

Working Within The Power Of God

When God has not given you something to do, everything you do is done in your own power, not in God's power. Today we are talking about working within God's power.

Working Without a Net

Have you ever been to the circus? One of the things I love watching at the circus is the high wire acts. The acrobats up in the air on the trapeze or walking the tight rope. I can't personally imagine what it is like being 40 or 50 feet up in the air flipping around and doing acrobatic maneuvers. Often there is a safety net rigged below the performers. This way if they lose their grip or their balance and fall, the safety net catches them.

Every once in a while you will come across a performer who is working without a net. They are so sure of themselves and their own ability, that they do not have a safety net rigged in case they fall. This is very dangerous and it only takes one wrong move or slip and they fall receiving serious injuries and sometimes death. It is just as dangerous for Christians to function without the power of God.

Receiving the Power of God

We know God has called us to be His witnesses in this world. Jesus told us all to preach the gospel and to go and make disciples. This is something all Christians around the world share. There are many ways to do these things. The key is for each person to do it the way God has equipped and empowered them to do it.

The Holy Spirit will empower you with all you need to accomplish what God has specifically ordained you to do. Let's read Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8

(8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

That is the final thing Jesus said to the disciples before he ascended into Heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father.

Many Christians love this verse. It is one of my favorites. The problem is it is often taken without what comes before it. We like to focus on the power of God, not what leads up to it. Let's back up and read Acts 1:4-5.

Acts 1:4-5

(4) On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. (5) For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus first tells the disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the gift from God the Father. He is telling them to wait for the empowerment that comes from God through the Holy Spirit. It is important to see all three members of the Trinity working in concert here. The Father is the source of the power which is delivered through the Holy Spirit when he comes upon the believer. This power is used to fulfill the call



and commission the Son has placed on all believers in the specific way the Father created them for. It is a beautiful well-orchestrated plan that only works when we work with it.

Waiting on God

We are pretty entrepreneurial. In other words, we can easily see a need or an opportunity, examine it, and come up with a plan to meet that need or enjoy the fruit of an opportunity. We are so good at it that sometimes we jump into action without consulting God.

In the passage, we just read Jesus told the disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait. During that time waiting time they gathered together and waited and prayed. If you read on into Acts chapter 2 you will read that there were about 120 disciples all assembled in an upper room that had been praying for days waiting for the gift of the Father. When the gift came, the Holy Spirit rushed in like the wind and baptized each one giving them the ability to preach the gospel in foreign languages they had never spoken before.

Imagine if they had gone out on their own to all the people assembled in Jerusalem for Pentecost and started preaching the gospel just in Hebrew or Aramaic. Many of those there for the festival would have not understood and would have not heard the good news of Jesus Christ. This is what happens when we take matters into our own hands. God's plan is not carried out, ours is. God's results are not achieved. It is dangerous and foolhardy to work without the calling, power, and timing of God.

Abraham and Sarah

Abraham and Sarah took matters into their own hands. We start to read the story of Abraham in Genesis chapter 12. In chapter 15 of Genesis, we read God's promise to Abraham. Let's read Genesis 15:1-6.

Genesis 15:1-6

(1) After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." (2) But Abram said, "Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" (3) And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." (4) Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." (5) He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (6) Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

At this point Abraham and his wife Sarah were old and they had no children. This meant all of Abraham's wealth would fall to one of his servants when he died. This troubled Abraham greatly. God promised an heir to Abraham. More than that, God promised that Abraham would be the father of more offspring than could be counted. This brought peace to Abraham and Sarah.

In chapter 16 of Genesis, we read that Abraham and Sarah decide to take matters into their own hands. They think God may have forgotten his promise to Abraham. They set out with their own plan under their own power to create an acceptable heir for Abraham. Sarah tells Abraham to have a child with her Egyptian maidservant. This was a common practice in these times. He did and she gave birth to a son. This son was named Ishmael and is the root of modern Islam.



God in his own timing did cause Sarah's womb to open and she became pregnant with Isaac, fulfilling God's promise in God's timing for Abraham and Sarah. Isaac is the root of Israel. Enmity ensued between Sarah and Hagar, Ishmael's mother. There has been enmity between Israel and Islam ever since as well.

Our Own Efforts Are Meaningless

This is a classic example of not waiting for God's timing. When we work outside of God's plan, under our own power, or in our own timing, we are destined to fail. We may see short-lived successes, but for the most part, our efforts will be wasted.

King Solomon put this to the test. He is the wisest man to ever walk the earth, aside from Jesus. Solomon, David's son, wrote the majority of the proverbs assembled in the book of Proverbs. He also tried everything and studied everything. After reading all 12 chapters of Ecclesiastes you will find Solomon tried everything under his own power and plans and it was all meaningless. His conclusion is found in Ecclesiastes 12:13.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

(13) Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind.

Conclusion

The only way we will truly succeed in life is to do what Jesus has asked and commissioned us to do with the tools, abilities, and power provided through the Holy Spirit, in the timing that the Father has set in motion. Do the right thing at the right time, the right way. This is the recipe or formula for a successful life. We must work within the power of God, not our own.

