

Torrey 1998 Can God really do everything?

By Gordon Kirk

[singing 00:00:17-00:05:29.960]

Speaker 1:

Father, thank you for this week that we've gotten to experience. Thank you for all the talented speakers. I just pray that the words that we have learned this week, the things that they've taught us that you've taught us, will draw us closer to you. Pray that we won't leave this conference and impacted, but that we will be able to take this weekend and use it for reflection and just to ultimately serve you probably. Thank you for this week and pray these things in your name.

Amen.

Quick reminder, Dr. Kirks outline notes will be in the chaplain's office and student ministries office. If you go there and leave your name today, they'll be printed up by Tuesday or Wednesday and you'll be able to pick up outlines of all his talks for the Torrey conference. Our distinguished chaplain, Ron Hafer, is on an airplane right now flying out to do speaking for this weekend. So it's my great honor at this point to introduce to you again Dr. Gordon Kirk. And he will be finishing off the Torrey memorial conference for 1998. So welcome him with me. Thank you.

Gordon Kirk:

Well, I believe all my life that God works through a remnant in a really large remnant for the last service on Friday and wrapping things up, so thank you for hanging in and being here. But I also want to thank you for your very gracious sensitivity and interaction and responsiveness. It's been

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a very meaningful time for me to be back on campus. And the different topics that we've worked through, whether it's the morning sessions or the afternoon electives, you have been very, very understanding and responsive.

Good question and answers and time together as I've walked from one place to another. So it's fun to get to know you and great to be able to connect a little bit more on those areas of our of our friendship this morning.

As we begin, I would like us to reflect a moment again on just what the worship team led us into. One of those first songs, as it says, I am, changed in the presence of a holy God. Wow. I mean, that's why we've come. And there's a certain sense where God's word does say to us that there's to be a renewing of our mind, a deeper understanding or a sense of of going deep into what God is said to be true about himself. That will allow us in a very real way to to really understand God and care about him, to understand how much he cares for us and just the hopes and the dreams that he has for us.

A couple of years ago, I read a book called Disciples are Made and Not Born by William Hendrickson. And he made this statement in the book. He said, every problem we have relates to our concept of God. Did you just pause for a moment? I mean, maybe it's even the family in which you were born. You wish that somehow you had different parents or you had a different family, some kind of a change. I still. Something different than what you what you do with dropped. Excuse me, I can tell there was something going on there. It dropped. OK, sorry.

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Thinking back on the issues of your of your parents or your family, and you said, you know, if God had only given me parents like you think about somebody else or maybe you don't know who are your parents and maybe you're adopted. And just wondering if I only knew who were my birth parents or if they were the ones that had helped nurture me and help me grow.

Maybe it relates to even your own physical being. If you were taller or shorter, not so heavy, your different IQ, so much again goes back to how we were made friends. I have a very strong commitment that of the most significant circumstances of our lives. We have control over very few of those. I mean, when you were born and and what family you were born and IQ and some of the major events that have happened within your life, you don't have much areas of choice. But our choice relates to how we respond to the circumstances, how we react or how we work through those issues. There may be moments where all of a sudden, I mean, you feel so alone or something's fallen apart. You're saying, you know, God, where are you? I mean, I prayed about this for months or weeks or maybe even four years. And just that thought, I sort of of of an inactivity of God or lack of him coming alongside and working out some detail or solving some issue or healing some problem. Again, it's God, where are you? What's happening was your power, was your strength.

I'd like you to think for a moment about just some issues that you're wrestling with right now in your life. You may be a problem or a struggle or an issue or a dimension in which all of a sudden there's frustration. Hendrickson says to us, every problem we have relates to our concept of God. And then he stuffs it up one line and he says something like this If your God is small, every problem you have is an obstacle for him to work through. But if our God is big, every problem

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becomes an opportunity to see God work. And that's been part of my passion as I prayed through these days of us being together that there would be a sense of us going deep and the love of God going deep, and the love of Jesus understanding more about what it means that God's spirit's within our lives, and a sense of who is God and what is he said to be true about himself. And so this morning, if you would turn with me to the Old Testament book of Isaiah for a moment, I'd like us to begin to focus on one of those issues that often becomes that obstacle.

