

Men Who Learned to Yield



Strength Through Weakness (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week. All through this week I've been speaking about two kinds of strength: the strength which the world understands and acknowledges, and the strength which comes only from God and only through the cross of Jesus Christ. In the eyes of the world, this second kind of strength is weakness. And yet, it is ultimately destined to triumph and to prevail throughout the entire universe.

Yesterday I sought to answer the question: How can this second kind of strength be released in your life? I suggested that the key word is "yielding." It's released through yielding. And I gave you two vivid pictures from the teaching of Jesus. The first was the picture of denying yourself and taking up your cross, saying no to that ego in you, denying your own will and wishes, and then willingly coming to the place where your own life ends. The cross being the place appointed for you to die.

The second picture was letting the grain of wheat fall into the ground. I explained how that little grain of wheat remains isolated and unfruitful as long as you hold it in your hand. But if you release it and let it go beneath the earth, that husk around rots and opens the way for the new life to come out of it. And that's how it is with our life. Our own life is like a grain that we hold in our hand and it remains isolated and unproductive. If we let it go and die in the earth, then out of it comes a new life, which is a life that God has for us.

Today I'm going to show you two examples of men who learned to yield, and the results that followed from their yielding. Both these men are characters in the Old Testament, but you see this principle of yielding didn't begin with the New Testament; it was simply consummated in the New Testament by the cross of Jesus. But the same principle is true in the lives of all the servants of God throughout the Bible. The men who really found God's purpose for their lives were men who had learned to yield.

The first example I'm going to take is from the life of Abraham. The second is from the life of Jacob. The example from the life of Abraham is found in Genesis 13. At this time his name was still Abram, it had not been changed to Abraham. And he and his nephew Lot were wandering

shepherds in the land of Canaan, the Land of Promise. They had both become extremely rich; they had many flocks and herds and tents and servants. They had become so wealthy that it was not possible for one area of ground to support both of them. So they came to the place where they had to separate from one another. And this is the description of how they separated. Genesis 13, reading verses 5–11:

> "Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. And quarreling arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time. [You see the point of that? The Canaanites and Perizzites were potential enemies and it was very, very dangerous for God's servants to be quarreling between themselves when there were enemies in the land.] So Abram said to Lot, 'Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers.'"

And let me remark incidentally, we Christians have got to learn to say the same to one another, "Let's not have any quarreling between us for we are brothers." Abraham's a marvelous example in that respect. So Abraham goes on to say to Lot:

> "'Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left.' Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company." (NIV)

Now let me pause and comment on that. Abraham was the older man. Lot was his nephew, younger, and in some sense in a junior position. Abraham was the spiritual man; Abraham was the man whom God had called; Abraham was the man to whom the whole inheritance was promised. It would have been easy for him to say, "Well, I'm the senior. I'm the one God has called. The promise is mine. This is what I'm going to take. And then you can look after yourself." But what a different Abraham had. He humbled himself. He was meek. In one word, he "yielded." He said to Lot, "You make the first choice. You take what you want and I'll take what's left over." Isn't that a beautiful example of yielding?

What was the result? Lot went where his soul urged him to go and it was a bad place. He wend toward Sodom. Lot hadn't learned to say no to that soul-life in him as Abraham had.

Then what happened to Abraham? Let me read—this is beautiful—going on in Genesis 13:14–17:

> "The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him..."

Let me mention something. In Hebrew the name "Lot" has a meaning, it means a veil, something that covers the eyes. To me that's typical. It describes Lot. He never got rid of the veil of the carnal, self-seeking mind. Although he was a righteous man, he was carnally a righteous man. He didn't really have the law of the spirit in him. But after Lot had parted from Abraham, then the veil was taken away from Abraham's eyes. Can you see?

> "And the Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, 'Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.'"

See, as long as Lot was with Abraham he couldn't see his inheritance. He was in it, but he couldn't see it. He had to yield. Yielding brought the revelation. Then God said:

> "I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." (NIV)

But you see, Abraham could not see his inheritance until he'd applied the spiritual principle of yielding. What seemed like foolishness—giving away to a younger man who didn't have the same claim—was the key to insight, blessing and to the inheritance. And it's the same with you and me. Until we learn to yield, we have that veil of the carnal mind over our eyes. We may be right in the midst of our inheritance but we can't see it until we've learned to yield.

