

LOVE
Without Hypocrisy
 (in the book of Romans)

27 – Blessing one's persecutors?
Our ability is from God!

PART 1

**YOU CAN'T DO THESE THINGS
 WITHOUT GOD'S POWER.**

**ALL SAVED PEOPLE CAN DO
 THESE THINGS.**

Romans 12:9-21
"Unhypocritical Love"

- 1) Living in the family of God (v. 10-13).
 (All people who belong to Jesus.)
- 2) Interacting with people (v. 14-16).
 (Both saved and unsaved.)
- 3) Responding to enemies (v. 17-20).

WE JUST FINISHED LOOKING AT OUR OBLIGATIONS FOR...

**EXPRESSING LOVE
 WITHIN OUR CHRISTIAN FAMILY**

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.
Honor one another above yourselves.
 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your
 spiritual fervor, **servi**ng the Lord.
Be joyful in hope, **patient** in affliction,
faithful in prayer.
Share with God's people who are in need.
 Practice hospitality.

Romans 12:10-13 (NIV)

IF YOU CONCLUDED ...

**I CAN'T DO
 THESE THINGS
 ON MY OWN!**

THEN YOU WERE BEING HONEST!

... the exceeding greatness of **his**
power in us who believe, ...
Ephesians 1:19b (ULB)

**GUESS WHAT...
 NOBODY CAN!!**

**YOU MUST RELY
 ON ME FOR THE
 POWER!**

**THE NEXT
 SECTION
 IS ABOUT
 THIS TOPIC:**

**WAIT UNTIL
 YOU SEE THE
 NEXT VERSE...**

**YOU'LL HAVE AN
 EVEN *GREATER* NEED
 FOR MY POWER!**

REALLY?

2) Interacting with people (v. 14-16).
 (Both saved and unsaved.)

WE BEGIN THIS NEW SECTION WITH THIS VERSE:

WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
Romans 12:14 (NIV)

BLESS THEM? IMPOSSIBLE!

DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT THEY DID TO ME?

I COULD NEVER BLESS THEM, LORD!

NOT IN A MILLION YEARS!

I'D TURN INTO A SKELETON BEFORE THAT!

GUESS WHAT... NOBODY CAN DO IT!! YOU MUST RELY ON ME FOR THE POWER!

... the exceeding greatness of *his power* in us who believe, ...
Ephesians 1:19b (ULB)

... the exceeding greatness of *his power* in us who believe, ...
Ephesians 1:19b (ULB)

It is not until we realize that *our power comes from God*, that we can begin to truly "bless those who persecute us."

- God gives us his Spirit, so we *can* do it in *his* power.
 - We will be *willing* to bless those who persecute us, because the Spirit dwells within us.
 - We will *keep on trying*, even though we sometimes fail (when we momentarily stop relying on God).
- We will realize it's *his* power that makes it possible; so we won't give ourselves credit for our success!

Since God's sovereignty and human responsibility *work together*...

GOD WILL:	WE (GOD'S PEOPLE) WILL:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give us a <i>desire</i> to obey him. • <i>Enable</i> us to obey him. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strive</i> to obey God. • <i>Grow</i> in our success at obeying God.

Because of God's Sovereignty, we *can* and *will* do it.

Because of human responsibility, we *must* and *will* choose to do it.

DO YOU WANT THE SPIRIT'S POWER, SO THAT YOU CAN (AND WILL) OBEY GOD?

(If you belong to God, then you *do*!)

- Focus on *your* responsibility. (God will take care of his.)
- There are things *you* must do, to make it possible.
- If *you* choose to NOT do these things... *the Spirit will NOT be able to work in you.*

PART 2

GOD GIVES ALL SAVED PEOPLE HIS POWER.

YOU MUST LIVE IN A WAY THAT ENABLES GOD'S POWER TO BE PRESENT.

YOUR DAILY CHOICES
will determine whether or not the Spirit's power will be present in your life!

➤ You have an obligation to not stifle his work!

Don't put out the Spirit's fire. 1 Thes. 5:19 (GW)

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, ... Ephesians 4:30 (ESV)

SMOTHER,
CHOKE,
SUPPRESS,
HINDER

It doesn't take a lot of brains to understand this:

IF YOU WANT:
The Spirit's power in your life, ...

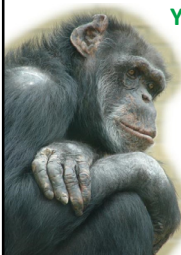
↓

THEN YOU NEED TO:
Trust God to do his part. (He will.)
Do what you need to do! (He will enable you.)

IF YOU DON'T DO THOSE THINGS, ...

↓

THEN IT PROVES: You DON'T trust God.
You WON'T have the Spirit's power!



EVEN I CAN FIGURE IT OUT!

WHY CAN'T SOME PEOPLE FIGURE IT OUT?

**THE FOUNDATION FOR CHANGE:
A RENEWED MIND**

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. "
Romans 12:2 (NIV)

➤ **Nobody makes the necessary changes without it.**

➤ **If you have a renewed mind, such changes will make perfect sense to you.**
(Otherwise, they will seem arbitrary and burdensome.)

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✓ **CHOOSE DAILY TO DO THINGS THAT ENCOURAGE (= do not choke) THE SPIRIT'S PRESENCE.**


- Pay attention to those "following Jesus" verses! They describe it as being **a complete turn-around in what we do (and why we do it).**

IT'S OBVIOUS: Obeying these verses will result in changes in the way we live!

- When you do something, ask, "Is this building me up, or hindering the Spirit?"

IT'S OBVIOUS: If you are following Jesus, you cannot do things the same way you used to.





