

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 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.

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 silence.

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. 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 a permanent, life-transforming revelation.

Jesus' message to Paul contained just fourteen words, intended to create the same permanent, daily results in each of us who hear and believe them.

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—water constantly replaced by new water as it rushes downhill. This is how 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 condition through which His power is completed in its expression.

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.

This is the revolutionary insight that most teaching on this passage misses.

But Jesus revealed something surprising. 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 something has gone wrong.

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 that weakness is the design, not the obstacle.

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

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.

No one understands the power-weakness relationship more deeply. It is one of His trademarks—and the reason He is our perfect Savior.

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, as His lifelong practice, to say and do nothing in His own strength or initiative. So completely surrendered to the Father’s will—so completely dead to His own self-will—He functioned in continuous, voluntary weakness regarding His own agenda.

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 meet us there.

This also gives Him the genuine ability to comfort and sympathize with us—He has been through what we face.

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. 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.

This power is real, and God still exercises it 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 severs the very connection that keeps us 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 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.

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.

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 are continuous—God is always 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—His power is energizing your will even when you cannot feel it. 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.

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—one that transforms how we experience weakness rather than simply escaping it.

Paul's Attitude Transformation

Paul 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).

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's new attitude toward weakness opened his eyes to a single word buried in his own testimony. When he wrote “so that the power of Christ may rest upon me,” that word *rest* is not ordinary. In the Greek it is *episkēnoō*—literally, *to pitch a tent over*, to tabernacle. He was describing something he could feel with his own hands: the power of Christ pitching its tent directly over his weakness, making that very place a dwelling. This image is deeply rooted in Scripture and deserves careful development.

Paul the Tentmaker

In the ancient Middle Eastern world, tents were not temporary shelters—they were homes. A tent represented dwelling, security, and the intimacy of family life. For Paul, whose hands had crafted countless tents, he knew exactly what it meant to pitch a tent, to dwell, to make a home in a particular place.

Moses' Experience of the Power-Tent

This imagery has deep roots—all the way back to Moses in the wilderness. Long before the great Tabernacle was constructed, Moses would take a tent and pitch it *outside the camp*. He called it the Tent of Meeting. Whenever Moses went out to that tent, something remarkable happened:

“When Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses... Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.”
(Exodus 33:8-11 ESV)

Moses went to the tent. God came down to the tent. The tent did not stand at the center of Israel's strength—it stood at the margins, a place of deliberate dependence. Yet that was precisely where God descended.

This “outside the camp” pattern runs through all of Scripture to its ultimate fulfillment. The writer of Hebrews draws the line directly to Calvary: *“Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured”* (Hebrews 13:12-13 ESV).

The cross stood outside Jerusalem—the place of ultimate weakness and rejection. Yet it became the place where God's power accomplished what nothing else could. Jesus' power-tent is not pitched at the place of our competence. It stands outside the camp of our self-sufficiency—at our point of weakness—and it is there He meets us, just as He met Moses, just as He met the world at Calvary.

David's Longing for the Power-Tent

David understood this same truth. In Psalm 27, surrounded by enemies, he did not ask God to remove him from his distress. He recognized that God's tent—His presence—was the place of safety in the midst of it.

*“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 was not more of the same. His deepest desire was for something more permanent—a temple that would give enduring structure to everything the Tent of Meeting represented. That longing pointed forward to a fulfillment far greater than David could have imagined.

CHAPTER 6: God Pitches His Tent—Forever

But why is His presence specifically drawn to our weakness? The answer is written into the whole story of Scripture. David's longing pointed forward—but the fulfillment came in a way no one anticipated.

The Tent That Walked Among Us

When John described the incarnation, he chose his word deliberately. *“The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we have seen his glory”* (John 1:14). He did not say Jesus entered a building. He said Jesus pitched a tent.

This was not accidental. The Tent of Meeting was always a mobile dwelling—God on the move with His people, present in the journey, not waiting for them at a fixed destination. Jesus came the same way. He was not stationed in a temple for people to visit. He walked the roads of Galilee, entered homes, crossed lakes, and sat at wells. Like Moses going out to the Tent of Meeting, the disciples could approach Him directly. Like the pillar of cloud descending to the tent entrance, the glory of God was visible and accessible in Him. The face-to-face intimacy of Exodus 33 was now walking among them in flesh and blood.

But John 1:14 also carries the Temple echo: *“we have seen his glory.”* This is the language of the Shekinah—the glory that had filled the Tabernacle at its dedication, that had overwhelmed Solomon's Temple at its consecration. The same glory was now present in a person. The tent had become flesh.

The Temple That Could Not Be Destroyed

Yet Jesus pointed beyond the tabernacle image to something more permanent. When the religious leaders demanded a sign of His authority, He answered: *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”* (John 2:19). John tells us plainly—He was speaking of His body.

This was a declaration of the entire New Covenant in a single sentence. The Temple in Jerusalem was a fixed location—you traveled to it, you ascended to it, and you left it. Its presence was bound to geography. But Jesus was announcing a temple that would transcend every limitation of stone and place. Through death and resurrection, He would establish a dwelling place for God's presence that could never be demolished, never taken into exile, never left behind.

The Tent of Meeting had been mobile but temporary. Solomon's Temple had been permanent but fixed to a location. Jesus is both—permanently present, and always with you wherever you are.

His Dwelling Place Is You

And now, through His risen presence, Jesus makes *us* His dwelling place. We are not traveling to a tent outside the camp, or ascending to a temple in Jerusalem. Paul grasped the staggering implication: “*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?*” (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The power-tent of Christ is permanently pitched over *you*—at your specific point of weakness—because the living Temple of God’s presence has chosen to make His home in you. Jesus does not visit our weakness; He *dwells* there. His grace is already sufficient, His power already being perfected in the very weakness you carry today.

