

## THE SECRET OF POWER ACCORDING TO JESUS

### *Christ's Power Working Through Our Ongoing Weakness*

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#### **Introduction: An Open Secret**

A secret is a powerful thing.

Some secrets must be fiercely guarded—passwords, security codes, confidential information. Other secrets are “open secrets”—information that is publicly accessible yet largely unknown to the people who would benefit most from it. A newly published book that changes lives, an undiscovered restaurant serving exceptional food, a life-transforming truth hiding in plain sight.

The secret of power we are about to explore is an open secret. The information comes directly from Jesus and is available to all his followers, yet it remains largely unknown in our actual experience. This powerful secret is one of the most important—and most misunderstood—truths a Jesus follower can ever learn.

Here is the secret: *God's power is specifically designed to work through our ongoing experience of weakness.* The weakness stays. The feeling of inadequacy remains. And that is exactly how God planned it.

Most Christians assume that when God's power comes, we should stop feeling weak. We expect divine strength to make us feel strong, capable, and adequate. But Jesus revealed the opposite truth to the apostle Paul, and through Paul's testimony, to us. This insight runs counter to everything we naturally expect about how God's power operates.

This is not a consolation prize for unanswered prayer. This is God's primary design for delivering His power to His people. Understanding this changes everything about how we approach our weaknesses, our prayers, and our expectations of God's empowering presence.

## CHAPTER 1: Paul's Problem and Jesus' Solution

### The Unplucked Thorn

About fourteen years before he wrote Second Corinthians, Paul had been afflicted with what he called a “*thorn in his flesh*” (2 Corinthians 12:7). This was not a literal, physical thorn, but some unspecified, unexplained condition that brought pain and torment to Paul's life and ministry.

The day came when Paul could endure the thorn no longer. He prayed three successive times, asking earnestly for this thorn to be removed from him. Paul prayed with all the faith that Christ had given him, as desperately as only a deeply hurting soul can pray.

But there was no answer. No relief. No transformation. Only continuing weakness.

Can you feel the disappointment? Can you sense Paul's confusion? Here was the great apostle, the missionary church-planter, the man who had seen miraculous healings and deliverances through his ministry—and yet his own prayer for deliverance went unanswered. Nothing changed. The thorn remained.

If Paul needed to learn the secret of power through this experience of unanswered prayer, then it makes sense that we need to learn it too.

The path to understanding God's power often runs through the valley of persistent weakness. If you are experiencing difficulty, trials, distress, or pain today—if you have prayed for change that has not come—this mini-book is especially for you.

### Jesus Speaks

Then came the turning point. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:9: “*Then He said to me...*”

Jesus spoke to Paul.

The word of Jesus Christ is always the answer for every need we face, for every problem, for living in the abundance of the very life of God that comes to us through faith in Jesus. Everything God gives us in His loving grace happens through God speaking it to us.

When Paul wrote “*Then He said to me,*” he used the Greek perfect tense for the verb “*said.*” This tense is crucial for understanding what happened.

The Greek perfect tense describes an action that took place in the past but created a result that remained permanently effective. If you say in Greek using the perfect tense, “I built my house fifty years ago,” it means that the house you built half a century ago is still standing in

the same condition as when you built it. The results of building that house remain unchanged.

Jesus had spoken His secret of power to Paul fourteen years earlier, and the results of Jesus' words still maintained the same effectiveness in Paul as when he first heard them.

This was not temporary encouragement. This was not a momentary comfort that would fade. This was a permanent, life-transforming revelation.

Jesus' message to Paul contained just fourteen words. These words were intended by Jesus to create the same permanent, daily, lifelong results in each of us who hear them from Jesus and believe them by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### The Fourteen Words That Change Everything

Here is what Jesus said: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"* (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Let's understand these words the way Jesus intended them. This declaration consists of two coordinated statements; each built upon a key verb in the present tense.

The Greek present tense describes ongoing action, a continuous process. When Jesus said, *"My grace is sufficient,"* He used the present tense to communicate that His grace *"is in a constant state of sufficiency."* This is not grace that comes and goes. This is not grace that might be sufficient sometimes. This is grace that continuously, perpetually, reliably maintains its sufficiency for us.

