

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

EFFECTUALLY WORKING

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

I Thessalonians 2:13

It would be fair to say that the majority of preaching that one hears today is primarily centered on trying to motivate and stir up those who profess faith in CHRIST to an obedient and faithful walk with the LORD. Such a walk in this world serves as a testimony to the unbeliever (see I Pet.3:2) as well as an example for those of like precious faith. (see I Tim 4:12)

Yet this sort of walk is not that which can be brought to pass by the most persuasive motivator, greatest of teachers, or those who use threats of GODLY punishment to coerce men to conform to this or that legal obedience. Neither can it be produced by teaching men that they possess the ability to gain GOD's blessing by acts of devotion or monetary giving into this or that ministerial organization, mission, benevolent society, or greedy preacher's pocket.

In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul points out the fact that there is a POWER which works "effectually" in the sons of GOD to produce a desire to walk in conformity to the way of CHRIST. This POWER is not brought to bear by the activity of men nor any amount of persuasion or coercion of any type. Rather this POWER is none other than the operation of the SPIRIT of GOD who dwells in those who believe. "*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" (Php 2:12-13)

The words "effectual" and "effectually" appear in the New Testament a total of eight times. Each time they appear they are derived from the Greek word, "energeo". The root of this word is where we get our English word, "energy". When Paul says that the WORD of GOD "effectually worketh in you that believe," he is describing an active, effective, efficient, and evident performance which is carried out, not by the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD.

"Effectual working" is active. It is not reactive, (i.e.; not something man does in response to some type of stimuli.) It is a work which is carried on according to a purpose; as are all of the works which the LORD performs, even as HE said to Isaiah, "*I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*" (Isa 45:7) "*Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*" (Isa 46:9-11) Thus we are certain that this "effectual working" of which Paul speaks is the work of GOD and not man.

"Effectual working" is effective. "*For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it*

shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isa 55:10-11) Sometimes we hear it said that the LORD is “trying” to teach us something or “trying” to get us to do something, The LORD never “tries” to do anything but always does exactly as HE intends to do as Nebuchadnezzar describes, *“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Dan 4:35)*

“Effectual working” is efficient. The LORD does not waste time waiting “to see” what men will do, nor can “*effectual working*” be anywise dependent upon the work of the flesh as though HIS blessings are somehow conditionally based upon mans obedience or faithfulness, *“But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.” (John 2:24-25)* *“For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” (Psa 103:14)* Therefore HE will waste no time in “finding out” whether or not we will abide faithful. HE knows that we will depart from the paths of righteousness if left to ourselves, even as HE taught Peter by Peter’s denial of HIM and as HE demonstrated in the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane’s garden.

“Effectual working” is evident. The results of that which the LORD does can be seen. Just as HE said to Nicodemus, *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)* You cannot see the wind but its result is unmistakable. Obedience to the way of GOD is not an “option” for those in whom the SPIRIT of GOD works. *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2Cor 5:17)* *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom 6:1-2)*

This “*effectual working*” is akin to the “power” (i.e.; Greek word “dunamis” from which we get our English words, dynamite and dynamo) which resides in ONE PLACE, even JESUS CHRIST the RIGHTEOUS, *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” (Mat 28:18)* Man has no power at all except that which is given to him even as the LORD reminded HIS disciples. *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5)*

The sons of GOD in themselves and of themselves are powerless, yet “in CHRIST” they are empowered as HIS SPIRIT is pleased to perform HIS work in them as Paul states, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Php 4:13)* This verse has become popular among the “motivational” and “name it and claim it” crowd”. They imagine that this describes what they are able to accomplish with a little help from the LORD.

Yet the reality is that, Paul is not speaking of an “assist” from the LORD, but is rather describing the “dynamo” (Greek: *endunamoo*; i.e.; *strengtheneth*) or power of CHRIST performing in them. HE is not our Co-Pilot, but is the CAPTAIN of our SALVATION. A mighty DELIVERER and our PROTECTOR. This is that “*effectual working*” which cannot fail.

- 1 No strength of nature can suffice To serve the Lord aright;
And what she has she misapplies, For want of clearer light.
- 2 How long beneath the law I lay, In bondage and distress!
I toiled the precept to obey, But toiled without success.
- 3 Then to abstain from outward sin Was more than I could do;
Now, if I feel its power within, I feel I hate it too.
- 4 Then, all my servile works were done A righteousness to raise;
Now, freely chosen in the Son, I freely choose his ways.
- 5 What shall I do, was then the word, That I may worthier grow?
What shall I render to the Lord? Is my inquiry now.
- 6 To see the law by Christ fulfilled, And hear his pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child, And duty into choice.