

"Do not despise your strength!"

God, in Tagaytay, Philippines May 1, 2019



The Lord spoke to me during a team meeting at the Filipino International Living Waters Leadership Training and said, "Do not despise your strength." This might sound like a simple concept to most people, but for many of us who have endured childhood sexual abuse, it isn't quite that easy.

It felt like I had to surrender my own strength during the abuse. I knew that if I resisted, I would be hurt. Badly. Instead of fighting the abuse, my heart "went somewhere else" while the rest of me just endured. That created the message that I was a weak coward who simply "let the abuse happen". Since our body parts don't know that the sensations were caused by unwanted abuse, they respond how those body parts were made to respond. This simultaneously creates the sense that we're being betrayed by our own bodies, and plants the lie that we "like" the abuse. Since resisting the abuse would bring more pain, I began to believe that my own strength was dangerous... something to be avoided... something to despise.

When the Lord told me to stop despising my own strength, He began to unfold these dark dynamics of abuse. He also began to unfold the truth about strength. It wasn't weakness to recognize that I would be hurt if I resisted the abuse. It was actually strength to endure the abuse and come out the other side. It takes strength to acknowledge the pain and confusion of abuse, and to bring that pain and confusion to the only one who can truly heal our souls. Jesus endured the torture and abuse of the cross. He suffered unspeakable torment for us. And He can heal us. He can give us the strength to face the truth and speak the truth. Jesus can set us free from the devastating effects of abuse.

As we learn to stand in His strength, there will be times when people who are used to taking advantage of our weakness rise up and try to come against our strength. It is then that we need to lean on Jesus, the true source of our strength, and live the truth of 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. As we experience the reality of God's strength made perfect in our weakness, we learn to stand in Christ. He will give us the strength to persevere through the opposition and gain victory through His power. Rather than being something to despise, our own strength – really, Christ's strength in our weakness – is something to be embraced.

My name is Dan Hitz, and I'm the Executive Director of Reconciliation Ministries. As I share this part of my journey with you, I hope that it gives you encouragement to continue to heal from the pain of your past. If you or someone you love has suffered from abuse, call Reconciliation Ministries at 586.739.5114 to find out how we can help you find healing. We offered licensed professional counseling, prayer ministry, and support groups to help you overcome sexual struggles and the trauma of abuse.