



GOD IS WORKING



IN YOU.



Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 2
(Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 77–80.

Philippians 2:12–18 (NKJV)

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

14 Do all things without complaining and disputing,

15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,



16 holding fast the Word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

17 Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.



- "Work out your own salvation" (Phil. 2:12) does not suggest, "Work for your own salvation." To begin with, Paul is writing to people who are already "saints" (Phil. 1:1), which means they have trusted Christ and have been set apart for Him.
- The verb "work out" carries the meaning of "work to full completion," such as working out a mathematics problem. In Paul's day, it was also used for "working a mine," that is, getting out of the mine all the valuable ore possible, or "working a field" to get the greatest harvest possible.



- The purpose God wants us to achieve is Christlikeness, "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29).
- There are problems in life, but God will help us to "work them out." Our lives have tremendous potential, like a mine or a field, and He wants to help us fulfill that potential.
- The phrase "work out your own salvation" probably has reference particularly to the particular problems in the church at Philippi, but the statement also applies to the individual Christian. We are not to be "cheap imitations" of other people.



1 Corinthians 11:1 (NKJV)

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

One of the beautiful things about being a Christian is the knowledge that God has a plan for our lives and will help us work it out for His glory.

- Our God is a God of infinite variety!
- No two flowers are the same.



1 Corinthians 11:1 (NKJV) Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

One of the beautiful things about being a Christian is the knowledge that God has a plan for our lives and will help us work it out for His glory.

- No two snowflakes are the same; why should two Christians be the same? All of us must be like Christ, but we must also be ourselves.
- We are to follow what we see of Christ in their lives. Every "saint" has feet of clay and ultimately may disappoint you, but Jesus Christ can never fail you.



Philippians 2:13 (NKJV)

for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

- The principle Paul lays down is this: God must work in us before He can work through us.
- This principle is seen at work throughout the Bible in the lives of men like Moses, David, the Apostles, and others. God had a particular purpose for each man to fulfill, and each man was unique and not an imitation of somebody else.



- For example, it took God forty years to bring Moses to the place where He could use him to lead the people of Israel.
- As Moses tended sheep during those forty years, God was working in him so that one day He might work through him.
- God is more interested in the workman than in work.



- If the workman is what he ought to be, the work will be what it ought to be.
- Too many Christians obey God only because of pressure on the outside and not power on the inside.
- Paul warned the Philippians that not his presence with them but their desire to obey God and please Him was significant (Phil. 1:27; 2:12). They could not build their lives on Paul because he might not be with them very long.



The Power That Works In Us Is The Power Of The Holy Spirit Of God

- It is sad to see how some ministries in the church weaken or fall apart because of a change in leadership.
- We tend to please men and to obey God only when others are watching. But when you surrender to the power of God within you, then obedience becomes a delight and not a battle.
- The power that works in us is the power of the Holy Spirit of God.



John 14:16–17 (NKJV)

16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NKJV)

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.



- Our English word energy comes from the Word translated "worketh" in Philippians 2:13.
- It is God's divine energy at work in us and through us! The same Holy Spirit who empowered Christ when He was ministering on earth can empower us as well.



We Are In Warfare With The Flesh, And The Devil As We Are Trusting The Spirit Of God In Us

Romans 7:5 (NKJV)

For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.



We Are In Warfare With The Flesh, And The Devil As We Are Trusting The Spirit Of God In Us

Ephesians 2:2 (NKJV)

in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

2 Thessalonians 2:7 (NKJV)

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.



- Because of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, God's divine energy is available to us (Eph. 1:18–23).
- The power is here, but how do we use it?
- What "tools" does God use, by His Spirit, to work in our lives? There are three "tools": the Word of God, prayer, and suffering.



The Word of God

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

- God's divine energy is released in our lives through His inspired Word.



- The same Word that spoke the universe into existence can release divine power in our lives! But we have a responsibility to appreciate the Word and not treat it the way we treat men's words.
- The Word of God is unique: it is inspired, authoritative, and infallible. If we do not appreciate the Word, then God's power cannot energize our lives.



- He commanded Peter to walk to Him on the water, and the command enabled Peter to do so, as long as he exercised faith (Matt. 14:22–33).
- It is faith in God's promises that releases God's power. His commandments are His enablement's.



Prayer

- We must also pray because prayer is the second "tool" God uses to work in the lives of His children.

Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV)

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,



- Unless the Christian takes time for prayer, God cannot work in him and through him. In the Bible and in church history, the people God used were people who prayed.



Suffering

- God's third "tool" is suffering. The Spirit of God works in a special way in the lives of those who suffer for the glory of Christ (1 Peter 4:12–19).

1 Peter 4:12–13 (NKJV)

12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.



- The "fiery trial" has a way of burning away the rubbish and empowering the believer to serve Christ.
- Paul himself had experienced God's power in that Philippian jail when he was beaten and thrust into the stocks in the inner prison, for he was able to sing and praise God despite his suffering (Acts 16:19–33).
- His "fiery trial" also enabled him to forgive the jailer.



- It was not the earthquake that brought conviction to the man; the earthquake almost led him to suicide! It was Paul's encouraging Word, "Don't do it! We are all here" (TLB).
- This kind of love broke the man's heart, and he fell before Paul, asking how to be saved.



- The Word of God, prayer, and suffering are the three "tools" that God uses in our lives.
- As the Christian reads the Word and prays, he becomes more like Christ, and the more he becomes like Christ, the more the unsaved world opposes him.
- This daily "fellowship of His suffering" (Phil. 3:10) drives the believer back to the Word and prayer, so that all three "tools" work together to provide the spiritual power he needs to glorify Christ.



- If we are to have the submissive mind and the joy that goes with it, we must recognize that there is a purpose to achieve God's plan for our lives), a power to receive (the Holy Spirit), and a promise to believe.

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