



WEEK THREE

Expect to Be Empowered

VIDEO NOTES

Key thought: The potential of your _____, is determined by the strength of your _____.

We tend to look at situations in life and determine how much power or ability we can give to it.

But what did David do?

1. He _____, the situation.

“... Who is this uncircumcised Philistine [Goliath] that he should defy the armies of the living God?” 1 Samuel 17:26 NIV

David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” 1 Samuel 17:32 NIV

2. He had to fight against _____.

Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth.” 1 Samuel 17:33 NIV

3. He remembered God’s _____.

“Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.” ... 1 Samuel 17:36-37 NIV

How do we plug into God’s power? We choose to rely on God as our power source.

“... Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.”

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 NIV

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Day One // God’s Great Power for You

“Remember: even the smallest drop of God’s strength is more than enough to cover our frailties, our shortcomings, and the places where we deem ourselves weak.”

—Lysa TerKeurst

SEEK GOD

“No one who hurries into the presence of God is content to remain for long. Those who hurry in, hurry out.” —Calvin Miller

I have learned so much about what I have in you, Father. I ask you to take me further into your truth than you already have. Thank you for these precious moments of seeking you. Amen.

OBTAIN TRUTH

Let’s look back at Ephesians 1:18-21 and remember what awesome hope the Apostle Paul prayed we would be able to understand.

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may **know the hope** to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people [We will look at this in week four], **and his incomparably great power** for us who believe. ...*

Ephesians 1:18-19 NIV (emphasis added)

Okay. I want to stop here for emphasis.

This power is for whom?

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Just making sure you caught that. Let’s go on to the next verse:

... That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. Ephesians 1:19-21 NIV

And how does Paul describe this power?

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Dunamis is the Greek word for power, and it basically means “power, might, or strength.” Our modern dictionaries define power as “the ability to act or cause a reaction.” Words we use for power could be: authority, ability, strength, might, force, or energy.

Let’s consider what Paul declares to us in 1 Corinthians 4:20 NIV: *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.*

What power does the Kingdom of God possess?

How would you describe God’s power?

What object could you use as a symbol of God’s power?

It’s pretty difficult, right?

The following Scriptures, with emphasis added, give us many examples of how God’s kingdom power is manifested in our lives. I pray they’ll encourage you.

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.
John 17:11 NIV

In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. Acts 19:20 NIV

... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. Acts 10:38 NIV

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation of everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.
Romans 1:16 NIV

For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.
Romans 1:20 NIV

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 2 Peter 1:3 NIV

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7 NLT

Whether this information is new to you or a reminder, what’s important is that we learn to live from the reality of it! I suppose the question to be answered is, “How?” How do we live our day-to-day lives in this supernatural power? This is the focus for this week’s study, and today we will consider the source of our power.

How do you live empowered by the Holy Spirit who lives in you?

The way is simple, but it’s not always easy: **Admit your weakness while depending on His strength.** Recall what Jesus said to Paul:

... “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” ...
2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV

I love the way author Lee Strobel said, “We can’t be filled with the power of God until we let go of the pretense that we can get by on our own.”

Let’s revisit Isaiah 40. Have you ever seen a journal, coffee mug, or framed print on the wall with a bald eagle and the well-known Isaiah 40:28-31 passage on it? You may even own one! This biblical text is famous for a reason. Favorite Scriptures are kind of like that. And there’s truth to be examined or rediscovered in Isaiah 40 today. As you read, underline God’s unique qualities and circle what it says God gives to us.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:28-31 ESV

How is our strength renewed?

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In week one, I asked you what waiting on God might look like for you. Do you remember your answer? If so, write it out again.

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Why do you think waiting on God brings us strength?

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Now, let's consider this well-known verse:

"... Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts."
Zechariah 4:6 ESV

The Hebrew word for "power" in Isaiah's text means "ability." But the Hebrew word for "might" is *chayil*, meaning "strength, efficiency, wealth, or an army." I think *this* is the verse I should personally quote every day! My wealth of knowledge is limited, and my memory is forever forgetting to remind me of this fact. We all have pretty good ideas about how to muscle through a problem. We all tend to try to get by without seeking the Holy Spirit's direction or help. Could there be anything as dumb as that? I think not.