✓ **REALIZE THAT NOTHING IS NEUTRAL.**

Not music, not TV, not sports, not computers, not entertainment, not work, not sleep, not food...

- **ALL** of these occur within a context... of *values*, *choices* and *priorities* related to following (or not following) Jesus.
- **ALL** of these: Honor (or dishonor) God; and increase (or decrease) the Spirit's presence.
- **ANY** of these: Can be a *barrier* to the Spirit's power working in our lives.

[OR ELIMINATED.]

✓ **IF IT HINDERS YOU, IT MUST BE CHANGED.** 

Example:

THERE IS **NOTHING WRONG** WITH SPORTS!

THAT'S TRUE **ONLY** WHEN THERE IS **NOTHING WRONG**.

OFTEN, THERE IS **MUCH WRONG**.

- How does your "sports emphasis" compare to the emphasis you have on:
 - ✓ Love for God
 - ✓ Fulfillment of your duties
 - ✓ Love for neighbor
 - ✓ Your spiritual growth

- ✓ Love for God
- ✓ Love for neighbor
- ✓ Fulfillment of duties
- ✓ Your spiritual growth

IF YOUR SPORTS EMPHASIS IS GREATER THAN THESE...

- It is *idolatry* and *sin*, a *barrier* between you and God.
-- AND --
- **IF THIS IS YOU:** You might have to give up sports the same way the rich man had to give up his riches:

"There is still one thing you lack," Jesus said. "Sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."
Luke 18:22 (NLT)

IF you are saved, certain choices will occur.

IF YOU ARE SAVED:

- **God guarantees:** You will start choosing to have values that honor God.
- **You will choose:** To do things that *promote* values that honor God.


God's Sovereignty: God is the source of 1) our "renewed mind" and 2) our willingness to "follow the Spirit."

Human responsibility: There is "*cause and effect*" in what we do when following Jesus... *just as there is in all other areas of life!*

CAUSE & EFFECT: Promoting God-honoring values


It influences all of life. **Example:**

- You cannot constantly feed yourself junk food and expect healthy results!
- Your choice of "inputs" will determine the "outcome."



It determines your values:

- The "inputs" you choose to *see*, *hear*, *do* and *think* will influence the "outcome": your values.



In both of these situations: **You will reap what you sow!**

DON'T LIE ABOUT THE TRUTH!

The truth will win in the end.

Don't be misled. Remember that you can't ignore God and get away with it. **You will always reap what you sow!**

Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful desires will harvest the consequences of decay and death.

But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.

Galatians 6:7-8 (NLT)

IT'S REAL SIMPLE! And Obvious!

Since sovereignty and responsibility work together:

If the Spirit is in you...

- *You will choose* to do things that promote growth in Christ and the expression of the Spirit's power.

If you do NOT choose to do such things...

- It's simply because the Spirit is not in you.



CONCLUSION

**REJOICING IN GOD
&
TAKING SERIOUS OUR OBLIGATIONS.**

We who are following Jesus can rejoice, for God is changing us!

- **The time spent in learning to follow him:** It will be time well spent, and will yield a harvest of righteousness!
- **Our efforts will not be in vain:** We will know that God is embedding his truth in our hearts!

"This is the promise that I will make to them after those days, says the Lord: **'I will put my teachings in their hearts and write them in their minds.'**"

Hebrews 10:16 (GW)

Your Mission...

YOU WILL REAP WHAT YOU SOW!

★ Make sure you sow in a way that enables the Spirit to work inside you! ★

THEN

When we see verses such as, **"BLESS THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU,"** we can rejoice, knowing that God is making us able to obey them!

Credits (1)

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Your Mission...

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse."

Romans 12:14

We cannot obey this verse on our own. We are weak - even the apostle Paul was (1 Corinthians 2:3; 2 Cor. 11:30; 12:9-10). God knows our needs and helps us (Romans 8:26; Hebrews 4:14-16).

**WE CAN BE STRONG *ONLY* AS LONG
AS WE REMAIN *IN* CHRIST.
ON OUR OWN, WE BECOME
INSTANTLY WEAK AGAIN.**

God's power, demonstrated in us.

His power seen in our salvation.

- This is the *more difficult* demonstration: Jesus had to *die!*
- Saved now and forever! Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 1:24.

His power seen in our living.

- This is the *easier* demonstration: He just has to *live* in us!
(More about this on the next page.)

[His power seen in judgment - no longer applies to us.]

- [This display of power will be experienced by the unsaved and by the demonic forces of darkness.]

Admit your weakness and ask for help!

- There is a strong connection between prayer (including prayer for each other) and receiving this strength.
- Admitting weakness and praying for strength - Acts 4:23-31.
- Praying for others to grow strong - Ephesians 1:18-21; 3:16-19; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Colossians 1:9-12.

Don't forget where the strength resides!

- It's not *our* strength, but *God's*. When we fail to be strong, it's because we looked to ourselves, instead of to God, for power.
- Our strength is *only* in God - Ephesians 6:10; 2 Corinthians 13:3-4; 2 Timothy 1:7.
- Our weakness makes his strength more visible - 2 Corinthians 4:7; 6:4-10 (weakness and strength *combined*); 12:9-10.
- We can (and must) do *everything* in his strength - Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:11-13.

Having God's strength brings obligations and blessings.

- An obligation to share the good news with others (who also need to experience God's strength) - 2 Timothy 1:7-8; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.
- Some of the blessings include: hope - Romans 15:13; patience and endurance - Colossians 1:11; and a guarantee that our good efforts will be fruitful (when we depend on God for strength to do them) - 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

More about God's strength in us.

- It started at the time of our salvation, when God gave us a desire to obey him - Hebrews 10:16-17; Philippians 2:12-13.