

Power Filled Living

Our culture loves to throw around the word power. We cheer power plays in hockey, consume Power Bars for extra energy, install power windows in our vehicles, and watch Power Rangers on TV. Weary business executives even learn to take power naps. But how many of us would choose the word power to describe our spiritual lives? Many of us know in our heads that in Christ we have tremendous spiritual power. Fewer of us, however, claim to experience that power in our daily lives. What do we need to know—and do—for Christ's power to become tangible and visible in our lives?

Power to Know: One aspect of spiritual power becomes evident in the earliest moments of our life of faith: the power—the ability—to believe in and understand God. Paul called the gospel of Christ *"the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes"* (Romans 1:16). It was God's power at work on your behalf that brought you to belief in Him.

Power to Understand: For those who believe in Christ through God's power, Paul prays for power to understand. He longed, for example, for the early believers to have power *"to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love"* (Ephesians 3). Paul knew that the only way we can possibly grasp such truths, humanly speaking, is by the power God implants within our souls through His Holy Spirit. Don't breeze past this aspect of spiritual power because it seems obvious or familiar. Without God's power, you could neither believe in Him nor understand His character and His ways. His power in you is a gift beyond price!

Power to Walk: The power from God that leads us into relationship with Him also enables us to live the life that pleases and glorifies Him. The true Christian life is impossible under our own strength and effort. Without divine power we will resemble the Pharisees of Jesus' day: We will have religion and doctrine but we will not have power. We will have great human accomplishments, human discipline, and human determination, but we will have nothing of spiritual significance.

With God's power alive and active in me, I can persevere and be patient. I can stand strong against demonic forces. I can give witness of salvation. I can follow God's voice in faith. We can live out all the

promises stated in God's Word, whether we're employees, mothers, soldiers, or students. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit guarantees we have the power to live consistent lives worthy of our calling.

Unleashing God's Power: *"The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power"* (1 Cor. 4:20). How do we move from the world of talking about power into the world of walking with power. To unleash God's power, we first must evaluate our hearts. We need to pray with the psalmist, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"* (Psalm 139). When we examine our hearts, we may shudder at what we find there. But if we long to experience God's power in our lives, we must face our brokenness and depravity: *"A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise"* (Psalm 51). Naturally, we don't like to be weak; but until we are, we won't be spiritually powerful. The Apostle Paul discovered this: *"For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Corinthians 12). Present yourself before God—just you and Him—and see yourself exactly as He sees you—broken, then redeemed. This deep awareness destroys power-sapping selfish ambitions and condescending attitudes, no matter how subtle they may be. Will you dare? Few really do. But it is worth it.

God's power is also released through our obedience. To experience the power of God in our lives, we must listen to God. We must consciously commit our daily actions to Him, and we must obey -- whether it makes sense or not, whether alongside others or alone. The path to experiencing the power that is ours in Christ is not complicated. It is a path of brokenness and obedience. Not complicated, but because of our humanness, also not easy. If you are longing for more of Christ's power in your life, you will need to ask and answer some tough questions: Are you willing to let God drive you to the depths of your soul where you will stand face to face with your broken, helpless self? Are you willing for your heart to be emptied of your own ways, your own agendas, and your own goals? Are you willing to stand solo before Holy Almighty God for evaluation? Are you willing to obey at all costs? If so, then you will be filled with the fullness of Jesus Christ so that God's power can flow through and in you.