

May 2026



GLOBAL TRAINING NETWORK

Our Itinerary



May 10: Floris Baptist Church, Floris, IA

May 14-31: Rwanda Ministry

June 1-9: Cameroon Ministry

July 9-26: Philippines Ministry



The Hidden Art of Defeat and Victory

Think of the most godly person you know. What are their traits? Chances are that somewhere in the mix of godly descriptions you found words like integrity, humility, bravery, or discipline. You may have thought of godly habits like prayer, Bible reading, or sharing the gospel. Usually, we picture such a man or woman as one who stands tall and faces adversity with shoulders squared and head held high. There is a visionary light in their eye. They have great moral strength and fortitude. They are our heroes. The problem is, I seriously doubt that the godliest among us view themselves like that at all.

One key secret of godliness is not what you

would expect. It is the unusual *gratitude for weakness* displayed by the Apostle Paul. "That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. *For when I am weak, then I am strong*" (2 Cor. 12:10 NIV, *italics mine*). Think about that! Paul is saying that the very *essence* of moral strength is weakness.

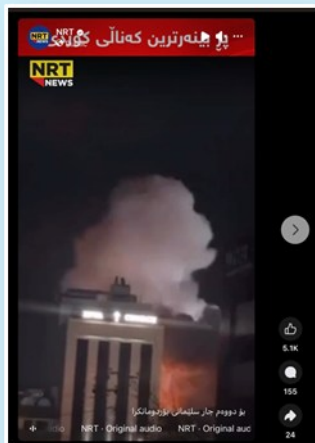
"Paul prized anything that would drive him to greater surrender and dependence upon God."

Insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties are pathways to godliness. It's *NOT* because there is any particular *virtue in suffering*, but because it is too much for us. We are soon overwhelmed. In our weakness we turn to God who alone can provide strength to

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Keeping Up With the Edmondsons

March and April have given me a longer than usual time in the States. The war with Iran closed Middle Eastern airspace and disrupted our plans to minister in Kurdistan and Qatar. Instead, we conducted our two Kurdistan classes and our Doha class online. While this is not nearly as effective as in-person training, it is better than doing nothing. The technology worked well for all classes with hardly a hiccup, and the students were appreciative. I was very disappointed at not being with them during these trying days, but it was not the Lord's will. It apparently would have been exciting. I received a video of an Iranian missile



strike on a building just a few meters from the Hiwa church where our Kurdish students meet for classes. Fortunately the targeted building (a former political headquarters for the Iranian resistance) was now empty. No one was killed or injured. Eileen and I have twice traveled to Arizona this spring to visit partners and speak in six different partner churches. By God's grace, we will speak in another partner church in Iowa in early May and in our two Washington state churches in

September. I am currently preparing for my next ministry trip to Rwanda and Cameroon starting this month. All systems are go for a smooth trip to Africa! I will be



teaching two pastoral skills classes in Rwanda followed by another in Cameroon, returning to the states in early June.

In other news, our annual Matching Fund drive to fully fund all our training events for this year is going very well. Our initial goal was to double a challenge gift of \$7500, making our total goal \$15,000. Later, another generous partner gave an additional \$5000 as a challenge gift, raising our total goal to \$25,000. With one month left to go, you have given a total of \$23,754. We are inches away from our new goal. By God's grace I've no doubt you will do more than I could ask for, in keeping with God's leading. Oh, by the way, we are also happy to report that our 2026 goal of raising \$10,000 to help translate theological text books into the Kurdish language has been exceeded already by God's grace and the generosity of a partner church here in Iowa! So, God continues to provide for the ministry. As for us, we are raring to go!

The Hidden Art of Defeat and Victory *(cont'd)*

meet those trials. Thus, "when I am weak, then I am strong!" That's why Paul actually rejoiced in the difficulties of his life as an apostle. He prized anything that would drive him to greater surrender and dependence upon God. That acknowledgement brought him spiritual and moral strength. He gained spiritual victory while experiencing physical defeat. He gained strength as he faced his own weakness. He conquered via surrender.

