

# Make Disciples 6

MAKE DISCIPLES

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## THE PARADOXICAL PRINCIPLE OF 100%/100%

### Review:

#### The [Three Tenses of Salvation](#)

The meaning of the word **synergy** (syn = with + ergos = work) meaning working together

Understanding that sanctification involves a "sacred synergy" - but not like 2 horses pulling a wagon, both pulling equal weight. Clearly the Holy Spirit is omnipotent and frankly we would not even want to pull or have the power to pull if He did not first enable us. Our fallen flesh is still strong and the war between the fallen flesh and the indwelling Spirit wages daily (even moment by moment) in our physical bodies, Paul writing "the flesh ([present tense](#) = continually) sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition ([antikeimai](#) in [present tense](#) = are continually hostile and opposed) to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." (Gal 5:17+). Here is the same verse in the NLT = "The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions."

We have previously discussed this little prefix "**sun/syn**" in **synergy**. As we discussed **SYN** speaks of intimacy (think of it as the "baked cake word" = ingredients used to make the cake mixed together and inseparably, "intimately" mixed and then baked) rather than **meta** which means side by side (as the ingredients of the cake sitting side by side before mixing and baking). And previously discussed an important verse for our walk of holiness, or progressive sanctification is Phil 2:12-13 which says...

**work out** ([present imperative](#) - command to continually work out) your salvation with fear and trembling; for (term of explanation) God (Spirit of Christ) is working ([energeo](#) in [present tense](#) - continually "energizing") in you, giving you the **desire** (the "want to" because our fallen flesh does not "want to") and the **power** ([energeo](#) in [present tense](#) - continually energizing or empowering you) to do what pleases him. (Php 2:12+, Php 2:13 NLT+)

**So can you see the divine pattern?** As believers we are commanded on one hand to continually work out our salvation. On the other hand God is continually working in us to enable us to work out our salvation by (1) giving us the desire and (2) the power to accomplish what He commands. Our part/His part. Our responsibility/God's sovereignty. We *work out* what God *works in*. So while we are responsible to work, we are only able to WORK OUT what the Spirit of God WORKS IN our heart (continually energizing and giving us the Desire and Power). We work intimately with (aka "**SYN**") the Spirit's enabling power. In our daily struggles, one might say we are enabled to kill "**SIN**" by relying on "**SYN**" (our intimate union with the Spirit of Christ) which is the very principle Paul teaches in Romans 8:13 writing "if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." For now notice the same pattern in Romans 8:13 - God's sovereign provision = "By the Spirit" and our responsibility = "you are putting to death..." Notice that this is not "Let go, let God" which is not Scriptural. Instead it is more like "Let God and let's go!" (See related discussion with quote from Jerry Bridges on the role of the Spirit).

A synonym of synergy is [cooperation](#) (from Latin **co** = with + **operari** = to work) which means to work with another, acting together towards the same end (in our case the end is being conformed to the image of God's Son Ro 8:29+). Toward this end, the Spirit is not just our *Helper* (or better "*Enabler*") but He is also our "*Transformer*", changing us from one degree of glory to another into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. And what is our part in this transformation process (day to day progressive sanctification also known as "present tense salvation")? Our responsibility is to continually behold His glory, and His glory is most clearly revealed in the Word of Life (2Cor 3:18+). In light of the truth that our sanctification is a synergistic, cooperative work, it begs several questions -

### AM I "COOPERATING" WITH THE SPIRIT? AM I KEEPING IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT (Galatians 5:25NIV+)?

Am I seeking to continually be filled with the Spirit each morning (Eph 5:18+, see also the importance of being filled with His Word), so that I might obey the Father's command to continually walk by His Spirit (Gal 5:16+)?

Am I willing to lay down my rights and my will and willingly be led throughout the day by the Spirit (Gal 5:18+, Ro 8:14+)?

Am I *daily trying* to live this supernatural life in my own strength or am I *daily dying* to self that Christ might live His life through me by His indwelling Spirit (Gal 2:20+)?