A sense of that is God's power. If God's capable, why isn't he doing it? If God's got the ability to make it happen, to pull it off, why is it such a struggle? Why isn't there that sense of us experiencing that and seeing it take place? And so when Isaiah Chapter 40 and versus twenty eight to thirty one, I believe we have somewhat of a prophetic promise. If you're familiar with the book of Isaiah, you may know the first half of Isaiah chapters one through thirty nine are focused on warning of judgment and a sense of potential destruction and even catastrophe, because God's people had turned to idols, God's people and walked away from the ordinances, the commands, the the various instructions that God had given them.

And so in those first thirty nine chapters, at first part of Isaiah, it's a very doom and gloom kind of a message because of their idolatry, because of their prostitution, of their spiritual lives. But beginning in chapter forty of Isaiah and in fact if you look at verse one, just turn your page or look up. The tone changes. He moves to comfort my people, look at verse to speak tenderly or kindly to my people. Verse three, a voice is saying, prepare the way I'll make the way straight. And really the underlying dimension of that is God saying I'm going to do.

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Supernatural work with you. I'm going to come in with my power and there will be a dramatic change that will take place. And so that sense of God's power, that sense of them beginning to trust God's ability is a part of the promise that he gave them in the sense of the hope that they were to have for the future.

Now, look back with me of those last verses of the chapter of Jeremiah of Isaiah, 40. Look with me at verse twenty eight. He begins by saying, Don't you know haven't you heard in the idea this is something that everybody needs to know what? I'm going to tell you something I want everybody to understand and have as a part of his or her life. Matter of fact, if you look back at the Old Testament time and time again, when Israel was in trouble, God would say to the judge to go to the people or the prophet to go to the people or the king, whatever spokesperson he would have. That was always, hey, remember how I chose Abraham and remember what I did with Jacob and remember what took place and that miraculous birth and remember what happened with the Red Sea and remember what I did with my people, Israel through Moses to there's a sense in which God wants to remember those powerful things he's done to give us that hope for his intervening power in whatever circumstance we're in today. I mean, I love it.

When David was confronting Goliath, you remember the scene. He said the God who took care of the bear and the God who took care of the lion. It's going to take care of you, too, you ugly philistine, little paraphrasing there. But that was kind of the idea. But there was a confidence that he had because of what God has done. Can I encourage you in a very sensitive and personal way to at least keep some kind of memory pieces that allow you to see God's hand in your life?

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Some of you love to journal, you love to diary, you love to write and others love you. I mean, a journal just isn't your thing. And there's no words, scripture that says you've got to keep a journal. All right. It's a fun method and helpful. But I do believe Scripture says we should keep some memory pieces and maybe that's some written notes. Maybe that's the letter of acceptance to Talbot or to Biola or to Rosemead or to what school of nursing of that acceptance that you're in the program, that sense of where he supplied certain areas of funding for you.

Man, it was marvelous at that moment. But then about a year later, you know, you're into the real mundane and two years later, I mean, it's really getting tough. And, man, you're ready to walk away and go back and read that letter of acceptance, go back and remember how excited I made it. They accepted me. This is what God called me to do until this point in our lives. When the going gets tough, he says, Don't you remember? Haven't you heard? Can't you call it to mind? Don't forget what I've done for you. Now, with that in mind, look at what he begins to say in the second half of verse twenty eight. Here's what he wants us to remember about God. The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the Earth. Now look at the next phrase, and he will not grow tired or weary friends.

If you're taking some notes as we begin to design some kind of a thought about what how would we define God's omnipotence, I think the first things he says to us is God's power is in exhaustible. He'll never grow weary. He'll never grow tired. I mean, how different that is for us. I mean, we make promises and there's times we can't keep them because we get sick. There's times that we hope we can get four things done this day or finish that twenty five page paper.

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And, you know, we got interrupted with this or something else happened or we couldn't get to the library, we didn't get enough stuff. We just ran out of energy. So often we struggle as human beings because our power, our abilities are not inexhaustible. And so he says this. This is the everlasting God. This is the very Lord. This is the very creator of the universe. And those are powerful Hebrew pieces that he puts together, says he never becomes weary or tired friends. God has never given up because he was unable to fulfill a task. I give it up like that. I just can't do it. I quit. It's oh no, it isn't worth the effort. I haven't got the gifts. I haven't got the ability to walk away from something that he's never done that because there's a lack of power. If I could read again from one of the books that is so mentored me, A.W. told his knowledge of the Holy and I've read from it each time that I've been here in these sessions. And I just would encourage you to make it a part of your life every chapter. Thirty three chapters, I believe. Just a couple of pages each, but they're just packed with biblical thoughts and illustrations about what God says to be true about himself and in this chapter that relates to God's omnipotence.