It still works. I know. The memory is still painful. I was a backslidden believer, a music major at the University of Northern Iowa. The product of an alcoholic home, by age 19 I was already an apprentice drunk. I studied when I had to and partied when I could. Believing I had lost my 3-year-old Christianity, I worked hard at being a party animal with good grades. But I was miserable...and I didn't know why. I didn't realize I was being pursued by the 'Hound of Heaven,' the Holy Spirit, whom I had thought long gone. Not recognizing conviction of sin for what it was, I just felt sorry for myself. Drinking began to bring out my ugliest traits. I had a belligerent attitude and cruel language. One evening while drunk I chanced to encounter a young woman who lived down the hall from me. I didn't like her and, for no good reason, I unloaded a shovel-full of sheer verbal cruelty on her. She burst into tears and cried out, "What did I ever do to you!?" I watched her turn and run away weeping. Her question echoed in my ears. What HAD she ever done to me? Nothing really, except object to the loudness of my Elton John music after midnight. Who could really blame her for that? I walked back to my room and looked hard at my face in the mirror. I heard my own voice saying out loud, "Bob, you are becoming everything that you hate." I sighed

because I had no idea what to do about it. Feeling sorry for myself, I walked to a nearby bar, listened to a sax soloist, and drank some more.

The next morning the sun was way too bright for my hung-over eyes as I made my way to class. Just outside the classroom building, I encountered a smiling Christian guy who immediately invited me to his Tuesday evening Bible study. I had already declined his invitations about 27 times, but today things were different. I was in trouble. I was screwing up my life, and I didn't know how to stop. Now here was someone offering me a possible alternative. I was not enthusiastic, but, what if...? "OK, I'll go," I croaked, shielding my eyes from the glaring sun. This may have been the most reluctant decision for God since Jonah was coughed up on the beach and said, "OK! OK! I'll go preach to Ninevah!" At the Bible study, I learned that I was still a believer and that God would never be content to leave me in the path of sin. The facilitator laughed when he said, "A believer trying to live like an unbeliever will be more miserable than when he WAS an unbeliever!" It was true!! I made my decision that night to become a serious Christ follower. This was a *victory* that came through *utter defeat*. This conquest came through surrender. This unfamiliar strength filled me when I was at the end of myself with only weakness to offer.

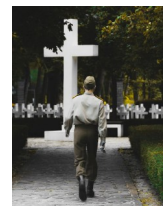
There have been many turning points in the nearly half-century since those events. I am not as godly a man as I could be, but I have found again and again that Paul's prescription always works. The pathway to victory is paved with surrender. I am strongest when I am weakest. I am most victorious when I surrender to God. I conquer when I confess defeat. This is the hidden art of defeat... and victory. ∞

"The pathway to victory is paved with surrender."



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Our Praises & Prayer Requests



- Praise God for fruitful online training of students in Iraq and Qatar.
- Praise God for good visits to many of our partner churches in February and April.
- Praise God that our 2026 Matching Fund stands at 23,754.
- Please pray for good time management, balancing many demands.
- Please pray for continued good health as all the travel can be demanding.
- Please pray for my upcoming trip to Rwanda and Cameroon.

Ministry Partnership

Your financial partnership is essential as we carry out our God given ministry. Please follow the instructions below or on the enclosed response card (US mail version).

"Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account... And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:17, 19)

You may give online at:

gtn.org/edmondson

Under "Ministry Designation" select "Bob and Eileen Edmondson (435)," or "Edmondson Matching Gift (43502)" (type in "Matching" and that selection will appear), or "Books for Kurdistan (43503)."



Support also accepted at:

Global Training Network
 PO Box 6507
 Peoria, AZ 85385

Please include a note indicating that your gift is preferred for the Edmondsons #435, or "Edmondson Matching Gift #43502," or "Books for Kurdistan #43503."

Please call GTN at 623-217-3867 if you need any assistance.

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