This reminds us of John's description of Jesus' grace: *"Out of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace"* (John 1:16). Think of a flowing mountain river. The water is constantly being replaced by new water as it rushes by in a downhill dance. This is the way Jesus' grace abounds to us in its constant sufficiency.

The second statement describes the reason for the first, so it begins with *"because"* or *"for."* Jesus said, *"My power is made perfect in weakness."*

The verb's meaning here is crucial—*"to complete"* or *"to perfect."* As a present tense verb, it describes a constant, ongoing process: Jesus' power is continuously being completed or perfected.

But here is where we must pay close attention. The verb *"made perfect"* is in the passive voice, which means the subject of the verb (*"My power"*) is continuously receiving the action that completes it from an external agent acting upon it. That active agent is *"weakness."*

*In other words, weakness has a special relationship to Jesus' power—it is the force that completes His power by causing it to operate effectively.*

When weakness is present, Christ's power has the conduit it needs to connect and deliver that power. Without weakness, Christ's power remains incomplete in its delivery, even though it is always complete in its omnipotence.

## CHAPTER 2: The Core Insight—Weakness as God’s Design

### Weakness: The Connection Point for Power

Think of a powerful electric generator. You can produce all the electricity you need and more with a generator, but it will not deliver any of that power without a connecting cord or cable and a receptacle to plug into. The generator’s power is complete and ready, but it requires a connection point to flow.

*Weakness is what God’s power plugs into. Weakness is the connector, the conduit. This connection between weakness and Jesus’ power is the reason why His grace is always sufficient for us.*

This is the revolutionary insight that most teaching on this passage misses. We assume that the goal is for God’s power to eliminate our weakness. We pray for the weakness to be removed so we can be strong. We expect that answered prayer means transformed circumstances and feelings of strength and capability.

But Jesus revealed something entirely different. He told Paul—and tells us—that weakness is not an obstacle to overcome but *a connection point to be maintained*. God’s power works best not by removing weakness but by flowing through it.

### What Does Jesus Mean by Weakness?

The Greek word translated “weakness” has a broad range of meanings: weakness, infirmity, inadequacy, sickness. It appears frequently in the gospels describing sick and ailing people whom Jesus healed.

Furthermore, in this passage Paul used other words as synonyms for weakness, including:

- The thorn that tormented him with pain and humiliated him
- Insults—being assaulted by attacking words
- Hardships—situations where our most basic needs are unmet
- Persecutions—experiences that strip us of rights, freedom, and security
- Difficulties—intense pressure from stress and challenging circumstances

*What Jesus meant by weakness is anything—either within us or in external circumstances or conditions—that makes us aware of our inadequacy or insufficiency to cope, and increases our sense of dependency on Him. Weaknesses make us feel uncomfortable at the least and cause excruciating pain at the worst.*

Jesus himself said we are all weak in regard to doing God’s will because of our sinful human nature: “*The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*” (Matthew 26:41). How weak? Jesus said, “*Apart from me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5).

Every weakness we experience is therefore a reminder of our dependency on God. Since Jesus' power works through weakness, and weakness is our constant condition, Jesus' grace is in a constant state of sufficiency for us. Jesus' power taps into our constant need for Him.

### The Misunderstanding We Must Correct

Most of us approach weakness with one goal: make it go away. We pray for God to remove the thorn, heal the sickness, resolve the conflict, eliminate the difficulty. We assume that God's power should make us stop feeling weak.

When we continue to feel weak after praying, we conclude that God has not answered our prayers. We assume His power is not working. We may even question whether He cares about our situation.

*But this entire framework misunderstands how Jesus said His power operates.*

Jesus is not saying, "My power will eventually remove your weakness if you pray hard enough or have enough faith." He is saying, "My power is specifically designed to work continuously through your ongoing weakness."

The weakness does not need to be removed for God's power to work. The weakness needs to remain for God's power to have its connection point.

This fourteen-word declaration from Jesus changed everything for Paul. It must change everything for us too.

## CHAPTER 3: Jesus—The Supreme Expert on Power in Weakness

### Why We Can Trust What Jesus Said

Jesus used the possessive pronoun “my” twice in his fourteen words: “My grace” and “My power.” With this repetition, He highlighted the uniqueness of His kind of power—power that works specifically through weakness, in contrast to other kinds of power that operate through strength, resources, or favorable circumstances.

