

The Audacity of Paul

A JOURNEY OF POWER &
CONSECRATION

BIBLE STUDY

H2O

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Welcome to the study of Paul. In looking at the life of Paul we see a man who went from being a zealous persecutor of Christ's followers to a passionate apostle, ready and willing to do whatever was required to spread the gospel of Christ. He was also responsible for writing the majority of the New Testament – either by himself or through those he trained.

How did he do it? What sustained his strength and courage in the middle of all the opposition? How do we apply these in our lives today?

As we go through Paul's journey of power and consecration, please take the time to see what you can apply to your own life. It's good to study, but it is more beneficial to put what you have studied into practice.

I pray this study blesses you and positively impacts every aspect of your life.

Day 1

Saul's Transformation

"...and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul." Acts 7:58

"Now Saul was consenting to his death." Acts 8:1

As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. [a] It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." Acts 9:3-6

We are introduced to Saul in the Book of Acts as one of the men who consented to the stoning of Stephen and bringing great persecution against the followers of Jesus (Acts 7). He went further to obtain letters from his leadership to prosecute the followers of Christ take them as prisoners to Jerusalem, and all was going smoothly until....

The dramatic encounter on the way to Damascus in Acts 9:3-19 changed his life forever. Jesus stepped in and showed Saul that he was persecuting Him, not just the followers. In his divine wisdom Jesus also gave a Saul a 3 day 'time out' until his sight was restored. During this time, Saul was able to reflect on his experience with Jesus, what he had done in the past and what he would do next and so when his sight was restored, he had no intention of going back to persecute the Christians anymore. In fact, he became one of the chief advocates. Imagine the shock to his colleagues. Talk about high level defection to the opposition camp.

Saul experienced something that changed him forever and nothing was going to make him turn back. What did Saul see?

He saw a future without condemnation, an opportunity to turn away from his past misdeeds, an avenue to partner with Jesus to spread the Gospel.

Reflection: Your past should not hold you to ransom. Jesus has the power to take your past and create a better future you couldn't even have imagined before.

Day 2

Journey to Arabia

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called *me* through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and remained with him fifteen days.” Galatians 1:15-18

Paul did a strange thing after his Damascus experience. Rather than go to the apostles as one would have expected, instead he went to Arabia (Gal 1:15- 18). Why? Paul chose to separate himself, so he could be in a position to receive a revelation from Jesus. He didn’t want any second-hand learning from the other apostles.

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Let’s reflect a bit on the context. Here’s a man who was well known as an enemy of the church. His mandate was to arrest the followers of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem. Then he had an experience with Jesus that turned his life around. Rather than go to the Apostles who represented the leadership of the people he had been prosecuting and try to win them over, he went into seclusion. Don’t forget that unlike the other apostles, Paul didn’t walk with Jesus during his lifetime. He wanted to get to know Jesus for himself. And he was willing to pay the price.

For Paul the price was separation in Arabia and then returning to the apostles 3 years later. What did he do with the time while he was away? We don’t know exactly, but we do know that he returned in power. So much so that when it was time to go on a mission, Barnabas went to look for Saul so they could work together to teach the disciples at Antioch (Acts 11:25).

Reflection: Anything worth having comes at a price, there are no shortcuts to authentic greatness.

Prayer: Ask God to reveal to you who you are in Him and ask Him to help you pay the price to become who you’re meant to be

Day 3

Partners in purpose

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”” Acts 13:2 NIV

God didn't design us to walk or work alone. For every purpose he has placed in your heart, every assignment you've been given, God has already assigned partners to help you. In Exodus 31:1-11 we see that God appointed Bezalel and Oholiab to help Moses make the tabernacle and all the items to be used in it. David had Jonathan as a helper and supporter while he (David) was in King Saul's service. Jesus had the 12 disciples. The right partnerships are a big deal with God. Why? Because who you listen to, spend time with, seek counsel from and execute with can make or break your assignment.

When it was time to set out to preach to the Gentiles, the Holy Spirit partnered Paul with Barnabas. He knew they had the right complements to work together and complete the assignment given to them. And they went on several missions together, enduring a lot of hardship on the way, but constantly encouraging one another and never giving up. Some partnerships are for life, some are for a season. We must be sensitive to where we are in our walk with God and to listen to who He's telling us to partner with in the season.

Reflection: Who are your purpose partners? Who are those working with you to achieve God's purpose for your life? Did you pick them by yourself or did you ask God to help select them?