My second example of a man who learned to yield is Jacob. It's found in the passage that describes Jacob wrestling with God. But we need to go back for a moment and look at the background. Jacob, like Abraham before him, was the man of God's choice. Before Jacob and his twin brother were ever born, God said Jacob is the one that's going to be the ruler

and the leader. But Jacob had to learn the lesson of yielding the hard way. He didn't have the same initial kind of attitude that Abraham apparently had. So Jacob tried in his own strength to get what was his by right from God. First of all, he bought the birthright from his brother Esau for a bowl of soup. That perhaps wasn't exactly dishonest, but it certainly wasn't what you would call brotherly. But he wasn't satisfied with the birthright, he wanted his father's blessing. And to get that, as you remember, he cheated. He pretended to be his brother, Esau. He came in and deceitfully received the blessing and then there was no similar blessing left for his brother Esau. And his name Jacob means a "cheat" or a "supplanter."

But Jacob got nothing by cheating. He immediately became a fugitive. He had to leave the land of his inheritance and he took nothing with him but one staff in his hand. For twenty years he was in exile working for his uncle Laban. Then at the end of twenty years the Lord spoke to him and said, "Now is the time to go back to your inheritance!" So he went back with his wives, his children, his cattle and all that he possessed. He came to a certain place on the border of his inheritance and he sent his wives, his children, his cattle, everything before him and then he was left alone at night. That night a man wrestled with him. Let's read the account.

> "'So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' The man asked him, What is your name?' 'Jacob,' he said, 'Supplanter.' Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with man and have overcome.' Jacob said, 'Please tell me your name.' But he replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, [which means the face of God] saying, 'It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.'"

That was no ordinary man. He was a man, he was an angel and he was God Himself. That was what we call a preincarnate manifestation of the Son of God, the one who was manifested in history as the Lord Jesus Christ. Man, God and the messenger from God to man. Now listen to the conclusion of Jacob's story:

> "The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip." (NIV)

Can you see the truth? When he walked in his own strength he walked out of his inheritance. He lost everything. But when he learned to limp, he walked back again. And that's an application for you and me. As long as we trust in our own strength, our own ability, our own cleverness, we're like Jacob; we'll struggle, we'll strive but we'll not get what God has appointed for us. But when we have a limp, when we no longer walk in our own strength, then the way is open for us to walk back into our inheritance.

Let me sum it up. Abraham yielded to a man; Jacob yielded to God. In each case, however, yielding opened the way for the revelation and fulfillment of God's purpose. And so it is in our lives.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week we'll be studying another challenging theme from God's Word.

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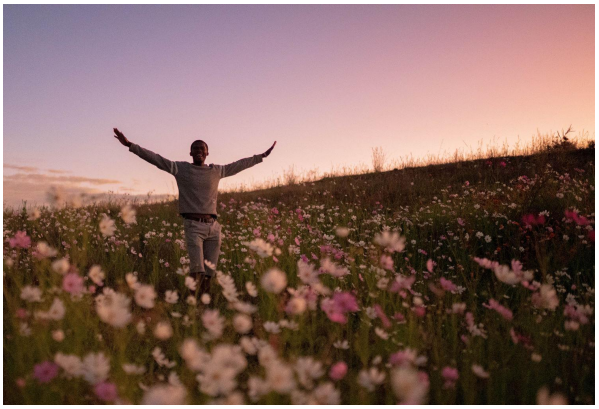

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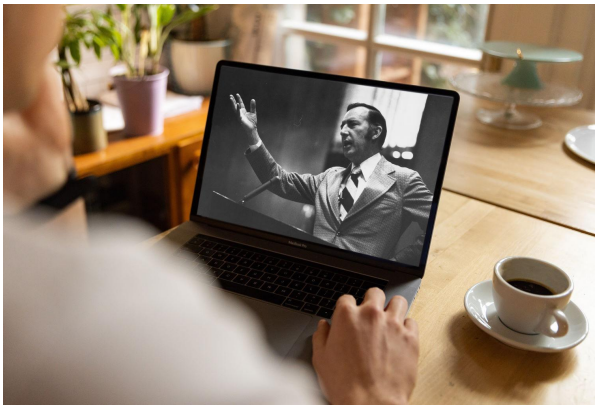

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