

ESSENTIAL CONNECTION

DEVOTIONS FOR STUDENTS

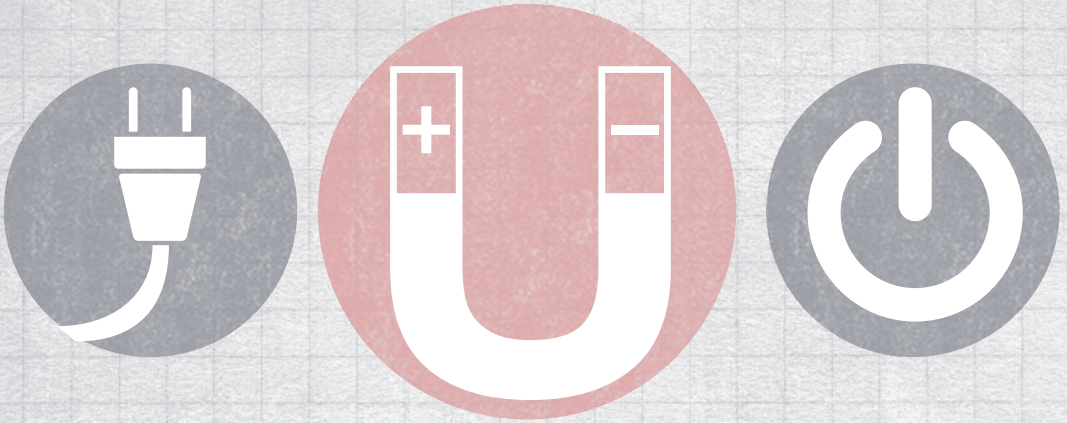


OMNIPOTENT
OMNIPRESENT

OCTOBER 2013

OMNISCIENT
PERSONAL

OMNIPOTENT



OMNIPOTENT

(OF A DEITY) HAVING UNLIMITED POWER; ABLE TO DO ANYTHING.

MEMORY VERSE

Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us— to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

—*Ephesians 3:20–21*

TUESDAY

10.1

BEHIND THE STORY

In Scripture, Israel has long been referred to as the bride of God (Isa. 54:5; 62:5; Jer. 31:32). Here, the Lamb is Christ, and the bride is the church—people from all nations who have been redeemed by Jesus' blood. This marriage marks God's complete and final victory and symbolizes eternal fellowship with Him.



THE POINT

Nothing can compare to God's power. He is all-powerful and the absolute Ruler who will reign forever. His omnipotence calls for our praise.

ABSOLUTE POWER

PAUSE

Begin your quiet time by considering this quote by A.W. Tozer: "The heaviest obligation lying upon the Christian Church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God until it is once more worthy of Him." Ask God to elevate your understanding of who He is.

Think about the most powerful person you know. Why did you pick him or her? List the things that make that person so powerful.

Read Revelation 19:6-8 in your Bible. As you read, consider what this passage teaches you about God's power.

Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying: Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty, has begun to reign!
—*Revelation 19:6*

- The word translated "Almighty" in verse 6 is the Greek word *pantokratōr*, which means "He who holds sway over things," or "the ruler of all." Why would the multitude choose this word to describe God? Explain.
- These verses posit that God is over all, the absolute Ruler, and all-powerful. Why is it vital that we understand that this is a component of God's character?

RESPOND

When was the last time you praised God for His power? Today, spend some time focusing on the Almighty God, His unlimited power, and His everlasting reign. Record your praises below.

For further study of God's absolute power, read through Isaiah 40-41, focusing on all the examples of God's power and rule.

WEDNESDAY

10.2

BEHIND THE STORY

Today's passage is Nebuchadnezzar's repentant response to being exiled by God in the wilderness like a wild animal for an extended period of time. This punishment came about because of the king's pride. History seems to affirm this. While kings avoided mentioning weaknesses or failures in their accounts, Nebuchadnezzar's annals are notably silent between the years of 582-575 B.C.

THE KING OF KINGS

PAUSE

Take a moment to consider the power that world leaders wield. Thank God that He is all-powerful, but also all-wise and absolutely good.

Read Daniel 4:34-37 in your Bible. As you read, look for phrases that explain or describe God's great power. Underline them when you find them.

All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and He does what He wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can hold back His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?"

—Daniel 4:35

Ask yourself:

- What does it mean to say that God does "whatever He wants" with the inhabitants of heaven and earth? What does that teach you about His power and sovereignty?
- Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan king, well-versed in the ways of the world. How does His praise for God compare or contrast with what the world says or believes about Him today?

THE POINT

Despite what the world says or how they belittle or ignore God's power and right to rule, He is all-powerful. In an uncertain world, we can trust our powerful God.

