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## Posts tagged 'C.S. Lewis'

### HOW TO HAVE A CONTENTED CHRISTMAS.

★★★★★ 1 Vote

Wes Shelnutt

The Christmas season is upon us... it has been since stores starting decorating back in October! [Charles Schultz](#) painted a pretty accurate picture of the [commercialization of Christmas](#) in [A Charlie Brown Christmas](#)— one of my favorites! Near the beginning, Charlie Brown, who's having a predictably blue Christmas, is getting some psychiatric counseling from Lucy who says,

"Incidentally, I know how you feel about all this Christmas business, getting depressed and all that. It happens to me every year. I never get what I really want. I always get a lot of stupid toys, or a bicycle, or clothes, or something like that."

Charlie Brown asks, "What is it you want?" and Lucy's dry reply, "Real estate," *though absolutely hilarious*, is a strong indictment on the way most of us have a tendency to think, whether we'll admit it or not, around this time of year.

All the buying and giving and receiving we do at Christmas time brings a little closer to the surface an underlying discontentment that our culture has sewn into us so deeply, most of us aren't even able to articulate the root of it. We don't usually think it, but we feel a desire for more than we have, and we never stop to consider whether obtaining those things will make us happy or whether they'll just be another step down a maddening path of frustrated unrealizations. The really insane part of it all is that the treatment we apply to our discontentment is to buy more, but in so buying beyond our means, we place greater financial strain on our families, which prevents us from being able to get things later – in other words, we spend beyond our means today, and so our means tomorrow are smaller; so we have even less opportunity in the future to obtain the things we believe will satisfy us. Rather than pursuing a path of greater satisfaction, we're actually walking a narrowing plank over a dangerous ocean.

One of the two books that have most influenced my views on money is a classic called [The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment](#), written by [Jeremiah Burroughs](#) in the early 1600's. In it, [Burroughs](#) presses us to consider the root of our discontentment as well as the source of true contentment. He makes an interesting assertion that we "come to contentment, not so much by way of addition, as by way of subtraction." He says that there is no end to what the world can offer us by way of things to buy or possess; so we'll never be satisfied by adding possessions, because there will always be so much we don't have. Instead, we subtract – we subtract our desires back into line with our reality, or as Burroughs puts it, "[the content man subtracts] from his desires, so as to make his desires and his circumstances even and equal."

Besides subtraction, he goes on to describe the other side of contentment, the addition part, which [C.S. Lewis](#) later delved into head-first in [The Weight of Glory](#), where he wrote:

*"It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."*

GO!

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So, now we're getting somewhere with contentment: it has a lot to do with desires – subtracting desires for things that we can't get our hands on or that wouldn't satisfy us even if we did, and increasing our desire for that which truly satisfies and is offered freely, an offer inaugurated with the birth of Jesus, which is what Christmas was originally all about.

Jeremiah Burroughs said that contentment is an inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit.

Flowing out of Burrough's ideas on contentment, here are a few very practical actions that you can take this holiday season to remain content:

1. Contentment is Inward & Quiet: Remind yourself often of the truth that having more stuff won't get you more happiness. Test yourself; if you're trying to get contentment by means of outward, attention-grabbing, instant-gratification, you won't find it – at least, not the kind that lasts.

2. Contentment is Gracious: Be gracious for what you have. Often, making a written list of your blessings is a terrific way to become content – you'll be surprised how much comes to mind that you have to be thankful for when you begin to list it out on paper.

3. Contentment is a Frame of Spirit: Contentment is immaterial and can't be discovered by material means. Spend more time with your friends, family, and church than you do at the store this season; not only will that help you spend less money (after all, we [Mvelopes](#) users are trying to spend *within* our means this year), you might just find that, as your deeper desires for fellowship and love are satisfied, they grow to overcome those lesser desires for material things that so quickly pass away.

As a closing comment, I'd simply like to remind you, many of whom made [New Year's resolutions](#) back in January to get your spending under control and pursue a path to being debt-free, that spending more than you have saved on Christmas gifts is *precisely* what led to the guilty, remorseful feelings which prompted those resolutions in the first place. If you can't afford to buy something for someone you love, consider that material things won't help them be content, either. Get outside the box with your gift-giving and do something that costs less, but lasts longer. You can do a web search for "low cost Christmas gift ideas" to get the creative juices flowing.