Prayer: Ask the Lord to reveal His purpose for your life to you and to show you who he's selected to partner with you at this stage of the journey.

Day 4

Dealing with Challenges

“...These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

From Acts 13 onward, we see that the Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas on several missionary assignments which were successful, but often laden with challenges. In fact, on one such assignment Paul was stoned and left for dead! (Acts 14:19). In 1 Corinthians 16:9, Paul says, “For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.” Isn’t this contrary to what we often think, that if God has made an opportunity available to us it will be free from challenges? If anything, Paul’s life teaches us that the presence of challenges does not mean the absence of God.

We learn from Paul’s experiences that God deals with the challenges we face in different ways. Sometimes he removes the challenges ahead of time and we’re not even aware of what He’s done; sometimes He partners with us through prayer to remove the challenges, and other times He builds us up right in the middle of the challenges.

After the stoning experience Paul did something fascinating: Acts 14:20 tells us that the very next day he and Barnabas got up and went on the next assignment. They didn’t give up, turn back or stay in one place moaning about how wrong things had gone. They got up and moved on.

Action steps: When we’re facing issues, we need to do 3 things:

1. Stay close to God to understand the source of the issue
2. Ask God to direct us so we respond appropriately
3. Pray for grace and strength to keep going and not give up

Day 5

Find out for yourself, Always Verify

“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” Acts 17:11

Today we’re taking the focus off Paul and looking at one of the vicinities he ministered in called Berea. On one of the many missions Paul went on, he went to Berea where he encountered a set of people who not only listened to him, but “...searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.” (Acts 17:11). The Bereans did not rely on Paul’s popularity or his experience. Paul was at this point a seasoned and well-travelled missionary and the Bereans eagerly listened to him, but they always went back to the scriptures to verify if what he was saying was true.

It is incredibly easy to get information across these days, which is both a plus and a minus. A plus because it’s easier than ever to learn new things from parts of the world one may never physically go to. A minus because it is just as easy to spread misinformation, either accidentally or intentionally. Jesus himself warns us in Matthew 24:24 about the rise of falsehood in these days.

What do you do when you receive information? Do you accept it as is, or do you verify? Be sensitive! Always verify from the scripture what you’re told, especially when the information will impact your life and your relationship with God. The Bereans had formed a discipline of constantly reading and studying the scriptures for themselves, so they could not be easily deceived, and we should do the same.

Action step: Commit to spending at least 10 minutes a day reading your bible. If you’re wondering what you should read, you can start by studying a Bible character, a specific topic, or books in the Bible (e.g. Psalms, etc). Fix a time for this reading and stick to it daily. You will be glad you did.

Day 6

How to Know what to Do

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.” Psalm 32:8

Throughout Paul’s missionary journeys we see times when things flowed smoothly for him and many were converted without any challenges. We also see times where he faced resistance and opposition. It is instructive to note that his response to opposition varied. At times, he stayed in the region where he was being opposed, preaching to and teaching all, other times he left the region entirely, and sometimes he stayed in the region, but restricted his interaction to a few people/groups.

This should form our guiding principle in engaging opposition – it’s not every argument we should engage in, it certainly is not every battle we should fight. The good Lord who has sent us on the assignment – be it in our careers, our families, our businesses, our church, etc. – knows exactly what he has equipped us for and the specific outcomes He wants to achieve through us at that time.

In John 5:10: “So Jesus replied, “Truly, truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself, unless He sees the Father doing it. For whatever the Father does, the Son also does.” Let’s take a cue from this - it’s not our responsibility to pre-determine the outcome of any assignment. Our responsibility is to find out from God what He would have us do and how He would have us do it. This can be challenging as we are naturally hard-wired to try and figure things out ourselves and put in the effort to see the outcome we expect.

That’s why we are told in Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”. We serve a God who sees the end from the beginning, so His perspective is always long-term, and he already knows what is going to happen. Meanwhile our perspective is limited to what we think we know.

Paul understood this principle clearly as evidenced by his life of prayer. He understood that prayer was the key to his success and understanding the strategy to employ in each situation, so he didn’t waste unnecessary time and energy. He encouraged the church he planted in Ephesus to, “...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests...” Nothing is too big or small to pray about. God has a strategy for each day and we need to pray to Him daily to receive the strategy for that day. We cannot afford to rely only on what we think we know.