If you and I are going to live by God's power, we're going to have to rely on the Holy Spirit's ability to infuse our limited efforts with supernatural, powerful results. The Apostle Paul explains his life's mission this way in Colossians: "For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he so powerfully works within me." (Colossians 1:29 ESV)

Paul also wrote the great message in Philippians 4:13 (NKJV): "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

I want you to notice a few words in these texts. In the Colossians verse, *how* did Paul say he labored?

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And what are the first three words Paul writes in the Philippians text?

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The Greek word for "struggling" is the word *agónizomai*, which means to contend for a prize, like in an athletic feat or warfare. This shows me two lessons about God's power in us: first, the empowering work of the Holy Spirit in Paul—and in us—involves us! We have actions to take. Secondly, we should give our best and trust God with the results.

The most obvious personal example I can give you right now is writing *The Hope* Bible study. I am absolutely honored to wrestle with what to include in each day's lessons. This study will not write itself. Someone has to do the work, but I am completely trusting that the Holy Spirit is guiding my thoughts and helping me know how to best lay out His truth and heart for you. It's quite daunting, but *I can* do all things *through Christ* who strengthens me. And, sweet sister, so can you.

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

You are empowered by the Holy Spirit! You are weak, but He is strong.

Where do you feel weak, incapable, alone, or defeated?

What are you saying, “I can’t” about?

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You may be weak, but the truth is, you are *not* powerless. Proclaim this truth aloud with confidence: “I have the strength of Christ.” It’s time to unplug from the limited socket-of-self and plug into the mighty power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you!

Are you living life plugged into God’s strength? Check any of the areas that you tend to take on without waiting on God’s help:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Your marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> Your job | <input type="checkbox"/> Serving at church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Your scheduling | <input type="checkbox"/> Your parenting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Don’t let appearances fool you. You may have a ministry, job, or relationship that’s outwardly impressive and even has some good results. But if it’s become self-gratifying or self-willed instead God-glorifying and Spirit-led, what may have begun as a Spirit-empowered work desperately needs an overhaul of the heart.

If you checked one or more of those boxes, I encourage you to write out a short prayer statement of what changes you need to make here. Be clear and specific:

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REACH OUT

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NIV

Take a deep breath now and allow the encouragement, hope, and strength of God’s Spirit to overflow in you. Going through the motions of life with hurried busyness and unintentional reactions is *not* how Christ calls us to live. Now, as you set this study book down, I pray you will be carried along in His presence and that every word and action you take will come from the overflow of His life in you.



Day Two // Empowered by the Holy Spirit

SEEK GOD

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 2 Peter 1:3 NIV

Pursue God in prayer with your heart confident in the hope you have. Savor the wonder of His fellowship with you.

OBTAIN TRUTH

The Holy Trinity, which is Almighty God being three parts of one, has beautifully, powerfully, and lovingly made us in His image to intimately know and love Him. God, our Holy Father, is the great “I Am” who also became one of us—Immanuel, God with us—in human form as the Son of God. When the Son, Jesus, gloriously returned to the right hand of the throne of His Father, He provided us with the most profound treasure you and I have in Christ—the Holy Spirit. That’s “God With Us” on a whole new level!

This amazing truth never gets old to me. How could it? The Holy Spirit is now involved in my daily, moment-by-moment experiences and is always helping me whether I realize it or not! God’s life-giving presence and power lives in me and in you, sister in Christ. You may want to pause and dwell on this truth.

There’s much to cover, so let’s dive into the Scriptures and read the empowering qualities of the Holy Spirit we can rely on. Read 2 Corinthians 4:6-11, printed here for you.

For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. 2 Corinthians 4:6-11 NIV

Who is the light shining in our hearts?

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What two ways is the “light” described?

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What are the jars of clay?

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“Christ in us,” as the Holy Spirit in our little, fragile, earth-soiled self is the most empowering and glorious treasure. Yes, we house the Holy One, the one and only Creator of all things. That, my friends, is the ultimate treasure!