Jesus knows more about the power-weakness relationship than anyone else who has ever existed. It is one of His trademarks. Jesus is our perfect Savior precisely because He knows this secret so intimately and completely.

### Jesus’ Expertise Regarding Power

Regarding His power, Jesus declared, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). “My power” means all power. He is omnipotent—all-powerful. There is no power that exists apart from Him, and no power greater than His.

Jesus constantly demonstrated this power in His ministry of loving service to others. There is not one example of Jesus using His power for His own benefit in the Bible. His Power served others because of God’s love.

### Jesus’ Expertise Regarding Weakness

But more remarkably, Jesus knows everything there is to know about weakness—things that only He could possibly know, because of the depth and breadth of His experience of weakness. This too is an expression of God’s kind of love.

Jesus said in John 5:19, using the present tense, “The Son is in an ongoing state of being able to do nothing of his own initiative.” He repeated this truth many times, particularly in the Gospel of John. Jesus chose to embrace the same weakness He used to describe us: “Able to do nothing.”

We are weak, so Jesus became what we are. Jesus chose to be, say, and do nothing in His own strength or initiative as His lifelong practice. Our Lord was so totally surrendered to the Father’s will—so completely dead to His own self-will—that He functioned in a state of continuous, voluntary weakness regarding His own agenda. He had God’s omnipotent power at his fingertips, but He chose to not exercise that power for Himself, in Himself. Rather, He chose to be as dependent on God’s power as we are.

But there is more. Jesus lived in this sinful, fallen, broken world, just as we do, and He experienced all the weakness that comes from sin and its destructive impact on

relationships. Jesus never sinned, but He experienced the effects of others' sins far more than anyone else.

Jesus poured out nothing but pure love, in every relationship, in every word and deed. Yet He never received anywhere near the same degree of love in return. Jesus was unjustly treated and even hated throughout His life more than anyone else, and yet He continued to love unconditionally.

Love makes us vulnerable like nothing else in this sinful world full of selfish people. The more purely and completely we love, the more vulnerable we become to being hurt, rejected, and betrayed.

Furthermore, Jesus' death was the ultimate experience of weakness that was humanly possible. Paul wrote, "*He was crucified in weakness*" (2 Corinthians 13:4). So, there is no pain, sorrow, weakness, difficulty, hardship, torment, injury, injustice, or any other kind of weakness you or I will ever encounter that Jesus has not already experienced to an infinitely greater degree.

#### Why Jesus Embraced Weakness

Jesus experienced every dimension of weakness out of His great love for each of us. He wanted to understand our weakness with every fiber of His being, so He would know exactly how to deliver His power to us in that weakness.

Jesus also experienced weakness so He would have the genuine ability to comfort and sympathize with us in our weaknesses, because He has experienced the same things we experience. And He has been with us in every moment of weakness we have experienced since before we were born, experiencing it with us in real time.

There is pure grace in Jesus' love that embraces weakness so completely and personally.

*This means that His secret of power working through weakness is the most kind, loving, and caring solution for our needs that omnipotent power and perfect knowledge could conceive. We can absolutely trust what He says about power working in weakness. Praise Him!*

## CHAPTER 4: Two Kinds of Power—Understanding the Difference

### Transforming Power

There are two distinct ways that Jesus' power works in our weakness. Understanding the difference between them is crucial for grasping the secret Jesus revealed to Paul.

*Transforming power is power that instantaneously transforms weakness into wholeness.* This is miraculous power, and it is what Paul expected to receive in answer to his three prayers for the thorn's removal.

Transforming power works instantly and changes whatever is broken into perfect wholeness. When Jesus healed people, they were left completely whole. The blind received the best eyesight on the planet. The lame walked with perfect strength and coordination. Jesus turned water into the most delicious wine ever tasted. Transforming power turns weakness into instant wholeness.

Transforming power is real. Jesus exercised it continually during His earthly ministry. The New Testament records numerous instances of transforming power at work through the apostles. God still exercises transforming power today in answer to prayer.

But here is the crucial point that most teaching misses: *Transforming power is the exception, not the norm.*

Why? Because transforming power leaves us whole, and thereby deprives us of the very weakness that is our best connection to Jesus' ongoing power. Transforming power solves the immediate problem but disconnects the conduit that keeps us continuously dependent on Christ.

