

Grace Evangelical Free Church
Issues & Answers: The Power Granted to Christians

The Tyndale Bible Dictionary defines power as the “ability to do things, by virtue of strength, skill, resources, or authorization.” The Bible says a Christian’s power comes from God through the Holy Spirit.

God is the ultimate source of power. All power comes from Him and is subject to Him: **“Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head overall. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all”** (1 Chronicles 29:11–12).

Many Old Testament passages speak of God giving His power to the weak: **“He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak”** (Isaiah 40:29). Psalm 68:35 says God gives power to His people: **“You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people. Praise be to God!”** Frequently, we read of God’s power being given to kings (1 Samuel 2:10) and prophets: **“But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin”** (Micah 3:8).

God’s inexhaustible power poured forth in the lives of His people is seen in various applications in Scripture. The Bible says the gospel itself is the power of God for salvation: **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile”** (Romans 1:16; also 1 Corinthians 1:18).

A Christian’s power—his ability to do anything of worth—is received from the Holy Spirit. When Jesus ascended on high, He told His disciples to wait for the power they needed: **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”** (Acts 1:8). Without the Holy Spirit, the disciples would just be spinning their wheels, no matter how talented, energetic, or enthused they were in presenting the gospel.

A Christian’s power from God strengthens the inner being: **“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being”** (Ephesians 3:16). We do not lose heart because, even **“though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day”** (2 Corinthians 4:16).

A Christian’s power from God enables him or her to become a servant of the gospel: **“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power”** (Ephesians 3:7).

A Christian's power is not his own. After God used Peter to heal a lame beggar, the apostle explained to astonished onlookers that the man was healed not by Peter's own power but through faith in the name of Jesus Christ: **“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? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. . . . 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”** (Acts 3:12–16).

A Christian's power from God enables him to endure suffering in the face of persecution: **“The Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God”** (2 Timothy 1:7–8).

A Christian's power is perfected in weakness: **“But 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 about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me”** (2 Corinthians 12:9).

A Christian finds power in prayer: **“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective”** (James 5:16).

God empowers Christians for ministry, to speak in His name with confidence in His abiding presence: **“Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age’”** (Matthew 28:18–20).

Ephesians 3:20 says that God's power is beyond our comprehension. Divine power is at work in Christians to do far more than all we can ask or even imagine. **Ephesians 1:19–20** says that nothing compares to His great power toward us who believe. The power of God working on our behalf is the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead and seated Him in heavenly places.

Believers have a tremendous reason to rejoice. The Bible says a Christian's power supplies all we need for living a holy life in this world of sin: **“By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence”** (2 Peter 1:3).