

# INSIGHTS



TURN PRESSURE INTO

## power

**T**here are written accounts throughout Scripture relating how God brought different people through trouble and even unimaginable pressure—delivering them through miraculous and often very dramatic demonstrations of His power. The biggest names of the Bible—people like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Peter, and Paul—all experienced amazing miracles that brought them out of dire straits.

Reading through the book of Acts, Luke’s account of the apostle Paul’s persecutions gives the picture of Paul handling difficulties and opposition with ease. Luke just made it look easy. But when we look at Paul’s account of these events, he painted a different picture.

2 Corinthians 1:8–10 (*TPT*):

8 Brothers and sisters, you need to know about the severe trials we experienced while we were in western Turkey. All of the hardships we passed through crushed us beyond our ability to endure, and we were so completely overwhelmed that we were about to give up entirely.

9 It felt like we had a death sentence written upon our hearts, and we still feel it to this day. It has taught us to lose all faith in ourselves and to place all of our trust in the God who raises the dead.

10 He has rescued us from terrifying encounters with death. And now we fasten our hopes on him to continue to deliver us from death yet again.

BY DR. DENNIS BURKE



When there is increased pressure from the outside, you must increase the force of power from within."

It is clear that these attacks weighed on Paul's mind. It all seemed like a death sentence. Yet he understood that even death didn't represent the end of a situation—because God raises the dead!

Like Paul, we all sometimes face adverse situations in which we can feel threatened, filled with fear, or just worn out. We can all get weary when the pain, problems, and pressure seem unrelenting. The longer we face that kind of onslaught, the weaker we can get if we're not careful. The pressure will talk to us and keep our focus on the failures. It will raise questions in our minds about why things aren't changing—and if we entertain those questions long enough, we can sink into a "woe-is-me" kind of despair.

There are really only two instances when we as believers face the pressures and strategies of the enemy: when we do things *wrong* and when we do things *right!* In other words, it's a reality of life in this fallen world. Every day we face the enemy's tactics, plots, and plans as he tries to undermine our confidence in God.

It happens to every one of us. We all can be squeezed by the pressure of this natural world. Experiencing pressure, problems, and troubles isn't an indicator that we are doing things wrong or right. It is simply an indicator that we are human beings, disciples of the Lord, and Satan's targets for attack.

We need to realize that when the pressure is on, the enemy's ultimate goal is to use that pressure to convince us to let go of our confidence in God. But just study the apostle Paul's example when he was under extreme persecution. He clearly had the mindset for passing through the pressures while sustaining

the power it requires. When the sentence of death was trying to dominate Paul's mind, he declared resurrection power had delivered him in the past, would deliver him in the present, and would continue to deliver him in the future.

Later in this letter Paul got even more descriptive with the details of his attitude:

2 Corinthians 4:7–9 (TPT):

7 We are like common clay jars that carry this glorious treasure within, so that the extraordinary overflow of power will be seen as God's, not ours.

8 Though we experience every kind of pressure, we're not crushed. At times we don't know what to do, but quitting is not an option.

9 We are persecuted by others, but God has not forsaken us. We may be knocked down, but not out.

Paul's description here is amazing. This glorious treasure within and its extraordinary overflow of power paint the picture that our ability to conquer each and every kind of pressure is really all about God and not about us. Again, like Paul, we have a choice to make when the adversary comes to harass us:

- **Pressure?** I'm not crushed!
- **Perplexed?** I'm not quitting!
- **Persecuted or betrayed?** I'm not alone!
- **Knocked down?** I'm never out!

This is the voice of confident faith in God's Word even when feelings are shaken. We hear the language of faith rising up out of our hearts louder than the fear that adversity thrives on. Feelings will follow our faith or our fears. Whichever captures our attention will feed our feelings.

All of this really does not come easily at first. We are accustomed to life led by our feelings. Paul's way of thinking expressed in Second Corinthians 4:7–9 will require a new and different habit—that of hearing what our Heavenly Father has said above the clamor. Hebrews 5:8–9 from the *Mirror* translation reveals this exact pattern in the life of Jesus.

Hebrews 5:8–9 (*Mirror*):

8 As son, he was in the habit of hearing from above; what he heard distanced him from the effect of what he had suffered. [The word often translated as "obedience" is the word *upoako*, which means *under the influence of hearing, or hearing from above.*]

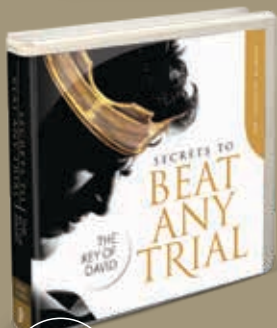
9 By his perfect hearing he forever freed mankind to hear what he had heard.

Jesus, because He always heard His Father, kept a continual buffer between Himself and any attacks, pressure, or persecutions that tried to come against Him. As God's family today, we, too, can hear the Father's words within, and we possess the same ability as Jesus did when He walked the earth to resist the effects of Satan's attacks.

Later in his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul described an exchange he had with the Lord that sheds even greater light on how we can take our stand against any adversity.

