

Week 5

January 29- February 4

The theme for this week is God's power. As you read this week, you will be challenged to consider the power of God in your life. The lives of Job and Moses will serve as the backdrop for your personal reflection. May you, this week, be confronted with the reality of God's power in your life.

January 29th

Job 35-37. "Omnipotence"

Elihu makes the statement in 36:22 that God is all powerful.

Theologians refer to this as omnipotence, which is the teaching that God has the power to accomplish all that He wills to do. Elihu also gives us two key applications of this truth.

The first is that God doesn't need us to instruct Him in what to do or how to do something (36:23). In fact, God doesn't need us at all. He is perfect in His existence. Are you like me? Have you ever found yourself trying to instruct God in how to accomplish something? A better way is to receive instruction and direction from an all-powerful God.

The second application is that we should have a response of joy to God's omnipotence (37:1). Have you ever wanted to do something, but were powerless to accomplish it? God never experiences that. How hopeless would our lives be if God were powerless to accomplish His desires.

May you, like Elihu, find joy in knowing that God has the power to fulfill His good purposes in your life.

January 30th

Job 38:1-40:5. "Creator"

The work of creation is one of the greatest evidences of God's power. He uses it here to help Job understand how great the Almighty One is.

On the first day of this month you read the biblical account of creation. Many of us take God's creation for granted and have lost sight of the magnitude of what God did. Mankind has become quite skilled at creating different things from automobiles to computers; we can make some pretty amazing stuff. However, no one has ever created something ex nihilo, or 'out of nothing' as God did. It is not as though God brought together the raw materials of the universe and followed the instruction manual. No, he simply spoke things into existence. His creative power is beyond all that we can imagine. "In the beginning God created..." (Gen. 1:1). God has always existed. We may not be able to fully comprehend this, and we certainly cannot create ex nihilo, but we can accept it and believe just as Job did (40:3-5).

January 31st

Job 40:6-42:17. "Political Power?"

About this time of year we sometimes receive our voters' pamphlets in the mail, giving us details on all the candidates involved in the upcoming election. I don't know about you, but I am becoming a bit of a political cynic. Every candidate promises to have the solutions to all the problems we face, but once their term is up, the problems remain. I am so thankful that God's power is not a political power. God was not elected to His position and His power is not subject to anyone else.

As you read the closing chapter of Job today, you noticed that God chose to bless Job. God did not have to defend that decision to anyone. He didn't have to get the approval of the House or the Senate. God's promises are not like those of a politician. Because of God's power, we know that every last one of his promises will come true. Do you trust in God's promises? What about God's power? Do you believe that God has the power to accomplish whatever he desires? We must first believe in the power of God before we can trust in His promises; otherwise God is nothing more than a politician. –David Curtis

February 1st

Exodus 1:1 - 4:17; 1 Chronicles 6:1-3a. "Roadblocks"

Have you ever done something that can only be explained as the power of God working in your life? One experience of the power of God in my life was on a mission trip to Alaska, when our group was witnessing to members of the Bahai faith. While I recognize that God was speaking through me, I also recognized that I had a part in the experience. God couldn't have used me unless I had been willing to go on the trip and been willing to open my mouth. God's power is truly amazing, but often God chooses to work through His servants. This means that we can either allow God to work, or become a roadblock to His power.

God chose to work through Moses, but Moses was unsure about his role. Moses attempted to be a roadblock to God's power. Thankfully for the Israelites, Aaron was willing to be used by God. Are you more like Moses or Aaron? Are you a roadblock to God's power or are you willing to be used by God?

May you be willing to be used by God and thereby experience His power in your life.

February 2nd

Exodus 4:18 - 7:13. "Is God Really Powerful?"

The Israelites had lived under Egyptian oppression for a long time, so it was not difficult for Moses and Aaron to convince the leaders of Israel that God had sent them to free His people (4:31). They were convinced, that is, until things got difficult. Following Moses' and Aaron's first request for freedom, Pharaoh ordered their workload increased. This turned Israel against Moses and Aaron (5:21). Pharaoh showed his power by taking action, while God invited Moses, Aaron and all Israel to believe in His power to deliver them.

Do you find yourself ever trusting in the power of what you can see or touch rather than in God's power? Are you like the Israelites who doubted God's power to deliver when life becomes difficult? I think that God performed the plagues, not only to show His power to Pharaoh, but to His own people as well. What more does God have to do to prove His power to you?

February 3rd

Exodus 7:14 - 9:35. "Working on Multiple Levels"

In sending the plagues, God demonstrated His great power over all creation. In spite of all these demonstrations of power, I think there is something that reveals God's power even more in this story. After every plague that takes place, we read that Pharaoh hardened his heart. That is, until you come to the plague of boils. If you notice, following the plague of boils, it says that the "Lord made pharaoh even more stubborn." (9:12).

Now wait a minute, you may be thinking, if God's goal was to deliver Israel why would He make Pharaoh's heart more hard or stubborn? While deliverance was God's goal, it was not all that He was working to accomplish through the plagues. In 9:16 God reveals the greater purpose of revealing His power and seeing His fame, "spread throughout the earth." So not only is God in control of all creation, but He is working on multiple levels at the same time.

I think that sometimes we lose sight of God's ability to work in this way. We can become short-sighted and focus only on what we want God to accomplish in the here and now, instead of looking for the bigger picture that God might be doing.

February 4th

Exodus 10-12. "A Bigger Perspective"

Exodus 10:1-2 really sums up the whole theme for this week's devotionals. The hardness of Pharaoh's heart allowed God to demonstrate His power through miracles among the Egyptians.

However, during this time I would imagine that Moses and Aaron experienced some frustration as Pharaoh would repeatedly change his mind about letting them go. Moses and Aaron had to hold to the bigger perspective that God had given them. Could you imagine the history of Israel without the plagues of Egypt and God's great deliverance? Time and time again God would remind His people of the great signs and wonders He did in Egypt. If Pharaoh had been a push-over, then God's people would have no concept of His power and ability to deliver. There was indeed a bigger perspective in place.

Could it be that the times when it seems God is delaying an answer to prayer or is not delivering you from a situation, that He is working with a bigger perspective?

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General Questions for each day:

Summarize the day's Bible passage in your own words.

What thoughts, actions, attitudes or beliefs are addressed in the passage?

How is the Holy Spirit leading you to apply this passage to your life today?

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Job 35-42; Exodus 1-12

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Bible Discussion Guide:

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of God's power?

How have you seen God's power at work in everyday life?

This week we read the conclusion of Job's saga. How was God's power evident in Job's life?

The devotional for January 29th stated that the power of God should bring joy into our lives. How has God's power been a source of joy for you?

Do you trust in God's promises without recognizing his power? What is the danger in this thinking?

Reflect on the events of Moses' life you read of this last week. How was God's power demonstrated in his life?

Moses' reluctance to lead served as a roadblock to God's power working through him. How have you created roadblocks to God working through your life?

The Hebrews doubted God's power when Pharaoh increased their workload. How have you doubted God's power when life gets difficult?

How was God's power demonstrated through the plagues?

Pharaoh hardened his heart in response to God's power. In what ways have you allowed your heart to harden?

Personal application: Is God's power real for you? Are you experiencing joy as a result? In what ways does God need to soften your heart?