In light of this reality, I want you to have a fresh view of what our Savior Jesus had to say about the Holy Spirit in John 14. As you read, underline the names Jesus calls the Holy Spirit.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. John 14:16-17 NIV

“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ...” John 14:25-26 NIV

In John 14, Jesus also says the Holy Spirit will adopt us when He says: “I will not leave you as orphans.” He also assures us the Spirit will bring us relational peace (see John 14 verses 18 and 27).

Keep underlining the names and functions Jesus gives us for the Holy Spirit as you read through John 16:7-15:

But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate [Counselor] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because

the prince of this world now stands condemned. I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.” John 16:7-15 NIV

“Counselor” in Greek is the word *parakletos*. It’s a beautiful word that depicts the act of coming alongside someone. *Parakletos* can be translated into English as counselor, helper, advocate, intercessor, and comforter. Jesus also refers to the Holy Spirit as being like currents of living water.

“... Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” John 7:38 NIV

Write down a few words or thoughts that come to your mind about “rivers of living water.”

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My mind immediately fixated on the word “rivers.” Water currents can be scary powerful. But moving water is not only a strong force but also a cleanser and a transporter. Abundant life is found in this flow of living water. This is the great and living hope we have—the Holy Spirit is always life-giving.

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

I don't know about you, but I constantly need help, comfort, counsel, and someone standing up for me. Rocky Balboa, the fictional boxer who was always striving for a champion's title, needed and had someone in his corner. Mickey, his coach, gave Rocky training in the gym and wise advice for his personal life. He was more than a great coach; he was a true friend. Imagine if Rocky never trusted and followed his coach's advice. He never would have become a champion fighter. It wouldn't matter how strong or how dedicated he was to his sport; his potential would have been severely limited.

You and I have a true and faithful friend, coach, and so much more in the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Are you following His training plan?

What are some ways you can see the Holy Spirit's power at work in your own life? Circle any that apply and write out the circumstances:

Counselor: _____.

Teacher: _____.

Conviction of sin: _____.

Helper: _____.

Guidance: _____.

Advocate: _____.

What specific way do you need the Spirit's power to help you today?

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Be sure to pray now and often regarding this need.

REACH OUT

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ... Ephesians 3:20 NIV

The Spirit of God is able to do more in and through us than we could ask or imagine. If you believe it, it's time to expect it and live boldly. Who do you know who needs a little or a lot of loving today?

Take a step of faith and go the extra mile for them. Do something beyond your norm of a generous, thoughtful, supportive, and loving act. Remember, God's ability to do immeasurably more will be working through you!



Day Three // Empowered Through Prayer

“We are fearful. God’s presence gives courage. We are alienated. His love draws us near. We are doubtful. His promises give us hope.” —Paul David Tripp

SEEK GOD

Wait quietly before the Father in prayer today. Wait in hope. Expect His help, protection, and love. May your heart rejoice because you can trust in who He is. Don’t rush. Take as much time as you need. After all, what’s a Bible study for if not to grow closer to the Author?

We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you. Psalms 33:20-22 NIV

OBTAIN TRUTH

We have been encouraged through the truth that God did not leave us helpless but gave us the empowering support of the Holy Spirit. Now, we will examine the awesome and powerful privilege we’ve been given through prayer.

We’re going to broadly cruise through a lot of subject matter today. My prayer is that you will be strengthened and encouraged by the following Scriptures and that your prayers will be filled with greater hope, faith, and passion.

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24 NIV

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 1 John 5:14 NIV

What are the qualifications for our prayers to be answered according to these verses?

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Answered prayers are absolutely the best, right?! Yet, we’ve probably all experienced times when we’ve seemed to pray with all the faith in the world, but God didn’t answer in the way we asked Him to.

What are we missing? Well, perhaps our faith was actually lacking, but more than likely, it had more to do with the ultimate purposes of God. God explains it this way in Isaiah: *“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* Isaiah 55:9 NIV

Ephesians 1:11 beautifully comforts us with the promise that our God works out everything to conform with the purpose of his will. And Romans 8:28 tells us that, as believers, God is working all things for our good.

So, what does this show us about prayer? We should pray! Jesus gave us some amazing promises.

According to the promises we read, circle each true statement:

- A.** We should pray in faith.
- B.** The name of Jesus has power.
- C.** Answered prayers glorify God.
- D.** God wants us to pray.
- E.** God’s path looks much different than ours.
- F.** God is able to turn ashes to something good and desirable.

