

THE WORD OF GOD WHICH EFFECTUALLY WORKETH ALSO IN YOU THAT BELIEVE

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In the course of our daily lives we avail ourselves of and benefit from a number of different power sources. Most of them we just take for granted, but they are truly awe-inspiring to think about. For example, we plug appliances and tools into electrical outlets and avail ourselves of tremendous electrical power, which in our homes is only a small fraction of the mega-watts of power which is sent out from the generating plant. The engines within our vehicles are capable of producing great mechanical power from the chemical energy which is resident within, and is released from, the fuels which they employ. We transport ourselves repeatedly in vehicles capable of generating great amounts of horsepower, and astonishing amounts of thrust. Industries, along with the military, employ various explosive compounds and devices, which upon implementation release staggering quantities of power. Some of which, like nuclear weapons, actually go beyond our ability to both truly measure and comprehend the power which is involved in their use. On the other end of the spectrum is the power which is resident within the foods which we eat. Though not released in massive quantities, or with explosive force, the energy contained in our foods is none the less impressive, and the physical power we gain from it exceedingly important. If we add to these few examples the naturally occurring demonstrations of power and energy such as solar energy, the winds, the power of hurricanes and tornadoes, lightening, earthquakes, volcanoes, the tides and the like, it is obvious that power sources, along with expenditures of power and consumption of it, are all around us. Power in many forms is both an important and necessary ingredient in our lives.

For us as Christians, though, there is a power source available to us which far surpasses all others. It is the power of God.* It is the personal working of God's power in our lives, and the wondrous results which the expenditure of that power produces. From the moment we trusted in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ for our salvation, we became beneficiaries of God's power to us. For at that moment God by His own power and grace forgave us our sins; justified us; reconciled us unto Himself; sanctified us in Christ; made us members of His "new creation"; worked the exceeding greatness of His power towards us by "delivering us from the power of darkness, and translating us into the kingdom of His dear Son"; seated us together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and more. We have already been the beneficiaries of God's tremendous power to us. However, the power of God doesn't stop there. Rather, there is a Divine power source available to us which God has designed for us to be partakers of on an ongoing basis, and from which we are to derive the strengthening of our inner man in our daily lives.

That power source is the word of God to us. It is the excellency of the power of God's word operating in our souls. As Hebrews 4:12 says,...

"The word of God is quick and powerful..."

God's word, because it is *God's* word, is "powerful," with the capacity not only to bring things into existence and uphold all things, but also to work within our inner man and effectually work there to produce proper motivation, encouragement, comfort, joy, along with stability and peace in the face of the most trying circumstances. God's word is able to function within us, as the verse says,...

"to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

As such, God's word is to be an effective worker within our inner man. It has the power to do things with, and within, our soul and spirit. Paul understood this and spoke about it to us in I Thessalonians 2:13.

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH EFFECTUALLY WORKETH ALSO IN YOU THAT BELIEVE."

God has designed for His word, in the hands of His Spirit within us, to be the source of His power to us in the details of our lives. He has designed for His word to 'effectually work within us'; to energize us and provide us with His power within in our inner man.

Unfortunately, though, the issue of God's power in the Christian's life is a much misconstrued and abused subject today. Because of the overwhelming failure among Christians to "rightly divide the word of truth" and, hence, recognize the difference between God's program and dealings with Israel and His program and dealings with us today in this present dispensation of Gentile grace, the doctrine of the power of God to us today has suffered. In accordance with this, the general expectation and desire among Christians is for God's power to operate in their lives with the same kind of overt manifestations of His power with which He commonly intervened in the lives of His people as recorded in the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the book of Acts. God's power is looked for in the form of outward signs, visible wonders, physical deliverance, and the direct interposing of God's hand between His people and their problems, just as He so often displayed His power in times past. But God's program and dealings with us today in this dispensation of Gentile grace are greatly different from His "time past" dealings with Israel. And this is especially so in the area of the personal working of God's power in the lives of His people.