Listen to what Tozer writes. God possesses what no creature can and incomprehensible plenitude of power, a potency that is absolute. And then he gives this illustration. You see, sovereignty and omnipotence must go together. One cannot exist without the other to reign. God must have power and to reign sovereignly. He must have all power. And that is what omnipotent means, having all power. Now, listen to this. Since God has at his command all the power in the universe, the Lord God, omnipotent, omnipotent, can do anything as easily as anything else.

Now, listen, all his acts are done without effort. Just think of all his acts are done without effort. I love the motion, the dance, the body language that we had this before our first session and as

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they let us in that time of praise and just to be able to see the hand motions at all and the bowing and what took place, and then that moment when all of a sudden as they were talking about how he put the stars in place and just the way they did it with the hands, you know, it is so simple. So it's not like us throwing glitter or confetti around the sense of that.

This and secondly, he expends no energy that must be replenished. Think of that. I mean, I carry a laptop with me and I'm traveling on a plane somewhere. And all of a sudden PBB battery's low. And, you know, I got to plug it in. I've got to replenish it. I've got to change the battery life of my own life. And it go so long and you got to eat. You've got to you've got to rest. You've got to sleep there. Just draw away for vacation moments. We're constantly in need of daily sleep and replenishment, daily food. But listen, let me repeat it. All of God's acts are done without effort. He expense no energy that must be replenished. His self-sufficiency makes it unnecessary for him to look outside of himself for any renewal of strength in that rich. Wow. All the power required to do all that he wills to do lies that undiminished fullness of his infinite being. May I read the verse last portion. The Lord is the everlasting God. He's the creator of the ends of the Earth. He will not grow tired and weary. Wow. He will not look at the next portion, would you? With me, his power is inexhaustible. But look.

Secondly, the next portion of verse twenty eight and his understanding no one can fathom. Wish we had one more session. We could talk about the omnipotence of God, that sense of his knowledge and his wisdom and what he understands. But this one particular section of this verse says his understanding, no one can fathom. Would you jot down as a second understanding of God's very nature, of his power that he has power over his power?

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See, there's an understanding. There is a design. It is a power without control. It is in power that sort of let loose. Does the sense of you of having his power under control that means so much to me because that means we don't just have power without love. You know what that's like? Power without love, power without compassion, power without grace, power without forgiveness, power without kindness. What do you have? Something cruel, something masochistic, something oppressive to. He's got power, but he's not just power. He's also love and mercy and grace and forgiveness and compassion. But he's not just love without power because that often ends up being flimsy or impotent or somewhat weak. It just sort of a lot of love. But there's no actual ability to carry out that love to. That's why we say God is not made up of parts or components or characteristics or traits like where God is love. God is all powerful. God is all knowing. God is grace, and once we begin to grapple with that issue and it goes deep in our soul, there's that sense of unique confidence of what we see.

This morning, I hope as we continue to think about this, God will allow you to begin to trust his power in a brand new way, even in the crises that you're facing, even the hurt that you've gone through with a loss. I think of that Romans eight twenty eight, all things work together for good. I don't want to be trite men and women, but I do believe it doesn't say all things are good. Cancer isn't good, it's part of a sin infected world, but God says, I will even work that disease to a higher good, to an ultimate dimension that goes beyond the pain, the suffering, the crisis, the breakup that you went through, the hurt, the loss, the tears, the emptiness, maybe the angry words and the feelings of all of a sudden being abandoned. That's not good. The God says, in my understanding and in my design, I can take that really bad situation and I could work it together because of my higher purpose and the dimensions of what I have planned for you. Would you be willing to say

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in your heart of hearts this morning, my comprehension is so limited. Got my picture of what's going right now, is so myopic, is so is so small that I'm willing to trust the fact that your ways are inscrutable. I can't fully understand them, but I'll trust you.