RESPOND

- These verses teach us that no one has the wisdom or might to challenge God's power. He has divine dominion over all in heaven and on earth. Ponder these questions: What would it be like to serve a God who didn't have complete dominion? Would He be worthy of your worship?
- Thank God that He is all-powerful and you don't have to worry about the things you don't understand or can't control. Lift them up to Him today and thank God for knowing what best accomplishes His plans.
- For further study, read Jeremiah 29:10-14 and Romans 8:28, then consider God's good use of His omnipotence.

MEMORY VERSE

Using the calendar app on your smartphone or on your computer, input Ephesians 3:20-21 into the notes, then set an alert to remind you to study the verse two to three times a day.

THURSDAY

10.3

BEHIND THE STORY

God asked Jeremiah to do some pretty strange things to serve as signs to the people of Israel. This passage is no exception. God told Jeremiah to buy a plot of land that was about to be destroyed by the invading Babylonians. This field would serve as a sign to the people that although God was allowing the Babylonians to capture Jerusalem, He would one day allow His people to return to reestablish their homeland.

MISSION POSSIBLE

PAUSE

Think about the situations, circumstances, or relationships in your life that seem impossible right now. Ask God for the strength to trust in His power, even over what seems impossible.

“Look, I am Yahweh, the God of all flesh. Is anything too difficult for Me?”

—Jeremiah 32:27

Using a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the most difficult, rate how tough each of the following actions would be for you to accomplish:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make an A in Calculus | <input type="checkbox"/> Write a book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heal someone suffering from cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> Build a car from scratch |

Now, go back and rate how difficult each action would be for God if He chose to accomplish these things.

Read Jeremiah 32:17,26-27 in your Bible. Consider these questions:

- Look at verse 17, then re-read verse 27. How are they similar?
- God affirmed Jeremiah's assertion that nothing is impossible with God. Why is it important for believers to know that nothing is too difficult for God? Explain.
- God had asked Jeremiah to do something that seemed impossible, doomed even. Jeremiah did it, even though he was doubtful. When have you seen someone trust God even when they were unsure where He was leading? What did you learn?

THE POINT

Nothing is impossible or too difficult for our all-powerful God. Our lives aren't dependent on what seems impossible; they're based on a God who is able to do what seems impossible.

RESPOND

- Think about those situations or relationships in your life that feel impossible or too difficult for anyone to restore. One by one, lift them up to God today, repeating Jeremiah's familiar phrase: *Nothing is too difficult for You!*
- Write a note to God promising to trust Him and His power when He asks you to do things, whether they seem difficult or impossible.

FRIDAY

10.4

BEHIND THE STORY

In context, this passage records an event that happened after the people had made the golden calf. Because of their disobedience, God had declared that the people would wander in the wilderness for 40 years, until the unfaithful generation was gone. During the wandering, God supplied food in the form of manna, but the people complained that they wanted meat—and God provided it. Read Numbers 11 in its entirety for more.

THE POINT

Because God is all-powerful, His power isn't limited. He is able to do whatever He has promised.

NO LIMITS

PAUSE

Find a quiet place outside for today's devotion. Get away from everything that could distract you from God and His Word. Ask Him to open your eyes and heart to what He wants to teach you.

Think about all your knowledge, skills, and talents. Now, consider your limits in those areas. Is there a mathematical concept that's past your understanding? Is there a level when your athletic skills just don't match up?

Put down a few ideas.

We all have our limits, but God's power isn't limited. He is able to do what He promises. **Read Numbers 11:21-23** to learn more.

The LORD answered Moses, "Is the LORD's power limited? You will see whether or not what I have promised will happen to you."
—Numbers 11:23

Read verse 23 again carefully and respond to these questions:

- What was the only solution Moses could see to the problem of feeding that many people? Was it the only option?
- How many of the possible solutions do you think God is able to see? And how many of those solutions is He capable of making happen? Explain.
- Does the knowledge that God sees all possible scenarios and is capable of doing whatever He chooses affect the amount of trust you have in Him? If so, how?

RESPOND

- Are there situations or circumstances in your life in which you're doubting God's ability to act or the promises of His Word? Be honest with Him about those things today. Pray over them, then write a statement of your commitment to trust Him completely below.

- For further study, read Ephesians 3:20 and Philippians 4:19.

MEMORY VERSE

Take advantage of your downtime. When you're waiting for class to begin, driving, doing chores, or whatever, use the time to repeat and think about Ephesians 3:20-21.

IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

PAUSE

One of the most seemingly impossible things God has made possible is salvation. Spend a few minutes thanking God for doing the impossible in your life.

Read Matthew 19:23-26 and Luke 18:24-27 in your Bible. Both of these passages are accounts of the same event.

How are they alike? How are they different?

If you had to pick the key point of these passages, what would it be? Write it below in your own words.