Let's turn to the book of James and see what he can teach us about prayer. Grab your pen and underline each statement about prayer.

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. James 5:13-18 ESV

According to James 5, what all are we instructed to do in prayer?

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In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. Romans 8:26-27 NIV

According to Romans 8:26-27, what does the Holy Spirit do for us when we don't know what to pray?

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I love the word intercede. It's so practical and rooted in helpfulness. To intercede is to make a plea on behalf of another; it's to step in as an advocate. The Holy Spirit is our great advocate!

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. 1 John 5:14-15 NIV

I encourage you to read biographies of great Christian men and women of faith. Learning from their faithful lives and commitment to prayer will inspire you always to go to God in prayer about every situation. Here's just one of many examples I could share with you:

After World War II and during the height of the Cold War, Communist countries were keeping tight control on their borders and were opposed to the spread of Christianity.

But God had called Brother Andrew, founder of Open Doors International, the world's largest outreach organization for persecuted Christians in high-risk places, to help strengthen Christians behind what was known as the "Iron Curtain." Here's a small glimpse of his story:

"When I pulled up to the checkpoint on the other side of the Danube, I said to myself, 'Well, I'm in luck. Only half a dozen cars. This Romanian border crossing should go swiftly.'

But when it took forty minutes to inspect the first car, I began to worry. ... Literally everything that family was carrying had to be taken out and spread on the ground.

Every car in line was put through the same routine. The fourth inspection lasted well over an hour. The guards took the driver inside and kept him there while they removed hubcaps, took his engine apart, and removed seats.

'Dear Lord,' I said, as at last there was just one car ahead of me, 'what am I going to do? Any serious inspection will show these Romanian Bibles right away.'

'Lord,' I went on, 'I know that no amount of cleverness on my part can get me through this border search. Dare I ask for a miracle? Let me take some of the Bibles out and leave them in the open where they will be seen. Then, Lord, I cannot possibly be depending on my own strategies, can I? I will be depending utterly upon You.'

While the last car was going through its chilling inspection, I managed to take several Bibles from their hiding places and pile them on the seat beside me.

It was my turn. I put the little VW in low gear, inched up to the officer standing at the left side of the road, handed him my papers, and started to get out. But his knee was against the door, holding it closed. He looked at my photograph in the passport, scribbled something down, shoved the papers back under my nose, and abruptly waved me on.

Surely thirty seconds had not passed. I started the engine and inched forward. Was I supposed to pull over, out of the way where the car could be taken apart? I coasted forward, my foot poised above the brake. Nothing happened. I looked out the rear mirror. The guard was waving the next car to a stop, indicating to the driver that he had to get out. I drove a few more yards. The guard was having the driver behind me open the hood of his car. And then I was too far away to doubt that indeed I had made it through that incredible checkpoint in the space of thirty seconds.

My heart was racing. Not with the excitement of the crossing, but with the excitement of having caught such a spectacular glimpse of God at work!”

Taken from *Brother Andrew’s Story* at www.opendoorsusa.org and in his inspiring book, *God’s Smuggler*.

As seen in Brother Andrew’s example, power-filled prayers are given with childlike, relational, faith-in-action *dependence* on the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the kind of praying I desire to live out!

Let’s look at the hope we have through prayer when we are covered—completely saturated, body, soul, and spirit—in the Holy Spirit.

As you read the following passage of Scripture, underline the instructions.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. Ephesians 6:10-18 NIV

You and I have a powerful advantage over the scheming, evil forces in this sin-fallen world! Through Christ, we have unlimited access to the Lord’s mighty power.

Your prayers are the catalyst to living a faith-filled life. Metaphorically called the Armor of God, this is how to protect ourselves and our souls. And I believe it’s this protection that enables us to pray with precision, persistence, passion, and power.

Where are you weak and vulnerable in your armor?

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

What a hope we have through prayer! We are not left powerless. Our God personally hears our every 911 and SOS call. I hope you already know and experience prayer as your mighty resource and privilege.

But the vital question before you is this: are you praying knowing that your prayers are truly heard and will make a profound difference in you and in the world?