Are you willing to say I am the creature and you're the creator? And even though I am in deep pain right now, I'm going to trust you. See, friends, we can't always choose our circumstances. And maybe you didn't choose the breakup. He said the little space a little time. And I just let's just be friends for a while. Or maybe she said it to you. You didn't cause that, you didn't make it. It wasn't your choice, but the issue we have right now is how are we going to respond to every problem we have relates to our concept of God. And if we believe that God has a bigger plan and he says I will work it all together for good, all of a sudden there's confidence as the tears are pouring down our face, friends don't be afraid to cry. I don't know where we've gotten this strange cultural dimension that expressing our feelings, especially crying, is somehow unnatural or uncomfortable.

Let me think about that wonderful passage in Ecclesiastes three. There's a time to be born and there's a time to die. There's a time to plant and there's a time to harvest. And he says there's a time to laugh and there's also a time to cry. You know, I have been in very few settings where someone has apologized for laughing. Now there are the moments, you know, you laugh at the wrong time or a little bit too loud or the goofball is what you quite plan, but just sort of came out and embarrass yourself. But very few. But there was hardly any setting I've been in or somebody begins to cry, Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't plan it. Just a minute. Let me apologize.

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I didn't meet and all of a sudden we're apologizing about our tears. Jesus cried. Paul says about those have already died, don't cry or don't, sorrow's those who have no hope. He never says don't sorrow. As we go through a lot of sorrow, we got through a lot of things of which there are tears. But the question I want to ask you today, based upon what he says, that his understanding we can't fathom, are you willing to step in that sense of trust and that day to day situation that even that loss of a relationship in the emptiness and the tears, the embarrassment now walking alone or not having a date for Friday night or not doing the things that you used to do, and that sense you can say, but, God, you're going to work this together for something greater.

Remember, Joseph, the Old Testament, after he was reunited with his brothers? Sort of the Romans eight twenty eight of the Old Testament, Genesis 50 and verse 20, he said to his brothers, you know what, you meant this for evil, but God has allowed it for a greater, incredible good that none of us even saw at that moment. See, that's the trust factor. But it's got to begin with that on a sense of saying here, the creator God, who never grows weary entire he has understanding that none of us can fathom.

Well, thirdly, would you look with me at verse twenty nine? He says he gives strength to the weary and he increases the power of the weak. You're taking then jotting down. I think it's OK to take off my coat. Right. It's a hot Friday afternoon. If you look at what it says there in that passage, he's saying to us, God's power is active and available for us. He says he gives strength, strength to the weary and increases the power, the weak. And the idea that's there in the Hebrew, it's a part of it's a participle. And he says he keeps on giving strength. He keeps on increasing him that way. It's the idea of an ongoing characteristic of God, not some sporadic dimension. But

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God sake, I want to help you. I want to keep on helping you. I want you to count on my faith. I want you to experience my power in your lives. And then he says, would you look in verses thirty and thirty one? Even youths the young grow tired and weary. Young men stumble and fall. But those who hope and the Lord. [inaudible 00:29:37]

Now friends remember in the context. This is chapter forty two. We're right at the end. And there were times in the earlier parts where Joe would have talked about God, he would have dialog about God. He would have kind of interacted in somewhat of an intellectual basis on a level even with his friends. But after God began to speak to him and God began to confront if there was a sense in which he says, Oh, man, now I know that God can do all things. It was a major transition within Job's life at that moment.

And let me read to you from a book by Gerald Switzer called A Grace Disguised, and he says that this way of of jobs, understanding and thoughts. Listen to this. Jobs story becomes more understandable and meaning to me when I try to stand inside jobs experience, I tremble before the power of jobs, freedom to decide how he was going to respond to his suffering. I also realize that job stopped asking questions not because God was a bully, but because job finally beheld God's unfathomable greatness in his immediate experience. He had spoken about God, but then he came to know God. Wow.

I know that you can do all things. God can do anything, but look at the next phrase and no purpose of yours can somehow be thwarted. You captured that balance. That goes back to the fact that what God's purpose is and plans, as we saw in the in the Isaiah passage, is his

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understanding. No one can fathom. There's a certain sense in which we cannot understand at all. But Jobe says you can do everything psalm. One hundred and forty seven, verse five says Graters, our Lord and abundant in strength. There's the idea of omnia, the abundant, all strength. You are all powerful. And he talks about God being omniscient as well, where he says and your understanding is infinite. You see how he links that constantly. There's a sense of power with God's design because a sense of God's ability with a plan for our lives, because a sense of God's inexhaustible, creative ways, with a sense of his plans and his purposes that are so clear, friends, God has power over his power. That's important for us. Matthew, 19, talking about the rich man you remember and how difficult it is at times for rich people to trust in something other than themselves, he says. Looking to them with people, with human beings, this is impossible.