Action step: Ask God to show you His strategy for succeeding today and make it a daily habit to pray this every day.



Day 7

How did Paul Pray?

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father ^{of} our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3: 14-19

One of the things that I have always found fascinating is Paul’s prayer life. This is a man who through God’s power did so much: raised the dead, healed the sick, wrote almost half of the new testament, went on several missionary journeys, suffered a great deal on these journeys and never stopped. Clearly, he was a man of prayer. He said himself to the church in Corinth that he spoke in tongues more than all of them (1 Corinthians 14:18). It is one thing to pray, it is another to pray correctly, so a question we should ask ourselves is what was the content of his prayer?

Paul’s recorded prayers were largely intercessory in nature, meaning he focused more on praying for other people than praying for himself. That doesn’t mean he didn’t have needs, in fact he said he in Philippians 4:12a, “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty”. So, despite being in need, he took his focus off himself and focused on the needs of other people. How was he able to do this? What encouraged him to look beyond himself

In Ephesians 3:18 he prays that the church may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. He had experienced a dimension of love that drove him to want to help others experience the same. He experienced an unselfish love that was open to everyone who was willing to take a step of faith and kept his eyes fixed on sharing the message of that love.

Paul also recognised the power of God and was confident that this power was more than enough to take care of him and others so there was no need to be self-centred in his prayers. The beauty of God is that this experience isn’t limited to Paul alone. The door is open to us all if we are willing to take the step of faith and walk through it.

Prayer: I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. (Ephesians 1:17-19)



Day 8

Path to Intimacy

“Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot.” Acts 20:13

When Paul was leaving Ephesus with his companions, he chose to walk for about 30 miles on his own to their next meeting point while his companions went by boat (Acts 20:13-16). Paul chose to separate himself to get God's guidance, reflect, pray. By the time he joined his travel companions, he knew exactly what to do and was now in a hurry to reach Jerusalem to complete another task. During his time alone, he must have received guidance, encouragement and specific instructions from God. This helped him chart his journey and put a strategy in place.

Fellowship with others is important but spending time alone with God is critical for a believer. It's in the quiet place that instructions are given, questions are answered and intimacy with God takes place. It's in the quiet place that revelations, strength and direction come. Yes, a lot of things can happen in the place of corporate worship, but as a believer your real strength lies in the amount of time you spend alone with God.

Don't make the mistake of replacing personal time with lots of activity. So many times, we are so consumed with working for God that we forget to walk with God. And God is more interested in our relationship with Him than in our labours. Why? Anything done outside of God is done by our own physical/mental efforts and may not reflect His will. Ultimately God's goal is to have a relationship with us. He did not design us to walk this journey of life on our own. But God will not force himself on us. We must choose to have a relationship with Him, and the depth of that intimacy is largely determined by how much of our personal time we choose to give Him.

Action step: Choose to set time apart to be with God. Not going with a list of things you want, but asking Him what He wants to tell you, and give time to listen to what He has to say.

Day 9

The Power of Knowing

“And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more...” Acts 20:25

The Holy Spirit was constantly revealing things to Paul, so he could know with total confidence what was going to happen in the future, see Acts 20:25,29 for just one example. The Holy Spirit is not bound by time and he is able to give us revelation about things to come so we are well positioned to know what to do, where to go, when to go. We have a promise in psalm 32:8 that He will lead us along the best pathway for our lives. Our role is to spend time with him in prayer, study of the word and living a life that is yielded to him. And truthfully, we cannot do any of these without the help of the Holy Spirit. .

The Holy Spirit isn't loud or forceful. He is incredibly powerful but also very gentle, so he will only function in our lives to the extent that we submit to him. He won't make us do anything we are not willing to do. The danger of this is that he could leave us, and we won't even know. Samson experienced this first-hand when he tried escaping from the Philistines as he was used to, not knowing that the real source of his strength had left him (Judges 16:20).

We see in the life of Paul an example of what being submitted can do for us. The Holy Spirit gives us advance warning of danger (Acts 21:11) and also ways to come out of it. He brings assistance our way to help us complete our assignments. In most of Paul's letters, he sends greetings from and to all those who supported him in his work of spreading the gospel - all of whom were orchestrated into his life by the Holy Spirit. He helps us put our lives in proper perspective. .

He is indeed our helper.

Action item: Make a conscious effort not to rush off after praying, but to ask what the Spirit has to say to you and spend some time listening for his answer.