In whom am I trusting in live the Christ life? Remember that **self-confidence** is weakness, because it seeks no help from God. On the other hand **self-distrust** is strength when it casts itself upon the Spirit's all sufficient power. We see this principle in Paul's great affirmation...

And He (JESUS) has said to me, "My grace (TRANSFORMING POWER) is sufficient (ADEQUATE, ENOUGH) for you, for (MY) power ([dunamis](#)) is perfected in (YOUR) weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that (PURPOSE) the (SUPERNATURAL) power ([dunamis](#)) of Christ may dwell (CHRIST'S POWER TAKING UP RESIDENCE) in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor 12:9, 10+)

## 100% DEPENDENT 100% RESPONSIBLE

Let's look at Scriptures which validate this principle in both the Old and New Testaments...

### First the Old Testament...

Ps 127:1 (A Song of Ascents, of Solomon)

Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in **vain** who build it.

Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in **vain**.

2 It is **vain** for you to rise up early,

To retire late,

To eat the bread of painful labors;

For (term of explanation) He gives to His beloved even in his sleep

### Let's analyze Psalm 127 by asking what is a key word? **vain**

Note that the Septuagint translates labor with **kopiaio** which means to work to the point of exhaustion! And yet without the LORD, we may work very hard but it is worthless, useless, empty!

### What relationship do you observe about God and man in regard to building a house or guarding a city?

It is vain to build or guard unless God does it. We are dependent on Him.

### What is the message of this OT passage?

The verse's message is that the Lord doesn't merely help the builder and the watchman. He is totally involved with each one. They are **working together** (synergism, cooperation). Jehovah supplies 100% of the enabling power, and the builder and watchmen do 100% of the tangible work. The message is clear that if you do not have Jehovah intimately involved in your endeavor, it will come to naught which reminds us of Jesus' words in John 15:5! Applying this principle to living out the walk of sanctification, we need to daily confess that our efforts are simply not enough -- we must have the Spirit intertwined with our efforts or they will be fraught with frustration. I might add that Ps 127:1 is imminently applicable to our marriages and our role as parents. We need to learn to lean hard on Jesus. And this means we need to be humble enough to realize and admit that without Him **we can do nothing!** (Jn 15:5)

**Jerry Bridges** writes "In monergism (mono = alone + ergos = work) the Spirit works alone. In synergism He enables us to work. But whether it's the Holy Spirit working alone or enabling us to work, all spiritual growth (transformation, growth in Christ-likeness) is (ultimately) the result of His work. We cannot make one inch of progress apart from Him."

Puritan **John Owen** wrote "The actual aid and internal operation of the Spirit of God is necessary to produce **EVERY** holy act of our minds, wills, and emotions in every duty whatsoever. Notwithstanding the power or ability that believers have received by the principle of new life implanted at salvation, **they still stand in need of the divine enablement of the Holy Spirit in every single act or duty toward God.**" (You may want to read that last sentence again -- if you are like me, your old fleshly pride chaffs at that truth!) (Paraphrased)

## NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF 100% MY RESPONSIBILITY, 100% SPIRIT'S PROVISION

Let's look at a NT examples that illustrate the paradoxical principle of 100% our responsibility and 100% Spirit enablement. So before you read the explanatory notes, read through each passage with the objective of observing man's responsibility and God's provision.

- (1) Romans 8:13-14
- (2) 1 Corinthians 15:9-10
- (3) Philippians 4:11-13
- (4) Colossians 1:27-29
- (5) 1 Peter 4:10-11
- (6) Philippians 2:12-13

### ROMANS 8:13-14

The venerable British expositor **Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones** said the following regarding the importance of Romans 8:12-13 - "These are the crucial verses with regard to this old problem around which there is and has been for a number of years a good deal of controversy (he is speaking of progressive sanctification)." Listen to his sermon [A Call for Action - Romans 8:12-13](#). [Memorize](#) Romans 8:12-14 so that in the Spirit you can [meditate](#) on it and [pray](#) it to the Father and the Spirit can use it to transform you from glory to glory (2 Cor 3:18+)! Your walk of holiness will never be the same!