The journey from Moses’ tent outside the camp, to David’s longing, to Solomon’s Temple, to the Word becoming flesh—it all arrives here: at your point of weakness, where the unbreakable, resurrection-powered presence of Jesus has pitched His tent forever.

CHAPTER 7: Living the Secret

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 way to find His power in the very place we least expect it.

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."*

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?

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 facing overwhelming financial pressures? Are you 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—His presence already covers that very weakness. His grace is sufficient for you, and His power is being perfected through it.

The Connection to God's Presence

Take a moment and think about your own life. Where are the specific places where you feel weakest?

Perhaps it is the desk where you sit every month to face the bills—the stack of statements, the budget that never quite stretches far enough, the low feeling that settles in as you open the laptop. That desk is where His presence already waits. His grace is sufficient for that specific place of financial pressure.

Perhaps it is your bed. You lie down at night and instead of rest, the anxious thoughts begin—the replaying of conversations, the worry about tomorrow, the darkness that makes everything feel heavier than it did in daylight. His power covers you even in those sleepless hours, at the very place where you feel most alone and least in control.

Perhaps it is a particular chair—the one where a difficult conversation always seems to happen with your spouse or your child. Or the seat in a meeting room where your inadequacy feels most exposed. Or the treatment room where you receive ongoing medical care.

Every location of weakness is already a location of His presence.

Name them. Be specific. The desk. The bed. The doctor's office. The conversation you keep dreading.

This is exactly what Paul did. When Jesus spoke those fourteen words, Paul did not receive a promise about a future he could not yet see. He received new eyes for what was already true. His thorn was still there—but now he could see His presence covering it. Every weakness he named became a location of Christ's presence. That is why he could say *"I will boast all the more gladly"*—not as a spiritual performance, but as a man who had learned to see.

When you walk to that desk, that bed, that chair, that room, you can say what Paul learned to say: *"This is where Christ's power-tent is pitched. This is where His grace meets me. This is where His strength is being perfected—in this exact weakness, in this exact place."*

For Those Not Yet Following Jesus

So far the content of this book has assumed that readers are already believers in 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? If so, just tell Him you need forgiveness, and surrender yourself to His loving, empowering presence. You can pray a prayer like this:

“Dear Lord, I am tired of trying to live my life my own way, in my own strength. I need forgiveness for all of my sins. Thank you for loving me as I am. Please forgive me, and take control of my life now. I make the decision to permanently yield myself to you, as your faithful follower. Save me forever. Come into my heart and show me how to live in your presence, with your power working through my weaknesses. I will give you the glory for what you do. Thank you for hearing my prayer.” Amen.

CHAPTER 8: 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.

For that truth to become your daily dwelling place rather than just a concept, you need an action plan. Here are three 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: 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 presence covers me. Let me never feel this weakness without believing in your power working in it to enable me to function for your glory.'*

Step 3: 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 people who understand grace and can pray with you for both transforming and enabling power. Share not just requests for removal, but how you are learning to recognize His presence in your weakness—and how you are functioning in His strength even there.

Look for function, not just feelings. Notice the times you served despite exhaustion, loved despite pain, trusted despite doubt. These are evidences of His dunamis at work. As you recognize His power flowing through your weakness, you become equipped to encourage others carrying similar burdens: *“My weakness hasn’t left either. But I’m learning that God’s power works best through it.”*

Repeat these steps with every new awareness of weakness. They will become second nature, just as this truth transformed Paul.

Finally, remember the price Jesus paid to understand our weakness from the inside. He did it out of His great love for you—so His power could reach you there.

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

His presence is already there, at your point of weakness. You don’t have to earn it. You don’t have to become stronger first. The weakness itself is where He dwells.

He is there. Step inside and live in it with Him.

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

The secret explored in this book did not originate with Paul's thorn.

It was revealed at a cross.

The pattern that shapes your daily walk—God's power perfected in weakness, strength found in surrendered dependence—is the same pattern that shaped the death of Jesus. He did not conquer by force. He did not preserve his own strength. He chose weakness. As Paul wrote: "he was crucified in weakness."

And in that weakness, everything was accomplished.

The Cross... According to Jesus

If *The Secret of Power* has shown you how the pattern of the cross operates in your daily life, *The Cross... According to Jesus* takes you to the source.

This thirty-day devotional follows Jesus' own words about his death—before, during, and after the crucifixion—drawing from all four Gospels in chronological order. It is built on a single conviction:

Jesus interprets his own death.

He did not leave others to explain what the cross meant. In his own words, across his entire ministry, he named what he came to do, why it was necessary, and what it would accomplish. *The Cross... According to Jesus* lets him speak for himself.

The same Lord who said “my power is perfected in weakness” also said “it is finished.”

The two belong together.

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The Risen One... According to Jesus

But the cross was not the final word. Resurrection was.

For forty days after his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples, opened the Scriptures, restored the fallen, commissioned his followers, and prepared them for continued life in his invisible presence. After his ascension, he actively continued his ministry on earth through the Holy Spirit.

The Risen One... According to Jesus provides a devotional for each of the fifty days from Easter to Pentecost. It follows the resurrection sayings of Jesus in chronological order, drawing from all four Gospels and Acts—driven by the same conviction:

Jesus interprets his own work.

The pattern of weakness and power does not end at the cross. The resurrection is its ultimate vindication. The One whose power was perfected in weakness is now risen, reigning, and present—and He is not finished.

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John Stephen Wright is a missionary (Japan) writer, teacher, and church planter/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, along with Daily Jesus News (DJN), a devotional project designed to help readers engage regularly with the life and teaching of Jesus.

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