

There is a great series of television commercials now for Holiday Inn Express. The idea of the ad campaign is that you get such a great rest at this particular hotel that you feel like you can do anything, even brain surgery. So the commercials present someone who exudes confidence in a crisis situation and saves the day. One of the best one shows a guy from a tourist group who calmly directs the shut-down of a nuclear reactor which is about to melt down. But my favorite is where a life-threatening contagious disease is kept from accidental spread by a man who claims that he isn't a "scientist" (he uses the finger quotes), but he did spend the night at Holiday Inn Express. Think about the power of being able to feel so confident that you can deal with such a situation. This is the opposite of what I normally feel when I am given a challenge like that.

In spite of my significant ego, I still have a tremendous feeling of inadequacy when faced with complex situations. You may feel the same way. Suppose that we come upon an accident and need to be able to give serious medical aid in a life-or-death situation. Some of us have been trained for first aid, but we are not capable of emergency surgery. Imagine the feeling of helplessness that strikes you when you realize that you just cannot deal with this problem. It is felt most strongly at the moment when critical action is needed.

There are many things that I feel inadequate to handle, such as handling priceless art or properly cleaving a raw diamond. On a higher level, I feel inadequate to deal properly with people; to comfort those torn apart by suffering, or to convince them of the glory of God. There are so many people that I just can't seem to help. Even holding a newborn baby tends to make me think that I am not prepared to hold a fragile life in my hands, or to touch a precious soul. I guess that none of us have felt really equipped for the responsibility of being a mother or a father.

I really feel my inadequacy when it comes to teaching people about the gospel. The word of God is too precious to be trusted to my hands. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly **handles** the word of truth." The King James expressed this 'handling' as 'rightly dividing,' just as you might describe the skill of a great surgeon. But I am so far from God's level of Goodness that I can't give a very good presentation of Him. I can't help people to understand even the limited vision that I do have. It bothers me that I can't really encourage those who need it. I might as well be trying to wrestle the universe to make it do what I want it to.

When man is inadequate, though, we find that God makes the difference. Moses, for instance, tried to get out of going to Egypt, but God showed him in a miraculous way that he had been equipped for the job (Exodus 3). Isaiah felt ruined and unclean, but God's messenger touched his mouth with a live coal from the altar of God and he went forth able to proclaim God's message (Isaiah 6:1-7). God has promised to equip us for our work, for Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly **equipped** for every good work." He provides the armor to make us adequate to the task (Ephesians 6:10-17). Though we are weak, we can do everything through the strength that God shares with us.

We have to remember that there is a difference between being inadequate and unworthy. Unworthy means that we are not good enough in comparison to God; but inadequate means that we cannot solve a particular problem, we cannot find a solution that meets our needs. God is the only way for us to get past this. The only solution that I have found is to express my inadequacy on my knees and ask the Lord to see me through. Our adequacy, just as with our worth, is from God. Whatever we do for His cause, it is God that gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:7)