**Romans 8:13-14+** - for if you are living (present tense = habitually = the "direction" of your life!) according to (Greek = kata which conveys the idea of subject to, dominated by or under the power of) the flesh (the old "Adamic nature" - anti-God inclination), you must (will) die; but (term of contrast = striking contrast - What's the change of direction?) if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For (term of explanation = What's Paul explaining?) all who are (present tense = habitually) being (divine passive) led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

**NLT** (New Living Translation - a good paraphrase but not optimal for inductive Bible study) is helpful -

"For if you live by its **dictates** (I like this verb because it depicts the flesh as a ruthless dictator that seeks to draw us into bondage), you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live."

### IN Ro 8:13 WHAT IS THE BELIEVER'S RESPONSIBILITY? WHAT IS THE SPIRIT'S PROVISION?

Our **responsibility** is to put sin to death (cf Paul's command in Col 3:5KJV+). The Spirit's **provision** is that He enables us, giving us the **desire** to kill sin and the **power** to kill sin (see Phil 2:13NLT [below](#)). Notice that "putting to death" is which means this is a daily "activity" (even moment by moment), because as we have learned in Galatians 5:17+, there is an ongoing, unceasing war within our body.

**Puritan John Owen** asked "Do you mortify? Do you make it your daily work? Be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; **be killing sin or it will be killing you**...Let no man think to kill sin with few, easy, or gentle strokes. He who hath once smitten a serpent, if he follow not on his blow until it be slain, may repent that ever he began the quarrel. And so he who undertakes to deal with sin, and pursues it not constantly to the death....The vigor and power and comfort of our spiritual life depends on our mortification of deeds of the flesh." (If you have never read Owen's classic, you might consider reading [Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers](#)). (See [Owen's full book in modern English](#))

### HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT?

You are **enabled** to put to death those godless deeds the flesh tempts you to carry out (James 1:14+, cf 1 Pe 2:11+ where "wage war" = present tense = continually). The fallen flesh continually sets "its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit (continually sets its desire) against the flesh, for these (two) are in (continually) opposition to one another" until the day our body is glorified! (Gal 5:17+).

### WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY IF WE ARE BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT?

Yield, follow, submit, die to self, surrender to the Spirit. Our responsibility is to be willing to manifest a willingness to be led by Him.

## WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE SONS OF GOD?

We are continually putting to death sin (as our habitual practice). And remember this is about "direction" not "perfection!" Conversely, those who are not sons of God give evidence by continually "living according to the flesh!"

## AS AN ASIDE, WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE IN GALATIANS 5 THAT WE ARE BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT?

Paul gave us a general checklist of evil deeds in Galatians 5:19-21-note and he says "the deeds of the flesh are **evident**." In other words these deeds are not hard for us to recognize. And notice that some of these sins are not of the more "gross" variety ("enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying"). On the other hand the fruit of the Spirit is described in Gal 5:22-23-note. The upshot is that we by doing a personal inventory we can discern whether we are putting sin to death by the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, or being led by the Spirit. And since sanctification is a process (not an arrival), while our life should evidence a steady decrease in the sins in Gal 5:19-21 and a steady increase in the fruit in Gal 5:22-23. But don't place yourself under the law if you fail. Put it under the "blood," confessing your failure (1Jn 1:9). Arise and begin walking again by the Spirit, willing to be led by Him. So while periodic failures will be part of our sanctification process in this life, Paul gives a strong warning that if our lives are ONLY characterized by the sins in Gal 5:19-21 ("those who practice [prasso in the present tense = habitually, as their lifestyle, their "direction"] such things") we will not inherit the Kingdom of God. In other words, that person has never truly been born again, regardless of their profession. It is not profession of Jesus which saves, but possession of Jesus and His Spirit's possession of us!

