than one.

We did the rounds of ear, nose, and throat doctors, voice specialists, throat surgeons—the works. One doctor thought he detected a possible growth in Dad's throat, which might need attention. Another recommended surgery to replace the paralyzed vocal cord with some sort of gadget. The list of diagnoses and possible cures went on and on.

A grandson who had always hero-worshipped Dad got married, and he asked Dad to give the toast. Dad wrote out a toast that was both touching and brilliantly humorous, but our hearts were heavy as he sat to the side while his granddaughter read the toast. Many such disappointments and frustrations surrounded Dad's affliction, and the weeks stretched to two and a half years. Still, Dad never stopped praising God, and never questioned His decision to take his voice.

Then Dad was struck with another less serious affliction—an allergic cough that would not go away. It left him helpless and exhausted through the night, and caused him to be unable to enjoy a meal without choking. We never lost faith, but it was



getting increasingly difficult to watch Dad suffer so.

Then at about four o'clock one morning, while the rest of us in the house were sleeping, Dad went into a coughing spasm. He sat up and muttered angrily at the cough—and there was something different about that mutter. It took a minute or two for it to fully register, but Dad had talked in a normal voice! He had coughed so much over the last month that it finally jolted the paralyzed vocal cord to life!

There is something very special about the moment when a miracle happens. God made sure that Dad's moment was not diluted by the sounds of the day or the presence of others. He was alone in the quiet of the night with his Maker.

Looking back, it's easy to see the “all things work together for good to those who love God” in this situation (Romans 8:28). Dad's heart had been so weak after Mother left that he could not afford to be his usual, talkative self. He needed to be quiet and still, so the Lord took his voice away till he was stronger. And the cough that had been such a bitter pill turned out to be the cure for the paralyzed vocal cord, which no doctor or treatment had been able to cure in two and a half years!

Now I know what people mean when they say that just when you think you have come to the end of your own resources and cannot take any more, you have reached that point where the Lord comes through for you and gives you the “exquisite experience.” ■

SUNITA ANDREWS IS AN ACTIVATED READER IN INDIA.

STRENGTH FROM WEAKNESS

weakness

BY VIRGINIA BRANDT BERG

“Have you not known? Have you not heard?” the Bible prophet Isaiah asks in chapter 40 of the book that bears his name. Not known what?—“The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth ... gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:28–31).

The central promise there is, “He gives power to the weak.”

The apostle Paul said something similar. “When I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10). It’s interesting to note that Paul wrote those words to the Greeks, who exalted intellect and physical beauty and prowess—man and his achievements—and had no use for a weakling. Yet we know that Paul had some physical impairment, his “thorn in the flesh,” as he called it (2 Corinthians 12:7), and the Greeks said of him, “His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible” (2 Corinthians 10:10). The fact that he had been scorned, stoned, whipped, and imprisoned didn’t help his reputation either. In short, Paul did not at all measure up to the Greeks’ ideas of strength.

What the Greeks didn’t understand is that God frequently works contrary to human logic and natural expectations. He says in His Word, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8–9). What the Greeks called weakness, God calls strength.



It's very often people who are not particularly gifted, nor highly trained, nor learned in man's wisdom that God is able to do the most with. Because they are humble, emptied of self, weak in themselves, and depend on God for strength, He can work through them. He supplements such weakness with *His* strength, and they become truly strong. "To those who have no might He increases strength" (Isaiah 40:29).

All of God's spiritual giants have been weak men and women who became great by God's power. Moses was such a poor public speaker that God said his brother Aaron could do his speaking for him. But because Moses had learned to depend completely on God, he became the greatest lawgiver the world had ever known. Most of Jesus' disciples were uneducated, but the influence of those weak men is felt to this very day. God was able to use them because they realized their weakness and put no confidence in themselves.

