

# The Secret of Spiritual Power

by Chip Brogden

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*The secret to spiritual power is humility and submitting to God, which allows us to find grace and peace and overcome the devil.*

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Humility And Grace"

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## Description

Chip Brogden preaches on the principle of strength out of weakness, emphasizing the importance of humility in receiving God's grace and power. He highlights how God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble, urging believers to submit themselves to God and resist the devil, leading to victory and spiritual authority. The sermon underscores the need to embrace weakness, surrender to God, and avoid relying on human strength or methods in spiritual warfare.

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## Transcript

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:6b,7).

There is a principle at work in our life and walk with the Lord, and it is the principle of strength out of weakness. "The meek are blessed, for they will inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). If we want the blessing of the Lord then we must learn what it is to be meek, for the proud will not inherit anything from Him.

The way of the world says that in order to be stronger, we must build ourselves up and seek strength and dominance over others. Christians everywhere are keenly interested in how to be increased, how to be stronger, how to take authority, how to rise up, how to get more. They look for methods, formulas, and techniques for becoming bigger and better. The results have been disappointing. Many mistakes have been made and many people have been hurt and disillusioned.

The Lord has a different approach for us to take. He invites us to accept weakness in order to be strengthened. We do not become strong by embracing strength, but by embracing weakness! This is the secret of all spiritual power. When Paul learned this secret he was able to say, "When I am weak, then I am strong" (II Corinthians 12:10b). This makes no sense to the natural man. I do not remember ever hearing anyone begin a teaching on spiritual warfare with this verse. It is no wonder, then, that these teachings never seem to produce any lasting fruit.

This passage of Scripture from James gives us further insight into why the strong are weak, and why the weak are strong. Our study of this verse may be divided into four distinct sections. Let us look at each one individually.

## GOD RESISTS THE PROUD

Christians are full of many plans, many pursuits, many thoughts, many words, many things. It is impossible to say just how much of the flesh is involved in the things we undertake in the Name of Jesus. We know they cannot be purely spiritual works because often there is little fruit to be found. We labor and toil and work but it seems as if we make little or no progress. It seems as if something is always blocking our way and preventing us.

The automatic assumption is that anything which resists us or hinders us is of satanic origin. That is, if we encounter difficulty in our spiritual walk, our first reaction is to rebuke the devil, or ask the saints to pray for us to have a clear way. Certainly the devil will attempt to hinder us from anything we undertake that glorifies God and threatens the darkness. Yet we learn from James 4:6 that there is Someone else who can resist us. There is Another Who carefully watches what we do, and frequently hinders us from making progress.

It comes as a shock and surprise to some Christians to see one day that God, not the devil, is resisting them. The Lord Himself resists us, closes doors, causes things to be unfruitful, and spoils all our plans. How so? Because "God resists the proud." This resistance from God is insurmountable. It is a fearful thing to fight the Lord. We spend most of our lives wrestling with God instead of cooperating with God, and in the end we have nothing to show for it. So much time and effort is wasted because we proceed in our own, stubborn way. We attribute all difficulties to the devil, or to other people, or our circumstances, or our environment, and fail to recognize that the Lord Himself is resisting us.

God resists the proud. This is an active resistance that will block our path like a huge rock or a great chasm. All who walk in pride are in league with the devil himself, and will receive the same judgment (cf. I Timothy 3:6). Brothers and sisters, this is a serious matter. If we harbor the least bit of pride then we will find ourselves on the wrong side of the Lord, but if we are humble before God and man then we cannot be defeated because...

## GOD GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE

The single requirement for grace is humility. But what is grace? Grace is more than just a theological term used to describe how we are saved. Grace is the power of God at work in my life to do what cannot be done in my own strength. Grace is energizing and proactive. When I have reached the end of myself then Grace Himself takes over and does what I am unable to do. In the first place, what I cannot do is save myself, and so I trust in the Grace of God, Jesus Christ, to save me. But Grace will not only bring me through the Gate; He will bring me down the Path. Grace does not just get me started in the right direction, but goes along with me every step of the way. For Grace is a Man!