### Enabling Power—The Norm

*Enabling power is the ability to will, to act, and to accomplish God's will in spite of continuing to feel weak.* This is the power Jesus promised Paul when the thorn was not removed. This is the power that flows through the conduit of ongoing weakness.

Paul emphasized this truth by using the present tense twice in the final sentence of 2 Corinthians 12:10: "When I am weak, then I am strong."

The first present tense verb, "am weak," emphasizes the ongoing process of weakness. We remain weak. We continue to feel the pain or discomfort that creates the sense of weakness within us. The circumstances do not change. Yet at that very time, in that state of weakness, we are simultaneously strong in God's power.

The second present tense verb, “*am strong*,” uses the famous Greek word *\*dunamis\**, which means “*ability to do*” or “*power for action*.”

*Paul continued to feel weak from the thorn. It was never removed. Yet Jesus’ enabling power flowed through Paul as he remained weak, empowering him to do and accomplish everything he would have been able to do if he had been healed.*

Paul’s ability to do his Lord’s will was strengthened in spite of the weakness caused by the thorn. In fact, the ongoing weakness continued to connect him to Jesus’ enabling power in a way that transforming power could never do.

As far as we know, Paul lived with the thorn until the end of his life. He learned to embrace the power of Jesus that flowed through him because of that unplucked thorn, even as he remained weak.

### Feeling Weak While Being Strong

This is profoundly important and deeply counterintuitive. Most of us expect to feel God’s power working in some tangible way when it is working. When we continue to feel weak, we assume we have no power. We conclude that God is not answering our prayers or meeting our needs.

*But the whole point of Jesus’ promise is that He is an expert at delivering His power to us while we remain weak and feel weak. The best thing for us spiritually is to remain aware of our dependence on Him. God’s plan is for us to remain in a constant state of weakness so that His power may continually flow through us.*

Paul’s words in Philippians 4:13 help us grasp this reality: “*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*”

Once again, this verse features two present tense verbs describing ongoing, continuous power. The second reference to being strengthened by Jesus uses the same word for power as 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, but adds a preposition to let us know it is power giving us ability to cope on the inside—in our inner person; our will and mind.

When Paul said, “*I can do all things*” in the first phrase, he used a different Greek word for power—literally “*to be strong*” in *ability*. This word describes the ability to function, to do, to accomplish at a high level—to be strong in action and effective in getting things done.

Paul expressed the same reality in Philippians 2:13: “*It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*” Both verbs are in the present tense again—God is continuously at work in us.

*God's power strengthens our will and mind to do His will even when we remain physically, emotionally, or circumstantially weak.*

### The Brilliant Design

The power of Jesus has a unique capacity to specifically energize our will and mind with the ability to function while leaving us aware of our weakness and unaware of His power operating within us.

Feeling weak does not mean you are weak when the power of Jesus is energizing your will to function in spite of your weakness. You can be simultaneously weak in feeling and strong in functioning.

In addition to keeping us dependent by allowing our weakness to remain, I believe Jesus hides His power in our weakness to protect us.

If we could perceive the actual magnitude of omnipotent power flowing into us, we would be blown apart by it. This is similar to the way the Trinity veils their glorious radiance from us. If we could see the actual reality of God's glory, we would be instantly blinded and destroyed by exposure to infinite light in one moment.

Jesus' power that flows into us is omnipotent in its capacity, but He has perfected the ability to limit its influence to where we need it most—our wills and minds—which enables us to function effectively in spite of how we feel.

This solution is absolutely brilliant.

## CHAPTER 5: The Permanent Attitude Change

### Our Natural Reaction to Weakness

Before Paul heard Jesus' secret, he reacted to his thorn the way we all naturally react to our weaknesses. There is nothing wrong or unusual about this reaction—it is simply human.

When we experience weakness, our natural response is understandable: We feel ashamed and want to hide it from others. We pray earnestly for God to remove it. Sometimes we wonder if the “thorn” is punishment from God, or something we deserve because we have failed in the past. When the weakness continues, we wonder if God has heard our prayers or if something is wrong with our faith.

This normal human response views weakness as something to overcome or escape. But Jesus came to teach us a radically different way—a positive, life-changing response that transforms how we experience weakness.

