

Distinguishing Ourselves

When situations become difficult, unfavorable, damaging and even life threatening, sometimes people go by the assurance that God is in control, that there is no reason to do anything because God is the one controlling everything.

Recently, I found myself in situations. I felt so hapless over having no control over my situations that I was furious with Him.

I ran. I hid myself. From God. From everyone. Like [Jonah](#).

Surprise, surprise. God didn't let me run too far or too long. On the 2nd day, while browsing through one of my dance instructors' Instagram, I saw this:

Your strength is made perfect in my weakness.

I recognise this coming from 2 Corinthians 12:9. At that time, I had no idea why this verse stayed in me. Over the next few days, God had me come to the realisation that I do have control over my situations.

The man and his boat

A man was rowing his boat upstream, against the river's strong current. Along the way, he passed larger and more luxurious boats heading downstream. The people on these boats were laughing and drinking, at ease. Sometimes they would look over at the man battling the river's



strong current and mock him.

After some time, the man grew tired and discouraged and put up his oars. Due to his initial momentum, he continued drifting upstream. Then something sad and terrible happened. Even though his boat was pointing upstream, it began drifting downstream.

After some time, he came across another boat that was pointing upstream but drifting with the current. The people there were at ease, laughing and drinking. Since the boat was also pointing upstream, he decided to join them.

Interpretation

The river represents the world, the current as the flow of the world which is under the sway of the evil one. The man in the boat is a fellow believer. By the oars of **God's grace**, the man **has the ability to resist the current** and move upstream to his destiny, advancing in His kingdom.

Sadly, his strength wanes and he grew weary of the fight. Even though he stopped pedaling, he still sees some fruits in his life as he saw his boat continue moving upstream. He erroneously thinks he still leads a successful Christian life. Soon the boat came to a standstill and begins drifting backwards slowly, eventually at the same speed as the current. He now has the appearance of Christianity – knowing the talk, the songs, the mannerisms of the kingdom but in reality, he is conforming to the ways of the world (1 John 2:15-17).

The man spots another boat, a party of 'believers' like him. They too, know the talk, the mannerisms, the songs of the kingdom. They are at ease because they are no longer persecuted and mocked by the non-believing world. They are accepted and sometimes hailed by the

world's top influencers. They no longer press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called heavenward in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14). These drifting believers have little or no resistance to the ways of the world.

This story depicts 3 types of people:

- **The unbeliever** – drifting with the current, oblivious to the reality of wanting.
- **The believer** – pressing on in the fight of faith for the advancement of the kingdom
- **The deceived** – outward Christian appearance but hides his motives of wanting

Which person do I resemble?

Personal reflections

At first, I was angry at God. If He has control over everything, why did He allow adversity to happen? I know I was being petulant. I might as well be asking why God didn't intervene and slap the forbidden fruit out of Adam's hand. God indeed, has the control and authority but He has also given us the freedom to make our own choices.

He has mapped out our lives, but it is up to us to make the right choices in order to walk in the exhilarating path He created for us. Wrong choices can detour us but genuine repentance can right our ships (as mentioned in my previous [article: Take Cover](#) written

Take cover

Met up with an old friend and the topic of the gravest sins one can commit came up in our conversation. Some of the things we discussed stayed in my mind. I am not sure if it is just me but I feel that as the people around us grow older, the lines between right and wrong seem to blur. Along the way, I hear these...

*That's the way I was raised.
Everyone else does it.
He started it.
I was tired.*

in February). We are called to build bridges between heaven and earth. Life on this earth shouldn't rule us for through the power of Christ we become influencers as we rise above adverse circumstances in life, a light in an unenlightened world, guiding the blind. Each of us is called to a different sector of the society but wherever we are located, we should distinguish ourselves in the midst of a dark society.

God's design is to make us a showcase for Jesus's power. Not necessarily the way the market demands - by getting rid of all our weaknesses (circumstances, situations, experiences and wounds) but by giving us strength to endure and even rejoice in tribulation.

Being connected to God, disciplined in staying close to Him, God will distinguish us from the rest of the world like how He did with Joseph (Genesis 37:2-50:26) and Daniel in the Old Testament. The passing of centuries changes the tests of the faithful very little. The path will always be marked by trial, for this is God's way of proving His sufficiency for every circumstance.

All I need is to have a relentless spirit – to be unyielding in faith, hope and obedience to God regardless the adversity. Not only to start well but also be committed in every way to finish well.

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