

# POWER THROUGH SUBMISSION

By

Curtis Dickinson

It is not a question of whether or not we believers will be able to compel all the world to bow down to King Jesus, but whether or not we ourselves will bow down to Him and not be distracted by all the controversy and cares of the world.

In the days of the prophet Samuel the people became greatly concerned with worldly power. With God alone as their ruler they had accomplished all that they had set out to do, yet they saw themselves as missing out on some very spectacular things. They were impressed by the romance of kings, courts, parades, pomp and ceremony — it all looked so powerful and glorious. They were distracted from their mission and demanded a king on the order of the other nations. After they went that route they were continually plagued with all the sins of the other nations until their final downfall.

Modern Christians often suffer from the same illusion. Just give us the glamour and glory seen in popular and famous people; give us power and money to make a really big splash before the world; then we will capture the attention of sinners and turn them to the Savior; then we will have influence in legislation, in education, in economics and make the proper impact upon the world.

But it doesn't happen. Those who attain the power or the money or the influence sought after almost always are corrupted and become an embarrassment to the Christian community.

Six months ago, as I was thinking along these lines, I made this note: "Just take a look at the electronic church and its stars. Their bizarre money-raising schemes, their ridiculous claims to special revelations from God, their high pressure tactics through TV appeals and letters, which are designed to extract funds from sincere but unknowing people and from the guilt ridden and emotionally unstable, all are a disgrace." Little did I think that within a few months the secular media would be taking up the same criticism. But I needed no crystal ball for such a statement. The church which attains a place of worldly power invariably is captured by the world so that the truth and simplicity of Christ are buried in the competition for leadership and struggle for more power.

This is not to say that we should not exert influence in and upon the world or that Christians are powerless in a hostile world. On the contrary, the power of Christ is transmitted in and to the world through His saints, but not in the way the worldly-wise use power. Note some of the differences.

1. Redemptive power belongs to God is not ours. "All power is given unto me..." (Matt. 28:18). To listen to some church-growth leaders one would think that all power is in the hands of men and that Christ is helpless to work His will without man's expertise in planning, organizing, administering and ultimately manipulating through twentieth century psychology and technology. We are continually flooded with literature urging us to attend this conference, that workshop, and to read this or that book in order to gain the skills necessary to implement the power of Christ in making the church grow. One wonders how in the world the church survived for nineteen hundred years without having this highly refined professionalism in the office and in the pulpit. The power, at least in

the minds of many men, has passed from Christ to the preacher, primarily to the “senior minister.”

Men may build organizations and wield authority over the members, but the power to save people from sin and death and transform them into His image belongs only to the Master.

2. Christ’s power is not exercised through the channels of organization as is done by the world. Power flows through the believer who is immersed in the word and submissive to Christ through the holy Spirit. Each individual Christian is a light to the world to the extent that he is under the guiding power of Christ through His word and His spirit. The disciple becomes an extension of His power through actions and words, through life and witness. “I am the vine and you are the branches....” Christ is the vine and every believer is a living branch.

The power of Christ changes individuals and this transforming power cannot be hidden from others, but radiates like a light to all who see it. We must quit thinking that the success of the church and the salvation of society rest in the ability of the preachers and a few famous leaders. Every Christian is a branch of the vine, and by Christ’s power is enabled to bear the fruit that He wants.

3. Results do not depend on getting everything in perfect order — all the right legislation enacted, all the right officials in position, a prosperous economy, and all the churches in full agreement on all the details. Such ideal conditions have never existed, and scripture indicates they never will, at least in the present age. But this is no obstacle to Christ’s purpose. Jesus lived in a society governed by some of the worst leaders the world ever knew. Slavery, injustice, economic disorder, depression and political corruption abounded everywhere. Jesus did not teach His disciples to wait until all these things were in better order before they were to begin following Him and observing His commandments. Rather they were to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness in spite of the general chaos of the world and in so doing they would be seen “as lights of the world,” “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Phil. 2:15).

According to Scripture the world is broken; it “groans and travails in pain” and it is not going to be fixed until God fixes it in the day of glorification of His children (Rom. 8:19–23). The task given His sons is to make disciples, baptizing them, teaching them to observe all things Christ has commanded. Power for the task is in Christ, not in the bank or in the halls of congress. We are not to let the world determine our agenda, but rather to demonstrate to the world the meaning of life according to God’s purpose.

4. The power of Christ and His gospel is not to be “used” for the protection of our affluent lifestyles or material wealth. Too often we have put the cart before the horse, in pouring all efforts into saving the political system in order to guarantee the safety of the spiritual! Christians and patriots have been trying this for over fifty years and haven’t succeeded.

Freedom is the result of a right relationship with God, not the cause of it. The loss of freedom is due to man’s loss of his devotion and submission to God. To try to “use” God to save our nation, our economy and our obsessions is hypocrisy and will only succeed in great losses. The gospel is the power of God unto redemption, and a redeemed people will produce a just and free nation.

Christ is Sovereign, His power is being exercised today either in redemption of those who repent and commit themselves to Him, or in judgment upon those who are in rebellion against His rule.

The world needs to hear the message of Christ and then see it incarnated in the Christian, wherever he is — in business, in social activities, in school, in the family and in every phase of life.

Christ did not promise us power to control economics and politics in the world. He did not say, “In the world you have great power,” but “In the world you have tribulation.” It is in the midst of tribulation and opposition that He calls us to “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

Before we can solve problems, national or individual, we must bow in repentance and humble submission to Jesus. It is in surrender to him that we have power to overcome the world. “And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith” (I John 5:4).

.....  
Copyright © Curtis Dickinson. Formatted and Posted by Ken Fortier Ministries. Permission is hereby granted by Mrs. Regina Dickinson to reproduce and distribute Curtis’ articles to as many as possible. This statement is to remain attached to this article for permission to be valid. Vol. XXVII, Number 6.  
.....