

NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE 8

Walking as Jesus Walked: Walking in Power

“Very truly I tell you, all who have faith in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” – John 14:12 (TNIV)

“Six people went into the house of a sick man to pray for him. He was a leader in the Episcopal Church, and he lay in his bed utterly helpless. He had read a little tract about healing and had heard about people praying for the sick. So he sent for these friends, who, he thought, could pray ‘the prayer of faith’ (James 5:15). He was anointed with oil according to James 5:14, but because he had no immediate manifestation of healing, he wept bitterly. The six people walked out of the room, somewhat crestfallen to see the man lying there in an unchanged condition.

When they were outside, one of the six said, ‘There is one thing we could have done. I wish you would all go back with me and try it.’ They all went back and got together in a group. This brother said, ‘Let us whisper the name of Jesus. At first, when they whispered this worthy name, nothing seemed to happen. As they continued to whisper, ‘Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!’ the power began to fall. As they saw that God was beginning to work, their faith and joy increased, and they whispered the name louder and louder. As they did so, the man rose from his bed and dressed himself. The secret was just this: those six people had gotten their eyes off the sick man and were taken up with the Lord Jesus Himself. Their faith grasped the power in His name. Oh, if people would only appreciate the power in this name, there is no telling what would happen.”¹

What an awesome God we serve that at the very mention of His name miracles happen! It is undeniable – when we read the gospel accounts of the life of Jesus, we see that He was an extraordinary miracle worker. He turned water into wine, multiplied loaves of bread and fish, and even commanded the wind and the waves to be still. Jesus walked in power. About one third of his ministry consisted of casting out demons and healing the sick. He was filled with discernment, giving people words of wisdom and knowledge and prophesying over them. Yes, Jesus preached a message of repentance and salvation in order to enter the coming Kingdom of God. But often before He shared His message, He ministered to people by meeting their physical needs through healings and miracles.

Imagine walking and talking with Jesus as one of His first disciples and hearing Him say, “You will do the works I have been doing and even greater works.” Awestruck and slightly bewildered, it is natural that our first question would be, “But how? How can we do these things?” Gratefully, Jesus does not leave us wondering. In this same passage of scripture, He told His disciples that when He returned to His Father above, He would send them His Spirit, His inner life, His very own nature. In John 14:16-17, He used a special word to describe the Holy Spirit: “Helper,” which also translates into Comforter or Advocate.

Biblical scholar N.T Wright states, “As a result of this promised spirit, the spirit of Jesus himself, Christians now,

Pre-Article Questions:

1. What is one of the most powerful things or stories you have ever seen or heard?
2. How would you describe the word, supernatural? Would you like to see more of the supernatural in your life and around you, why or why not?

1. Wigglesworth, Smith. Greater Works: Experiencing God’s Power. New Kensington: Whitaker House, 1979. 17-18.

remarkable though it may seem, are in a better situation even than the followers of Jesus during his lifetime... now, by the spirit, they (Christians) will be able to do all kinds of things. When Jesus 'goes to the father' - in other words, when he defeats the power of death through his own death and resurrection - then all sorts of new possibilities will be opened in front of them. The 'works' he has been doing, as he says again and again, are the evidence that the father is at work in him. Now he says that the disciples will do even greater works than these!"²

The normal Christian life is a life filled with Christ. If we have the Spirit of Christ living inside of us, we cannot isolate and focus on the particular facets of His nature we are comfortable with and ignore those with which we are not. We cannot continue to choose only certain aspects of who Jesus is to study, teach, and practice because we are familiar with them and disregard those with which we are not. Healing, miracles, casting out demons, prophesy, discernment, words of wisdom and knowledge, and tongues were a part of the life and ministry of Jesus and of the disciples and apostles who followed in His footsteps. Since we are filled with the same Holy Spirit that filled them, it follows that our lives should be filled with such signs and wonders too. Being unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and consequently failing to study or desire them, causes us to miss not only practicing but also enjoying a very important aspect of the nature of Christ in us. We should all long to live our lives with Christ as our role model.

Christ came with a message He declared was from none other than God Himself. The power displayed in and through His life was the testimony that affirmed His message was true. The normal Christian life is a life that mirrors the life of Christ and is, therefore, a life filled with power. In a day and age where our words often seem insufficient, we should all desire and seek to walk in the power of the Spirit of God. Trent Sheppard says, "One of the most urgent needs of our generation, is a deeper and healthier, more holistic and more powerful relationship with the Holy Spirit: a relationship rooted in biblical understanding of God, a relationship not afraid of using commonsense when seeking for and operating in the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, a relationship truly impassioned in its pursuit of being continually filled with the living and powerful presence of Jesus."³

Scripture Questions:

1. What keeps us from desiring to do greater works in His name?
2. Read and discuss John 14:12. What does Jesus say it takes to do the works he has been doing?
3. What is the purpose of the works we will do in his name for those who do not know Christ? Read Mark 16:17 and John 2:11, 6:14, and 11:47.
4. Read Luke 24:49, Acts 1:3-8, and Acts 2:1-12. When the Holy Spirit comes upon believers, they are clothed with what according to these scriptures?
5. Please read first 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, Ephesians 4:11-12, and Romans 12:4-8. What is the purpose of the gifts the Holy Spirit gives to believers?

Application Questions:

1. Would you be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to use you in any way he sees fit, even if you felt it would be foolish? Why or why not?

2. Wright, N.T. John for Everyone Part Two. Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 2002. 63.

3. Sheppard, Trent. God on Campus: Sacred Causes and Global Effects. Madison: Intervarsity Press, 2009. 121.

Application Questions:

2. After doing this study, are you eager to experience and practice the power of Christ within you?
According to Matthew 7:7-11, where is the best place to begin?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for giving us your Holy Spirit. Thank you that the life of Jesus is and was a life filled with power. Thank you that, through Him we are able to walk in even greater works. Please forgive us for our doubt and unbelief and remove our false conceptions. Give us a desire to have an impactful witness in the world. Help us to understand the importance of experiencing and practicing the power you have given us. Fill us with your Holy Spirit; give us all that He has, and help us to begin by asking. We want to accept and walk in the fullness of who you are. We love you.

Prayer Partner Assignment:

Memory Verse:

John 14:12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father."

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 "and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

Meet with your prayer partner from this week for a meal. Discuss your thoughts on this study and discuss some of the additional scripture below. Pray for one another before you leave.

Additional Scripture:

1 Samuel 16:13

Acts 4:33

1 Corinthians 1:18-27

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

Colossians 1:9-12

2 Peter 1:2-4