



# When I Am Weak, He Is Strong

BY STEPHENIE HOVLAND



**Opening:** Speak or sing one or more verses of “Jesus Loves Me” (LSB 588).

**Opening Prayer:** Holy Spirit, You are a comforter and an ongoing strength in our lives. Remind us of Your presence as we think about being vulnerable and weak. Show us how to live as the body of Christ, living fully in weakness and showing Your strength as we support our Christian sisters. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Many people take pride in self-reliance. We often see greater value in overcoming hardships through strength than in living out the small, simple moments of life. When we sing songs like “Jesus Loves Me,” we think they belong only to little children, even though we are children of God.

We hide weaknesses or try to make them disappear altogether. When someone asks us how we’re doing, we rarely admit when we feel depressed or overwhelmed. We take pride in working ourselves to the point of exhaustion, depression, and sickness. We may think vulnerability is weakness, and that weakness is sinful and shameful. Let’s explore what the Bible says.

## I Am Weak, But He Is Strong

List some words or images that remind you of strength: \_\_\_\_\_

of weakness: \_\_\_\_\_

What does **1 Corinthians 1:26–31** say about power and weakness? \_\_\_\_\_

In Whom should we boast? \_\_\_\_\_

How can we know God values us and believe the words “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so”? Fill in the blanks below and be able to say Jesus loves me with confidence.

### Isaiah 43:1

*But now thus says the Lord, he who \_\_\_\_\_ you,  
O Jacob, he who \_\_\_\_\_ you, O Israel: “Fear not, for  
I have \_\_\_\_\_ you; I have \_\_\_\_\_ you by  
\_\_\_\_\_, you \_\_\_\_\_.”*

We don’t find our strength within ourselves, though we continue to try. What do you do that makes you feel strong (physically, emotionally, intellectually)? \_\_\_\_\_

When we take our focus off our own strength and on to God’s strength being shown in our lives, then we actually feel stronger. We realize that our real strength came from God all along. And we realize our own personal strength is never enough for the trials of this life.

The Old Testament has several passages about God’s strength. Read these verses aloud, as statements you believe and have witnessed: **Psalm 46:1; Psalm 28:7; Psalm 18:1.**

## Walking with Me on the Way

In the 80’s, a national company launched a series of commercials that proclaimed, “Never let them see you sweat.” That commercial still sticks in our memories. We love the idea that we might appear to others to be always strong. It doesn’t matter what’s on the inside; we should never show weakness.

On the other hand, the Bible has countless references to people who are in distress, reaching out to the Lord for help. Look at these people to see real-life examples:

**Job:** Read the whole book when you have time. Focus on **Job 30:16–19** today. How has Job hit the bottom? How does he feel? \_\_\_\_\_

**Jeremiah 20:7–8:** The great prophet Jeremiah had his days too. How does he pray when he is being persecuted? \_\_\_\_\_

**Jesus:** Even Jesus suffered. We know about the cross, but let’s look at the period just before the Crucifixion in **Luke 22:41–44.** \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus was fully human and fully God at the same time. And yet, He wasn't always tough and strong as some people think Christians have to be. Here we see vulnerability and weakness, but it isn't a weakness of faith. It isn't a sin. Jesus needs His heavenly Father in the very stressful, painful time ahead. He feels that pain before it even arrives. He doesn't deny it or put on a good show. Jesus goes to God in prayer. Notice that before He prays so intensely, He has brought His closest friends with Him. They are there to pray for Him and be with Him. That is what we are to do as well. We take our fears, pains, and suffering to God. We know He is here with us, to strengthen and comfort. And, as Jesus invited His disciples, we ask our sisters in Christ to support us in our misery. We give and receive love in times of weakness and strength.

### Light and Love to All Who Live

How do we support one another as we walk alongside our sisters and brothers? Let's think about what can benefit our fellow Christians, whether they are close and in-person or across the globe.

We know that supporting our sisters in Christ is not always easy. We, like other families, have our share of conflict and awkward moments. Nevertheless, we are one family in Christ. He unites us, no matter our different personalities or our weird casseroles. Read **1 Corinthians 12:21-26**. Notice the differences that come together to make the body. How do you see that in your family or church community? \_\_\_\_\_

Read that last verse again (1 Corinthians 12:26). Notice where we are united. We unite in suffering and support. We unite in honor and rejoicing. How have you seen people supporting one another during suffering? \_\_\_\_\_

Rejoicing together? \_\_\_\_\_

Identify specific ways, in the following, we can walk alongside our fellow women in mission:

**Matthew 25:35-40** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 12:10** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 12:13** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 12:15** \_\_\_\_\_

**Galatians 6:2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Philippians 2:3-4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Colossians 4:5** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** \_\_\_\_\_

**Titus 2:3-5** \_\_\_\_\_

**James 5:16** \_\_\_\_\_

Women involved in ministries like LWML have servant hearts, always looking for ways to serve. Instead of taking the above list as a mandate or to-do list, look on it as opportunities to serve others. Don't add them to an already-too-busy agenda — especially if you are in a weak moment of your life.

Did you know it's okay to be the "weakest link" sometimes? Did you know you don't always have to be the strong one? Did you know God brings others into your life to serve you too? When we give, give, give, sometimes we forget to fill up. Our tank runs out of gas, and we need a refill. What are some ways we can keep ourselves from running empty?

**Genesis 2:3** \_\_\_\_\_

**Psalms 127:2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 11:28** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 18:15** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 2:42** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26** \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 10:25** \_\_\_\_\_

What are some other things you do that help you feel renewed and refreshed to continue in God's work?

It's tough to serve God and others when our tanks are completely empty. God has not given us that expectation. We bring it on ourselves. How does **Galatians 6:9-10** guide you in serving others, especially sisters in Christ?

As you go about your week, think about times when God gives you opportunities:

- To serve another person.
- To spend time in prayer and Bible study.
- To rest.
- To be served by others.

Pray that God reminds you, His child, of His love and strength at all times.

**Closing Prayer:** Speak or sing the words of "Jesus Loves Me" one more time.

A pastor's wife, former Lutheran school teacher, and mother of two grown girls, Stephenie wants to help others connect to God. She is willing to meet with your group through video, to assist with this study (as her schedule allows.) Contact her at her website, [StephenieHovland.com](http://StephenieHovland.com) or through email: [email@StephenieHovland.com](mailto:email@StephenieHovland.com).