



***Stronger: How Hard Times
Reveal God's Greatest Power***

Clayton King

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God's Unexpected Plan to Make Us *Stronger*

Over the course of twelve years, Clayton King performed nine funerals for family members—including his mother, father and two grandparents. Repeatedly he found himself on his knees, crying out to God in pain and questioning. Yet he was surprised to discover that God was using each painful experience to teach and mold him. In *Stronger: How Hard Times Reveal God's Greatest Power*, King shares his intensely personal struggles with suffering, weakness and insecurity to show how difficult times can become the source of our greatest power.

Drawing from his own story as well as biblical examples from Job, Paul and more, King offers a truly liberating understanding of weakness and suffering—not as God's punishment, but as his pruning. With rawness and honesty, King covers topics including:

- Sharing our stories of overcoming to bring hope to others
- Letting God turn our messes into messages
- Worshipping in weakness as a way to find strength

Revealing the God who is a companion in our most difficult seasons, King shows us that when we are in Christ our times of testing can become our strongest testimony. Readers struggling to make sense of this broken world or their own seemingly hopeless situation will find hope for a brighter future and purpose in the imperfect present.



Clayton King is founder and president of Clayton King Ministries and Crossroads Missions and Summer Camps, teaching pastor at NewSpring Church and professor of evangelism at Anderson University. The author of over a dozen books, King regularly speaks to tens of thousands of people all over the globe. He and his wife, Sharie, have two sons and live in South Carolina.

Baker Books has a vision for building up the body of Christ through books that are relevant, intelligent and engaging. We publish titles for lay Christians on topics such as discipleship, apologetics, spirituality, relationships, marriage, parenting and the intersection of Christianity and culture. We also publish books and ministry resources for pastors and church leaders, concentrating on topics such as preaching, worship, pastoral ministries, counseling, biblical reference and leadership.

Endorsements for *Stronger*

"This book is more than a page-turner. It's a game-changer. It's courageous. It's bold. It's vulnerable and funny and redemptive. It's a revolutionary way to see suffering, which Jesus modeled two thousand years ago. You will learn that no one is exempt from difficulty. We don't get a pass when it comes to pain. But we can worship God in our weakness because pain has a way of clearing out the clutter in our lives. It burns off the excess and allows us to see what really matters after all: the people we love, the message we carry, and the God we worship."

–From the foreword by **Mark Batterson**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Circle Maker* and *The Grave Robber*

"What a rare and beautiful gift it is for a man to fully open his broken heart. My friend Clayton does just that in this book. He helped me see God isn't breaking me but actually making me. You will gain such needed perspective and comfort from these pages."

–**Lysa TerKeurst**, president, Proverbs 31 Ministries; *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Best Yes*

"Clayton is one of the most gifted gospel communicators I've ever known--one of my preaching heroes. But this book is not a message, it is the revelation of his soul. Clayton is a man who has walked through fire, a fire God used to forge him into an instrument of grace. This book will not inspire you. It will transform you."

–**J. D. Greear**, PhD, author of *Jesus, Continued...Why the Spirit Inside You Is Better than Jesus Beside You* and *Gospel: Recovering the Power That Made Christianity Revolutionary*

"I've known Clayton since we were teenagers. He's not only one of the greatest communicators I've ever heard speak but also one of the best friends I've ever had. His transparency is disarming and refreshing, something the church desperately needs from its leaders. In *Stronger*, he speaks with authority because he's lived through tragedy and loss, and he speaks with tenderness because his experience has helped him relate to all of us who have known pain, doubt, and fear. Clayton shows us how to overcome and find victory through vulnerability. I love this book. You will too."

–**Perry Noble**, senior pastor, NewSpring Church, South Carolina

"Clayton's ability to see God as 'stronger' no matter what personal circumstances weigh against him is one of the characteristics I've admired about him through all the years I've known him. I saw it the first moment I heard him speak and I see it in him today through his support as a personal friend. What you will discover in this book will help you walk through whatever challenges are thrown your way. Read this book and then get a second copy for a friend."