But notice with God all things are possible. When the angel spoke to Mary, who had not had sexual intimacy with a man who was a virgin, and there was this miraculous conception that took place, he said to her when she said, Hey, how can this happen? I've not known a man. Nothing is impossible with God to the woman, past menopause and past childbearing, to Sarah, to Abraham, and said she was going to have a son and they laughed about it.

Look at the phrase is anything too difficult for God friends? If you were to ask me, how would you define the sense of God's power from a biblical perspective? How would you define omnipotence? I would begin with that phrase. God can do everything, but I need to added that phrase, hopefully a second simple thought.

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But yet I hope it captures the whole theme is consistent with his nature, if you want to add to that, consistent with his nature and his plan. And that's clear for you, that's fine. I kind of include that together with his nature, his designs. But you saw the idea of his designs. Nobody can thwart his plans. And so if I was to define God's omnipotence, the fact that God is all powerful, I would say God can do everything his powers inexhaustible. He's independent, no extra resources. But that which is consistent with all of his nature, no friends. I don't believe that second phrase is a cop out. There's some people who would say, oh, yeah, you're just kind of playing with that. He really can't do everything. Well, I believe the only issues that he can't do it would be those that are self-imposed or self-limitations. Kind of fun as you think about those that you asked to do things. And I noticed you find from time to time you think the person is going to do it for you has no limitations.

I love the little frame that goes that the saying that goes like this, you know, nothing is impossible to the people who don't have to do it themselves. You want it when you wanted that one time. But there's that sense of God in his power. See James chapter one, Verse Thirteen says no one say when he's tempted. I'm tempted by God I will get a notice for God cannot be tempted by evil. See, God is absolutely righteous, absolutely perfect. Not only can he not be tempted by evil, but he will never tempt you with unrighteousness. Second, Timothy, chapter two and verse thirteen says even if we are faithless, he remains faithful.

God cannot deny himself men and women. God will never go back on His promises. He'll never deny himself. Hebrews Chapter six, Verse eighteen The Scripture says it is impossible for God to lie.

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See, those things are based upon his nature, because God is eternal, there's no way you can die, no way you can cease to exist, came across a great little booklet. I know you can't read it from there, but just about this size for the little ones. And it says one hundred and one things God can't underlined do one hundred one things God can't do. Listen to several they have number two is God can't solve to be God can't be given a problem that he can't solve. They use Matthew nineteen twenty six. Jesus said to them, well this is impossible. But with God all things are possible. A third one they say God can't leave you. God said I'm with you, I'll keep you. I'll go with you. I'll never abandon you. God can't forsake you. I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Number nine. God can't stop loving you. I've loved you with an everlasting love and therefore with loving kindness. I've drawn you no. Thirty four. God can't be prejudiced about God so loved the world. I'm deeply concerned in the culture which we live, the ongoing increase of bigotry and prejudice and supremacy. You put whatever race you want with it. Friends, if you really believe the Bible. Our parents are Adam and Eve. If you really believe the Bible, we all came from the same human family. Are there differences? You bet. Other distinctions and cultures you got it is one better than another. No way. Not in God's eyes. For God so loved the world and especially with the church.

He says there's no longer Jew or gentile, male or female, bonders free and yet friends. If I may be very candid with you, as I've heard, quoted a number of different times from different sources. The most segregated hour in the week of our lives is Saturday or Sunday worship. Do you think about that? And yet he says in the church, the comment is, well, you know, I'm an American, Christian and a Christian, I'm a follower of Jesus, I'm an African-American Christian.

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No, no, no, no. I'm a follower of Jesus. I'm African-American. Well, I'm a Korean Christian. No, no, no, no. I'm a follower of Jesus. Maybe Korean friends don't put your ethnic dimension. Don't put your denomination, denomination, denominational mentioned first. That's different people. Well, you know, tell me about your spiritual life. I'm a Presbyterian. I'm a Congregationalists. I'm an evangelical. No, no, no, no, no, no. I'm a follower of Jesus. That's the core. And we could all be secondary and tertiary issues. The friends are there's something God can't do. He can't be prejudice from every nation. He works righteousness for God. So loved the world. And the number one hundred. I love it. It says God can't fail Deuteronomy thirty one six be strong and of good courage. Fear not. Don't be afraid of them for the Lord, your God. He's the one that goes with you and he will not fail you nor forsake you. There's stuff that God can't do because it's impossible for him to go against his nature. Well, let's apply.