But when we are so sure of our own strength, so confident of our own powers, the Lord leaves us to walk alone in the strength we are so sure of. I'm reminded of my daughter when she was just learning to walk. She was natu-

rally very impulsive, and she insisted on trying to walk by herself rather than let me hold her hand and guide her. She really couldn't walk well yet, but in her independent spirit would pull away, over and over, to launch out by herself, falling, bumping, and bruising her way along—and she nearly always bore the marks of her independence on the end of her little nose.

How many of us bear the marks of our independence—our wanting to lean on our own strength until, sometimes broken, defeated, and disappointed, we learn to depend on God's strength instead of our own? What a pity that we should depend on the human when we can have the divine, that we should draw only on our natural resources when we can have all of Heaven's resources at our command! How strange it is that we should insist on depending on our own strength and wisdom when we can have the power of Almighty God!

God wants to be our ally. He longs to give us His strength, but if we insist on walking by ourselves in our own strength, just as I've said, He'll leave us to stumble around till we find how little strength we actually have. He'll walk off the stage of our lives and leave us to ourselves until the foundations of our pride and confidence in the human strength have been shaken and we at last come to the realization that our supposed strength is weakness.

Look to God for strength. He says, "I dwell with him who has a contrite and humble spirit" (Isaiah 57:15). Ask God for His wisdom and His strength, and He will give it to you, "that the excellence of the power may be of God" and not of you (Matthew 7:7; 2 Corinthians 4:7). Then you will be able to say with the apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). ■

FAITH OR WORKS?

It's a dilemma that all Christians face at one time or another: How much does our success depend on faith, what we trust God to do, and how much depends on our works, what we do ourselves? What's the balance?

A rowboat makes a good analogy. Label one oar "faith" and the other oar "works," and see how far you can get with only one or the other. Drop the oar labeled "faith" and row with the one labeled "works," and you'll find yourself going around in circles. Drop "works" and row with "faith," and you'll go the opposite direction, but still in circles. But if you apply equal pressure to both oars, you'll find yourself moving forward in a straight line toward your goal. It takes both!

**GOD WANTS
TO BE OUR
ALLY. HE
LONGS TO
GIVE US HIS
STRENGTH.**

FALLING

.....

IT HAPPENED TO ME

.....

BY MARIA MORROW

W

hen I was a child we played a game in which we would each stand straight as a board and then try to fall backward into the strong arms of an adult who was waiting to catch us. It's strange, but no matter how many times I'd seen it done or tried to do it myself, it was still difficult to keep from bending my knees or doing something else at the last split second to try to break my fall. Not chickening out took a certain "letting go" that went contrary to my natural reasoning and reflexes. It took complete trust in the one who was catching me.

In the Christian life we often use the expression "leaning on Jesus," or, as the old hymn goes, "leaning on the everlasting arms." The picture is of one leaning on Jesus for support while passing through life's difficulties. I've done a lot of "leaning" in my life. And I have found Jesus to be strong and stable, full of strength and comfort. I leaned hard on Him through several long and difficult years when my husband battled a life-threatening illness. I leaned harder still when I walked the difficult road of cancer myself. But there was never a time that He wasn't there to lean on. Even when the road was too difficult for me, He lifted me up and carried me.

There recently came another time in my life that was so difficult it left me despairing again. The night had closed so dark around me that I couldn't see Jesus or feel His presence. I knew He was there, somewhere, but why did He seem now distant from me? I pictured myself reaching out, grasping at air, searching for His love and strength. Then, in answer to my deepest prayer, I heard His tender voice tell me, "The reason you haven't been able to see or reach Me is that I'm not in front of you. I'm right behind you. My strong arms are around you, holding you from behind. All you have to do is lay your head back on My shoulder and rest. Don't reach. Don't struggle. Don't try so hard to find My presence. Just lean back and rest in My everlasting arms."

**THE PEACE THAT FILLED MY
HEART WAS SO COMPLETE
THAT IT ENTERED EVERY
FIBER OF MY BEING.**

The peace that filled my heart was so complete that it entered every fiber of my being. During the difficult months that followed, I leaned on Jesus like never before. It's hard to explain, but it became a different type of leaning, somehow more complete.