### Paul's Attitude Transformation

After Jesus spoke His fourteen words, everything changed for Paul. He wrote: *"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Paul didn't just understand the concept intellectually. He experienced a permanent transformation in his attitude toward weakness.

Notice the dramatic shift Paul experienced:

- - FROM fighting against weakness TO embracing it for Christ's sake
- - FROM seeing weakness as obstacle TO recognizing it as connection point
- - FROM desperation for removal TO contentment within it
- - FROM shame about weakness TO boasting gladly about it

### Paul the Tentmaker

To understand the word picture Paul used to describe this transformation, we need to remember that Paul was a tentmaker by trade. He supported himself and his ministry team by making tents—working with his hands to craft portable homes from leather and cloth.

In the ancient Middle Eastern world, tents were not just temporary shelters. They were homes. Nomadic peoples lived their entire lives in tents. A tent represented dwelling, security, belonging, and the intimacy of family life. When you were inside your tent, you were home.

For Paul, whose hands had crafted countless tents, this imagery carried deep personal meaning. He knew exactly what it meant for someone to pitch their tent, to dwell, to make their home in a particular place.

### The Power-Tent of Jesus

With this background, Paul used a beautiful word picture to describe what happens when we embrace our weakness. He wrote that Christ's power would *"rest upon me"* or literally *"tabernacle over me"* (2 Corinthians 12:9).

When Paul embraced his weakness gladly, Christ's power pitched its tent right there—dwelling at Paul's point of weakness. Jesus made His home at the very place where Paul felt most inadequate.

John used this same Greek word to describe Jesus in the incarnation: *"The Word became flesh and dwelt [literally 'tabernacled'] among us, and we have seen his glory"* (John 1:14).

### Moses' Experience of the Power-Tent

This imagery of God's power tabernacling over our weakness has deep roots in Scripture. Moses experienced God's powerful presence in the Tabernacle—the tent of meeting where God's glory dwelt.

After Moses encountered God in the Tabernacle, something remarkable happened: *"When Moses came down from Mount Sinai... Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God"* (Exodus 34:29).

Notice what caused this transformation: *Moses had been in the presence-tent, talking with God.* He didn't manufacture the glory—it radiated from him as a result of being in God's presence.

This is the pattern Paul discovered and that we experience: when we position ourselves at the place of weakness and Christ's power-tent covers us there, His strength radiates through us even though we continue to feel weak.

### David's Longing for the Power-Tent

David understood this same truth about God's tabernacling presence. In Psalm 27, while facing enemies and troubles, David didn't ask God to remove him from the day of trouble. Instead, he recognized that God's tent—His presence—was the place of safety in the midst of trouble.

The same psalm reveals David's greatest desire:

*"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:  
 that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,  
 to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.  
 For in the day of trouble  
 He will keep me safe in His dwelling;  
 He will hide me in the shelter of His sacred tent  
 And set me high upon a rock."  
 (Psalm 27:4 NIV)*

What David longed for is exactly what Jesus promised Paul and promises us: Christ's power pitching its tent at our point of weakness, allowing us to dwell in His empowering presence continually.

#### Where Jesus Pitches His Tent

Here's the crucial question: Where does Jesus choose to pitch His power-tent?  
 Answer: At your point of weakness.

Your chronic illness? That's where Christ's tent is pitched. Your difficult marriage? That's where His presence dwells. Your financial struggles? That's where His power tabernacles over you.

We spend so much energy praying for God to remove us from these places, when He has chosen to meet us precisely there.

#### The Decision We Must Make

Understanding this truth invites a decision from you. Our natural human response to run from weakness is understandable, but Jesus offers us something far better—a positive, life-changing way to experience His power.

Will you continue relating to your weaknesses the way you always have? Or will you learn from Paul and make his choice—to embrace them gladly as the very places where Christ's power-tent is pitched?

Paul made his choice: *"I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses."* Not because weakness itself is good, but because weakness is where Christ's power covered him like a tent.

This doesn't mean you stop praying for healing or relief. Jesus invites you to continue bringing every need to Him. What changes is how you view the weakness—no longer as evidence of God's absence or lack of care, but as the dwelling place of His empowering presence.