Let's just take some moments now and put it all together in some areas that I hope we could live with, we can walk with and we can go deeper with him. Some promises I want you to leave with today, first of all, and we focus on that most important dimension. It's God's power that provides our eternal life, not our works, not our performance. It's the power of God. It's what God has done for us. And it's so clear in scripture, in Romans one verse sixteen, Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. I look at this for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes friends. If you're struggling with issues of Am I a child of God, will I remain that while I make it? Or what will happen when I die? If you're struggling with that, oftentimes that relates to the fact you're trying to put that all upon yourself. Friends, when I stand before God someday and he says, on what basis can I allow you to be a part of my family? It isn't. Well, I went to

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Biola Talbot or I spoke there. I was a pastor. Any of those pieces, it's I have no other argument. I have no other place.

It is enough that Jesus died and that he died for me, for my grace. I'm safe through faith, not of myself, not of my works, not of anything I should most see my confidence is what Jesus did and friends. That is critical. I mean, in one says I'm not an anthropologist. OK, so you make this a better illustration. But friends, in one sense, I want you to realize that even faith is a non-meritorious system. So it isn't my faith that saved me. It's the object of my faith that made the difference.

You and I could go to a little commune where people have sold everything they've had. You know, they've shaved off all their hair. They wear a certain kind of a robe. I mean I mean, they have incredible faith in a particular leader and their faith is shown by sacrificial actions more than you are my sacrifice. And they may even have more faith than you have or I have. To see the issue isn't my faith, my faith is not what saved me. It's the object of my faith friends. Three people died on the cross those days. Thousands of people have died.

A death of crucifixion was even the death. It was the person who died, the God man. Jesus Christ. My salvation is based on that power, not the fact that somebody died or somebody was martyred for my faith. That's why I believe in John. Jesus uses that wonderful illustration. Unless you eat of my body and you drink of my blood and I'll share with you some of my personal theological pieces. But I don't believe that that means somehow that that that the wine or the juice has to become blood or the or the bread has to become the actual body of Jesus. I'm not big

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on that piece, but I think what he's saying to us there is your faith is like eating. So eating is a non-meritorious activity. If you eat a power bar, there's a lot of strength. The cups, you drink some kind of poison and you're going to die.

So it's not the eating that saves you. It's not the drinking that makes it. It's what you eat or what you drink. And that's the critical dimension that begins to build that sense of confidence that my salvation is based on the power of God, based on what God has done for me through Jesus Christ, not on myself, not on my own works. I love it the way Paul puts it. The First Corinthians six, 14, he says now, God has not only raised the Lord because this, but he'll also raise us up resurrection. What through his power.

See, that's our hope. I mean, no greater display of power has ever been given that when God raised Christ from the dead. But you realize there will be an equal demonstration of power when we are resurrected. So that's the power of God. And first and foremost, remember, God's power is displayed in that sense of wanting to give us confidence through eternal life. But also his power wants to help us in the daily enticements that we face, that daily struggle of are we going to compromise or are we going to sin? And God says, I want to help you with that. I love Hebrews two one verse 18, where it says four. Since he himself was in that which he has suffered, he is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

That's the God and we worship who says as that moment of enticement comes into your life, I want to be there to help you, not to compromise. And that moment of temptation is so real. I want to help you not to sin, friends. I hope you've been through scripture enough to realize that

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with confidence that temptation in and of itself is not sin. Then for years that bugs me. I mean, my high school days especially, I mean, a thought would come into my mind, a tempting idea whether it was an issue of sexuality or lust or steal something or cheat on this or lie about something.

I mean, that thought would come to me and I just felt, man, I would just sitting and sitting and sitting and sitting all the time, friends. The initial thought, that moment idea, that sense to sort of hear that or all of a sudden were enticed. That is not sin. I mean, think of it. You remember Jesus. I mean, Satan came to him and said, turn these stones into bread. He heard that just as clearly as you may hear in your mind. You may think through something. You may visualize something.