Then my circumstances became more difficult still. I developed a chronic, debilitating condition, and at times pain took its toll. It was during this low time, when I had no strength of my own, that I heard Jesus' gentle voice again, telling me, "Fall back! Just trust Me completely and fall back into My arms—like the game you played as a child."

The experience seemed very real as it played out in slow motion in my mind. I felt myself standing in the middle of a blustery storm, atop a mountain of woes. I spread my arms wide open, leaned back, and fell with total abandonment, total surrender, total trust. Slowly I fell out of the realm of trouble and storm and into Jesus! I felt the soft landing envelop me with love. I found myself floating in a beautiful, dark stillness, dotted by tiny stars. I would call it space, but this place was not empty. It was

alive, and the very nature of it filled me with courage and faith.

I felt it lift me up, up, up, high above the mountains. I felt the fresh, cool wind blow in my face. Riding on the wings of the wind, I was flying! I thought of the verse, "Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31). I felt joy return to me, and my spirit receive new strength. It was refreshing and exhilarating!

Then I heard His voice speak again. "This is your place of freedom. When your body is held captive on a bed of suffering, let your spirit fly. Just fall. Fall on Me. Let yourself go and fall."

Suddenly "leaning" took on a whole new meaning. In falling I learned to completely let go and fall—not onto but into the everlasting arms. What a wonderful experience!

Science with all its knowledge and experience hasn't come up with a pill for true inner peace that transcends any circumstances. There is no magic potion for a soul lost in hopelessness, no tonic for a spirit crushed under the weight of an unbearable burden.

I have been there, and I have found that peace. Though my outward condition remains unchanged, inwardly I have been healed—healed of an inner pain more difficult to bear than pain itself. I am free!

MARIA MORROW IS A VOLUNTEER
WITH THE FAMILY IN THE U.S.

*I felt joy
return to
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*and my
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*It was
refreshing
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BY DAVID BRANDT BERG

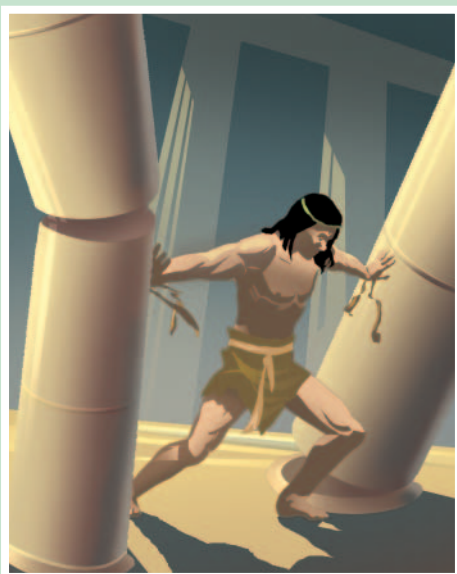
talents AND gifts, strengths AND weaknesses

Most of us don't consider ourselves particularly strong or capable, and we feel we lack certain strengths or abilities that we wish we had. That's when it helps to remember that God specializes in using people who *aren't* great in themselves.

The apostle Paul wrote, "You see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Corinthians 1:26–29).

Why does God purposely choose weak people?— Because the weaker we are, the better God can show what *He* can do. It's in our weakness that He is able to manifest His mighty power, overcome our human limitations, and perform miracles. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

When we don't feel capable or sufficient for the task God has set before us, then He has a chance to take over and do things to suit Himself. In fact, the weaker we get in ourselves,



the stronger we can be in His Spirit, because that's when His strength comes in (2 Corinthians 12:10).

The very fact that we feel incapable is one of the best things possible, because then we depend on the Lord and He has a chance to work—and He will. “It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). The Lord likes for us to be dependent on Him, to know that we need His help, and to ask Him for it. It's then that “the things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Luke 18:27).

The weakness of strength

The biggest temptation for people who have a lot of natural ability and drive is to push things through in their own strength, but that has its limits and dangers. “Men of force are men of faults,” and their biggest fault is when they keep on going in their own strength, their own force, instead of letting the Lord work through them.

