

“... Through Him who strengthens me”

The apostle Paul had learned important spiritual lessons from all the circumstances he experienced. He knew what it was like to have abundance and to be in need. He knew comfort; he knew persecution. By steadfastly pressing onward to the goal that is in Christ, he had matured to the point that he was able genuinely to say ***“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”*** (Philippians 4:13).

A constant, positive outlook and attitude does not just happen, nor does it always come easy. Disciples of Christ must work at it. It is a mindset that has to be trained in that direction in spite of the hardships, trials and temptations which are common to everyone. The ability to say truthfully *“I can do”* and then move forward in the direction an opportunity calls upon us to act is a skill that takes the willingness to learn and the determination to labor diligently to achieve what the Lord would have us do.

Paul possessed a Christ-minded disposition which enabled him to live every day – even in the midst of some terrible situations – with an I-can-do-all attitude. Is that not impressive? I humbly confess that I don’t. My attitude is not always godly, and I don’t always do what I can or when I can because of focusing on supposed obstacles and assumed limitations. But Paul’s spiritual outlook did not emanate from within himself but from and through Christ his Lord. Through Jesus who strengthened him, he could do all things.

Jesus Christ can do the same for you and me. But how? How does He strengthen us so that we can do all things? Consider Paul again. A blasphemous, persecuting Saul was chosen and placed in service to the King as one of His ambassadors. Wow! What a shocking turn of events. The converted Saul became an unrelenting, devoted apostle for Christ. He was strengthened for the task, but how? First, he came to understand his Savior’s rich mercy and abundant grace (1 Timothy 1:13, 14). He never forgot who and what he had been. He knew how far he had come because of divine mercy, grace and love. He did not earn salvation. It was a gift from heaven. “...I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe” (1:16). You and I likewise are saved.

Secondly, the apostle was strengthened because the Lord considered him faithful. “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service” (1 Timothy 1:12). Jesus knew his potential. He knew his strengths as well as his weaknesses. The Son of God had called him to the front lines, and that motivated Paul to keep fighting the good fight. A good soldier strives to “please the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:4). All of us Christians have been enlisted in the King’s army by the King Himself. Is not that strengthening so that one keeps on marching onward even in the heat of battle?

Strength also increased by being convicted of what Christ the Lord is able to do for a disciple personally. Paul said, “...I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.” (2 Timothy

1:12). The Living One who calmed the storm and was raised from the dead is omnipotent. He has granted precious and magnificent promises. Surely you and I can through Him.