

When You Have Nothing Left to Give

It was my very first summer to mow the lawn, about a decade ago. When I was growing up that was a boy job, so I had never even been asked to mow. But the grass was kicking up Matt's allergies and asthma so badly that I suggested I give it a go. Come to find out, I loved mowing.

During that summer, our friend's mower died, so Joey walked over and borrowed our mower for several weeks in a row, until they could get a new one.

One day we got to talking about the mower, and I told him I was amazed at the gas mileage that thing got. I had been mowing for weeks and hadn't had to fill it.

He looked me long in the eye and smiled.

Come to find out, he had been fueling the mower every time he borrowed it, and I had no clue.

The mower and I —we're simple machines.

So anyhow ...

That brings me to right now, and it is 3:03 a.m. For two days I have been asking the Lord what he would have me to write to you. For two days I have come and stood in front of the computer, with the cursor blinking on the white page. Then I've walked away with no idea what to say.

I want to serve you, to encourage you in the Lord, because this is what God has shaped me to do. But often I get nothin'.

Sometimes there are things I would like to say, but they involve other people or situations that aren't appropriate for me to broadcast to the world. Sometimes I'm just too tired to

have a coherent thought. Sometimes I'm struggling with something internally and am learning new things in the Lord that I can't even put into words yet.

All I know is that the page on the computer is empty, but I still want to serve you. I want so badly to give you some words that will help you know who God is in your day.

Don't you know this feeling of want?

You know what I'm talking about—those days when you need to give to your kids, but you feel empty. Or your spouse needs you to help him, but you feel like you can barely manage your own stuff. Or the demands at work are sucking the life out of you.

I don't call what I'm experiencing writer's block. I call it dependency, and dependency is what you're facing, too.

So I pray and I wait. I don't try to muster anything. **I don't reach for my own boot straps.** I pray, and I wait for the Lord to give me what I need. Like a 3:00 a.m. blog post idea.

Paul says it like this:

*"I can do everything through him who gives me strength"
(Philippians 4:13, NIV).*

So our prayer needs to be the inverse of what Paul is saying, and this is a prayer I say regularly:

Lord, I can't do anything unless you give me what I need.

I call it The Great I Can't.

I can't write. I can't be a mom. I can't be a wife. I can't be a teacher. I can't be care about the people in my church. I

can't do these things day after day in my own strength.

I run out of gas.

So the trick, you see, is to keep loaning the mower to someone who will fill the tank.