Have a merry (and contented) Christmas!

*Wes Shelnett is the product manager of [Money4Life Coaching](#) for Finicity, the makers of [Mvelopes](#). He and his wife, Liz, live in north Georgia with their two children where he serves on the pastoral staff for Christ Family Church.*

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🕒 March 2014

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## THE LIGHT OF HIS GLORY.

 1 Vote

One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the [house of the LORD](#) all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.

[Psalm 27:4](#)

Recommended Reading

Psalm 73:16-17, 23-28 ( <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2073:16-17,%2023-28&version=NKJV> )

At a meeting of the [Socratic Club](#) in [Oxford, England](#), in 1945, the [Christian apologist C. S. Lewis](#) said, "I believe that the Sun has risen not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else." In his biography of C. S. Lewis, [Alister McGrath](#) explains what Lewis meant: "We can look at the sun itself; or we can look instead at what it illuminates — thus enlarging our intellectual, moral, and aesthetic vision. We see the true, the good, and the beautiful more clearly by being given a lens that brings them into focus."<sup>1</sup>

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The psalmist Asaph had a similar enlightening experience. He was confused and frustrated about the prosperity of evildoers in the world — "Until I went into the sanctuary of [God](#); then I understood their end" (Psalm 73:17). When he went to the temple to worship God, suddenly he saw the answer — the answer was God! Somehow, when we "worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:2), life looks different.

We worship God not only because He is God but because we see everything else more clearly in the light of His glory.

In the light of God, human vision clears.  
James Philip

<sup>1</sup>Alister McGrath, C. S. Lewis: A Life—Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet

Read-Thru-the-Bible  
1 Corinthians 1-4

By David Jeremiah.

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 CATEGORY: GOD'S PLAN.

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## PRAYING FOR JUSTICE? LEARN A LESSON FROM THE PERSISTENT WIDOW.

★★★★★ 1 Vote



(melodi2/rgbstock.com)

The great Christian author [C.S. Lewis](#) once said, “There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second is claimed by [God](#) and counterclaimed by [Satan](#).” In other words, fighting spiritually is vital because of how invaluable God’s promises are—and even the devil knows it.

In [1 Samuel](#) 30 the Bible outlines an amazing battle plan for regaining those things that have been snatched away by the enemy of our souls. After the [Amalekites](#) kidnapped the women and children and raided [Ziklag](#)—the place where [David](#) and the families of his 600 men were living—he prayed, “Shall I pursue this raiding party?” (v. 8, [NIV](#)). Here’s a paraphrase of God’s answer: “Go and seize your stolen promises!” This riveting account of David’s bravery in successfully recapturing the kidnapped families and their stolen property from the Amalekites did not come about by sheer military force. David used a threefold strategy.

First, he *engaged his feelings*. He grieved the loss of his family and property. He even had to work through his emotions regarding the threats his own men made to stone him because their families and property were stolen (v. 6). These wounded warriors thought that killing David would ease their pain. Thankfully David went to God in prayer to find the answer to his emotionally traumatic dilemma.

Second, *David engaged his faith*. When David prayed, “Shall I pursue this raiding party?” he was calling on God’s wisdom to determine whether he should go after his family and property through military pursuit. David believed that God was the captain of the army—a warring God—who would answer in a way that resulted in victory.

Third, David *engaged in a fight*. God’s response to David’s prayer came in the form of words. Yet those words were infused with power that fired David up for the battle. His mind was focused, knowing that God was on His side. And David was on God’s side too. This battle was not only centered on revenge, but it was also fueled with marching orders directly from God. David was doing the [Lord’s](#) work. Any time you pursue God’s promises, you are doing His work. All heaven stands behind your spiritual effort to regain your stolen promises—the gifts God has given you.

Very much like natural fighting, spiritual warfare demands training and strategy.

Even understanding psychological warfare is crucial in gaining the upper hand against your adversary. Similarly a solid understanding of biblical principles is essential to engage successfully in spiritual warfare.

Regardless of your age, gender, ethnicity or national origin, the law of gravity dictates that you will come crashing to the ground at the rate of 32.2 feet per second if you jump off the roof of a building. This law is both constant and nonnegotiable, in the same way there are laws associated with prayer that are constant and nonnegotiable.