See, that moment of temptation in and of itself is not sin. Billy Graham and one of his books wrote to the moment that you see that person and they walk by you and you find them attractive, that moment of attraction is not sin. But if you either turn around and you follow them and you undress them in your mind or you move through some kind of a sexual situation within your mind or you act on that, then you've moved into lust and you moved into sin. But the moment that thought that comes into your mind, Jesus gave us the wonderful patter, remember, of what he heard a scripture came alongside.

And I just would encourage you whatever area that maybe you struggle, maybe it's very anger that turns to rage or issues of criticism and sarcasm or areas of sexual impurity or aspects of wanting to cheat or to lie about something or areas of not wanting to tell the truth in different

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situations or whatever a temptation comes to take your own life. Have you memorized a particular portion of scripture that may talk about your value and God's design for you or talk about the importance of sexual purity or talk about the importance of integrity or honesty?

I mean the Psalmist said your word. Have I memorized the word of I had in my heart, but that I might not sin against you? Hey, the temptation comes and at that moment it's neutral and you've got a choice to either act on it and act it out attitudinally, acted out physically, move through it and action whatever, or to respond with scripture and ask God to help you not to move in the lust and the sin. But God says, I want to come along and help you with that. I want to come to your assistance.

I love that passage in First Corinthians, it says There was no temptation common to all of us that he will not provide a way of escape. That's the God that we love, that Jew doxology. Now to him, who is able to keep us from stumbling and to help us stand in the presence of his glory, blameless, with great joy to the only God, our savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord glory and majesty and dominion and authority. Yeah, he says, I want to help keep you from sin. I want you to know it's my power that gives you eternal life. And then thirdly, he says, I want you to have a confidence that I can supply your needs and we need God's strength. We've got so many limitations. We need God's power.

I love Ephesians chapter three verses twenty and twenty one, where he says now to him, who is able that's our God to do exceedingly abundantly beyond wow. All that we ask or think. Look at

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the next phrase. According to the power that works in us, the moment we name the name of Jesus Christ, God's spirit comes into us.

And Jesus said he'll come and he'll never leave you. And he says, you can draw on that power to help you, that power to give you strength. Do you remember when Daniel, with his friends, the Shadrack Marchek and a Bendigo or Hennan I and Michelle Azariah, which were their real names, remember, as they face that fiery furnace? I mean, they said if it be so that we're going in this furnace, our God who we serve is able they knew his power. They trusted his power. He can deliver us from the furnace and the blazing fire and deliver us out of your hand. OKing see, that's the confidence God wants us to have.

God can do everything but the very next verse, verse eighteen. Look at this. But even if he doesn't. See, that's the inscrutable part of it, that's the fact that we read in verse twenty eight his understanding no one can fathom. Daniel and his friends knew that they knew that God was able. But he said even if he doesn't, their belief is God's got a plan. He would have a purpose in our death. He might have a wider understanding in the martyrdom or what we would go through. And he says, let it be known to you, OK, we're not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you set up.

See, Daniel did not indicate that God didn't have the power or God was incapable or God was impotent, but rather God's ways are beyond my ways. Lord, your thoughts are beyond my thoughts. And Second Corinthians 12 in verse nine, he says, with such sensitivity, my grace is

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sufficient for you. Your powers perfected a weakness. I look at it most gladly. Therefore, I will rather boast about my weakness that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

I'd like you to relax, and I'd like to close with a couple of pages from this book called A Grace Disguised. This is written by Gerald Switzer, who's been a prophet, I believe. Whitworth College. Yes, in Spokane, Washington. I want to read to you a little bit about his life because he went through a almost indescribable crisis within his family. Would you listen to this? I remember those first moments after the accident as if everything was happening in slow motion. They're frozen to my memory with a terrible vividness. After recovering my breath, I turned around to survey the damage. The scene of the accident was chaotic. I remember the look of terror on the faces of my children, the feeling of horror that swept over me when I saw the unconscious and broken bodies of my wife, Linda, my four year old daughter Diana, and Jane, my mother. I remember getting Catherine, then eight and David then seven and John two out of the van through my door, the only one that would open.

I remember taking pulses and doing mouth to mouth resuscitation, trying to save the dying and calm the living. I remember the feeling of panic that struck my soul as I watched my wife, Linda, my mother. And my four year old Diana, I'll die before my eyes. I remember the pandemonium that followed, people gawking, lights flashing them from emergency vehicles, a helicopter whirring overhead, cars lining up, medical experts doing what they could. I remember the realization sweeping over me that I would soon plunge into a darkness from which I might never emerge as a sane, normal, believing man.

