

## YOU CAN GET USED TO LOSING

### **SAMSON'S STORY:**

Judges 13-16

Don't focus on the **savior** that God is raising up,  
but on the **God** who saves.

### **A FEW POINTS TO PONDER:**

James 4:4-10, Matthew 16:26, Titus 2:11-14, Colossians 3:1-14

- Spiritual failure is seldom an **explosion**,  
it's usually an **erosion**.

We can be fooled because things **still work**.

We can rely on our **gifts**, not the **Giver**.

- The beginning of **strength** is an awareness of our **weaknesses**.

### **TWO QUESTIONS TO ASK:**

1 Peter 4:10-13, 2 Corinthians 4:7-12, Romans 1:21-32, Matthew 5:16, 1 Corinthians 6:20

- ▶ How are my **strengths** benefiting the **kingdom**?
- ▶ How would I know if the **Spirit of God left me**?

# Food for Thought

For the week of June 8, 2008

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

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1. Chris asked the question, "How are my strengths benefiting the kingdom?" In order to answer that question, it helps to be familiar with how God uses us in the building of his kingdom. What guidelines and insights about using your strengths and gifts to benefit the kingdom do you see in 1 Corinthians 12:7-31?

## **1 Corinthians 12:7-31**

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. [8] To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, [9] to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, [10] to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. [11] All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

[12] The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. [13] For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

[14] Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. [15] If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. [16] And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. [17] If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? [18] But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. [19] If they were all one part, where would the body be? [20] As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

[21] The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" [22] On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, [23] and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, [24] while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, [25] so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. [26] If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

[27] Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. [28] And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. [29] Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? [30] Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? [31] But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

And now I will show you the most excellent way. [NIV]

2. We heard this weekend that we can easily find ourselves putting too much confidence in our own strengths. The Apostle Paul confessed that he was tempted to do just that in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. What do you learn from this passage about how God dealt with this temptation and how Paul related to his weaknesses?

### **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

[7] To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. [8] Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. [9] But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. [10] That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. [NIV]

In what ways can you see Paul's perspective on strength and weakness revealed in 2 Corinthians 4:7-12?

### **2 Corinthians 4:7-12**

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. [8] We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; [9] persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. [10] We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. [11] For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. [12] So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. [NIV]

3. If spiritual failure is seldom an explosion but often an erosion, the natural follow-up question is, "how do we avoid that erosion?" What do the following verses say about how to keep our spiritual life from experiencing erosion?

### **Philippians 4:8-9**

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. [9] Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. [NIV]

### **Genesis 5:16-26**

And after he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. [17] Altogether, Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

[18] When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. [19] And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. [20] Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

[21] When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. [22] And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. [23] Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. [24] Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

[25] When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. [26] And after he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters. [NIV]

Is there anything you need to put into practice from these verses?

4. Take a moment to jot down the gifts and strengths you believe God has given you (possible areas you might want to consider include your spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality and experiences). Now consider how you are currently investing those in building God's kingdom. Are there any changes you need to make in light of this mini-inventory?