



REFLECTIONS

October 15, 2017 Refreshed from the Archives of January 9, 2011

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12:9

Brokenness

He walked with a swagger, talked with a drawl, and sat tall in the saddle. He was called a man's man. Whether playing the role of a western gunslinger or a wartime hero, John Wayne was an icon for courage, perseverance, and strength. In the movies he represented the epitome of what we believe a man was meant to be—rugged, strong, and self-sufficient.

Samson may have had a similar aura back in his day. Self-confidence gained from his physical strength added a swagger to his walk, long hair established his identity like a Texas drawl, and his esteem in the eyes of fellow countrymen must have elevated him to iconic status. As a celebrated warrior, his stature gave rise to his selection as a judge in the nation Israel. There was no higher position. But unlike John Wayne, Samson was not playing movie roles. His life was real. Then one-day reality struck, his weakness revealed, and life came crashing down around him.

It happened to Bob too. He was a Viet Nam combat veteran who became a successful corporate executive. His business position together with his role as a steadfast family man made him an admired model of success and self-sufficiency. Like Samson, Bob's life was not a movie role. It was real. And one day, confidently living in his own strength, a sudden bolt of reality found him without a job, a wife, or a friend to turn to. The swagger in his walk was taken, his identity tarnished, and he found himself alone, lost, and broken.

The likes of John Wayne are few, but stories like those of Samson and Bob are all too common. Capable people can fall into brokenness even when it seems they have it all. But within brokenness lies one of God's lessons. Self-sufficiency is a myth, not the source of strength.

God uses John Wayne types *after* their self-sufficiency has failed. He called Moses to lead a nation after he became a fugitive for killing an Egyptian. David became a better king after being exposed for adultery and murder. And a rising Pharisee leader named Paul became a missionary after Jesus dropped him to his knees along the Damascus road. But brokenness is only the first step.

Strength comes from submission, and sufficiency from Jesus Christ.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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