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In the hours that followed the accident, the initial shock gave way to unspeakable agony. I felt dizzy with grief's vertigo. I felt cut off from family and friends and tormented. By the Los. I was nauseous from the pain. He then writes this as he talks about this book. This book is not intended to help anyone, anyone get over or even through the experience of catastrophic loss. I believe that recovery from such loss is an unrealistic and even harmful expectation if by recovery we mean resuming the way we lived and felt prior to the loss.

Instead, this book is intended to show how it is possible to live in and be enlarged by loss, even as we continue to experience it. That's why I will emphasize the power of response. Response involves the choices we make, the grace we receive, and ultimately the transformation we experience in the loss. Now listen to this. If we face loss squarely and respond to it wisely, we will actually become the healthier. You see, it's not the experience of the loss that becomes the defining moment of our lives for that's as inevitable as death.

It's the last loss awaiting us, but rather it's how we respond to the loss that matters. That response will largely determine the quality, the direction and the impact on our lives. Now, listen to towards the end of the book where he talks about how he finally began to respond. He says there's a story line in the life of Joseph that helps us see God's transcendent purpose, remember his ways nobody can fathom. His purposes are beyond our understanding.

Although Joseph suffers loss at the hands of his brothers, all the while, God is planning to use Joseph's experience to move his family to Egypt and to save millions of people, Joseph had no idea that this story, his story fits this larger plot.

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As it turns out, however, Joseph's life doesn't consist of a succession of isolated events randomly strung together, but rather a story with a purpose that he didn't see at the moment and maybe never entirely understand, the story of Joseph helps us believe that our own tragedies can be a very bad chapter in a good book. Very bad chapter in a good book, Gerald, sister of the loss of his mother and his wife and his daughter then writes this I have often imagined my own story fitting into some greater scheme, the half of which I may never fathom. I simply do not see the bigger picture, but I choose to believe that there was a bigger picture and that my loss is part of some bigger story authored by God himself. I do not know yet. I choose to believe that God is working towards some ultimate purpose of even using my own loss.

To that end, Thornton Wilder suggests in the eighth day that we should understand or understand our lives as a great landscape that extends far beyond what the eye of our experience can see. Who knows how one experience so singularly horrible could set in motion a chain of events that will bless future generations? Loss may appear to be random, but that does not mean that it is. It fits into a scheme that surpasses even what our imaginations dare to think. Friends in the weaknesses that we're going through right now, every problem we have, every weakness we struggle with relates to our concept of God. And I would say in most situations, the circumstance of weakness you're going through right now, you didn't choose it.

The issue now is how will we respond, God says in that week, I want you to feel my power in that brokenness. I want you to see my healing power. God can do everything. According to his purpose and his nature, would you go with me, please? Right now, would you have the courage

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to run the risk? Based upon what we see of God's power and the fact that we can't understand the fact that we can't understand the depths of his wisdom, his plans.

Would you just lay that weakness at his feet and say, God, I can't do it? Maybe it's compulsive behavior, maybe there's some addictions in your life and you feel so and you've tried. Maybe there's an eating disorder or a sexual addiction or suicidal tendencies. Maybe it's a loss of a family member or some kind of a crisis you've gone through by way of death or disease. Maybe it's the see on the paper or the deed that you got. He had never studied as hard and put as much time into it. And all of a sudden, here's a circumstance you didn't plan. Maybe it's a roommate that you never would have chosen. And now it's three to a room and it's a whole semester yet ahead and it seems insurmountable.

Just reach out to wherever that is and say, God, here's my weakness. I want to experience your power. Here's where I'm tempted. Come to my assistance. Lord God, help us to live. With that unique sense of the complexity of your inexhaustible power. And you're unfathomable designs. Because we want to know we want you to act the way we want it to happen. And you've got bigger plans. So, Lord, we bow as we sang a few moments ago at your feet. Saying your ways are not our ways. And your thoughts are not our thoughts. But thank you for your love and your presence in your power. So when we go through that tough time, that weakness, you'll strengthen us. Or we want to grow deep in that confidence, and I would ask that as we share that with other people, it becomes a magnet to draw people to your love and your care. God bless each here today and allow what we've seen from your word and heard from illustration by your spirit. Bring it back to our minds to apply it in the name of Jesus.

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