Having so much natural ability, strength, and drive is often the very thing that stands in the way of the Lord showing His strength. It's more difficult for such people to depend on the Lord because they're used to depending on themselves.

My mother, for example, had a lot going for her in the natural—a lot of God-given talents, abilities, drive, personality, looks, and so on. But it wasn't until after she broke her back in an accident and was bedridden and in a wheelchair for five years that the Lord was able to use her the way He wanted to. After she and her doctors had tried everything they could with no success, when she didn't have anyone else to turn to and no more strength of her

IT'S IN OUR WEAKNESS THAT HE IS ABLE TO MANIFEST HIS MIGHTY POWER

own, the Lord stepped in and healed her miraculously—and she knew *the Lord* had done it! She still had the natural traits and abilities He'd originally given her, but through this experience she learned to lean on Him, to let Him use those traits and abilities for His glory, and to give Him the credit for whatever got accomplished—and that's when He was finally able to use her to the full. Of course, all of us depend on our natural abilities to some extent at different times, so to rely more on the Lord and His strength is a lesson we all need to learn.

How to win spiritual victories

It's been said that “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.” Well, that certainly is the truth, because when you're weak in yourself, that's when you can be “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). However, the Devil might not tremble so much if you're one of those people who think that they're “strong.” If you're too self-confident, that in itself is a major spiritual weakness. “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). As Martin Luther wrote:

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing.
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus it is He!
Lord Sabbaoth His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle!

We cannot strive in our own strength. We must look to the Lord, and *He* must win the battle. We don't have to try to win victories by our own striving, struggling, and working in the flesh. We just have to do our part by putting our will on God's side, and God will do the rest, which is virtually everything! ■

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

Who should get the credit?

Q: Several times I have heard or read about people who did something extraordinary or heroic—set a world record or rescued a child from a burning building, for example—saying something like, “Praise God!” or, “Jesus is the One who did it,” or, “Don’t thank me—thank God!” When people have worked hard or risked their lives to do what they did, are they just trying to sound modest by saying God or Jesus deserves the credit? Why can’t they just enjoy their well-deserved moment of recognition?

The fact is, most people today don’t acknowledge or give credit to God for His part in their accomplishments.

But is that right? According to the Bible, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from Heaven” (John 3:27), and “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (James 1:17). So God does deserve at least a large share of the credit. And when you think about it, the same is true for all of us, in everything we do.

Not only is it the right thing to do, but we’re actually doing ourselves a favor when we pass the credit on to God, because that pleases Him and makes Him more ready to help or work through us again. It’s also important for others’ sakes that we set the record straight, because that strengthens their faith.

A good example of giving credit where credit is due is found in the book of Acts, chapter 3, when the lame man was healed on the temple steps after asking alms of Peter and John. “Silver and gold I do not have,” Peter told the man, “but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” Peter took the man by the hand and lifted him up, and immediately the man was healed and entered the temple with Peter and John, “walking, leaping, and praising God.” When an awestruck crowd gathered,

**YOU COME TO ME WITH A SWORD,
WITH A SPEAR, AND WITH A
JAVELIN. BUT I COME TO YOU IN
THE NAME OF THE LORD.**

Peter asked the people, “Why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at *us*, as though by our *own* power or godliness we had made this man walk? God has glorified His Servant Jesus. Faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all” (Acts 3:1–16).

To be all we can be, we must rely on the Lord’s help, because our *real* strength comes from Him. A teenage shepherd named David did just that when he boldly accepted the giant Goliath’s challenge to a one-on-one fight to the death.

Before engaging in battle, David cried out to Goliath so that all would hear, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand. Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s” (1 Samuel 17:45–47). And when God caused little David to triumph over the giant, everyone knew that it was *God’s* doing, because David had given Him all the credit, even before Goliath was defeated.

So if you really want God’s blessing and help, be like David and boldly declare His greatness. You glorify the Lord every time you acknowledge His help. Every time you say “Thank the Lord,” you are giving God the credit. “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so” (Psalm 107:2). ■

FEEDING READING
Depending on God vs. Self-effort

God expects us to put our faith into action, which takes effort.