**Comment** - In the Webster's Thesaurus a synonym for **praxis** is **habit** which is especially illuminating in Romans 8:13. Before we were saved we all had praxis or habits and many if not most were bad (evil). Now that we are saved we are to submit to the Spirit, trust His enabling power and put to death or kill those evil habits. And if you are like me, those old "ruts in the road" of my mind die off very slowly and unwillingly and too often seem to come back to life! Don't be discouraged but occasional lapses into these old ways, but trust the Spirit to lead you in the right direction and over time the habit will have less and less of a hold on your heart and mind. Praise God!

Don't be discouraged when you fail to put an old evil habit to death immediately! BELIEVERS WILL SIN and if you took a SNAPSHOT at one point in time it might look like they were living according to the flesh but we need to VIEW THE FULL MOVIE of their life! What is their direction? I am reminded of an OT promise by God to the nation of Israel of what He would do for them as they went in to Canaan to possess their possessions (they went in to possess a land, we walk forth to possess a life! Moses wrote "And the LORD your God will clear away these nations (evil, anti-God with evil practices analogous to our old flesh!) before you **little by little**; you will not be able to put an end to them **quickly**, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you." (Dt 7:22) **Comment: As an aside, did you notice another OT example of the juxtaposition of God's Provision and Man's Responsibility?**)

### Related Resources:

- [A Call for Action - Romans 8:12-13](#) - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - Mp3
- [The Way of Sanctification - Romans 8:12-13](#) - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - Mp3
- [Sin and the Christian - Romans 8:12-13](#) - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - Mp3
- [Sin and the Body - Romans 8:12-13](#) - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - Mp3

## 1 CORINTHIANS 15:9-10

**1Corinthians 15:9-10**-note For I am the **least of the apostles**, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored (kopiao - to point of exhaustion) even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

### WHAT IS PAUL'S (OUR) RESPONSIBILITY?

Labor, even to the point of exhaustion

### WHAT IS GOD'S PROVISION?

Grace - in fact it is "grace in triplicate!" I am a physician and when I write a prescription, it is written in triplicate. So here God writes His "Prescription in Triplicate" that it might assure spiritual health for our life, marriage, ministry!

### WHAT IS PAUL'S ATTITUDE IN VERSE 9 THAT GIVES US A CLUE AS TO THE SECRET OF HIS SUCCESS IN MINISTRY?

He is humble. Humility is one of the secrets of tapping into grace. James 4:6-note says "But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED (in essence God "stiff arms") TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." The other secret of success in ministry (and in the Christian life in general) is weakness. Paul requests the Lord to remove the thorn in his flesh and in 2Cor 12:9-note we read the answer - "And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

In summary the secret of spiritual success is reliance on and receipt of God's grace, His transforming power, His supernatural power to accomplish what CANNOT be accomplished naturally. As we grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we should be growing in humility and the sense of our inherent weakness to live a victorious, supernatural life in Christ. And we see that progressive growth dramatically portrayed in Paul's life...

PAUL'S INCREASING HUMILITY AS HE PROGRESSES IN SANCTIFICATION		
55AD	1Cor 15:9	Least of the apostles
61AD	Eph 3:8	Least of the saints
63-66AD	1Ti 1:15	Foremost of sinners

J C Ryle said that "The true secret of spiritual strength is self-distrust and deep humility (cp 2Cor 12:9-10)...We have nothing we can call our own--but sin and weakness. Surely there is no garment that befits us so well, as humility."

As C H Spurgeon phrased it "He whose garments are the whitest will best perceive the spots upon them!"

### "INTIMATE GRACE!"

Finally one other interesting observation is the Greek word Paul used in the phrase "with grace" in 1Cor 15:10. The word for "with" is not **meta**, but **syn**. In other words, while **meta** can describe fellowship or partnership (which would certainly be a reasonable way to describe grace working with believers), **syn** is even better because it speaks of union which implies a nearer and closer connection with God's grace!

### PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13

**Philippians 4:11** Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

#### WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY?

To do all things

#### WHAT IS GOD'S PROVISION?

He strengthens us. The verb (**endunamoo**) is in the **present tense**, indicating that God's Spirit continually infuses us with **dunamis**, supernatural power!