–**Steven Furtick**; lead pastor, Elevation Church; *New York Times* bestselling author of *Crash the Chatterbox*, *Greater* and *Sun Stand Still*

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Selected Excerpts from *Stronger*

The Goal (Pages 52-53)

“It’s imperative that you understand the goal here. I don’t want you to be confused. The goal is *not* to be weak. Weakness is a result of being a fallen, sinful human being in a broken world. The goal is also *not* to pray for more hard times in your life. You’ve probably learned by now that you don’t have to pray for hard times to come. They will come regardless of who you are or where you live. Weakness is simply a way to get to your destination. Hard times are a vehicle to get you to your goal.

The goal is to be stronger. Stronger in your faith. Stronger in your reliance on Jesus. Stronger as a mom, a dad, a witness, a disciple. Stronger in your submission to the lordship of Christ. *The goal is to be stronger. Weakness is God’s way of getting you there.* When this revelation becomes your reality, there is nothing you can’t endure by God’s grace.”

Faith and Fear (Pages 90-91)

“...Fear must be present for faith to exist at all. Fear is the thing that calls faith out of us. The obstacle that’s too big for us, the situation we can’t fix, the sickness we can’t cure—these bring fear to the surface. But if we look behind those fears, we will find that faith is hot on their heels. Every fear is an opportunity to have faith in God’s power. Faith comes before the miracle. Proof comes after the miracle. So I pray for faith, then I wait for proof.

Fear is actually a kind of faith; it’s faith in the wrong thing, the bad thing, the worst thing. We succumb to fear when we forget that God is still there with us, in us, and for us.

Faith does not mean the absence of fear. Faith means moving forward in the face of fear. It’s owning our fear and forging ahead into an uncertain outcome. It’s refusing to feed our fears and facing them instead. God brings peace in the moment of panic as if out of nowhere, perhaps from a dark and quiet corner of our hearts that we haven’t heard from in a while. But right there, just in time, when we need it most, while the sky is falling and the bills keep coming and dark clouds keep gathering, peace comes. Faith wins out.”

Regret (Page 127)

“It’s hard to live with our regrets. They are a source of discouragement. They can punch us square in the gut and knock the breath right out of us. Our regrets make us feel weak. So what do we do with them? Where do we put them? Can they be redeemed for anything good or useful? Yes! Our regrets don’t have to be utterly useless. God can redeem them by using them to change us and teach us valuable lessons for the future. He allows us to share them with others as a way of helping them avoid the same mistakes we’ve made. Our regrets become signposts pointing to God’s grace.”

From Position to Posture (Page 191)

“It’s not your *position* in life that makes you strong. It’s your *posture* before God. When we embrace hard times and admit that we are powerless to change them, we leverage that weakness as it drives us to our knees before a powerful God who loves us and can help us. Tapping into his strength is what makes us stronger. Our strength has to be exhausted before we will reach for his in desperation. Getting low, humbling ourselves before God, is actually an act of worship. It’s a posture of humility in the presence of God’s great power that prepares us for the hard times we face in this life.”

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Suggested Interview Questions for Clayton King, Author of *Stronger*

1. In your first chapter about brokenness, you explain that there were several moments in your life when you found clarity about your brokenness. Do you have any advice for those who find themselves in the place of realizing their weakness? In what ways can they embrace weakness?
2. In what ways does God use humility?
3. You say on page 65 that “The wind and the waves that capsize us in our storms may be the same power that carries us safely to shore.” Tell us about that.
4. Why do you think not knowing God’s plan can feel so frightening? What are some ways that we can learn to accept not knowing and put our trust in God?
5. Do you have any encouragement for Christians who struggle to feel God’s presence?
6. What is the “upside-down” strength you describe? How can readers apply it to their lives?
7. How has God used the regret in your life for his purpose?
8. On page 139 you say, “There’s no future in the past, but there is grace when we press on toward what lies ahead.” How does this truth help those struggling with regret?
9. In our society we often think of vulnerability as a negative thing. What would you say to that?
10. You talk on page 167 about how “weakness is the doorway to understanding, and understanding is the doorway to compassion and ministry.” Why is that middle step, understanding, so important? How can readers who are experiencing hard times find understanding?
11. How does hardship help our worship? Can we worship authentically if we’re struggling with God?
12. The end of your book is hopeful; your last chapter is titled “Glory.” In what way is that a fitting end to a book about finding God’s strength through hard times?

For an interview with Clayton King, contact Brianna DeWitt at bdewitt@bakerbooks.com or 616.676.9185x395.

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