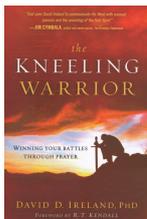
*The laws of prayer can be learned.* And once you have mastered them, you will invariably begin to grow in the power of prayer. You will also find yourself coming alongside discouraged believers to help them discover the reasons their prayers haven't been answered. You will be able to assist them in picking up their helmets, wiping the discouragement from their minds, and rejoining the ranks of the kneeling warriors.

A deficiency and vitality in your prayer life could mean that you've become discouraged. Discouraged believers often retreat to a life of spiritual apathy, but God wants us to make requests because *Hedelights* in answering us. We ought to persistently pursue Him for *all* His promises because this pleases Him. *God gets no glory from unanswered prayers.*

It's important to remember God doesn't say anything He doesn't mean. He is the epitome of integrity and credibility. His Word is His bond. He honors every aspect of His Word. It is absolutely infallible. God's Word is pregnant with power and every other vital ingredient needed to deliver on His promises. Our role is to trust Him when we pray.

In [Luke 18:1](#) Jesus taught His 12 recruits "that they should always pray and not give up." His counsel is followed by a parable of a persistent widow who illustrates the value of a prayer-filled lifestyle. The parable of the persistent widow is a lesson in how we should pray and *never give up*. She emulates what it means to have faith in God in the face of human opposition and a blatant disregard for justice.

Isn't this the perspective our commander in chief, Jesus, taught us to have? Jesus said to His disciples, "They should always pray and not give up" (Luke 18:1). This command to *never give up* embodies the attitude and will a kneeling warrior must possess before he bends his knees in prayer. Prayer starts in your feelings and thoughts about God, His power, His willingness to act, and your willingness to believe that His promises are *absolutely* attainable through prayer.



Adapted from *The Kneeling Warrior* by David D. Ireland, Ph.D., copyright 2013, published by Charisma House. Success in life requires spiritual militancy. This book offers a courageous how-to guide to reclaim God's promises over your life and win the battle against Satan's attacks on your knees. To order your copy [click here](#).

#### PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF 09/30/13

This week thank the Lord that He delights in answering your prayers. Ask Him to help you learn the laws of prayer and develop perseverance and mature faith. Pray that a spirit of repentance and revival would engulf our churches and spread throughout the nation. Pray for more laborers into God's harvest fields. Lift up our leaders and pray that they would seek God's guidance in all their decisions affecting our nation and the world. Lift up those victimized by the terror in [Kenya](#), Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, and our own Navy Yard. Continue to pray for Israel and the persecuted church. Luke 18:1; [1 Thes. 5:17](#).

Source: [CHARISMA MAGAZINE](#)/ SPIRITLED WOMAN.

[DAVID IRELAND](#)

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARE TEMPTED.

★★★★★ 1 Vote



How do you handle temptation?

I'm not talking about the fleeting, seemingly benign thought of sin that may hold initial allure, but is easily dismissed. (Though we should be on guard against these kinds of thoughts, too).

No, I'm talking about that moment when you've savored the juicy morsel and like the taste. You clamp down your jaws and suddenly feel the sharp piercing desire for more and a forceful tug towards deliberate, willful sin. You realize that you've swallowed a hook and the angler is reeling you in. Your better judgment, and God's Word, and the [Holy Spirit](#) are whispering "No." But your appetites and emotions are screaming, "[Yes!](#)"

I have in mind those times when you are like [Peter](#) in the courtyard, your heart frenzied by fear, about to commit an act of cowardice and treachery. Or David on the rooftop, seized by lust's hot desire, teetering on the brink of adultery. Or [Moses](#) at the rock, boiling in anger, poised to open a valve that will erupt into a rebellious torrent of volcanic rage.

Can you still escape temptation when you're in *that* deep?

The great 17th century pastor and theologian, [John Owen](#), though so. In his incisive and insightful book on temptation, Owen provides both analysis and diagnosis for tempted souls, with directions for watching and praying in order to avoid temptation. But, wise soul physician that he was, Owen also offered counsel to the person already in temptation's tenacious grip.