In Jesus' day, the Jews understood wealth to denote God's blessing. (See "Behind the Story" for more.) The disciples' question reflects this concept. They were confused because if those who were the most blessed by God were going to have a hard time getting into heaven, who stood a chance? Re-read Matthew 19:26 and Luke 18:27 to see Jesus' answer.

But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
—Matthew 19:26

He replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."
—Luke 18:27

Ask yourself:

- Why is salvation impossible in our own power?

- If nothing is impossible for God, even regenerating our sinful hearts, is anyone too far from God to be saved? Is any sin too great? Why or why not?

RESPOND

- If you are a Christian, take stock of the ways you may be trying to earn God's favor or be more worthy of His salvation. Rest in the fact that your salvation isn't based on your works, but made complete and possible in Christ. Pray about the ways you see yourself trying to earn God's favor and reaffirm your commitment to trust Christ alone.
- If you are not a believer, know that salvation is a gift you can't earn. Because God is all-powerful, no sin is too great, and no one is too far away for God to reach. Let go of the sin you think defines you and turn to Christ today. Read "The Gospel" on page 2 for more.

BEHIND THE STORY

During this time period, Jewish leaders commonly taught that riches were a sign of God's blessing and poverty meant God was angry at someone's sin. But Jesus turned this concept upside down. Jesus' point wasn't really concerned with wealth or poverty, but the source of righteousness. None of us have what it takes to enter the kingdom of God on our own merit. We need Jesus.

THE POINT

Only God can save people from their sin. You are saved by grace through God's limitless power.

SUNDAY

10.6

MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE

PAUSE

What do you imagine the next week or year will be like? What do you pray God will do in your life in the future? Spend some time reveling in and praising a God who can do more than you can ask or imagine.

BEHIND THE STORY

As in many of his letters, Paul began Ephesians by laying a doctrinal foundation, then outlined how believers could practically live that out. This prayer of praise ends part 1 of Ephesians, focused on the role of the church. Chapters 4-6 explain how those within the church should live out their faith, withstand spiritual warfare, and build unity in the church.

Read Ephesians 3:14-21. These verses are Paul's extended prayer for the Ephesians. Paul knew that there were numerous benefits that came from knowing God, and he prayed that the Ephesian believers would come to know and live in the power of those benefits. As you read, underline or highlight the benefits Paul mentioned.

Focus on verses 20-21.

Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us— to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

—Ephesians 3:20-21

Focuses on God's sovereignty and power. He is able to do whatever He wills.

Some translations render this "ask or imagine" (NIV). What God can do far exceeds anything we could dream up, much less ask for. How does this compare with your view of God? Explain.

The power of the living God which raised Christ from the dead. How do you see that power at work in the world? In your life?

RESPOND

- Meditate on this thought: *I live, work, and fulfill God's mission out of His power at work in me, not my own.*
- Are there situations or instances in your life where you feel God urging you to step out in His power to do His work in the world? What steps will you take to do so? List two you will commit to follow through with this week.
- For further study, listen to Sarah Sadler's version of the song "How Deep the Father's Love For Us." Think about all that God has done and all He is capable of accomplishing in your life. Praise Him for His power and strength.

MEMORY VERSE

Write Ephesians 3:20-21 on an index card. Highlight the key phrases or write them in different colors. Place it somewhere you'll see it several times a day.

THE POINT

God is capable of doing far more than we could ever imagine. And as believers, His power is at work in us.

MONDAY

10.7

UNSTOPPABLE

PAUSE

Look back over the last several days of devotions and think about the infinite scope of God's power. As you pray for that power to be on display in your life, let your body reflect your awe. Kneel, lie face down, or otherwise express your response.

In your Bible, **read Ephesians 1:15-23**. Then, read aloud verses 18-19.

I pray that the perception of your mind may be enlightened so you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the glorious riches of His inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His vast strength.

—*Ephesians 1:18-19*

- According to these verses, what three things was Paul praying that Christians would comprehend?
- The word "enlightened" comes from the Greek *phōtizō*, which means "illuminated" or "to shed light on." "Perception" comes from a word that has to do with the eye. Why would Paul pray so passionately that believers would see the hope we have in Christ, focus on His riches, and understand the magnitude of God's power?

RESPOND

- Think about your life, your family, your church, and the world in general. In what ways do you, your family, your church, and the world need to see God's power and trust in it? How would resting in His power change these situations? List a few ideas.
- Write out your own version of Paul's prayer, asking God to help you to focus on His hope and riches and to rest in the magnitude of His power—in your life, church, or even the world. Ask Him to help you live out these truths this week and always.

BEHIND THE STORY

For the Jews, the heart was considered to be the core of a person's personality, the seat of morality and judgment.

Therefore, flooding the heart with light pictures a complete change in the way a person thinks, lives, and reasons.

THE POINT

Because of God's great power, we can live confident lives. We know that God is working according to His purposes and nothing can overwhelm or deter Him.