

Written in prayer

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His strength a new life

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RICHARD KLEIN

Written in Prayer
HIS STRENGTH
NEW LIFE

English Edition
Design: Ilona Klein
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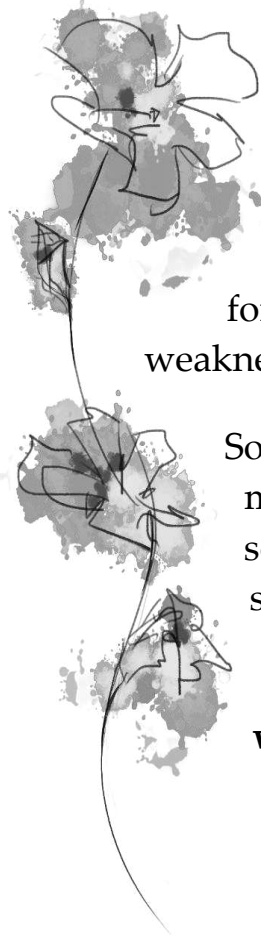
First Edition: 2026
ISBN: 9789465462608

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Printed in the Netherlands



But the Lord answered me
again and again:

“My grace is enough for you,
for my power is made perfect in
weakness.”

So now I am glad to boast about
my weaknesses,
so that the power of Christ can be
seen in me.

**His strength is revealed in
weakness.**

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INTRODUCTION

This book is about a race. Not about speed, but about direction. Not about winning, but about learning how to run.

My life has had moments of strong faith and moments of standing still. Times of speaking and organizing, of running hard and building things. But also times when I was sent back to the beginning. Back to the starting line. Back to the place where you leave your old sweater behind and learn to trust again.

I discovered how easily faith can shift from a relationship into just religion. How quietly the pressure to perform can take the place of surrender. And how lovingly God gives us space to see for ourselves where we end up without Him.

Through it all, one truth remained: I am called as a son. Not to prove myself, but to trust. Not to be first, but to run the race set before me with my eyes fixed on Jesus.

This is not a story of success, but of growth. Of falling and getting back up. Of learning to listen to His voice in the quiet of the heart.

Step by step. In His presence.

Chapter 1

· **Strength Made Visible in Weakness** ·

A Foundation in Dependence



“What were the last words Dad read from the Bible?”

I was often asked that question. After dinner, the Bible was put on the table every day in our home. Almost every evening, my father opened the Bible. With a serious voice, he read long passages. To me, it always seemed to take forever. Especially when it was about family lists. Who cares about that? I probably thought this back then. But there were also evenings when I did listen. Then the stories carried me away. Stories about kings, prophets, and about God stepping into people’s lives. Those stories felt big, impressive, even if I didn’t understand everything. When I was about six years old, I stayed with my grandmother during the week. She was sick and could not be alone very well. She lived in a little town, a neighborhood in Emmen, close to my parents. In the morning my mother picked me up, and after school she brought me back again. My grandmother was a woman of faith. A real Fanny Crosby kind of woman- not blind, but just as devoted and full of trust.

She knew her Bible, she knew her songs, and she lived her faith with a simplicity that touched people deeply.

Fanny Crosby wrote more than 8,000 songs in her lifetime songs that inspired and comforted generations, and that are still sung today in Johannes de Heer hymnbooks and worships songs. My grandmother knew many of them, sang them with conviction, and lived by them.

She often sat behind her piano, her eyes focused on the music, her lips moving with a certainty you could feel: "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine," she often sang. Her faith was simple, but deep. In spite of everything she had been through. She became a widow at a young age, struggling with illness and discomfort. And yet she held on to God. Her life was like a living song, and every note spoke of trust and surrender.

As a child, I often sat next to her, listening to her voice filling the room, full of emotion and certainty. My grandmother, my father's mother, took my mother with her to Het Baken a Baptist Church when she was young. The church where I myself would become a pastor years later. For a long time, I did not know that my grandmother had been there. And my mother only told me much later that it was in that church that she came to a living faith. On that special day, Jan Kits Sr. was speaking. He was already older at that time, but he spoke with a conviction that had lost none of its strength. Jan Kits was an evangelist in those days, closely involved in the founding of the EO "television channel" and strongly connected to the Maranatha movement. Despite his age, he spoke with fire. Not loud or spectacular, but clear and deeply meaningful. His words were simple, but carried weight. It was a direct call to trust your life to Jesus.

My mother was sitting there as a young girl in the room. Listening. There was talk about repentance, about grace, about a personal relationship with God. And there, in that service, she gave her life to the Lord Jesus.

When she told me that years later, it touched me. Not in an overwhelming way, but quietly, deep inside.