Suppose the soul has been surprised by temptation, and entangled at unawares, so that now it is too late to resist the first entrances of it. What shall such a soul do that it be not plunged into it, and carried away with the power thereof?<sup>[1]</sup>

He counsels four things that I find both helpful and hopeful but will phrase in mostly my own words.

**(1) Pray.**

**Ask the [Lord](#) for help.**

You're about to sink under the waves. The water is to your neck. You're gasping for air, but gulping mouthfuls of water. Your breath is gone. You're about to go under. What do you do? Cry out with Peter, "Lord, save me!" [Jesus](#) will stretch out his hand and catch you ([Matthew 14:30-31](#)).

This is the first and most immediate step. Pray.

Stop and do it now.

**(2) Run to [Jesus](#), who has already conquered temptation in your place.**

Running to [Jesus](#) is, of course, what we do when we pray. But when you are strongly tempted, don't just turn to [Jesus](#) in general. Run to him for specific, tangible help, remembering that he has already conquered temptation in your place.

For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.... For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need ([Hebrews 2:18; 4:15-16](#))

Remember this: Jesus was tempted, not first and foremost as our example, but as our brother, captain, and king. Adam, our first representative, was tempted in paradise and failed. Jesus, the [Second Adam](#) and our final representative, was tempted in the desert and conquered. As our hero and champion, [Christ](#) has already defeated and beheaded Goliath. He has crushed the serpent's head. The battle is already won.

So run, weary Christian. Run to your conquering King!

### ***(3) Expect the Lord to give deliverance.***

This is his promise. "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Expect him to fulfill it.

And keep in mind that the Lord has many ways of delivering you. He may send an affliction or a trial that takes the edge off your appetite for sin and restores your hunger for his Word. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word" (Psalm 119:67).

He may give you sufficient grace to endure the temptation (2 Corinthians 12:8-9; James 1:12). He may rebuke the enemy, so that he flees from you (Zechariah 3:1-2; James 4:7). Or he may revive you with some refreshing comfort from his Spirit and encouragement from his Word.

But be sure of this: the Lord has more ways to deliver than Satan has ways to tempt. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4b, [KJV](#)).

### ***(4) Repair the breach and get back on the right path.***

Finally, after you've found some immediate relief from the Lord, repair the breach and get back on the happy, narrow road of righteousness.

[C. S. Lewis](#) said, "A sum can be put right: but only by going back till you find the error and working it afresh from that point, never by simply *going on*. Evil can be undone, but it cannot 'develop' into good. Time does not heal it."[\[iii\]](#)

It is important, then, to figure out why and how we entered into temptation in the first place. Big sins always follow little sins. *Sins of commission usually follow sins of neglect*. When you have found yourself unusually tempted, follow the trail back. You will probably find carelessness, prayerlessness, and neglect.

Ask the Lord to search you and know your heart, to try you and know your thoughts, to see if there is any grievous way in you and to lead you in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23-34).

But be careful even in your repentance. Don't become obsessed with turning *from* temptation and sin; focus on turning *to* Christ. In the wise words of Jack Miller, "When you turn to Christ, you don't have a repentance apart from Christ you just have Christ. Therefore don't seek repentance or faith as such but seek Christ. When you have Christ you have repentance and faith. Beware of seeking an experience of repentance; just seek an experience of Christ."[\[iii\]](#)

Christ is the one who both preserves the tempted and restores the fallen (Luke 22:21-22; John 21). So, wherever you are in respect to temptation and sin, seek Christ.

## BRIAN HEDGES

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**Brian G. Hedges** is the lead pastor for [Fulkerson Park Baptist Church](#) and the author of [Christ Formed in You: The Power of the Gospel for Personal Change](#) and [Licensed to Kill: A Field Manual for Mortifying Sin](#). Brian and his wife Holly have four children and live in South Bend, Indiana. Brian also blogs at [www.brianghedges.com](http://www.brianghedges.com) and you can follow him on Twitter [@brianghedges](#).

[i] John Owen, *Overcoming Sin and Temptation*, edited by Justin Taylor and Kelly Kopic (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006) p. 207.

[ii] C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 1946, 1973) p. viii.

[iii] John C. Miller, *The Heart of a Servant Leader: Letters from Jack Miller* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004), p. 244.