Ecclesiastes 9:10a
Mark 14:8a
James 2:26

After we have done what we can, God does what we can’t.

Luke 5:4–6
John 11:39–44
John 21:5–6
Hebrews 11:7

We must rely on the Lord’s strength, not our own.

Psalm 20:7
Psalm 84:5a,7a
Psalm 105:4
Psalm 118:8
Zechariah 4:6b
2 Corinthians 3:4–5
2 Corinthians 4:7
Ephesians 6:10
Philippians 4:13
Colossians 1:11a

Self-effort is doomed to disappointment.

1 Samuel 2:9b
Psalm 33:16–17
Psalm 60:11

Psalm 127:1
John 15:4–5

Self-effort is trusting more in ourselves than in God, which He can’t bless.

1 Samuel 15:22
2 Chronicles 26:16a
Psalm 147:10
Jeremiah 17:5
Hosea 10:13
Matthew 7:22–23
1 Corinthians 10:12

Trusting the Lord means resting in Him and letting Him do the work.

Exodus 14:13–14
2 Chronicles 20:12
2 Chronicles 20:17a
Isaiah 40:31
Hebrews 4:10

Only when we cease from self-effort is the Lord able to fully work on our behalf.

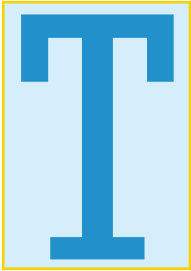
Psalm 73:26
Psalm 94:17–18
Isaiah 25:4
Isaiah 40:29
2 Corinthians 1:8–9
2 Corinthians 12:9–10

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Thank You, Jesus, that my happiness and success in life aren’t dependent on what *I* can do, but on what *You* can do through me—not on my supposed strength and greatness, but on Your true strength and greatness. Help me to be the person You know I can be. Help me to face my problems, weaknesses, or conflicts and resolve them with Your help. Help me to trust You more and to turn to You more. Thank You that when I put my life into Your hands, You help me do what You know I can do, and then You do what I can’t do. Amen.

More on Human Chip Implants

“He [the Antichrist’s false prophet] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [or “in,” KJV] their right hand or on [in] their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the Beast [Antichrist], or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.” (Revelation 13:16–18)



The technology needed to institute the coming “mark of the Beast” economic system, as foretold in the Bible, is being developed rapidly. And so is the media campaign that will help put it in place.

The concept of implanting microchips in humans for identification purposes is gaining public acceptance, and the number of “chipped” humans has risen from a few Americans to a few thousand people worldwide. Meanwhile, the chipmakers and media are busy hyping the benefits, such as quicker and more convenient financial transactions, greater security against identity theft, elimination of the hard-to-trace cash on which terrorists and drug traffickers depend, and quicker access to medical records in case of accident.

As public acceptance grows, governments will invest more in technology and practical applications, and that will attract more users. Eventually, of course, the Antichrist’s government will tell people that they can’t buy or sell unless they get the mark.

Consider the following developments:

- ▶ A VeriChip™ is a rice-sized radio frequency identification microchip designed for tracking everything from products to people. The company who created the chip, Applied Digital Solutions (ADS), has announced that organizations in Brazil and Mexico have begun implanting the chips in children to locate them in case they go missing or are abducted.
- ▶ The U.S. Department of Defense also announced that the government will begin using radio frequency identification devices (RFIDs) throughout the military for product inventory.
- ▶ Wal-Mart, the world’s largest retailer, is now using RFID tags on all its inventory.
- ▶ In 2003, the International Civil Aviation Organization adopted a global plan for the implementation of machine-readable passports containing biometric information. The U.S. State Department began issuing passports bearing RFID chips in 2005, and by the end of 2006 all passports issued in the U.S. will feature this technology. The chip includes a digital facial image, as well as all of the personal data found on the information page of traditional passports.
- ▶ The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved use of an RFID chip that could be implanted under a patient’s skin and would carry a number that linked to the patient’s medical records.
- ▶ The school district of Spring, Texas, is now issuing radio frequency ID cards to its school kids, so

police can track each of them on a computer screen. Authorities in Spring are now considering having the RFIDs implanted under the skin of each child to avoid problems with lost or forgotten tags. Then they could track them 24/7.