Every time you become aware of weakness, you can make a new conscious decision: *"This is where Christ's power-tent is pitched. This is where His grace is sufficient. This is where I will experience His strength."*

#### Paul's Lifelong Experience

Years later, Paul could write: *"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all things through him who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:12-13).

Paul wrote about this secret fourteen years after Jesus first revealed it to him. The results remained constant because the attitude change was permanent.

This same permanent transformation is available to you. When you embrace Jesus' fourteen words and make Paul's decision, you position yourself under Christ's power-tent. You learn to function in His strength while continuing to feel your weakness. You discover contentment in circumstances that once produced only desperation.

The power-tent is already pitched at your point of weakness. The only question is whether you will step inside and live there.

## CHAPTER 6: Living the Secret

In What Current Weakness?

Let me ask you directly: In what current weakness are you going to believe in His strength to function, in spite of how you feel?

In what specific current weakness are you deciding to employ your new attitude right now?

Where do you see the power-tent of Jesus covering you at this very moment?

Perhaps you are dealing with chronic pain or illness. Are you are facing overwhelming financial pressures? Are you are navigating a difficult relationship where you feel inadequate and confused? Maybe you are struggling with anxiety, depression, or a sense of failure in an important area of life.

Whatever your weakness—physical, emotional, relational, circumstantial—Jesus has already pitched His power-tent over that very weakness. His grace is in a constant state of sufficiency for you. His power is being perfected, completed, and made effective through that exact weakness you are experiencing.

The Connection to God's Presence

This secret of power connects directly to the broader truth of God's empowering presence that runs throughout Scripture. When God called Moses at the burning bush to lead Israel out of Egypt, Moses responded with a litany of his weaknesses: *"Who am I?" "What shall I say?" "They will not believe me." "I am slow of speech."*

God's answer was not to remove Moses' weaknesses but to promise His presence: *"I will be with you"* (Exodus 3:12). Throughout Moses' ministry, his weaknesses remained, yet God's power accomplished extraordinary things through him precisely because Moses remained dependent on God's empowering presence.

The principle Moses experienced at the burning bush—God's powerful presence delivered through human weakness—finds its fullest expression in what Jesus revealed to Paul. The power-tent of Jesus is God's empowering presence covering our weakness, enabling us to do His will in spite of our limitations.

For Those Not Yet Following Jesus

If you are not yet a Christian, accepting your weakness and inability to save yourself is the beginning of a right relationship with God.

Jesus came for people who recognize their need, not for people who think they are spiritually adequate on their own. He said, “*It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick*” (Mark 2:17). Acknowledging your spiritual weakness—your inability to make yourself right with God, your need for forgiveness and transformation—is the first step toward experiencing His saving power.

Are you ready to embrace your need of Him as your Savior right now?

For God’s People

And for those of us who already follow Jesus, His power-tent is dwelling on you right now. Jesus is covering you with His power at your point of greatest weakness and need.

He will never leave you or forsake you to deal with your thorns and troubles alone. No—these are the specific times and places where His power is designed to plug into your weakness and carry you through, even while you remain conscious of your pain or limitation.

Trust Him. He cares enough about your weakness to die and rise again to be the secret of your power.

## CHAPTER 7: Practicing the Secret

Understanding Jesus' secret is one thing. Living it daily is another. Paul's experience shows us that after Jesus spoke those fourteen words, everything changed—permanently. The Greek perfect tense indicated Jesus' words created an ongoing result that lasted Paul's entire life.

Remember the power-tent image: Christ's power pitches its tent right at your point of weakness. But for that tent to become your daily dwelling place rather than just an interesting concept, you need an action plan. Here are four essential steps.

### Step 1: Master Jesus' Fourteen Words

*'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'* (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Here are three actions to master Jesus' words and make them your own:

- *Memorize Jesus' fourteen words* in your preferred translation. Write them on cards, set phone reminders, repeat them daily. They need to be instantly available when weakness surfaces.
- *Study this mini-book* until you can explain the secret clearly to someone else. Work through the Greek verb tenses until the concept makes perfect sense.
- *Apply them constantly.* Every time you feel weak, recall these words. Let them interrupt discouragement and redirect you to the power source.

### Step 2: Change Your Attitude from Negative to Positive

Paul wrote, *'Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me'*—literally, *'may pitch its tent over me.'* This was a permanent decision to view weakness as the location where Christ's power-tent dwells.