The church where my grandmother took my mother.
The church where my mother came to faith.
The church where I would later serve as a pastor.

Sometimes, you discover later that God is drawing lines through your life that you did not plan yourself. Things that had already started before you were even there. Choices of others that later turn out to influence your path. For my grandmother, it was probably simple: she took her daughter-in-law to a meeting. For my mother, it became a life-changing moment. And for me, that same place became, years later, a place of calling and responsibility. My grandmother's faith was not complicated. It was simply there, and that made it powerful. When I was eight years old, my grandmother went to be with the Lord. Her passing left an empty space, but also a legacy of faith. A legacy of songs, of hope, of deep assurance that Jesus loves us, no matter the circumstances. I still often think about her about her songs, about the way she kept trusting, even in the middle of pain. Years later, on a Sunday morning in Zwolle, in the Free Evangelical Church, I felt that legacy again. A guitarist picked up his guitar and started to sing: "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!"

This is my joy, all the time,
In my Savior, Jesus is mine!"

It was as if I heard my grandmother singing. Everything inside me came loose. Tears rolled down my cheeks. It was more than music; it was presence. It was the Father heart of God touching my heart directly. Later, people came up to me. "Your grandmother taught us a song," someone said. "We knew her, we heard her voice, we felt her faith." And suddenly I understood: that faith did not disappear when she died. It is still alive—through songs, through memories, through the Spirit who touches our hearts when we listen. The years went by. My parents often took us to the Service Center in Emmen, a building in the middle of the city that became a familiar place for us. There, my faith grew, slowly and steadily.

When I became a teenager, faith sometimes felt natural. My world was focused on sports; handball was important, and the sports hall often felt like a kind of church. During Bible reading, my thoughts easily wandered, but that did not mean I doubted God. His existence was certain to me. It was something you felt, something you saw happening. For a long time, we went faithfully to church, week after week. As a child and teenager, I saw things happen that I could not always explain. Miracles, answers to prayer, moments of silence where something seemed to open. But to me, it did not feel special or spectacular. It was normal, because I grew up in the middle of it. Praying, reading the Bible, God being present it was just part of life. It was certain, as natural as breathing or the light of the sun. How could He not exist, when you saw things happen that could not be explained in any other way?

It was a quiet, strong faith, a foundation that later, in other moments of my life by the sea, in the streets of Jerusalem, by the Jordan River would become visible again. It carried me, gave me peace and certainty, even when everything around me seemed uncertain. I remember that as a child I had a medical condition. People came to our home to pray. Later, we went to the hospital, and the doctor said, "Remarkable... it is gone." I was young. And because I saw more things like this around me, I thought: this is just how it is. Miracles were not unusual. They were normal.

But then I became a teenager. And slowly, I became less interested. More and more, I spent time playing handball and going to the gym. I became interested in things you can see with your eyes. My father and mother kept pointing upward to God, to His grace, to trust. But my focus started to go in a different direction. I wanted to move forward. To achieve success. First in sports, later in business. Now I ask myself a question that I cannot let go of:

How do people come to a living faith? For me, it should have been so natural. With my background, my upbringing, everything I had seen. You would think there would be a straight line to a life with God, maybe even to a special calling. But that line was not there.

I forgot God. I forgot to live by biblical principles. And if faith can fade so easily for someone like me... what must it be like for people who did not grow up with the Bible at all?

How does a person come to a living faith?
How does God work in people's lives? How does His power become visible?

When I started writing this book, it began there. With that one question. How can you one day say: Yes! He is the One. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Creator of heaven and earth. How do you truly get to know the Lord Jesus? For me, the answer began with a very special event. And with a prayer... in a hospital. A prayer of life and death.

Even before I met Ilona, I worked seven days a week. During the day at a publishing company, in the evenings at a call center, and on weekends in the hospitality industry. Working, earning money, spending money. I lived in a small apartment in Emmen. My life was full, but not truly fulfilled. I actually had no time for anything. Not even for doing laundry. Thankfully, I had loving parents who helped me with that. Yes, even with the laundry.

Ilona and I worked at the same company. We talked sometimes, nothing more. What I did not know at the time: she already had a crush on me. I had no idea at all. I was too busy working, making plans, moving forward. One morning it was raining heavily. A colleague was going to pick me up for work and had already picked up Ilona. It was still early, so I invited them to come in for a cup of coffee first. My mother was there too. And she immediately liked Ilona. "What a nice girl," she said, as if it was nothing special.

Later that week, she again showed how much she liked Ilona. And then it slowly started to dawn on me. Maybe I had a very nice colleague! But yes... how do you handle something like that? How do you let someone know you actually really like her?

I decided to do it in a big way. Or well... in my own way.