

Weak Things

By Maryssa Dennis

(Based on a true story)

"If they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27).

Parker liked lots of things—music, art, rocks with cool shapes. But his favorite thing was riding his dirt bike. He loved racing over hills on his bike. He wanted to be the best racer ever!

But no matter how hard he tried, he never was. As he zoomed over dirt hills and across winding trails, it looked like he wouldn't be best in this race either.

Parker crossed the finish line and braked to a stop, kicking up a cloud of dust behind him. He heard his family cheering as he squinted up at the scoreboard. Parker felt his stomach clench. *Eighth place.*

"You did great!" Dad said, clapping Parker on the back.

"No, I didn't!" Parker dumped his helmet on the ground.

"Last time you got 10th," Mom



STRONGER

said. "You're doing better every time."

"It doesn't matter!" Parker almost shouted. "I'll never get anywhere close to winning." He threw his gloves on the ground too.

"Cumulus," Mom said.

Cumulus was the code word that helped Parker calm down. When Mom or Dad said that word, Parker closed his eyes, pictured a big puffy cloud, and did the breathing exercises Mom and Dad had taught him.

Usually it worked. Parker didn't really want to think of clouds right now. But he closed his eyes anyway. He breathed in for five seconds. He held it for five seconds. And then he breathed out for five seconds. He did it over and over until he felt a little better.

When they got home, Parker tried to calm himself down by playing the piano. He sat down at the piano and started playing a song he knew. He liked

it when he could play it perfectly.

But today he messed up at the end. Parker slammed his fist onto the keys. The jarring notes rang in his ears.

Mom came in from the other room. "What's wrong?"

"I can't do *anything* right,"

Parker said.

Mom sat down on the piano bench and put her arm around Parker's shoulders. "I'm sorry you feel so



frustrated today." She picked up the Book of Mormon on top of the piano. "One of my favorite scriptures is Ether 12:27. Can we read it together?"

She turned to the right page and handed it to Parker.

"My grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me," Parker read. "For if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them."

Mom smiled. "I like that promise. It reminds me that Jesus Christ can help me with my weaknesses."

Parker nodded. He liked that promise too.

"You know, you are good at so many things," Mom said. "But something you struggle with is being patient with yourself. It takes time to learn and grow and get better. And it's OK to not be the best at something." Mom gave Parker a hug. That made him feel a little better.

"Heavenly Father and Jesus can help you be patient with yourself," Mom said. "With piano and dirt bike."

The next day, Parker tried playing a new song. The first part was easy, but he kept messing up in the middle. He was almost ready to throw his music book on the floor, but he stopped. He pictured fluffy white clouds and breathed slowly in and out.

It's OK, Parker told himself. He could be patient and kind to himself. He looked at the picture of Jesus on the piano and thought of the promise his mom had read. *I'm getting a little better every day.* ●

The author lives in Utah, USA.