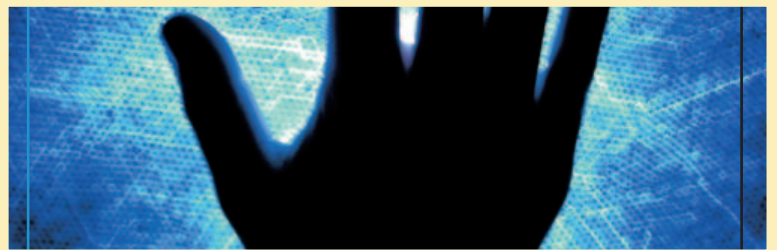
▶ A nightclub in Glasgow, Scotland, joined exclusive nightclubs in Barcelona, Spain, and Rotterdam, Holland, in offering its regulars the option of having a microchip called “digital wallet” implanted in their arm that eliminates the need for them to carry cash or plastic. The chip is similar to more than 25 million already embedded in animals worldwide that act as “pet passports.”

▶ The satellite telecommunications company ORBCOMM has signed an agreement with VeriChip Corp., a subsidiary of ADS, to develop and market new military, security, and healthcare applications worldwide, using an ADS-created implant chip for humans that utilizes global positioning satellite (GPS) technology. Once inserted under the skin, the chip relays information wirelessly to the Internet, where the individual's location, movements, and vital signs can be tracked and stored in a database for future reference. After the Asian tsunami disaster of December 2004, for example, advocates of the chip argued that it could have saved lives by locating victims lost at sea or trapped in the wreckage.

For nearly 2,000 years, the question has been how the people of the world could be persuaded to accept

something as sinister as the mark of the Beast. The answer is now becoming clear: By harping on the supposed benefits, little by little, like drops of water falling on a rock, people's resistance is gradually being worn away until what was once unthinkable will become commonplace and acceptable.

What the apostle John warned of is about to come to pass. The future is here! ■



MORE ON MICROCHIPS IN MEDICINE

- ▶ Scientists in the United States have developed a new way of taking medicines—a drug-containing microchip that can be implanted in the body. The chip then releases the medication slowly, so the patient no longer has to take pills.
- ▶ A team of neuroscientists successfully implanted a chip called BrainGate into the brain of a 25-year-old quadriplegic man, allowing him to control a computer. Since the insertion of the tiny device, the man has been able to check email and play computer games simply using thoughts.
- ▶ Professor Theodore W. Berger, director of the Center for Neural Engineering at the University of Southern California, is creating a silicon chip implant that mimics the hippocampus, the area of the brain associated with memory. If successful, the artificial brain prosthesis could replace its biological counterpart, enabling people who suffer from memory disorders to regain the ability to store new memories. Next in line to get that memory upgrade isn't your computer—it's you! ■

When things go wrong it's easy to ask, "Jesus, where are You when I need You?" It seems to you that I have failed you or that My love and patience have run out. At times like that your faith is being tested, and when you react in doubt rather than faith, you limit My ability to help you. It can become a vicious cycle.

Yet there are some people who remain positive, no matter what their circumstances. How can they face disappointment and even disaster so calmly? It's because they have strong faith in My love and the promises I've made in My Word. It's because they have sought and found a close personal link with Me. It's because they have learned to turn to Me in their times of need. It's not that their faith is never tested, but they know where to turn to for the help they need to pass the test.

Here's the secret to that kind of victory: Prepare for the hard times by learning to stay close to Me when times are good. Make a point of looking for My loving hand at work around you. Count your blessings. Cultivate an attitude of faith and trust and thankfulness. Then when the going gets rough, you will know I'm only a prayer away.

“Where ARE YOU?”