Make this same decision. Move from:

- Shame about weakness → Recognition that it's my connection point
- Desperation for removal → Expectation of power flowing through it
- Hiding weakness → Appropriate sharing in community
- Seeing it as failure → Understanding it as God's design
-

Take the time to write your commitment in your own words. Include:

- (1) What you now believe about how God's power operates,
- (2) Your decision to embrace rather than run from specific weaknesses,
- (3) Your commitment to watch for enabling power (dunamis),
- (4) Where you recognize Christ's power-tent pitched in your life.

Here's an example: *'I understand that God's power works through my ongoing weakness. I decide today to stop viewing my chronic pain as God's absence. Instead, I recognize it as where Christ's power-tent is pitched over me. I commit to watching for His dunamis—my ability to function, love, and serve despite feeling weak. I will share my struggles with my small group, trusting my community is part of how His power sustains me.'*

Pray your commitment.

After writing your statement, pray it to God. Acknowledge you need the Holy Spirit's enabling power to sustain this attitude change—you're weak even in your ability to embrace weakness. Ask Him to help you see your weaknesses as Paul learned to see them: as locations where Christ's power-tent dwells.

### **Step 3: Apply It to Your Specific Weaknesses**

Paul had his thorn. You have yours. The secret becomes real when applied to actual weaknesses.

List your current weaknesses specifically:

Physical (illness, pain, limitations),  
 emotional (anxiety, depression),  
 relational (difficult marriage, family conflict),  
 circumstantial (finances, job stress),  
 spiritual (doubt, prayerlessness),  
 character (anger, impatience, sin struggles).

For each weakness, pray two prayers:

Transforming power: *'Lord, I continue to ask You to heal my back pain. I believe You can do this instantly if You choose.'*

Enabling power: *'Lord, whether You heal me today or not, Your grace is sufficient. I ask for Your enabling power to flow through this weakness—give me patience when pain makes me*

*irritable, ability to fulfill responsibilities despite limitations, joy in serving You while hurting. This is where Your power-tent is pitched over me.'*

#### **Step 4: Share in Community and Watch for Function**

Paul shared his weakness publicly. You need trusted relationships where you can practice appropriate vulnerability.

Find 2-3 safe people who understand grace and can pray with you for both transforming and enabling power.

Share how you're experiencing power through weakness, not just prayer requests for removal. *'My anxiety continues, but I'm learning to see it as where Christ's power-tent is pitched. I can still function and serve even while anxious. That's His enabling power.'*

Look for function, not just feelings.

Keep a list of times you functioned despite feeling weak: patience with kids despite exhaustion, contributing at work despite anxiety, serving at church despite spiritual dryness, completing tasks despite pain. These are evidences of His dunamis.

Encourage others with similar struggles.

As you experience God's power through your weakness, you become equipped to help others: *'I understand. My weakness hasn't left either. But I'm learning that God's power works best through it.'*

Practicing the Secret of Power as Jesus revealed it to us will enable you to spend more and more time in the Power-Tent with Jesus. Repeat these 4 steps with every new awareness of weakness. They will become second nature to you over time, just as this truth transformed Paul.

Finally, remember the price Jesus paid to experience and understand our weaknesses. He did it out of His great love for you, so that He could deliver the ability to do His will (dunamis) by connecting to your ongoing weakness.

Resurrection power works in a graveyard... the ultimate place of weakness.

#### **The Power-Tent Is Already Pitched**

Here's the beautiful truth: Christ's power-tent is already pitched at your point of weakness. You don't have to earn it. You don't have to become stronger first. The weakness itself is the location where His presence dwells.

Paul didn't just know this secret—he lived it for decades. The results remained constant because he constantly applied Jesus' words to his ongoing weakness. He embraced his thorn gladly. He looked for function rather than feelings. He celebrated God's dunamis flowing through his continuing weakness.

You can do the same. Let Jesus' fourteen words reshape how you view every weakness.

The weakness will likely remain. The feelings of inadequacy may persist. But through it all, Christ's power-tent will be right there at your point of need—His grace perpetually sufficient, His strength continuously perfected through your ongoing weakness.

This is not a quick fix. This is a lifelong posture of weakness-embracing dependence on Christ's empowering presence. But it's the very design God chose for delivering His power to His people.

