

The Weaker Vessel - God's Treasure

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"The lowly estate in which God has placed us as women is not a disability. It is rather an equipping which, if properly utilized, will attract the Almighty God to work mightily in us. When our lowly estate is combined with lowliness of heart, it becomes a great treasure, an asset for divine usefulness. Are you lowly?"

Over the ages, the issue of the woman being referred to in the scriptures as the weaker vessel has been abused, She is looked down upon both at home and in the public places in many traditions and in many countries of the world. She is pushed to the back and asked only to sit at home and watch how men perform. This matter is being used in many quarters as a whip of discipline to ever remind her of the door she opened to sin in the Garden Eden. Sad enough, she is not also treated favourably in church denominations even though Jesus Christ paid the price of redemption for both man and woman.

As a reaction however, lack of understanding of their place in God's scheme of things also made women in many parts of the world to go into endless struggles with men and against authorities. And so in one way or the other, she has also abused her divine privilege of being the weaker vessel.

"Husbands likewise dwell with them with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."
1 Peter 3:7

Generally, to be weak means to have little strength or energy. It means to be breakable. From the scriptures above, you will however discover that the weakness being referred to in that verse is not necessarily physical, intellectual, or that due to sin and sinfulness.

Both in scriptures and contemporary times, there are many women that have proven physically strong, sometimes even stronger than men. Such women have attempted great things and confronted physically tasking works and have succeeded. Examples of such women in the scriptures include Deborah, who exhibited physical and spiritual strength, led Israel as a judge for forty years and went to the battlefield with Barak (*Judges 4*). She passed through the same difficulties of war along with the men as the Lord helped her. Jael was strong enough physically to drive a tent peg into the skull of Sisera, the commander of the enemy army with a hammer and killed him (*Judges 4:21*), Mary Magdalene exhibited her physical strength as she requested for the body of Jesus Christ with the intention of carrying Him away (*John 20:15*).

There are also many women in history who went into the missionary fields, faced the physical and spiritual rigours of the labour and emerged victorious, conquering lands for Christ in their own

generation. Among them were mother George who laboured as a missionary in Liberia and Mary Slessor who laboured in Nigeria and stopped the killing of twins in the Calabar area. Even intellectually, women are not behind at all. There are many women in our contemporary times who are doctors and lawyers of repute, professors, pilots, political leaders etc. So it cannot be an intellectual weakness that God is talking about.

The weakness (concerning the woman) referred to is also not that due to her sin or sinfulness because both the man and the woman sinned from the beginning. She is not weaker than the man in terms of sin and sinfulness. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And without partiality, the word of God says that if anyone purges himself of ignoble things, he will be a vessel of honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work (*2 Tim 2:21*). Even though sin renders a man or a woman weak in being useful to God, the woman is not a particular culprit in this matter. As it happens to the man, so it happens to the woman. And there are many men as well as women who purged themselves from sin and became great vessels in the hands of God as mentioned earlier. They did not allow sin to thrive in their lives and weaken them from divine usefulness.

The weakness that sin brings is inherent in the life of every natural man or woman. Sin makes a woman weak and unable to stand in God's presence. Sin renders her life impotent as far as God's work is concerned. It is an impurity that makes a woman not to be able to see God. . .see God at work in her life, see God answer her prayers. Sin brings separation from God and makes a woman vulnerable to Satan's attack. It hinders prayers. The Bible says *in Isaiah 59: 1-2*:

***"Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save;
nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have
separated you from your God: and your sins have hidden His face
from you, so that He will not hear."***

If you are still living in sin, you are already separated from God and you will not be able to attain to the weakness that the Lord is referring to here in the life of a woman, the weakness that makes a woman His treasure. Your first need is to reconcile with God and forsake your sins. Jesus has already paid the price for you on the cross of Calvary to secure your release from the grip of sin. Do not remain there. It is high time you made up your mind to become relevant and useful in God's hand and be what he wants you to be.

There is a weakness that is a treasure

". . .giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel. . ." (1 Peter 3:7)

You will remember that in this scripture, Peter was writing to instruct Christians, the ***"elect according to the foreknowledge of God the father, in sanctification of the spirit for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."*** (*1 Peter 1:2*).

So it is not a letter written to sinners. It is not an instruction to people who have been weakened by sin but to people who have been sanctified. Therefore, when the scriptures refer to the woman as the weaker vessel, they are not referring to the women who have been weakened by sin and the works of flesh.

Furthermore, when that scripture refers to the woman as the weaker vessel, it means that a man is a weak vessel; only the woman is weaker. In other words, both are weak as far as God is concerned.

There is a weakness in sanctified vessels that makes them God's special treasure and draws God to their lives, a weakness that commands honour even from a husband to wife. There is a weakness that makes a woman useful in God's hands; a weakness that qualifies her to be a vessel unto honour. While Christian men are weak, Christian women are to have that weakness in a greater portion if they would be useful in God's hands.

What is this Weakness?