It should be obvious that God will not give us grace while we are still proud. Why? Because He will allow no flesh to glory in His presence. He desires us to be thoroughly emptied of ourselves. When we cease doing what we cannot do then He begins to do what we cannot. The problem is that we still think we can do so many things. We must learn sooner, rather than later, that "apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5b). Nothing! But it is human nature to try and do it ourselves. This human nature is the flesh. It

prevents us from entering into Grace. God cannot save someone who is still trying to save themselves. Similarly, God cannot do what we are still trying to do. He will wait - weeks, months, or years - until we have exhausted our strength. When our strength is completely gone and we finally go to Him in weakness, He becomes our strength and we find Grace is there to do the impossible. Then we know it was not us, but the Lord. All praise goes to Him, and we retain nothing for ourselves.

See how many times the disciples tried to correct the Lord. See how many times they argued with the Lord. See how many time their thoughts contradicted the Master. See how many times they urged Him to take action. And the Lord, ever patient, would correct them. In every case we see that He is the Lord, and they are the disciples. The roles must never be confused. He is the Master, and we are His servants. We do not command Him, but He commands us. We do not direct Him, but He directs us. We do not lead Him, but He leads us. He was not created for us, but we were created for Him. He does not serve us according to our pleasure, but we serve Him according to His pleasure. So we must be adjusted to Him, and not the other way around. The Lord will never apologize to us and say, "I'm sorry, I was wrong. We'll do it your way." How laughable! How absurd! But we often live as if we expect Him to do that very thing. We have not humbled ourselves.

All those who want power with God must see that His power is released through our weakness (cf. II Corinthians 12:9). Do realize that you are weak whether you admit it or not, but the power of humility is in recognizing and agreeing before God that we really can do nothing of our own selves. God's power is not for those with natural charisma, talent, leadership skills, education, training, or "connections". God is not looking for volunteers to serve at their own convenience as their schedule permits, but calls for disciples who will lay down their lives. The flesh counts for nothing in spiritual matters. God's power is not revealed to us when we are proud, but when we are humble. Any demonstration of "power" manifesting itself through a proud man or a proud woman is, quite simply, not from God and cannot be trusted. Spiritual gifts may be counterfeited, but spiritual fruit cannot be faked. We will know the false from the true by their fruit, not their gifts (Matthew 7:20). Meekness is an essential quality of spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:23). Gifts may accompany fruit, but gifts may never substitute for fruit.

The secret, then, is to...

#### SUBMIT YOURSELVES THEREFORE TO GOD

Do we need the power of God today? Do we seek the Life of the Lord today? Do we desire Him to have the preeminence in our lives today? Do we long for Him today? Then now is the time for us to be unconditionally and wholeheartedly surrendered to Him. We need not drag the process out for several days and weeks, months and years. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). Do it today, do it now. If we must daily take up the cross anyway, let us bow our head and give up the ghost instead of struggling to stay alive, which only prolongs our agony. The secret to overcoming is dying daily.

If God gives Grace to the humble, then we should live a surrendered life so we can tap into grace. Die to Self, die to effort, die to trying, die to scheming. Stop wrestling, stop fighting, stop squirming, stop arguing, stop reasoning, stop bargaining, stop all that and just surrender, yield, give up, and lay down before Him! Humility is not some outward show, but a heart attitude that says in effect, "I will not resist the dealings of God. I will not argue with the Lord. I will not insist upon my own way. I recognize and admit that apart from Him I can do nothing. I am finished. Lord, I look to You to do in me and through me what I cannot do."

