



| Sunday, December 16

## Find Your Strength Within

*God will help you overflow with hope in him through the Holy Spirit's power within you.*

*Romans 15:13*

“Perhaps you should look elsewhere.” I heard those words numerous times during a series of medical school interviews, and I was growing weary. With only one more interview remaining, the pressure of failure was mounting. The backup plan had been graduate research in microbiology, but I didn’t want that. I wanted to be a doctor. After failing to demonstrate what made me unique from all the other applicants, I was starting to lose hope.

Prior to the last interview I went home to the family farm to see my parents, seeking encouraging words. While helping my father string a barbed wire through the woods, he commented, “Well... I bet none of those city kids could build a fence in the buckthorn like you.”

Unfortunately, when I met my interviewer in her cluttered office at the university, I still felt unprepared. The MD/PhD asked the same questions they all did, and I answered her with the same well-polished answers that I am sure everyone else had. Finally, she sprang the dreaded question that ended every interview. “So, what makes you different than all the others?”

Out of frustration, and facetiously, I proclaimed, “I’ve picked more rocks and fixed more fences than all of your other applicants.” There. I said it. I sealed my fate with that poor response. I went with the only thing I knew for certain—my background set me apart. The strengths I needed to overcome obstacles, like a good work ethic, commonsense, and an ability to build rapport, were put there long before, by my parents and my Creator.

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Roughly twenty years later I was summoned to the ICU to see a Franciscan Sister who had taken a turn for the worse. We had grown to know one another very well over the years but now her time was running short. As I held her hand, she described growing up on the farm. She, too, had moved on to touch others in a positive way, offering hope to those in need. Nearing the end of our time together she asked if I would pray with her. I invite you to join me as I share with you what she said.

*“Dear Lord, continue to bless us with the strengths that you place within us, so that we may overcome the obstacles we face as we bring your healing ministry to others.”*

- Mark Moe