1. Recognizing Your Spiritual Poverty

In Matthew 5 : 3 the Bible says,

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (King James Version)

"How happy are those who know their need for God. . ." (Phillips)

"Humble men are very fortunate. . ." (Living Bible)

Everyone is spiritually poor but not everyone recognizes and admits that he/she is. It is one thing to be spiritually poor; it is another to know it. Spiritual poverty is weakness that draws the spiritual riches of heaven to the one who has it and recognizes it. It is a useful weakness in that you are unable to do anything by your own strength. Our spiritual poverty is not a problem to God but our lack of knowledge of it, our inability to recognize it. The Lord Jesus spoke to the Church at Laodecia and rebuked them for this reason.

"So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth. Because you say, I am, rich, you have become wealthy, and have need of nothing-and do not know that you are wretched miserable, poor, blind and naked. . . .And as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent". (Rev 3:16-19)

When a woman does not recognize her spiritual poverty and her need for God, it makes her lukewarm as far as the things of God are concerned. She becomes complacent and loses her zeal for God. She becomes proud, pseudo-satisfied and presumptuous. She is self reliant and independent of God in one way or the other; because she thinks she is rich and strong and does not know her miserable state.

When you get to a state where you begin to recognize your riches and your wealth whether physical or spiritual, you are losing something great. You are losing the support of the whole kingdom of heaven. Such a situation makes a woman to lose her divine usefulness because she is strong in herself.

Recognizing one's spiritual poverty introduces a weakness into her life which draws the attention, the grace and the power of God towards her. **It is a weak person that normally cries out for help.**

When God says the woman is the weaker vessel, the first thing He expects of us to recognize that weakness; the weakness of the poverty of our spirit; the weakness of our daily need to depend on God. Had the first woman recognized this, she would not have fallen into Satan's trap. She would not have acted independently. She would have sought the help of the Lord or her husband before acting on the serpent's suggestion. When a woman knows her need of God and admits it and cries out to God, the whole realm of heaven will be at her disposal and the heavenly treasure in her will begin to be released.

Do you recognize that you are spiritually weak? Do you know that you are the source and the author of nothing? All that you are and have, come from God This must constantly be engrafted on the heart of every woman who desires to walk with God...

Nobody naturally wants to be weak or be counted among the weak. Everyone loves to be numbered among the strong. But when a woman is proving to be strong, she is gradually zoning herself out of God's reservoir of vessels for divine usefulness. When you prove your ability to argue and win arguments, when you have a forceful attitude and you are strong willed, you are surely not weak enough for God to use. You are strong. He will not make you His choice. He normally goes for weak vessels; people who recognise their need of God, who do not struggle with the men, who pursue nothing with the energy of the flesh. This is the kind of weakness in a woman that makes her precious in the sight of God. It also attracts honour from men as God commanded in that same scripture. Maybe you have not had any honour in the sight of your husband, check your life. It may be because you are not a weaker vessel. Maybe you are yet strong in yourself.

2. The Lowliness Of Her Estate

The lowliness of the woman's estate also makes her to be the weaker vessel. Her position in God's delegation of divine authority makes her weaker than the man. 1 Corinthians 11:3 says:

"But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of every woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God".

From this scripture, you will discover that the woman is at the bottom of the line of delegated authority. Every other person there has authority over her. She submits to the man, to Christ and to God. Her estate is a lowly one. The man is weak but she is even weaker in that regard. Yet you will discover in the scriptures that God has regard for the lowly. God is easily drawn to assist people of low estate. People like orphans, widows, slaves, the poor, the needy etc. often attract God's attention and compassion easily...

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3. Brokenness Or Breakability

We have seen earlier that to be weak means to be breakable. This aspect of weakness is another treasure that draws God to any life that has it. The Bible says in Psalm 34:18 that:

"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart and saves such as have a contrite spirit" (King James Version)

"The Lord is close to those whose hearts are breaking; He rescues those who are humbly sorry for their sins" (Living Bible)

Brokenness and contriteness of heart often go together. It often comes as a result of conviction of sin and transgression as the Holy Spirit sheds light on the word of God in one's heart. It also manifests in immediate, unprocastinated obedience to the Lord. Someone who has a broken and a contrite spirit is a person who yields easily to the convictions from the word of God by the Holy Spirit. She does not argue to justify herself. She easily accepts her wrong and repents with a humble and sorrowful heart and she obeys God no matter the cost.

Brokenness of heart or easy breakability draws the mercy and compassion of God to a person. Brokenness however has to do with the "texture" or "nature" of a vessel. **Earthen vessels are easy to break, whereas stony ones are not easily breakable.** Are you an earthen vessel? The treasure of brokenness dwells only in an earthen vessel. (2 Corinthians 4:7). Are you a breakable or a hard hearted woman? Does it take a long time for you to admit your faults or to obey instructions?

A weak vessel is a breakable vessel, and a weaker vessel is a more breakable vessel. Such is the woman unto whom God would draw near to save, to deliver and to help. Being a weaker vessel is not something to run away from. It is rather something to be desired. Weaker vessels are choice vessels in God's hands. It is a prerequisite for divine usefulness.

Yet such a weakness cannot come to a life by power or by might; it does not also come naturally. No one is born with this kind of weakness. **It comes only to a woman who has been regenerated, born again by the Spirit and the Word of God.** It is a spiritual nature, a spiritual attitude. After the new birth, it is further nurtured as a Christian woman daily surrenders her life to the purging work of the Lord and walks humbly with Him in obedience...

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