2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (TPT):

7 The extraordinary level of the revelations I've received is no reason for anyone to exalt me. For this is why a thorn in my flesh was given to me, the Adversary's messenger sent to harass me, keeping me from becoming arrogant.



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8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to relieve me of this.  
 9 But he answered me, "My grace is always more than enough for you, and my power finds its full expression through your weakness." So I will celebrate my weaknesses, for when I'm weak I sense more deeply the mighty power of Christ living in me.  
 10 So I'm not defeated by my weakness, but delighted! For when I feel my weakness and endure mistreatment—when I'm surrounded with troubles on every side and face persecution because of my love for Christ—I am made yet stronger. For my weakness becomes a portal to God's power.

A messenger of Satan—certainly not God—had come to undermine the revelations of the Kingdom that Paul was spreading everywhere. When Paul cried out to God for help and relief, God's answer was so empowering. He told Paul that the grace He had already given to him was more than enough to completely conquer any enemy attacking him from the outside, as well as any weakness on the inside.

In the times we feel the weakest, God's grace has deposited a treasure chest of power within us to access at any moment.

Paul's weakness was turned to become a portal of God's power. It is just as the prophet Joel said: "Let the weak say, 'I am strong'" (Joel 3:10).

Paul said it — "When I am weak then am I strong." As Vikki first taught me many years ago, God's power within us is voice-activated. The concept is revolutionary. We are not waiting for God's strength to come. It has already come. But we are activating this power with our own statements of faith from God's Word. Feelings are no longer the



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indicator of our ability.

One of the concepts I refer to often for silencing the many negative voices in this life and conquering the pressure is from something I learned as a young man. Growing up in the southern California coast area, I was really a beach kid and enjoyed surfing, as well as snorkel diving and spearfishing. In diving, it is mandatory to equalize the pressure the deeper water brings on your inner ear. It's easy to do this — you just have to pinch your nose and blow. This creates more pressure from inside, and the pressure from the outside is then equalized from within.

This really paints a picture of a very powerful spiritual truth. The pressures we all face from the outside will continue to mount up and cause us trouble at times. And certainly as believers, the more we walk in faith in the promises of God, the more pressure the kingdom of darkness will try to bring against us. Equalizing and overcoming that pressure is not complicated, but it is also not automatic.

*When there is increased pressure from the outside, you must increase the force of power from within.*

Here is the solution God



## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### MOSCOW, RUSSIA | OCT. 14

Moscow Good News Church  
 Tserkov Blagaya Vest, Irkutskaya Street 11/1  
 Moscow, Russia 107497 | 7-495-727-14-70

### FOREST PARK, IL | OCT. 21

Living Word Christian Center | 7600 W. Roosevelt Road  
 Forest Park, IL | 708-697-5000

### MCKINNEY, TX | NOV. 4

Genesis Church | 5780 Virginia Parkway  
 McKinney, TX 75071 | 972-562-9333

### OTTAWA, ON, CANADA | NOV. 10-12

Capital City Church | 1123 Old Montreal Road  
 Ottawa, ON K4A 3N6 | 613-833-1700

### EDMONTON AB, CANADA | NOV. 17-18

Living Word Christian Centre | 5315-91 Street  
 Edmonton, AB T6E 6E2 | 780-462-3737

### HESPERIA, CA | DEC. 7-9

Oasis of Faith Christian Center | 17250 Lemon Street  
 Hesperia, CA 92345 | 760-948-0745

### HEBBRONVILLE, TX | DEC. 16

Faithway Community Church | 1205 W. Viggie Street  
 Hebronville, TX 78361 | 361-527-3804

### LAREDO, TX | DEC. 16

Faithway Community Church | 800 E. Mann Road  
 Laredo, TX 78041 | 361-527-3804

provides in His Word for you to turn pressures into power:

- **Meditate in God's Word.** This will reveal an unending supply of His truth-treasures to you and enable a new way of thinking (Psalm 1:2–3; Romans 12:2).
- **Your decision to activate** this source of Holy Spirit strength and energy empowers you to set a new course that leads to real results.
- **As you use your words to speak what you believe in your heart** — to faithfully declare God's promises, power, and provision in every situation you face — you voice-activate a continuous flow of the miraculous provision that has been part of your covenant with Him all along (Mark 11:23, 24).

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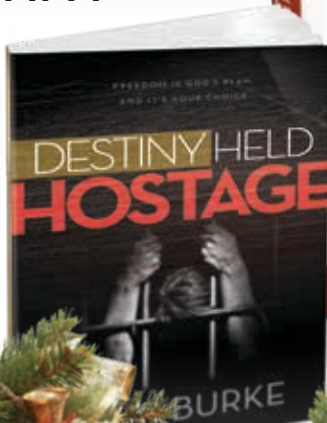


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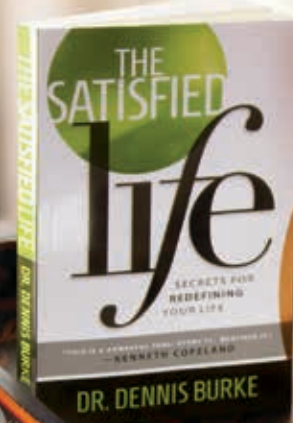
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