

The Power in the Christian Life

Philippians 4:13

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Paul has just listed the different circumstances of life that he has endured. He has been well taken care of and honored, while at other times he has suffered loss and been persecuted. Yet he has learned to be content in all those things. So then either way Paul will rejoice in the Lord.

But some are asking, "How does he do that." Others are saying, "Well I could never do that." But then Paul gives us the secret. And it really is a secret. As matter of fact some translate V-12 "I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ESV

The secret is that Paul is not doing this alone. He has some help. His help is the Lord Jesus Christ. Many before have spoken of this power.

Isaiah 40:29-31 (NKJV) 29 He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who wait on 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.

Isa 41:10 ¶ Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

- I. Some have wrongly understood this.
 - A. They get the idea that for the Christian, nothing is impossible.
 - 1. But Paul could not get out of prison.
 - 2. The power of Christ is not seen in keeping us from everything we do not want but by enabling us to get through what ever He brings our way.
 - 3. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NKJV) 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
 - 4. AW Pink says, "Is not this "glorious strength" indeed, which enables its recipients to persevere in the path of duty notwithstanding much opposition, to bear up manfully under trials, yes, to rejoice in tribulations? What a glorious power is this which is proportioned to all we are called

upon to do and suffer, enabling us to resist the corruptions of the flesh, the allurements of the world, and the temptations of the devil; which keeps us from sinking into abject despair or making shipwreck of the faith; which causes us to hold our course to the end.” Pink *Gleanings*, p 346, Ages

5. So then you can see that God’s power is not as often used save us from trials as it is to overcome even through the trial.
 6. Now I know we would rather have the former than the latter.
 - a. 1 Peter 1:6-7; 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,
- B. I remember once helping a young lady who was about to loose her house because she could not make the payments.
1. She told me that God was going to allow her to keep her house.
 2. I spoke to her several times as she went through that process and gave her a ride to court.
 3. She lost her house and was forced out by the court and the law.
 4. God does not promise that if you cannot pay your house payments that He will not let them take your house.
 5. I am not saying that He will not give you a better job, or as in this woman’s case “a” job.
 6. I am not saying that God will not supply that need by another means.
 7. But the judge is not going to allow the seller to suffer loss just so you can live in a house that you are not going to pay for.
- C. I had another case of a young man who thought God was calling him to the ministry.
1. So he quit his job taking Php 4:19 quite literally.
 2. Philippians 4:19 (NKJV) 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
 3. And the way that he thought God would do that was by him quitting his job and then living off his Christian friends.
 4. I think that he had forgotten another of Paul’s verses. 2Th 3:10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

5. Well we might understand how that did not work out very well for him or his friends.

II. Jesus gives us the power to do what it is He has called us to do.

- A. We are shut up to Him. John 15:5 (NKJV) 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.
- B. 2 Timothy 4:16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. 17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.
- C. 1 Timothy 1:12 (NKJV) 12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,
- D. Jeremiah Burroughs observes, “A Christian finds satisfaction in every circumstance by getting strength from another, by going out of himself to Jesus Christ, by his faith acting upon Christ, and bringing the strength of Jesus Christ into his own soul, he is thereby enabled to bear whatever God lays on him, by the strength that he finds from Jesus Christ... There is strength in Christ not only to sanctify and save us, but strength to support us under all our burdens and afflictions, and Christ expects that when we are under any burden, we should act our faith upon him to draw virtue and strength from him.” (The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment, 63) MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Philippians.

III. God uses means to work in us the might power.

- A. He uses the Word of God.
 1. 1 Thes. 2:13 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.
- B. It is the Holy Spirit that works in us.
 1. Ephesians 3:14-21 (NKJV) 14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 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, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

2. Added to this, no doubt, also, much of the power to do all things lies in the fact that the Spirit of God enables the Christian to overcome himself. He can lose all things, because he is already prepared to do it; he can suffer all things, because he does not value his body as the worldling does; he can be brave for Christ, because he has learned to fear God, and therefore has no reason to fear man. Spurgeon sermon on Php 4:13

IV. This power is not for the carnal Christian but to those surrendered to the will of God.

A. So many people want same things that Balaam wanted. Nu 23:10 " Let me die the death of the righteous, And let my end be like his!"

1. That is like me saying let me run like Bruce Jenner.

2. Well he spent 8 hours a day at the track to prepare for his gold metal run.

B. God's power will bring contentment to those who have no strength of their own, but only if they have been living righteously. There is no quick fix, no shortcut to contentment. It comes only to those strengthened by divine power, and that divine power does not come from counselors, therapy, or self-help formulas, but only from consistent godly living. MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Philippians.

Listen to Paul as he admonishes saints to get their strength from the Lord

2 Timothy 2:1 (NKJV) 1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:11 (NKJV) 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

Ephesians 6:10 (NKJV) 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

“Did the apostle really believe that there was nothing he could not do? The answer is this: When the Apostle Paul said that he could do all things, he meant all things which were God’s will for him to do.” MacDonal, W. (1995). Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (Php 4:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.