Examine your prayers. Do you pray daily? Are they faith-filled or empty? Do they come from a heart of passion and sincerity? Do you persist in your requests for years at a time?

It's time to take the gift of prayer more seriously and understand its power. Our failure to pray should be our great concern. It's not that our every prayer of faith will instantly—or even eventually—be answered. Not at all. Our prayers aren't supernatural formulas that result in an on-demand answer.

I'm reading a book right now called *When God Doesn't Answer Our Prayers* by Jerry Sittser that I highly recommend on this subject. I'm learning that receiving what we desperately want or need isn't the chief goal of our prayers. Prayer is not about getting our desired results; it's about going on a trust journey with our good and sovereign Father. Sittser said it this way, "We will begin to see God as worthy of our greatest love and affection, as if a *relationship* with God were the goal of our prayers and not merely the acquisition of things we want from God." Lovely sister in Christ, isn't this the greatest reason to pray more? To know Him is eternal life (see John 17:3)!

Here's a little assignment for fun: based on what you understand about prayer from our study of Scripture today, I'd like you write your own personalized prayer quote(s). You may want to reference a Bible verse that supports your quote. Below are some of my favorite quotes for your encouragement and inspiration:

"Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man is powerful on his knees." —Corrie ten Boom

"Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still." —E.M Bounds

"If you want that splendid power in prayer, you must remain in loving, living, lasting, conscious, practical, abiding union with the Lord Jesus Christ." —C. H. Spurgeon

"Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work." —Oswald Chambers

My Prayer Quote(s):

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Based on all you've learned, complete the following statement.

I have hope through prayer because:

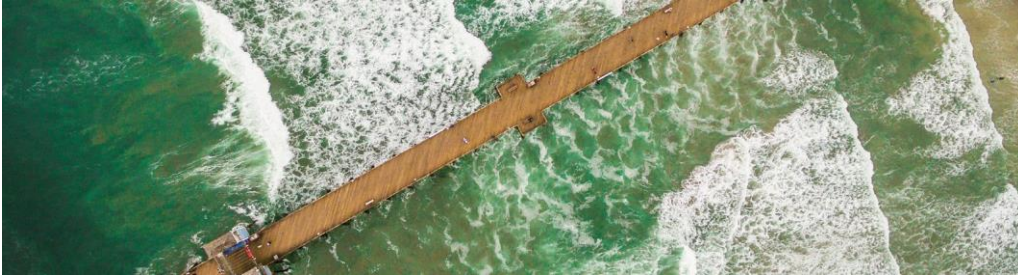
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REACH OUT

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Romans 12:11-12 NIV

What are you asking God to do for your neighbors, family members, enemies, co-workers, and friends? Do you have a prayer list? If so, does it need to be updated? And are you praying regularly for those people?

I'm thinking right now would be a great time to call boldly on Him who sits on Heaven's throne. It may seem awkward at first, but you can expect the Holy Spirit to support you—even when you don't know what to pray. (See Romans 8:26-27).



Day Four // Empowered Through Faith

SEEK GOD

What does your heart look like? Is it peaceful and calm, anxious and unsettled, or agitated and hurting? Whatever the state of your heart, you can draw near to the Savior of your soul. Focus all your attention on Him while you write out seven things you're thankful for.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

OBTAIN TRUTH

We've been given the gift of faith (see Ephesians 2:8). This is great news because faith and hope go hand in hand. In fact, they are so closely connected that we often get them confused.

If you recall, hope is having a *confident expectation* for something good in the future. Faith is a *confident belief* that compels a hope-filled action. Faith is living out of a certainty that what you're expecting in hope will one day be realized. So basically, your hope springs out of your active faith. I believe (faith), therefore I expect (hope). I expect because I believe. Even simpler: Faith is filled with hope! My prayer for today's study is simple. I pray God's Word will give you a strong faith that continually grows.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 ESV

"It is no longer I who live, but Christ ..."

What powerful words written by the Apostle Paul! Fill in the missing words of his next statement: The life I now live in the flesh I live _____, _____, in the Son of God.

Scripture clearly shows us many ways our faith empowers us. As you read through just a few passages (printed here for you), underline each benefit that comes through faith. Then, write them out in the margins.