Friends, if we truly mean that when we say it then we will naturally spend more time praying, more time in the Word, more time ministering to God, because we will realize we do not know anything and we can not do anything without hearing from Him. If Christ is to have the preeminence in all things right HERE is where it begins. Humility is offering no resistance to the dealings of the Lord with us.

When we are submitted to the Lord, we find Grace. We find peace. We find rest. All things are in His hands, and He does all things well. We need not fear what any devil or any man can do to us. To be submitted to the Lord is to be under His care, under His guidance, under His power, under His protection. Whom shall I fear? What can man do to me? What can the devil do to me? If I have humbled myself beneath the mighty hand of God then He will exalt me in due season; He will justify me; He will defend me; He will fight for me. If our submission to God is complete, if our surrender to the Lord is total, then victory is assured. We will...

### RESIST THE DEVIL, AND HE WILL FLEE

So many times we try to resist, but we are defeated. Why? Simply because we attempt to resist the devil before we have first submitted ourselves to God. There is a proper order that must be observed without fail. First, we must understand the principle of God resisting the proud but giving grace to the humble. This is the foundation of everything we do. Second, the word "therefore" signifies that those who learn this principle will act upon it accordingly. If they understand the truth just stated, they will submit "therefore" to God. Third, as a result of their submitting to God, they will find the devil flees whenever and wherever they offer him resistance. The word "flee" means "to run away in terror". How wonderful! How delicious to see the devil running from us in terror, instead of the other way around! That should be the normal experience of all Christians. That is the normal Christian life, a life that overcomes.

The whole object of satan is to bring us down from the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 2:6) and entangle us into some kind of earthly, fleshly thing that saps us of our strength and diminishes spiritual authority. Knowing this, the Lord has us to pray daily, "Deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13ff). That is to say, "Deliver us from the earthly, the fleshly, the worldly, the carnal, the selfish, the natural, the human, where satan has influence to work evil against us. Deliver us from all that hinders and distracts us, and bring us into the Kingdom of Your dear Son, that we may walk in Spirit and Truth, in the heavenly places, demonstrating your preeminence over all things Below." Brothers and sisters, praying in this way is what it means to resist the devil. He cannot stand before us when we take the high ground and maintain the Lord's Testimony.

If we grow impatient and fall into the flesh then we become weaker. To react in the flesh diminishes spiritual authority, and this must be avoided at all costs. Allowing the flesh to have its way for only a moment guarantees defeat against a spiritual adversary. "We worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3). To lose all confidence in the flesh is to take the higher ground of the Spirit. To meet flesh with flesh means the victory will go to the strongest, and there is always someone stronger than you according to the flesh. Instead, if people come against you in the flesh, let them come against you. If they wish to rail and argue with you according to the flesh, do not respond in kind. If they attack you without cause, let them attack, because the fleshly, the carnal, the natural cannot defeat the spiritual. The one who is submitted to the Lord has authority over those who remain unsubmitted to Him. Flesh is overruled by Spirit. Hate is overruled by Love. Darkness is overruled by Light. Death is overruled by Life. Earth is overruled by Heaven. "He that comes from above is above all" (John 3:31ff).

We offer no resistance, no defense, no argument, no justification to people who mean us harm. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:12a). We resist satan, not the person. We stand against the devil, taking no action against the instruments the devil uses. We submit to God, we offer no resistance to man, but we stand firm against the spiritual adversary. Outwardly, before others, we appear weak. But inwardly, before God, we are strong. "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (II Corinthians 10:3,4). If we war after the flesh then we are emptied of spiritual strength. If we war after the Spirit then we are emptied of fleshly strength. Which will you have, spiritual authority, or fleshly power? You can have either one you want, but you cannot have both.

We face perilous, dangerous times. The secret of spiritual power to see us through these times is humility. The arm of the flesh will fail us. Brothers and sisters, since we cannot avoid weakness, we may as well make the best possible use of it. Let us accept the dealings of the Holy Spirit with us and offer no resistance to Him. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (James 4:10). Amen.

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