

Pursuing God—A Seeker's Guide

Chapter Seven *The Power of God*

1. Several years ago in a small plane I circled three times over the great Victoria Falls at the border of South Africa and Zimbabwe. I don't think I had ever before seen such power. On another occasion I stood in the back of an open truck during a buffalo stampede. Dust flew as the ground was pounded by Cape Buffalo who were being routed from the watering hole by an angry bull elephant. At other times I have met powerful people, and witnessed powerful transformations of society. Power comes in many forms. Before we read the chapter, quickly relate to the group some of the most powerful things you have seen.

2. Read aloud the introduction to the chapter and then chapter seven, *Gospel Equals Power*.

3. The Bible teaches that God's power is needed for changing people like you and me. What are some reasons power is needed for making a person a true Christian? Think deeply about this.

4. The verse I quoted in the chapter is found in Romans 1:16. It goes like this:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Here Paul says that the gospel [that is, the good news about Christ's death, burial and resurrection for sinful people] is "the power of God to salvation." What do you think that means? In other words, how could the gospel equal power?

5. When we think of God we have to think in more than one form of power. He is powerful in nature, creating and sustaining the world (read Colossians 1:15-16), and He is also powerful in accomplishing His decrees (read Isaiah 46:9-11) He is powerful in influence as well (read Proverbs 21:1). The gospel, when God chooses to use it in a person's life, is irresistibly powerful by being attractive beyond our ability to ultimately resist. Of course, it is the nature of every person to resist God as we saw in Romans 3:11-12, "There is none who seeks God. They have all turned aside." Yet, when God wishes, He uses His power of influence to make a person want Christ above all other things. In John 6:37, 44-45 we find Jesus saying this:

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. . . . No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

Look at this passage carefully. How is God's power being exercised? Try to explain and discuss what God is saying about his power to draw people to Himself. Also, how does the Father's teaching and the human communication of the gospel correspond? Don't some people hear the gospel who do resist?

6. How do you know if you are being drawn to Christ?

7. The gospel is powerful to change us as the Spirit applies it and the Father Himself teaches us through it. The apostle Paul knew about this power firsthand. He once persecuted the Christians, but then was totally changed by the power of God and made to be an instrument in God's hands to change others. Do you really believe that God can do this to anyone? If not, who would be an exception? What about a person who is dying, and has been evil all of her life?

8. Has God convinced you that coming to Christ by faith is the only way to be in God's family? If not yet, in what ways have you seen God's power influencing you so far? If you are a believer already, how did you see God's power at work in you related to your conversion?

For next week: Please read the next chapter.