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

Acts 3:16 NIV

[Jesus giving Paul his assignment:] “... *I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified [purified] by faith in me. ...*”

Acts 26:17-18 NIV

It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

Romans 4:13 NIV

... it is by faith you stand firm.

2 Corinthians 1:24 NIV

... for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

1 John 5:4 NIV

Hebrews 11:1 NIV defines what faith is: “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Today, we’re going to look at some men who exemplified great faith. Their faith empowered them with an impenetrable protection and an unflinching hope.

Using the title, “Abraham, Man of Faith,” create a list of every faith-filled action Abraham carried out as you read Genesis 22:1-14.

Abraham, Man of Faith

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• _____
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.....
• _____
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Now, turn to Daniel chapter three and read the account of three brave men of faith.

I love the boldness of these men! Just imagine speaking to the most powerful dictator of your time and saying, “Nebuchadnezzar, we don’t need to defend ourselves before you about this.” That is seriously courageous faith! Did they have a death wish? Did they know they would be rescued?

What do you think fueled their resolve not to bow down?

Living by faith is when we go from reading and studying the Word, listening to podcasts, sermons, and faith-based songs, to actively getting into the game of obedience and trust. And an active faith is an empowered faith.

Just read Hebrews 11, known as “The Hall of Faith,” if you want to know what empowered faith really looks like.

I’ve copied the conclusion of Hebrews 11:32-38. Pay attention to what these people *did* through faith (I underlined what they did and endured for emphasis).

*And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, about David, and Samuel and the prophets, who **through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the ground.***

Hebrews 11:32-38 NIV (emphasis added)

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

I want to have the kind of faith and hope Abraham and the three Hebrew men had, don't you? They lived by faith, not by the sight of their circumstances. The truth is we can, too. Just like these men, we can trust God and have strong and resolute faith no matter what situation we face.

God longs for you to believe Him with total trust and patience. He wants you to live each day with hope, knowing He will empower each step you take in faith.

What kind of faith does nothing, risks nothing, but instead plays it safe?

Think about it this way: when you're not moving, you grow weaker. Sideline faith, or inactive faith, is an ineffective faith. Don't allow your faith to wither!

What have you clearly done by faith lately? Suppose someone were to write a "by faith" statement about you. What would it say?

By faith, (put in your name here), _____, (write what you are doing here)

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.....

I sincerely hope you identified far too much faith-filled living than this page had space for. I believe the stories of our "By Faith" should fill volumes of books as we seek to glorify Him in all we do, and I believe the list of empowered "By Faith" heroes will continue until the day our Lord Jesus returns.

REACH OUT

If anyone speaks, they should do it as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.....Peter 4:11 NIV

You are *empowered* by your faith! Take a step of faith and actively engage in someone's life with the intention to love and serve him or her. Do you know exactly who this person is? Maybe you're unsure. That's okay. Simply ask God what your expression should be.



Day Five // Empowered by the Word of God

“A lie believed as truth will often affect you as if it were true.” —Craig Groeschel

SEEK GOD

In a moment of stillness and quiet, turn your whole being to the one who fills and satisfies your thirsty soul. Ask the Father to guide you with truth and keep you from all deception.

OBTAIN TRUTH

Today’s quote from Pastor Craig is such a profound statement because we often live life based on lies. The way we view ourselves is often a lie. The way we think of others is often a lie.

Here’s the truth. You have a real enemy, the devil. He doesn’t want you to know truth. He is the Father of Lies. The Deceiver. In fact, he would rather you not even believe in his existence. Referring to the deceiver, Jesus had this to say to some Pharisees: “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (John 8:44 NIV)

Without the empowering truth of God’s Word, you are subject to the enemy’s STDs. I don’t mean sexually transmitted diseases. The STDs I’m talking about are much more serious because they attack your freedom in Christ.

(S) Suppressed truth: Sinfulness and the pull of our ungodly culture can destroy the truth we’ve been given if we don’t hold onto God’s Word.

(T) Twisted truth: When the truth is not sharp and fresh within us, we are vulnerable to believe in twisted truth, which is not truth at all. Twisted truths often sound right and may even make us feel good, but they’re dangerous.