#### WHAT DOES THE CONTEXT TEACH?

That Paul learned the secret (Phil 4:13-note) going through humbling circumstances as well as prosperous circumstances. We are commanded imitate Paul's pattern (1Cor 11:1 - "**be**" is present imperative). Everyone loves the truth of Phil 4:13, but all too often we take this great passage out of its context! It is a "secret" we must learn.

### COLOSSIANS 1:27b-29

**Colossians 1:27b-29**-note Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. 29 And for this purpose also I labor (**kopiao** - to point of exhaustion), striving (**agonizomai**) according to His power (**energeia**), which mightily works within me.

#### WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY?

Labor and strive both in the present tense speaking of continual exertion! And in the context of Col 1:27-28 Paul is describing the making of disciples (present every man complete in Christ). In short, discipleship is hard work!

#### WHAT IS GOD'S PROVISION? WHO PROVIDES IT?

God's indwelling Spirit provides the power (**energeia**) and this "spiritual energy" continually works in us (**energeo** in **present tense**) in power (**dunamis**).

## 1 PETER 4:10-11

**1 Peter 4:10-11**-note As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 (note) Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### WHAT IS THE CONTEXT?

Peter's summary of spiritual gifts ("each one has received a special gift") as either speaking or serving gifts.

### HOW DO WE EXERCISE (OUR RESPONSIBILITY) OUR GIFTS ACCORDING TO PETER?

We speak the utterances of God and we serve by relying on the strength which God supplies. How? Who? God supplies His strength through the Agency and Effect of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29b+, cf Zech 12:10+) Who provides us with God's "manifold grace." And so again we see while **our responsibility** is to employ the spiritual gifts God has given each of us (everyone has at least one spiritual gift), we are enabled to do so by relying on **God's provision** of manifold grace, by speaking His utterance, by relying on His strength. Can you see the pattern? We are "100% responsible" but we are "100% dependent." Our **part** and God's **provision**, functioning together as a *divine symphony* (*syn* = together + *phone* = sound), so to speak.

### AND WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE?

That God would be glorified through Jesus Christ, the first tenet of the Westminster Catechism - "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

## PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

The respected expositor **J Ligon Duncan** states that Php 2:12,13 "is one of the most important passages in all of the Bible about **sanctification**." ([Philippians 2:12-13 Live Life in Light of the Exaltation of Christ](#))

**Jonathan Edwards** by most measures the greatest theologian in American history attests to the importance of a proper understanding of Philippians 2:12-13 writing that "From St. Paul a sentence hit me when I was about twenty-two that has shaped my theology ever since, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to do his good pleasure"

**Philippians 2:12**-note So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out** (present imperative) your salvation (soteria) with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God Who is at **work** (energeo = present tense = continually) in you, both to **will** (present tense = continually) and to **work** (energeo = present tense = continually) for His good pleasure. 14 **Do** (present imperative) all things ("All" = first in Greek for emphasis = no exception clauses!) without grumbling or disputing; 15 that (term of purpose or result - Why? What is the purpose?) you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of (Note: No "holy huddle" but out in the world - work, school, family some of who are not believers, etc) a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world (Compare Jesus' command to disciples in Mt 5:16-note) 16 holding fast (or "holding forth") the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

**Philippians 2:13NLT (New Living version)** = For God is working in you, giving you the **desire** and the **power** to do (energeo = to put one's capabilities into operation = present tense, active voice which means that even though it is God's Spirit who gives us the desire and the power, we still have to make a volitional choice, a choice of our will to continually do) what pleases God.

### WHAT IS THE KEY WORD?

**Work** is found 3 times.

### WHAT'S PAUL'S COMMAND?

**Work out** (present imperative = calls for us to carry this out as the habit of our life) fully and thoroughly. Note not "work for" or even "work at" but "work out."