With Israel God particularly covenanted to deal with them in a manner which was both visible and overtly evident. He covenanted with them to make His power known to them and through them by means of physical, outward, visible manifestations. They, therefore, were taught to look for and expect 'their signs' as evidence of God's power working among them, whether favourably or unfavourably. God also dealt with them as "children" under the Law and not as "sons," and as such employed both the "rudiments of the world" with them, along with protectively intervening in the midst of their problems in view of their being as "children." As such God's power to them naturally took the forms of outward signs, physical deliverance, protective hedging, and the like. God's program with Israel called for such things and God's power to them worked according to His

program with them.

But God's program with us today is different. In not being treated as "children" but as "sons" God's dominant sphere of operation and expenditure of His power with us is not outwardly and in our circumstances, but rather it is in our inner man. And by providing inner fortification for us which enables us to endure what ever comes our way, the excellency of the power of God's word to stabilize us within in "this present evil world" is not only manifested unto us, but it is also put on display to some others upon whom God desires to make an impact, that is Satan and his angels.

With this being the case with us in this present dispensation it is little wonder that we find the apostle Paul repeatedly referring to the working of God's power *within us*, and that "power of God" being His word. Note this in the following examples:

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, THAT THE EXCELLENCY OF THE POWER MAY BE OF GOD, AND NOT OF US.... We having the same SPIRIT OF FAITH, ACCORDING AS IT IS WRITTEN, I BELIEVED, AND THEREFORE HAVE I SPOKEN; WE ALSO BELIEVE, AND THEREFORE SPEAK;....For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, YET THE INWARD MAN IS RENEWED DAY BY DAY." (II Cor. 4:7-18)

"FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT." (II Cor. 5:7)

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE: FOR MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (II Cor. 12:7-9)

"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be STRENGTHENED WITH MIGHT BY HIS SPIRIT IN THE INNER MAN;....Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US,..." (Eph. 3:13-21)

"For it is God WHICH WORKETH IN YOU both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13)

"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." (Col. 1:11)

The excellency of the power of God's word effectually working within us to stabilize and endure is just that, it is excellent. It, therefore, for the most part *excels* over physical deliverance in this present dispensation when it comes to what is valuable to God, better for us, and what glorifies God the most today. This is something which God teaches us to realize in our epistles, and it is something which is vitally important for us to understand and appreciate. Deliverance from adversity, sufferings, and problems by the power of God is not what God's program with us calls for. Instead, the capacity to endure whatever befalls us through the excellency of the power of God's word working within us is what

God's program with us calls for. Hence, we find Paul teaching us that...

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO BEAR IT." (I Corinthians 10:13)

"And whether we be afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, WHICH IS EFFECTUAL IN THE ENDURING OF THE SAME SUFFERINGS WHICH WE ALSO SUFFER: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation." (II Corinthians 1:6)

This operation of the 'excellency of the power of God's word' is not only a great dispensational change from how things were in "times past" in God's program with Israel, but it is also contrary to the desires of our flesh. In addition it is also in direct contrast to the various "winds of doctrine" and seducing activities of Satan's policy of evil against the body of Christ.

The power of God in the lives of His people is neither absent nor deficient in this dispensation. On the contrary, Paul exhorts us to avail ourselves of the power of God in the details of our lives. For example,...

"Finally, my brethren, BE STRONG IN THE LORD, AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Ephesians 6:10-11)

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel ACCORDING TO THE POWER OF GOD;..." (II Timothy 1:8)

"Thou therefore, my son, BE STRONG IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS." (II Timothy 2:1)

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENETH ME." (Philippians 4:11-13)

Once again, the power of God isn't lacking in this dispensation of grace. By no means is this the case. However, God is expending His power today in accordance with the new and different program He is administering with us. Today the 'excellency of the power of God' operates within the believer; through "*the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*"

*This is not to say that the previously mentioned power sources are not of God. They, of course, are. God created this world, and, hence, created the sources of energy resident in our foods and in the fuels which we use, etc. But Man, on the whole, in his ungodliness does not acknowledge this. And though he "uses this world," because of his sinfulness and increasing ungodliness, man all the more "abuses this world." He has even taken many of the power sources and incorporated them into his 'inventions of evil things.' It is in view of this world's denial of "the power of God" in creation and its continuance, and the fact that we Christians readily acknowledge it, that I use the expression to refer to that further and very personal working of God's power , His power in the lives of His people.