



FBCD Women's Theology Study

Do You Believe? by Paul Tripp - Chapters 9 & 10 (Omnipotence)

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THE DOCTRINE OF GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

Omnipotent = all-powerful; almighty; having unlimited power or authority

"To say that God is omnipotent is to say that God is God. The consideration of the power of God will always lead to that age-old rhetorical question, '**Who is a God like our God?**'" (Tripp, 164).

"**Who is like the LORD our God**, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?" (Psalm 113:5-6).

"**Who is like you, O LORD**, among the gods? **Who is like you**, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15:11).

"**Who is a God like you**, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?" (Micah 7:18a).

We can study and learn and train in order to know or do great things, but at some point we always reach a **limit**.

- **God does not study or learn or train, and he has no limits. He simply knows and does whatever he pleases with no effort whatsoever.**
- As scientist Johannes Kepler wonderfully stated, **we can only "think God's thoughts after him."** Because we are made in his image, we get to "share in his own thoughts" when we discover scientific laws or deep patterns in nature.

Power of Creation

- "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).
- "...then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature" (Genesis 2:7).
- Job 38:4-11 - "The 'Where were you?' question is meant to humble Job. It's meant to confront him with the vast difference between him and God. It is meant to confront him with his weakness. God is enabling Job to see that everything in the universe exists and is held together by one thing, the power

of God. It is power that never wonders about capability. It is power that never requires the exercise of effort. It is power with no lack of knowledge or understanding. It is power that never needs instruction or to ask for permission. It is power that is without challenge or rival. It is power that is gloriously autonomous and self-sufficient" (166-167).

- Job 38:34-41 - "The 'Can you?' question of this passage is the ultimate rhetorical question" (167).

Power of Resurrection

"We have all learned that we must accept death because we have a complete lack of power over it. ... We live in a world where every living thing is in the process of dying, and **we can't do a single thing to stop it**" (168).

We have no power over death, but God does. **Resurrection power is at the heart of our faith.**

- "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17).
- Page 169: the biology of resurrection
- "Here's what it means to be almighty: **no effort** was required for Christ to rise again" (169).

Question: Is God's power totally limitless? Can he literally do anything?

God uses his power for his own glory and for the good his people.

"For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14).

"...a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench..."
(Isaiah 42:3).

GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

1. We are all tempted to doubt the power of God.

- "Trust in the power of God is **not passive**. Believing that God is always active, unleashing his omnipotent power for the sake and good of his children, results in stepping out in courage and hope into situations you would otherwise have been paralyzed by or avoided" (174).
- "If you fail to trust in the exercise of God's almighty power on your behalf, you will avoid dealing with things that you assess are outside of the range of your personal power" (176).

- **Questions:** “Where have you been tempted to give up? Where have you quit doing the good things that God calls you to do because they just don’t seem to make a difference? Where have you let your weakness shape your responses to life more than the resurrection power that is yours right now as a child of God?” (177).

2. It is vital that the power of God become a key way you interpret your world and your identity as his child.

- “...it is so important to be aware that a **biblical worldview**, which has an omnipotent God at the center of all things, ruling in power and glory, is absent in the conversation of the culture that beams into your home and into your heart every day” (178).
- **Question:** Whose “wisdom” are you listening to? At street level, who or what shapes the way you think about life?

3. We all need to understand the power of God for our everyday living.

- “It is **not enough** to say that life between the ‘already’ of your conversion and the ‘not yet’ of your homegoing is hard. Here’s what we need to understand and be willing to confess: **the Christian life is impossible**. ... If left to myself, all of these things [of the Christian life] are impossible for me, but the glorious message of the gospel is that **I haven’t been left to myself**” (180-181).
- “God meets our weakness with his power. ... In fact, because of his grace, **our weakness isn’t a curse, but it becomes the doorway** to greater power and potential than we have ever known” (181).
- “The characters in your Bible are not a hall of fame of the strong. No, every man and woman in Scripture, even those who accomplished great things, was like you, a package of weaknesses, **held together and enabled by the grace of the gift of God’s power**” (182).

4. We all need to abandon our delusions of autonomy and self-sufficiency.

- “No one but God is autonomous and self-sufficient. To think and act otherwise never results in good in your life. This means that the move of God’s grace in your life is not from dependence to independence, but **from independence to dependence**. As you grow in grace, becoming more spiritually mature, your eyes open to more of your weaknesses and you become more and more thankful for and reliant upon the grace of God’s power that is at work within you” (183).
- “The gospel of human weakness and divine power doesn’t produce achievement-proud Christians. It produces people who are not only

humble themselves, but who are also **gentle and patient** with the people around them who share their weaknesses" (184).

5. Our problem is with the limits of our faith, not with God's power.

- "Our problem is that we experience moments in life when we seem to lose our theological minds; **we seem to forget who God is** and then lose sight of who we are as his children" (184).
- "You are never in a situation that is bigger than the extent of God's power, and there is never a moment when his power for you and within you is inactive" (184).

6. You and I will not always be happy with the way God exercises his power.

- "There are times when God's exercise of his power for our good doesn't look good to us at all. In power, God will lead us down hard pathways, not because he is angry with us but **because he loves us** and **the hard pathway is a tool of his redeeming grace**" (186).
- "In our dissatisfaction with God, our memory can be selective. ... **Discontent distorts your vision**, causes you to question how God has exercised his power on your behalf, and tempts you to crave what you should not crave, while rejecting what should cause you to be grateful" (188).
- **Question:** Do you respond with gratitude or complaint when you experience what God's power provides for you and where it leads you?

7. God's power is essential to his fathering care for us.

- "As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him" (Psalm 103:13).
- "The fatherhood of God is where boundless love meets unlimited power" (190).

"It is a sweet thing to be liberated from the fear of weakness. It is wonderful to be freed from the burden of acting strong. It is a gift to be freed from being overwhelmed each time you face something bigger than your ability or stronger than your strength. It's freeing to know that **weakness is not a curse, but rather the very thing God uses to produce true strength in us**. True strength does not come from building bigger muscles and exerting more effort. True strength comes when you are no longer afraid of confessing your inability. True strength does not feign power and hide weakness. **The admission of weakness is the doorway to true strength. It is when I quit denying weakness that I begin relying on one of the sweetest gifts of God's grace, his power at work within me**" (191-192).