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📁 CATEGORY: CHRIST LIKE.

🏷️ TAGGED WITH: C.S. LEWIS CHRIST EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS GOD HOLY SPIRIT JESUS JOHN OWEN LORD MOSES SAINT PETER SATAN

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## TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE-EARTH: A CHRISTIAN WORLD.

★★★★★ 1 Vote

### CHURCH HISTORY TIMELINE

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[6000-1 BC](#) [AD 1-300](#) [301-600](#) [601-900](#) [901-1200](#) [1201-1500](#) [1501-1600](#) [1601-1700](#) [1701-1800](#) [1801-1900](#) [1901-2000](#) [2001-Now](#)



John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was reading an old Saxon poem "The [Crist Cynewulf](#)" when a phrase leapt off the page. "Hail [Earendel](#) brightest of angels, over [Middle Earth](#) sent to men." Middle Earth is an ancient expression for our world which lies between Heaven and Hell. For years Ronald had been studying languages, inventing his own and making up stories set in a mythical past. Eventually he combined all this material into a world called Middle Earth. Authors create their work according to their view of the world. Ronald was a [Christian](#) and his books show it. [Christianity](#) appears in the ideas and symbols of his famous trilogy, [The Lord of the Rings](#).

Ronald said, "The gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essential elements of fairy-stories." The essence of the gospel and of fairy-tales is a surprising, hopeful joy in all man's despair and sorrow. Joy is the result, a brief glimpse of intense delight springing from unexpected good news.

When Ronald's good creatures think about good and evil, predestination, history, freewill and mercy, providence, judgment and redemption, they follow their maker's Christian mind. For instance, when an elf says, "But whereas the light perceives the very heart of darkness, its own secret has not been discovered," he echoes the Apostle John who said, "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it." (John 1:5).

Ronald, who lived through both world wars and spent time in the trenches, knew first-hand about light and darkness. His views of light required him to be obedient and he was— to the point of almost losing the girl he loved. He lost both parents at a young age. Father Francis Morgan took over his upbringing. Observing that sixteen-year-old Ronald was becoming too friendly with [Eugene Bratt](#), a nineteen-year-old girl, Father Morgan commanded him to break off the relationship when he turned 21. Ronald obeyed.

Fortunately, Edith forgave him. They married before he went to war. Once, while he was based in Hull, Edith and he were able to spend time together. She danced for him in the woods and this was the inspiration for his [tale of Beren and Luthien](#). He saw himself as Beren, and Edith as Luthien. During the war, he acquired trench fever and had to be sent home to recover.

As is well known, Ronald became a close friend of C. S. Lewis. His wisdom pointed Lewis back to Christianity. The two were founding members of one of history's most famous literary groups: the Inklings.

Ronald had difficulty getting *The Lord of the Rings* published. The publisher expected to lose money on it. Instead, it was such a success that by Ronald's death on this day, September 2, he was moderately wealthy. The book has spawned hundreds of imitations which unfortunately not share its [Christian world](#) view.

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 CATEGORY: HISTORY.

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## BONO: DAVID SANG THE BLUES AND JESUS DID SOME PUNK ROCK.

★★★★★  1 Vote



[Bono](#) exchanged Bible references with [Focus on the Family's](#) president [Jim Daly](#) as they bantered about music, theology and evangelicals' role in [AIDS](#) activism in a recent radio interview. (Lisa Cadman/courtesy of Focus on the Family)

U2 frontman Bono exchanged Bible references and bantered about music,

theology and evangelicals' role in AIDS activism in a recent radio interview with Focus on the Family President Jim Daly.

Growing up in Ireland with a Protestant mother and a Catholic father, Bono imitated [C.S. Lewis](#) in "Mere Christianity," where Lewis argued that [Jesus](#) was a lunatic, liar or Lord.

"When people say 'Good teacher,' 'Prophet,' 'Really nice guy,' ... this is not how Jesus thought of himself," Bono said. "So, you're left with a challenge in that, which is either Jesus was who He said He was or a complete and utter nut case."

"And I believe that Jesus was, you know, the Son of God," Bono said, according to a transcript provided to [Religion News Service](#). "I understand that for some people and we need to ... if I could be so bold, need to be really, really respectful to people who find that ridiculous."