**Comment:** The Greek verb for work out is **katergazomai** which was used by secular Roman writers (Strabo - 60BC) to describe the working of a silver mine with the goal of extracting all of the precious ore. By analogy, we are commanded to "mine out" of our



lives all the richness of salvation God has so graciously deposited in us. By sustained Spirit enabled effort and diligence we are to work out and perfect in daily conduct the precious "ore" God has placed within us when He blessed us with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" in Christ (Eph 1:3) and "granted us everything necessary for life and godliness through a true knowledge of" Jesus our Lord. (2Peter 1:3) **Katergazomai** was also used to describe working in a field with the reaping of a big harvest! I love that picture -- Lord, let each of us "reap a bountiful harvest" in the glorious Gospel field known as sanctification! Amen Finally, **katergazomai** was used to describe one working on a math problem and deriving the correct answer. So applied to Paul's command the idea is to "work out" as one does when referring to the working out of a problem in mathematics, carrying it to its ultimate goal or conclusion.

### HOW CAN WE OBEY THE COMMAND TO CONTINUALLY WORK OUT OUR SALVATION?

By a little "R & R!" We must continually **renounce** self-effort and **rely** on the Spirit's sufficient enablement.

### WHAT ASPECT OF SALVATION IS PAUL DESCRIBING?

Paul is describing "**present tense salvation**" or progressive sanctification. We are continually being saved. We have a responsibility in this process, but can only accomplish it by relying on the supernatural enabling energy of the Holy Spirit.

### WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE?

Fear and trembling

The **Amplified Bible** helps us understand what our attitude should be with this expanded translation -

reverence and awe and trembling (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ.)

As an aside, when you are studying a passage the Amplified Bible ([Amplified Bible online](#)) is always a good version to check as it is very literal and adds short comments (denoted by parentheses as in the preceding sample from Php 2:12AMP) to help understand the text.

Note especially the phrase "**self-distrust**" - Spurgeon well said "Beware of no man more than of yourself: we carry our worst enemies within us! Distrust yourself, dear friend, for you accurately gauge your own judgment when you do that. The well-instructed believer is very much afraid of himself; he dares not go into temptation, for he feels that a man who carries a bomb-shell within him ought to mind that he keeps away from sparks, and that he who has a powder-magazine in his heart ought not to play with fire. When I hear my Master say, "One of you shall betray me," I may have a shrewd suspicion that he refers to Judas, but it will be wiser for me to say, "Lord, is it I?" rather than to ask, "Lord, is it Judas?" (**See more in depth discussion of the idea of self-distrust - Click comments**)

### WHAT IS THE CRITICAL "HINGE WORD" IN PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13?

In other words what small word opens the door (so to speak) to understand how to obey Paul's command? If I were a proponent of a works based salvation, I might say you must "**work out your salvation**" and stop there, clearly taking Paul's command out of context. The crucial word then that prevents such a misunderstanding is the little preposition "**for**." For is a strategic **term of explanation (see discussion)** found almost 10,000 times in the Scriptures (not every "**for**" is used this way so you need to examine the context). Whenever we encounter a "**for**" (especially at the beginning of a sentence or one in which you could easily substitute the synonym "because"), pause and ponder what does the "**for**" explain? In this passage, Paul explains how it is humanly possible to obey what is otherwise a "superhuman" commandment! We can't, God never said we could! But He can, and He always said He would!

### WHO IS GOD IN US?

The Holy Spirit. Don't misunderstand. Clearly Christ is in us (Col 1:27b-note) but the Spirit is also in us (1Cor 6:19-20-note) and Jesus has sent His Spirit to be His effective Agent at dispensing His power and grace to believers in the church age. As J I Packer says the Spirit is the "Shy member of the Trinity" for His goal is to glorify Christ and He does so by carrying out His sanctifying work in us.

### WHAT IS HE DOING?

Working (**energeo** in the **present tense**) continually energizing us. This is the Spirit's working independent of anything we do. We don't (can't) merit or earn His working in us. His working is clearly a manifestation of God's undeserved, unmerited grace!

### SPECIFICALLY WHAT IS HE ENERGIZING?

He gives us the **Desire** and the **Power**. Our fallen flesh has NO desire to work out our salvation! Therefore it is vital that we recognize our innate inability to obey this command and continually lean hard on the truth of Phil 2:13-note!