Day 10

Confidence

“The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.” Acts 22:30

Paul had been put on trial for crimes he did not commit. The Jewish council had accused him of several things because they were angry that he was preaching the gospel. They were so angry the soldiers had to move Paul away from the council and put him in the barracks for his own safety.

The next night Jesus came to encourage him. “But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”” Acts 23:11 NKJV. I believe that part of what equipped Paul to make the impact he made was because he knew he had the backing of heaven. He was confident that no matter how bad things looked or what he had to endure, God was with him. Therefore, whatever the negative experience was, it would only be temporary, and he wouldn't lose sight of his assignment.

We have a similar promise in Deuteronomy 3:16 (NLT), “So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the LORD your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.”

God has promised never to leave us stranded, He will always send help. You may not be in the exact same situation Paul was, but perhaps you're facing some manner of challenge at the moment. Do not fret, do not worry. Prayerfully put the situation in God's hands, He will see you through as only He can.

Action step: “Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done.” Philippians 4:6 NLT

Day 11

Contentment

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.” Philippians 4:12

Paul went on several missionary journeys, all without any expectation of comfort, or even safety. What was key to him was completing the assignment given to him. Therefore, it did not matter to him whether he had more than enough, or he was facing lack. He had been on journeys where he had to struggle to fend for himself, and others where helpers provided for him (Phil 4:12-19). He did not limit his commitment to God to material benefits.

Too often these days, we qualify our walk with God based on what we see him do for us, thinking that if we receive physical gifts then we are doing well and if not, then perhaps we are not. But Paul challenges us to have a different perspective. He challenges us to seek God for who He is and not only for what He can give us. He challenges us to give our best to God regardless of what the circumstances surrounding us may be.

Yes, we have needs and we certainly want those needs met. Paul recognises this in Phil 4:19 when he prays, “And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”

He goes further in 1 Timothy Chapter 6 that who are rich in this present world should neither be arrogant nor put their hope in wealth, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Why? Because we are to remember that when we leave this earth, we will take nothing with us. All that will remain will be the good deeds we did while here. So, like Paul, let us learn to be content with what we have, and should God bless us materially, we must learn to be generous and willing to share.

Action step: Ask God for the grace to be content with what we have and give us an understanding of how we can use our gifts, resources, skills and talents for the expansion of the Kingdom, so we may lay up treasure for ourselves in heaven.

Day 12

Whose Approval are you seeking?

“Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.”
Galatians 1:10

Paul had no interest in doing things for the attention and approval of men. His focus was strictly on completing the assignment God had given him. So, whenever he was dishonoured, unacknowledged or criticised he didn't let that change his execution of his purpose.

At a point in time false prophets showed up in Galatia and were taking people away from the truth. Paul did not try to compete with the false message, neither did he try to repackage or water down the truth. He stuck to his assignment because his focus was on getting God's approval and not that of men (Gal 1:10).

He was so committed to sharing the truth that he openly confronted the Apostle Peter when his wrong actions were leading others astray. Paul's action would have taken some boldness as Peter was seen as one of the major leaders at the time, but that didn't deter Paul in any way.

During the many challenges he faced while spreading the gospel - confrontations with the Jewish council, flogging, imprisonments, shipwrecks - Paul could have chosen an easier route rather than go through all the persecution he endured. But his primary focus was on doing the work he was sent to do, regardless of the cost.

Despite his high level of education and pedigree, Paul happily laid all that aside and as he reminded the Corinthians in 1 Cor 1:17, his assignment was not to preach the gospel with wisdom and eloquence, but through the power of Christ. He was clear on who sent him, that he was a messenger and what his message should be and he never deviated from that.

Action step: Reflect and ask yourself if you're staying true to your call, or if you have modified yourself to gain the approval of men?

Day 13

The Success Factor

“...your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven....” Mathew 6:10

Paul did not function as an ordinary man, he carried a significant amount of power. Whether in preaching or in writing, he made an impact. This impact is due to one thing and one thing alone, his willingness to let Jesus have full control of his life. He goes as far as describing himself as a bondservant of Jesus. The term bondservant means someone who has willingly committed to serving another.

Paul was a man of prayer who got results from his prayers. John 15:7 says, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”. How does this work? The expectation is that the closer we fellowship with Jesus, the more aligned our desires will be with his will. Therefore, the risk of praying for something that contradicts what God wants for us is greatly reduced.

