

OVERCOMING FAILURE (2)

Introduction: Read 2 Cor. 12:7-10. God uses our weaknesses (the very things by which Satan tries to destroy us) to make us strong.

1. The testing and trials of life will either make or break us. The Christian can say, “*For when I am weak, then I am strong.*”
2. Last week we observed that although Moses is the only person in the Bible who is called “meek” (Num. 12:1-3; KJV, ASV), he was not meek but weak when God called him to lead His people. Moses had an out-of-control temper.

C. ABRAHAM: WEAKNESS TURNED INTO FAITH.

1. Read Gen. 12:10-20. How strange to read this account of Abraham’s deception immediately after reading of Abraham’s unquestioned obedience in leaving his father’s house and land (Gen. 12:1-9). What is truly amazing is that Abraham will follow the exact same course of action again (*cf.* Gen. 20:1-10).
 - a. God used Abraham’s most precious relationship to test his faith--his wife.
 - b. As Sarah’s husband, Abraham should have shielded her from the roving eyes of the king’s servants; rather, he released her as an unmarried woman.
 - c. There was a time in society that marriage protected men and women from the interest of others. What has become of our society with its adultery?
2. Note what Abraham accomplished by his lie: (1) risked his wife’s chastity, (2) put temptation in the way of his neighbors, and (3) betrayed his God who had so greatly favored him [*Pulpit Commentary*].
3. **Question:** When and under what circumstances it is right to lie? How do you know? **Answer:** There are no circumstances in which it is right to lie.
 - a. As it was with Abraham, lying is evidence of unbelief.
 - b. It is beyond the limits of finite minds to determine when it is right to lie.
4. How can man determine that lying may be the right thing to do when the Bible states that God does not and cannot lie (Tit. 1:1-2; Heb. 6:17-18)?
 - a. Consider the fact that the lie hurt Pharaoh deeply (Gen. 12:17-19).
 - b. How do you think Pharaoh felt? Who do you want to lie to you? You do not give others license to lie to you. Why would God give you license to lie?
5. Abraham could not see the consequences of his lie when he told it. God knows! That is why it is never right to lie. Abraham (1) lost self-respect; (2) humiliated Pharaoh; (3) was rebuked by Pharaoh; and, (4) dishonored his God.
6. God tested Abraham’s faith when he was weak so that he could become strong. Consequently he became faithful: “*So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing* [”faithful”; ASV] *Abraham*” (Gal. 3:9).
7. “But although the faith of Abraham failed, the faithfulness of God did not fail, and he promptly rescued Sarah from the perilous position, and averted disaster” [Leslie G. Thomas, *Annual Lesson Commentary* (5/5/68), p. 114].