



Not Quite Put Together

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But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Do you ever wonder why God allows each of us to have certain quirks and idiosyncrasies? You know, those laughable little oddities that force their way through the chinks in our armor and announce to the world that we are not quite what we make ourselves out to be?

I have reason to contemplate this question on a daily basis, but no more compellingly than on Sundays. Last Sunday provides a sterling example.

As we began our opening song, my guitar was the first instrument to bring us in.

Our instrumentalists use metronomes rather than a shared click track system, because of budgeting constraints. So, with my earbud securely in place, I dutifully followed the metronome click all the way through the intro and first verse. When the drummer joined me on the chorus, I reached up between chord changes and quickly tore the earbud out of my ear so that the metronome wouldn't compete with the beat of the drums.

I know. Decidedly low-tech.

Anyway, following this gutsy sleight of hand, I experienced a puzzling thought progression: "Hmm, for some reason, I'm having trouble keeping tempo with the drummer ... I'm hearing a click that sounds strangely similar to my metronome ... Wait a minute—there seems to be a cord hanging from my ear ... If my earbud is still in my ear, what is it that I just threw down?"

With this last thought, I glanced toward the floor and noticed my now-useless reading glasses tossed unceremoniously a few feet away from me. Laughing to myself, I once again attempted to remove the offending click from my ear, this time successfully. I felt compelled to apologize to God for my ineptitude: "Well, Lord, I'm all You've got up here on the guitar this morning. Sorry!"

Since that incident, several thoughts have occurred to me. First, I'm wondering if the decision to go lower tech with our sound system may not be just a function of finances after all. Maybe it's simply a prudent attempt to limit the obstacles this technologically-challenged guitar player has to face on a Sunday morning. Who knows what kind of havoc I could create if my monitor mix and my music for the day were both in a single iPad in front of me?!

But, other, more significant thoughts have occurred to me, as well, and they center around the Scripture quoted above. This Scripture gives two answers to my question about why God has kept from me the ability to multitask such things as playing an instrument and being technologically aware. It may answer questions you are asking about your own peculiarities, as well.

The first answer is that God allows these fault lines in us so that His power can truly take effect in our lives. Any self-sufficiency that might impede our admission of weakness is shot out of the water each time we encounter our frailties. It's in such moments that we welcome His power, because we know, beyond doubt, that we cannot function apart from it.

The second answer is that when these moments of self-revelation occur, it is so that any tendency to boast about ourselves will be squelched by the unarguable fact that there is nothing to boast about. Our pull toward self-promotion will appear ludicrous in light of His perfection.

It's not as if God looks at us and says, "Well, I guess these people are the best I can find, so I'd better go ahead and use them." He does not see us as second best. Nor is He ruffled by our eccentricities. Rather, He designs us with our distinctive quirks so that He can work through us to show the world that His power has no limits.

So the next time I throw my glasses down on the floor, or trip on a cord, or forget to mute my guitar, I hope to embrace it as an impeccable opportunity to be a living example of what the power of Christ can do in anyone.

Mighty God, when our imperfections stare us in the face and force us to admit that we aren't put together after all, will You help us not take ourselves too seriously? Please show us that these are often the very things You use to show Your power in unmistakable ways. Amen.

GOING DEEPER:

1. Do you have any unique characteristics that feel like disadvantages as you serve in worship ministry?
2. Have you seen Christ's power work through you in spite of such characteristics? If so, how?
3. Are you able to see His power in those you serve alongside in your worship ministry? Might God be leading you to tell one of them what you see?