Let Paul's permanent transformation become your daily experience.

*The power-tent is pitched. Step inside and live in it.*

## Scripture References

### Primary Texts:

- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (ESV) - Paul's thorn and Jesus' response
- John 15:5 - "Apart from me you can do nothing"
- Matthew 26:41 - "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"
- John 1:16 - "Grace upon grace"

### Supporting Texts:

- Philippians 2:6-7 - Jesus emptying himself
- Hebrews 4:15 - Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses
- John 5:19, 30 - Jesus' dependence on the Father
- 1 Kings 17:14-16 - Elijah's daily provision
- Exodus 4:10-12 - Moses' weakness and God's promise
- Daniel 3:17-18 - Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego's faith
- Judges 7:2 - Gideon's reduced army
- 2 Chronicles 26:16 - Uzziah's pride
- Psalm 119:71 - Affliction as teacher
- Philippians 4:11 - Paul's contentment
- Revelation 1:10 - John in the Spirit
- Matthew 11:28 - Jesus' invitation to the weary
- James 5:16 - Confessing to one another
- Acts 2:42 - Early church fellowship
- Exodus 3:11-12 - God's presence with Moses

## Continue the Journey

Thank you for reading *The Secret of Power*. My hope in writing this short book is simple: that you would discover that the power of the Christian life does not begin with effort, but with abiding — living in the conscious, daily presence of God through Jesus Christ.

This book is only an introduction.

For many readers, the next question naturally follows: How do we continue growing in this life of abiding? The answer is found in returning again and again to Jesus Himself — His words, His actions, and the way He lived in continual fellowship with the Father.

## A Larger Work in Progress

In 2011 I published a comprehensive chronological presentation of the life of Jesus, titled: The Jesus Saga, a narrative drawn directly from the four Gospels and arranged to help readers experience the life and ministry of Jesus as one continuous story.

This work forms the foundation of an ongoing series that explores the life and teaching of Jesus in a clear, readable format for modern disciples. A short introduction and promotional video explaining this project can be found on my website:

[www.johnstephenwright.com](http://www.johnstephenwright.com)

<https://johnstephenwright.com/about/the-saga-video>

If this book has been meaningful to you, I encourage you to visit the site and explore the material available there.

## Daily Jesus News (DJN)

Out of this larger project has grown Daily Jesus News (DJN) — 365 daily readings designed to help believers encounter Jesus daily through focused reflections drawn directly from the Jesus SAGA narratives. Each reading is intended to be read in 10-15 minutes, making it suitable for personal devotion, small groups, or church use.

Many readers have found that consistent, daily engagement with the life and words of Jesus gradually reshapes their understanding of faith and discipleship.

<https://johnstephenwright.com/daily-jesus-news-archives/>

## Stay Connected

If you would like to receive new writings, devotional materials, and updates about future books and resources, you are warmly invited to join the mailing list by clicking on this [atjministries@gmail.com](mailto:atjministries@gmail.com) email address and sending an email from your email account. We will include your email address in our mailing list. You can unsubscribe at any time.

[atjministries@gmail.com](mailto:atjministries@gmail.com)

Joining the mailing list ensures that you will be notified when new resources, books, and teaching materials become available.

## Share with Others

If The Secret of Power has encouraged or helped you, please consider sharing it with others. Many readers first encounter these ideas through a friend, a small group, or a church study. You are

welcome to share this book freely with friends, pastors, and church communities who may benefit from it.

The goal of this work has always been simple — to help people know Jesus more deeply and to live daily in the reality of God’s presence.

Thank you again for reading, and may you continue to grow in grace as you walk with Him.

#### About the Author

John Stephen Wright is a writer, teacher, and pastor who has spent many years studying and teaching the life and words of Jesus within both academic and church settings. His work focuses on helping ordinary believers encounter Scripture directly and grow in a daily life of abiding in the presence of God through Christ.

He is the author of *The Jesus Saga* a chronological narrative drawn from the four Gospels, and the ongoing *Beholding His Glory* series, along with Daily Jesus News (DJN), a devotional project designed to help readers engage regularly with the life and teaching of Jesus.

More resources, teaching materials, and future publications can be found at:

[www.johnstephenwright.com](http://www.johnstephenwright.com)