(D) Doubted truth: Doubting God’s truth makes us ineffective and weak vessels. Remember, doubt comes straight from hell’s lies.

I bet you didn’t think you’d be reading about STDs in a Bible study, but these spiritual diseases are just as serious for your soul.

This is why being a student of God’s Word is imperative.

Lies put you in bondage, but the Truth sets you free.

Lies mislead you, but the Truth guides you to abundant life.

Lies pollute you, but the Truth purifies all who believe.

Lies blind you, but the Truth gives understanding.

Lies make you weak, but the Truth makes you strong.

Lies bring confusion, but the Truth gives peace and hope.

Here is some truth: God is love. And as amazing as it is that we serve a loving God, He is more than that. Our secular culture refuses to know God as a holy God and a righteous judge. The truth is our sin destroys us, but God loved us to the extent that He sent Jesus to take the great and final punishment for sin. When we choose to believe this and follow God, we are also choosing to leave our sin nature and have freedom in Christ. Jesus came with grace and truth. And many people know about grace but willingly forget about truth. The enemy is stealing the truth about God from many hearts today and leaving only a small portion of truth. This twisted truth leads to a self-serving gospel that smells sweet when applied but quickly turns toxic.

To put it plain and simply: *Partial truth without the whole truth is a distorted truth.*

When one of my kids hit puberty, the first change I noticed was their B.O.! Every time I got a whiff of their strong body odor, I would remind them to apply deodorant. After several similar, unpleasant encounters, I discovered they didn't realize one swift swipe of deodorant wasn't enough—they needed much more. This complete information solved the problem. Hooray!

Similarly, as Christians, our thinking—and consequently, our behavior—will be off, even foul, and our lives can become completely misaligned when we only know and apply some of God's Word.

To say I'm passionate about this subject would be a gross understatement. But instead of me telling you why I feel this way, I'll let the Bible speak for itself. As you read these Scriptures, consider how important knowing God's Word is.

... while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:13-17 NIV

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12-13 ESV

The Word of God is alive and active! The Greek word for active is the word *energes*. You may notice this word looks similar to our word "energy." *Energes* is defined as being actively at work or effectively productive. And verse 13 reveals that the Word exposes us for who we really are—our thoughts and intentions are uncovered.

You Can Fight Your Battles with Truth

I am beyond thrilled our good Father hasn't left us to ourselves. Along with the Holy Spirit, He gave His Word to empower us to live as He lived.

In Luke chapter four, I want you to see how Jesus overcame the devil's lies and temptations. Underline every temptation the devil dished out and circle each reply Jesus gave.

Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days, He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"

Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Then he brought Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you,' and 'In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'" Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

Luke 4:1-13 NKJV

What gave Jesus the strength to make the right choices?

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What was always Jesus' weapon of choice?

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Why do you think Jesus didn't just run off and hide while praying to God the Father to make the devil go away?

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Did you notice the devil knows the Scriptures, too? What could that mean when applied to your life?

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Romans 1:25 NIV explains how unbelievers fell into the enemy's trap: "They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen."

ABIDE BY THE SPIRIT

The Word of God is your mightiest spiritual weapon and source of truth; therefore, your situation is never hopeless.

Jesus experienced physical weakness just like us. He was tempted just like us. But God's Word fueled Him. In the wilderness, He lived on truth.

What needs or temptations are you facing?

Apply God's truth to them! What Scriptures come to mind that you should hold onto? Write them down where you can review them and be strengthened by them.

Search the Bible and become a faithful student of it. Learn to use it against your spiritual enemies as the weapon it is. Learn it so that you know truth from lies. Learn it to encourage and be encouraged. Learn it to remember who you are, what you've been given, and what you are called to.

The truth is, you will face the temptation to doubt God's truth, the temptation to twist it to justify your sinful cravings, and the temptation not to remain in it.

The Bible is your empowering weapon! Are you equipped to wield it?

Write down the lies that currently deceive you.

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Now, write down the truth.

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REACH OUT

Jesus is the truth, and all He did was fueled by truth. Prayerfully apply a way you can live out this truth in Scripture today: *Share with Lord's people who are in need. ...*

Romans 12:13 NIV