### SO WHAT IS THE SYNERGISM IN PHIL 2:12-13?

12 = HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

13 = DIVINE ENABLEMENT

WE WORK OUT WHAT GOD WORKS IN.

Stated another way we could not work out our salvation unless the Spirit first worked in us giving us the DESIRE and the POWER. And so we WORK as He enables or energizes us to WORK.

### LET'S APPLY THIS TRUTH TO US AS HUSBANDS -

When He commands us in Eph 5:25-note (also Eph 5:33-note) to continually love our wives sacrificially, unconditionally and without bitterness (Col 3:19-note), dying to self as He died for the church, **HOW DOES PHIL 2:12-13 HELP US?** We can be assured that the Holy Spirit in us is **continually** energizing us, giving us the DESIRE and the POWER to "work out" this supernatural quality of love. We cannot love like this in our own natural power. That's where faith comes in - we renounce self-reliance and rely on the Spirit's enablement to create in our hearts a supernatural love for our spouse!

**John Piper** applies Philippians 2:12,13 this way - God's sovereignty in sanctification does not remove our obligation. It enables it...God's sovereign work in us is our only hope that we will press on to maturity. God's working and willing in us does not make our working pointless; it makes it possible. We obey and we work. It is our act and our choice. But beneath our doing and our willing is God giving the willing and giving the doing.

### POP TEST!

Paul immediately gives us a pop test in Phil 2:14-note commanding us "**Do** all things (no exceptions) without **grumbling** (complaining, Greek = goggusmos) or disputing (arguing)."

**Grumbling** is muttering in discontent ("growling, snarling") with a low voice by way of complaint. To utter (complaints) in a nagging or discontented way. Note that in Greek "all things" is first in the sentence for emphasis! Not "most things" but "all things!" This paints our flesh into a corner (so to speak). We might be able to bite our tongue and not grumble or mumble a complaint a couple of times when we are provoked, but not all the time! This is not naturally possible! That is Paul's point of application. He wants to make sure we are not hearers of Php 2:12-13 and not doers! (cf James 1:22).

### HOW CAN WE WORK THIS OUT ALL THE TIME?

We can't in our own strength. It is clearly impossible. But Phil 2:13-note says it is Him-possible. We must make a conscious choice (but even this being Spirit enabled) to renounce our futile attempts to try to muster up the power to not grumble and instead rely on the Spirit giving us the DESIRE and the POWER. Remember this is a PROCESS (sanctification 101). We probably won't relinquish our right to grumble immediately, but we will see progress as we give up **trying** and start **dying** to self and **trusting** the Spirit's work in us. We will never achieve **perfection**, but we will be walking in the right **direction**. And that is what pleases our Father (cf "like father, like son")

### WHY IS GRUMBLING SO BAD ACCORDING TO Ps 106:24-25?

Ps 106:24 Then they despised the pleasant land (LIFE); They DID NOT BELIEVE in His word 25 But GRUMBLED in their tents; They DID NOT LISTEN to the voice of the LORD.

So **UNBELIEF** is contrasted with **GRUMBLING!** When we GRUMBLE we are saying...

God we don't believe You are SOVEREIGN.

We don't believe You are the Giver of all good gifts.

We don't trust You to work out all things for OUR GOOD and FOR YOUR GLORY (cf Ro 8:28, Ge 50:20).

Finally in the context of Phil 2:15, we will not give a winsome witness to a dark, perverted world which needs to see the power of



the Gospel lived out, not just spoken (the Gospel needs to be spoken but our godly ways give our witness of God enhanced credibility!)

**SUMMARY OF EXAMPLES OF  
THE PARADOXICAL PRINCIPLE OF 100%/100%**

	<b>100% MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>100% GOD'S PROVISION</b>
Ps 127:1	We labor to build and watch	The Lord builds and guards
Ro 8:13	Put sin to death	By the Spirit
1Cor 15:10	Labor	Grace with us
Phil 4:13	Do all things	God strengthens us
Col 1:29	Labor and strive	God's power working mightily in us
1Pe 4:10-11	Speak and serve	Utterance of God and God's supply of strength
Phil 2:12-13	Work out	God works in