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## Hebrews 4:14-16 Jesus our Great High Priest

*“Since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:14-16 NIV).*

**Our Weakness** is a state of being. It has to do with our flesh. Our flesh may be defined as the condition of our weakness. Jesus understood this state of being for he experienced it but did not give in to its desires. He chose to obey the Spirit of God instead of the flesh. Jesus was fully God and perfect in Spirit and he was fully man and understood personally the condition of weakness (flesh) without yielding to that condition. **Our need** is help when faced with our weakness. We need help to not yield to our weakness. What is your need in regards to your specific weakness?

### FLESH ----- SPIRIT

*Jesus said, "If you **hold** to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32 NIV).*

The apostle Paul came to awareness of his condition of weakness when an angel of Satan continued to come against him. He cried out to God and God told him that God's grace (strength, power, wisdom, provision, and presence) was sufficient for his weakness. Further, God said that his power is made perfect through our human state of weakness. Our weakness is not the problem—giving into the weakness is the problem.

*"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. 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" (2 Corinthians 12:9-10, NIV).*

### LET US HOLD FIRMLY TO OUR FAITH IN GOD

It appears that part of God's plan is to use the human condition of weakness to reveal his strength. When we come to terms with our condition we can begin to look beyond ourselves and find great strength in the Spirit of God who desires for us to live the abundant life in him. It is not a time to look at our condition and despairingly give in to

the desires of the flesh. It is time to turn to God and receive what he has intended for us.

**Help** is available for our weakness. In our time of weakness we are to come boldly to the mercy throne of God for help for our weakness. This is instruction for what we are to do when tempted to follow the desires of the flesh.

*“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to **help** us in our time of **need**.”*

This verse is not talking about what to do after we sin. It is telling us what to do before we sin so we can receive help to turn away from the desires of the flesh and to obey the desire of the Spirit. We do not have to give into the condition of weakness just because it is present—we do have a choice to either follow the Spirit or the flesh. Following the Spirit leads to life and following the flesh leads to death and destruction.

The boldness mentioned in this verse is not like a selfish, demanding child, it is like a child who is being chased by vicious dogs and runs into the house crying for the help of a father. The child is not concerned about other problems or looking foolish. This was Jesus' approach and how he overcame the human condition of the flesh—in which he fully dwelled. He cried out to God who gave him strength to obey the Spirit.

*WEAKNESS ----- IN NEED OF HELP ----- RUN TO GOD FOR HELP*

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our **weaknesses**, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.*

The Bible states that Jesus resisted sin unto death. He resisted the desires of the flesh (that human condition of weakness) to the point of dying (c.f. Hebrews 12:4). By this he completed (perfected) what God had intended for man. The word perfect in these verses refers to maturity, wholeness, and completeness.

Westcott stated, “Endurance involves more, not less, than ordinary human suffering: sympathy with the sinner in his trial does not depend on the experience of sin but on the experience of the strength of the temptation to sin which only the sinless can know in its full intensity. He who falls yields before the last strain” (B.F. Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, London, 1892). Jesus not only understands every temptation known to man, he understand the temptations full intensity since he resisted it completely.

He not only calls for us to come to the mercy throne and receive help in our time of need, but he calls us to take **the next step** and press on to overcoming the temptation. As mentioned by Westcott, those who yield to the temptation at a time when they need to be pressing on to the help the Lord provides.

## RECEIVE HELP ----- TAKE THE NEXT STEP TOWARD MATURITY

The apostle Paul states that he had not reached perfection, but he went on to say, “Christ has taken hold of me. So I keep on running the race and struggling to take hold of the prize” (Philippians 3:12, CEV). He was determined to keep going forward even in his weakness. God has not allowed any temptation beyond what we can bear. If we yield to temptation it is because we choose to. If this is our habit we will never enter into the full understanding of God’s grace in our time of weakness.

Are you ignoring or not taking seriously your condition of weakness, giving in to it, and then justifying your actions? If so, do not be deceived. God has not allowed any temptation that he has not provided help to overcome.

*“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it”  
(1 Corinthians 10:13 NIV).*

Some have settled for mediocrity. The cost of moving beyond their temptation appears to be too high so they settle to stay where they are. To refuse to press on unto maturity (due to doubt and disobedience) is a choice to remain in infancy and of need of milk instead of solid food. Let us continue to move toward maturity in Christ.

Bruce states that the mature “have built up in the course of experience a principle or standard of righteousness by which they can pass discriminating judgment on moral situations as they arise.” (F.F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Hebrews, 1964, p.109) They have been trained in righteousness—knowing right from wrong and yielding to what is right. Let this be said of us!

**What is your next step?**