

Study #3

Praying for Power



In You, For You, or Through You?

Does God give us His power so that we will experience it in us?

Does God give us His power so that it accomplishes something for us?

Does God give us His power so that it ministers to others through us?

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

(Acts 4:31 NIV)

Power-FILLED or Power-LESS?

What is your view of the people of God today? Do you believe that Jesus-followers are filled with power? Do you wonder at times where the power of God is? Have you prayed for power before to help you in a situation and felt that God didn't respond?

Intercession is Praying for Power... but where do we want to see the power, why do we want to see it, and what do we really think it's given for?

Displays of God's power at work in a Sunday morning worship service are great. It's wonderful to witness healing, deliverance, or hear a word spoken as a message to the church. It makes us leave the service thinking, "Wow! What a wonderful service today!" However, after such wonderful services, many of us return to life as normal, hoping that God will send another display the following Sunday.

Giving us great worship experiences is not entirely the reason God sends His power.

Why Power? A demonstration for us or for the powerless?

The power of God is most always on mission. Power is given to simple people to accompany the message of the Gospel by providing a demonstration of its power. There are hoards of powerless and desperate people around us. They need the miraculous power of God more than we need a Sunday spectacle.

The power and authority of Jesus are two of the cornerstones of transformational revival.

Acts 3:1-16 NIV One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. (2) Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. (3) When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for

money. (4) Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" (5) So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. (6) Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." (7) Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. (8) He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. (9) When all the people saw him walking and praising God, (10) they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. (11) While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. (12) When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? (13) The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. (14) You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. (15) You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. (16) 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.

The Reason for Power – *Why God displays His mighty power.*

If you had to give the definitive reason, why do you believe God displays His mighty, miracle-working power in our midst?

Have you ever hoped and prayed for a miracle and wondered why you didn't receive the answer?

Sign-Seekers vs. True Restorative Power Seekers

Matthew 12:38-39a NIV Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." (39) He answered, "**A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign!**"

Why does Jesus tell them it is an adulterous and wicked generation that asks for a sign?

What does it look like today to ask for a sign from Jesus? Why do we seek signs?

God releases power through those with pure hearts, genuine faith, and kingdom-centered minds. We will continue to see in the ongoing story of Peter and John in Acts 3-4, that they were not seeking power for themselves. In fact, they were willing to endure a lot of trouble to be agents of the power that God wanted to display.

Normative and Expected – *Everyday life in the Kingdom includes Power.*

(12) When Peter saw this, he said to them: **"Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you?"** Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?

Peter and John are ordinary men displaying extraordinary power. Do you believe God still does this today? Why or why not?

Where does Peter explain the power comes from?

Ultimately, who was the power for?

Power Amid Persecution – *Our responses to trouble matter.*

Peter and John get into serious trouble with the Teachers of the Law for performing this miracle. They want to know by what power and authority they have done this miracle. Peter and John testify to the power that is in the Name of Jesus.

After much deliberation the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees release Peter and John but they give them a warning, **do not speak in the Name of Jesus.**

How has our world today curtailed the language of Christians?

Where is the Name of Jesus “unwelcome?”

Why do you think this is so?

*What did the Teachers of the Law know about **speaking Jesus’ Name** that perhaps we’ve forgotten?*

Power in Proclamation – *Declaring Christ verbally releases power.*

Acts 4:17-20 NIV But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name." (18) Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. (19) But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! (20) As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Speaking the Name of Jesus publicly and verbally is a matter of obedience to Christ as seen by Peter and John? Is it a matter of obedience to Christ for us as well? Why or why not?

Who are we obeying when we keep silent in every public place where we the expectation is that we will keep silent?

Why do we keep silent? What are the reasons? What are the ramifications of our speaking?

Acts 4:23-31 NIV On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. (24) When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. (25) You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (26) The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.' (27) Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. (28) They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. (29) Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. (30) Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." (31) After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

How do the people respond to the threats made to Peter and John?

Did they retreat or advance? Why? Do we retreat or advance? Why?

What do they ask for?

What is the result?

God's People are Given Power for Specific Purposes.

When we proclaim the Word of God boldly, His Message is DECLARED. When we display God's power through healing, deliverance, prophecy, and more, the Message of the Gospel is DEMONSTRATED! God still does this today. Do you believe He can do these things through you?

Pray:

Write a prayer from your heart as a response to this lesson.