In the interview that was broadcast on June 25, Bono made comparisons between biblical characters and music.

"First of all, David's a musician so I'm gonna like him," Bono said. "What's so powerful about the Psalms are, as well as they're being gospel and songs of praise, they are also the Blues. It's very important for Christians to be honest with God, which often, you know, God is much more interested in who you are than who you want to be."

As Bono praised David's "honest language with God," Daly noted that "sometimes it gets you into hot water with the more orthodox folks, because they see you as edgy, maybe too edgy at times."

It's a criticism that Bono's used to hearing.

"You've gotta be very careful that grace and politeness do not merge into a banality of behavior, where we're just nice, sort of 'death by cupcake,'" Bono said. "Politeness is, you know, is a wonderful thing. Manners are in fact, really important thing. But remember, Jesus didn't have many manners as we now know."

Bono recalled the section in [Luke 9](#) when Jesus told a man not to wait and bury his father but to follow Jesus immediately. Daly responded to Bono's summary, "Seems cold-hearted."

Bono replied, "No, seems punk rock to me. He could see right into that fellow's heart. He knew he wasn't coming and he was just, it was pretense. We've gotta be a bit more cutting edge, not look to the signs of righteousness. Look to the actions."

Bono made an explicit connection between his faith and his work with the [ONE Campaign](#), the humanitarian organization he founded to fight poverty and disease.

"It's very annoying following this person of Christ around, because he's very demanding of your life," he said while chuckling. "You don't have to go to university and do a Ph.D. to understand this stuff. You just go to the person of Christ."

Daly threw a C.S. Lewis quote at Bono: "When a man is getting better, he understands more and more clearly the evil that's left in him. When a man is getting worse, he understands his own badness less and less." Bono jokingly replied, "Yeah, that could turn up on the next U2 album, but I won't give him or you any credit."

In his work on HIV/AIDS, malaria, poverty and other areas, Bono noted the challenge of finding the right issue to take on.

"We have a pastor who said to us, 'Stop asking God to bless what you're doing, Bono.' Which by the way, I constantly do. He said, 'Find out what God is doing, 'cause it's already blessed,'" Bono said. "And when you align yourself with God's purpose as described in the Scriptures, something special happens to your life. You're in alignment."

Most of the 9 million HIV/AIDS victims who were saved are alive because of treatments funded by the U.S., Bono said.

"I am here to thank the American people for that," he said. "And I also want to thank the evangelical community for that, because it wouldn't have happened

without their leadership, because they like myself, pestered George Bush and the administration, who actually deserve praise for starting this out.”

He compared HIV/AIDS to biblical stories of leprosy.

“People don’t understand in that Scripture, the Samaritan was at odds with the ideology of the person he stopped on the road for. This is why we call it The ONE Campaign,” he said. “You and I can have many disagreements on many philosophical, theological things. But on this we know we can agree on.”

Daly said he expects potential blowback from Focus listeners who might see Bono as unorthodox.

“Does he use a bad word here and there? Yeah, probably. Does he have a Guinness every now and then? Yeah, probably,” Daly said. “When you look at it before the throne of God, I think (God will) say, ‘You saved so many children.’”

Daly said his predecessor James Dobson might not have done an interview with Bono, but Dobson did get blowback for having [Dr. Laura Schlessinger](#) on his program because she is Jewish.

“Bono clearly accepts Jesus as Lord. I wasn’t prepared for his quickness in inserting Scripture into the dialogue,” Daly said of the artist who has been married to his wife, [Ali Hewson](#), for decades. “I celebrate with them that they have four children and have been married 30 years. Not everyone in the Christian community can say that.”

Source: [CHARISMA NEWS](#).

[SARAH PULLIAM BAILEY/RNS](#)

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## WEAKNESS IS THE WAY.

