

Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 12:10

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

GRACELIFE  CHURCH

GOD'S PURPOSES IN PAIN - PART 7

POWER

We know it is vital to have a **Biblical understanding of God's character**. We are *looking at various reasons* God allows, or ordains problems in life. These include to **Prove**, or test us; to **Purify** us from things that hinder our relationship to Him; for our **Progress** in the faith; for **Patience**, and **Preparation** for dealing with future problems, with the blessings God can and will give as we follow Him. **Preparation** is also for eternity, because when we go through sorrow, we *long for heaven more*.

A. What is God's Power?

There are **many ideas** of what "*God's power*" is in the Christian life. Some are good, and some are deadly. Some go too far, and some don't go far enough.

People are so hungry for supernatural experiences - miracles of healing, visions and dreams, a personal word from God. Here is the supernatural experience that God has promised: ***the power of Christ coming down to rest on you, to fill you up, so that you can trust him when the worst thing you can imagine happens to you, so that you can be genuinely, if not yet perfectly, content even if he does not fill up the empty place in the way that you have longed for.*** At least not yet. (Emphasis mine)

From: https://www.crossway.org/articles/gods-plan-for-your-discontentment/?utm_source=Crossway+Marketing&utm_campaign=f3a3e0ca50-20200525+-+General+-+Discontentment&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0275bcaa4b-f3a3e0ca50-283282697

A. What is God's Power?

The ***resurrection power of Christ*** enables us to live life and face whatever comes our way! He moves ***through and beyond*** the battles, trials, persecution, and problems. He promises ***His presence with us, because He is in us!***

If we don't have the faith that He will walk with us in everyday life and in our trials, we are sunk!

B. Relying on God's Power

1. Humility

2 Corinthians 1:8-11 - For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. 9Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but

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on God who raises the dead. 10He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. 11You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

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1. Humility

The word translated "*rely*" in the ESV, here, means "***to trust, have confidence.***" Here, Paul says *their afflictions pushed them to avoid having confidence in themselves, but to ***transfer that confidence to God***, who raises the dead, and has the authority and ability to *rescue them* and us from any affliction we face. It doesn't mean it will be easy...*

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1. Humility

When we are humble, we are *honest with ourselves, God, others* and are *willing to admit our failures, weaknesses and mistakes*. We stop giving excuses and start to see things as they are and confess that change is needed. **Only when we admit we need God's power to do it, will His power be available!**

Deuteronomy 8:1-5 - “The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers. 2And you shall **remember** the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might **humble** you, **testing** you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his

commandments or not. 3And he **humbled** you and **let you hunger** and **fed you** with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might **make you know** that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. 4Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. 5Know then in your heart that, as a man **disciplines** his son, the LORD your God **disciplines** you.

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1. Humility

God ***humbled*** the Israelites, by putting them into a position where they had to depend on Him. Yes, it was *discipline for their unbelief*, but God *taught them and provided for them* during difficulty. Paul *learned that suffering and God's power were connected*: *Philippians 3:10, 2 Timothy 1:8.*

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***Suffering brings
dependence on God's
power and provision.***

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2. Embrace Your Weakness

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 - So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 8Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave

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me. 9But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore **I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** 10For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

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2. Embrace Your Weakness

In our pride, we don't want to admit our weakness, but we *need to embrace it*. No matter how gifted someone is, **God places weaknesses within them to keep them humble. Embrace weakness!** We *learn to do this* through problems. God *prepared Paul for ministry* through problems... like Joseph, David and the disciples.

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3. Renew Your Mind Through God's Word

*Losing trust in God is something many, if not all, Christians struggle with at one point or another. It can be a good thing, because it makes us face the idols in our lives, and confronts our wrong perspective of who God is. Then, by **faith**, we go to God's word as our strength. **When we go to His word, and get His word in us, we gather His power!***

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3. Renew Your Mind Through God's Word

You will not, and cannot have the power of God in your life, *without His word!* Yes, the Holy Spirit empowers us, and the *more we know His word and the more we are yielded to Him and living out His word, the more of His power we will have.* This **IS** the *filling of the Holy Spirit.*

***Our mind is renewed by
continually, consciously and
consistently by reading,
studying, learning,
memorizing and following
God's word!***

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4. Change Your Perspective

Rather than *focusing* on ourselves, our problems, our limitations, or our lack of ability, remember *God is bigger than us, bigger than our problems, bigger than our limitations* and is *abundantly able to do far above all we ask or think*. This is where **faith** comes in, and by faith, **we choose to have a different way of thinking than before.**

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4. Change Your Perspective

2 Corinthians 4:7-11 - But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing **power** belongs to God and not to us. 8We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10always

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carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

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Philippians 4:8-9 - Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me - practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

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4. Change Your Perspective

This is not about ignoring problems or reality. It is not about putting on a false face. It is not about saying your changing your perspective, but actually doing it, based on **God's word!** It is a matter of choice and will. ***We choose to change.*** We **choose** to focus on what we focus on.

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5. Rely on God's Promises

“In the times when we feel invisible, we can counter those fickle feelings that tell us we don’t matter with the **truth** that **God** will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13 v 5).

When the disappointments of life weigh us down, we can remember that **God** is the lifter of our heads (Psalm 3 v 3). When we feel like we are doing life alone, we can **know** that it is **God** who helps us (Isaiah 41 v 10). God also gives us **hope** in his word. He knows he can

be counted on, and he kindly fastens our hearts to **his promises**.

"A hope deferred makes a heart sick" (Proverbs 13:12), but the **Lord gives** us the expectation of hopes met, and he graciously meets them. Pick a **promise** of God's and **hold on** to it dearly, **knowing** that as you cling, **his hands strengthen your grip**. God's **comforting word** doesn't only birth hope, but it also **gives life**. Consider Isaiah 55 v 10-11:

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall **my word** be that goes out from my mouth.” The word of God **waters, nourishes, and revives** our hearts. **It alone quenches our thirst.** His **promises grow us** and will even permeate those around us, if we let them. O, the blessings we miss when we are not regularly communing with our God!”

From: <https://corechristianity.com/resource-library/articles/have-you-ever-lost-trust-in-god>

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5. Rely on God's Promises

Romans 8:31-39 - What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

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34Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died - more than that, who was raised - who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36As it is written, "For your sake we are

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being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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5. Rely on God's Promises

My encouragement is to **remind us of God's promises** in the problems we face. God sent His only Son to die for our sins! He is gracious and will provide. If satan or someone brings a false charge against you, or condemns you unjustly, don't worry. God knows the truth, and **HE** has *declared you righteous in His eyes!* Can anything separate us from the love of Christ?

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6. Accountability

Galatians 6:1a - Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness...

If we are *not willing to be accountable to others, willing to learn, accept encouragement, and rebuke*, then we stifle God's power in our life.