It's like when you have a very close friend you spend quality time with daily, you can almost predict what they will/will not like. The same principle applies when we have a close relationship with Jesus. By daily prayer and reading the Bible, we are constantly being transformed and so we begin to think the way Jesus thinks and view life from his perspective.

“Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4)”. At times we take it to mean that God will give us whatever we are desiring. But let's look at this verse from another perspective – God will put in our heart what it should desire. And so, whatever we are desiring will be in line with what God wants for us because he gave us that desire in the first place.

Prayer: Father give us the grace to remain in you and let your words remain in us, so we will have the confidence that whatever we are praying for is your will.

Day 14

The Power of Unity

“On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you...” John 14:20

One of the things Paul understood as a key factor to succeed in his ministry was the power of unity. He always encouraged the churches to be of the same mind, meaning that they should function in unity of purpose. And personally, Paul focused on having a unified relationship with Jesus. Do not underestimate the power of unity.

In Genesis 11:1-9 we see the power of people functioning in unity as they attempted to build a tower and the Lord recognised that the people would achieve their goals if they were not deliberately dispersed. Jesus said it himself in Matthew 18:19, "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven."

Now imagine the power that is available to us when we are in unity with God concerning His plan? Imagine if what you are doing is based on God's will and priorities, definitely all of heaven's resources will be available to support you.

John 15:4-5, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

This is God's ideal for us. He wants us to be united in spirit and purpose with Him so we can bear much fruit, and live truly intentional lives. We were not created just to exist, but to act as change agents wherever we are placed. However, we need to know what God's will for us is, so we can be united with Him in establishing His purpose in our lives and in the lives of others.

Reflect: Meditate on what drives you. Are you seeking to be united with God's direction or are you driving your own agenda?

Day 15

Joy

“Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.” Ephesians 2:17-18

In the book of Philippians, the words joy or rejoice are used more than 10 times. The interesting thing to note is that Paul wrote this letter to the Philippian church while imprisoned and facing an uncertain future. He who was imprisoned was encouraging those outside to rejoice always!

This shows us that true joy isn't limited to our external circumstances, it doesn't mean there aren't (major/minor) challenges or that everything is perfect. The type of joy Paul refers to is the joy that comes from serving God and fulfilling purpose.

Paul encourages us to be joyful while looking out for the needs of others (Phil 2:3-5), not to argue or complain (Phil 2:14-15). He encourages us to rejoice as we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, pressing on in knowing Him and becoming like Him (Phil 3).

We rejoice not based on circumstances and situations around us, but in the Lord. Why? Because by so doing we are laying claim to the fact that we are not limited by earthly challenges but focused on the higher calling in Jesus. If all we had to look forward to was the world we live in then how miserable we would be. But we have hope because Jesus died and was resurrected for us. So, we have a template showing us that there is indeed more to come. But while we are here, let us follow the patterns laid out before us and rejoice in the Lord.

Action step: For the next 3 days make a list of 5 different things you are grateful to God for each day - without repetition - and thank Him for them. Build up the capacity to be joyful.

Day 16

Diligence is key

“Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” 1 Timothy 4:15-16

Paul instructs Timothy to be diligent in executing the instructions he'd been given so that he would progress and that his progress would be clear to all, (1 Tim 4:15). Not only was Paul diligent in his walk with God, but he constantly instructed, encouraged and admonished others to be diligent as well. Paul realised that for anyone to have a true walk with God, that person would have to be consistent in their prayer and Bible study life as well as diligently following whatever instructions God has given them.

Oftentimes we like to pick and choose which instructions to obey, thinking that God will understand. But half obedience is still disobedience. And even if in His mercy God does choose to understand, we greatly limit what He can do with and in us if we are inconsistent in obedience.

Picture a scenario where a father who wants to ensure his legacy is maintained desires to hand over a significant inheritance to his child. But the child either fails to follow his instructions completely, or he obeys the instructions he feels like obeying when he feels like doing so. Now if you were the father, you would still love your child no doubt, but would you entrust anything of major value to this child?

What the child would likely receive from the father would be limited to what he has shown his father that he has the capacity to manage. Not necessarily what the father has the capacity to give.

We have a father in heaven who desires to bless us abundantly. He said in Psalm 81:10, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.” He is not limited in any way. Ephesians 3:20 reminds us that God can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. So, any limitation exists only on our side, not God's.

Reflection: We are the ones who determine how much of God's unlimited power we will see in our lives based on how diligent we are in our walk with God.

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