★★★★★  1 Vote



In [The House at Pooh Corner](#), the second of [A. A. Milne](#)'s enchanting collections of [Winnie-the-Pooh](#)'s adventures, we meet fussy mother [Kanga](#), who deems it vital that, whatever else he does, her happy-go-lucky, into-everything offspring Roo should regularly take his strengthening medicine. Why? To grow up strong, of course. And what does that mean? Strength is physical, moral, and relational. Strong people can lift heavy objects, stand unflinchingly for what is right against what is wrong, lead and dominate groups, and in any situation, as we say, make a difference. Strong people carry personal weight, which, when provoked, they can effectively throw around. Strong people win admiration for their abilities and respect for their achievements. Kanga wants Roo to be strong, as other parents want their children to be strong, and as commandants and coaches want those they instruct to be strong—strong, that is, in action.

This is the way of the world, and from one standpoint it is God's way too, as the following exhortations show:

· God to Joshua, whom he was installing as Moses's successor: "Be strong

and courageous” ([Josh. 1:6–7, 9](#)), said three times for emphasis.

- Paul to the [Ephesians](#), preparing them for spiritual warfare: “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might” ([Eph. 6:10](#)).

- Paul to Timothy, encouraging him for the pastoral role to which Paul has appointed him: “Be strengthened by the grace that is in [Christ Jesus](#)” ([2 Tim. 2:1](#)).

Clearly, it is proper to aim at being spiritually strong and improper to settle for being anything less.

But now look below the surface. Why were these exhortations necessary?

Answer: to banish, if possible, the sense of weakness that was there before. It is likely that Joshua, listening to God, and Timothy, reading the words of Paul, were feeling panicky deep down. To follow up Moses’s ministry as [Israel](#)’s leader and Paul’s as a church planter were two tremendous tasks; it would be no wonder that neither man felt up to the job. In other words, they felt weak. And there is no doubt that in relation to their assignments they really were weak, and had they not found strength in God, they would never have got through.

For what is weakness? The idea from first to last is of inadequacy. We talk about physical weakness, meaning that there is a lack of vigor and energy and perhaps bodily health so that one cannot manhandle furniture or tackle heavy yard jobs. We talk about intellectual weakness, meaning inability for some forms of brainwork, as for instance [C. S. Lewis](#)’s almost total inability to do math, and my own messiness in that area. We talk about personal weakness, indicating thereby that a person lacks resolution, firmness of character, dignity, and the capacity to command. We talk about a weak position when a person lacks needed resources and cannot move situations forward or influence events as desired. We talk about relational weakness when persons who should be leading and guiding fail to do so—weak parents, weak pastors, and so on. Every day finds us affirming the inadequacy of others at point after point.

A *Peanuts* cartoon from way back when has Lucy asking a glum-looking [Charlie Brown](#) what he is worrying about. Says Charlie, “I feel inferior.” “Oh,” says Lucy, “you shouldn’t worry about that. Lots of people have that feeling.” “What, that they’re inferior?” Charlie asks. “No,” Lucy replies, “that you’re inferior.” As one who loves witty work with words, I plead guilty to finding this exchange delicious. But some, I know, will find it a very weak joke, unfeeling, unfunny, and indeed cruel: vintage Lucy, in fact—no more, no less—mocking Charlie’s gloomy distress and implicitly endorsing his lugubrious self-assessment. It illustrates, however, how easily those who, rightly or wrongly, think themselves strong can rub in and make fester the sense of weakness that others already have. If people who feel weak did not very much dislike the feeling, the joke would not work at all; and if people who at present have no sense of weakness were more careful and restrained in the way they talk of others and to others, the world might be a less painful place.

Often linked with the sense of weakness—sometimes as cause, sometimes as effect—is the feeling of failure. The memory of having fallen short in the past can hang like a black cloud over one’s present purposes and in effect program one to fail again. [Christian faith](#), prompting solid hope and promising present help, should dispel all such fears and expectations, but does not always do so, and the encouragement that one Christian should give to another who needs it is frequently in short supply.

The truth, however, is that in many respects, and certainly in spiritual matters, we are all weak and inadequate, and we need to face it. Sin, which disrupts all relationships, has disabled us all across the board. We need to be aware of our limitations and to let this awareness work in us humility and self-distrust, and a realization of our helplessness on our own. Thus we may learn our need to depend on Christ, our Savior and Lord, at every turn of the road, to practice that dependence as one of the constant habits of our heart, and hereby to discover what Paul discovered before us: “when I am weak, then I am strong” ([2 Cor. 12:10](#)).

## J.I. PACKER, AUTHOR

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