ACTIVATE: God’s Power

**MS & HS CURRICULUM**

**Connect Groups**

 **July 4, 2021**

**Lesson 39:** It’s In Us

**What we want students to learn:** That God’s power is at work in and through us for His glory.

**What we want students to do with what they’ve learned:** To come to an understanding that they’ve been equipped to do all that God calls them to do and that their lives can bring God glory.

**Scripture Focus:** Ephesians 3:20-21; 2 Corinthians 9:8

**Overview:** If people have ever told our students the Christian life was going to be easy, they lied to them. They might not have intentionally lied, but they lied. It's tough. As an adult, you know it's not always puppies and roses and nice things. However, we can draw strength and comfort from the fact that we serve an all-powerful God that is at work in and through us. This is the truth of this final lesson. In the last lesson, we saw that Jesus moves in great power for our good. In this lesson, we are going to see that He moves in power in us for His glory. He equips us for everything he calls us to do, and He receives the glory from it. In lesson 50 we learned that God has the power to do everything He pleases. In lesson 51 we saw how Jesus embodies that power and uses it for our good. Finally, in lesson 52 we'll learn about how God's power plays out in our lives.

**Bible Background**

The *Bible Background* is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you’ll be studying. *The Details* gives you background info for each book. *The Setting* informs you of what’s happening in and around the passage. *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

* ***What do we mean by “context”?*** In every **YM360** Bible Study lesson, you’ll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know *who* wrote the book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.

***What’s the big deal?*** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don’t get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God’s plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the *Bible Background* to help summarize the context.

**The Details**

Ephesians

* **Author:**The Apostle Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians and Titus. Of course, we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
* **Timeframe:** Ephesians was probably written by Paul from prison in the latter years of his life, sometime around 60 or 61 AD.
* **Purpose:** Paul had a very close relationship with the church in Ephesus. It seems as if the motivation for the letter was simply that the church would know how he was faring in his imprisonment. But, true to form, Paul couldn’t help but teach. The letter covers general teaching on the work of Christ to redeem believers, unity among believers, and how believers are supposed to conduct themselves.

2 Corinthians

* **Author:**The Apostle Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to the Church in Corinth.
* **Timeframe:** Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia around 55 or 56 AD, a year or so after writing 1 Corinthians and a year before he wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth.
* **Purpose:** According to the ESV Study Bible, the main theme of Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians was “the relationship between suffering and the power of the Spirit in Paul’s apostolic life, ministry, and message.”

**The Main Point**

The first point you’ll make is that God moves in power in and through us for his glory. You’ll do this using Ephesians 3:20-21 and Psalm 23:3. Paul makes the point clear in the in the Ephesians passage, one that the psalm serves to back up: God's power is more than we could ever fathom. He can do it all. What makes it even more amazing is that His power is at work within us.

Then, you’ll help students see that God gives us the grace necessary to do all that he has called us to do. It can seem like an overwhelming task: living a life that brings God glory. Are we really capable of doing that? Are we equipped for it? Using 2 Corinthians 9:8, you’ll make it clear that God gives us the grace to do what He’s called us to do. You’ll talk about how we take that blessing and grace and “abound in every good work.”

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called *The Lead In*; the Bible study section called *The Main Event*; an application-focused segment called *The Last Word.*

**The Lead In**

* **Goal:** To start students thinking about how God does amazing things through us by His power.
* **Set-Up:** Search for and preview a video montage of amazing feats. There are plenty available on YouTube.

FIRST, ask the students to share about some amazing thing they’ve recently heard of someone doing. Or maybe it’s something they’ve seen in person. This can be an inspirational story of someone overcoming incredible odds, or just someone who can do a cool stunt. It might be something ridiculous one of their friends has done. Allow them to share, having fun while you do.

THEN, if you have the ability, show the YouTube video. You don’t have to show it all, but you certainly can if you want. The video is pretty amazing. When you’ve finished, ask:

* **What was the coolest thing you saw on the video?**
	+ Answers will vary.
* **Are these types of abilities something you see and wish you had? Or are you cool to watch others do it?**
	+ Answers will vary.
* **Why do we find videos (or stories) like that so incredible?**
	+ *Answer*: These videos capture our attention and imagination because we don’t see things like that every day. We are amazed when we see people do things no one else can.

FINALLY, explain that these videos are pretty amazing. But, the most amazing thing we as humans can do pales in comparison to what we can do under God’s power for His Kingdom.

**The Main Event**

* **Goal:** To teach the student’s that God’s power is at work in and through us for His glory.
* **Set-Up:** Whiteboard, markers.

FIRST, remind students this is the last lesson on God’s Power. Allow students help you with a quick recap of what you’ve learned so far. Here are the main points from lessons 50 and 51:

* Lesson 50:
	+ God has power over all things and all circumstances. He controls it all.
	+ God works in impossible situations to bring glory to Himself.
* Lesson 51:
	+ Jesus has power and authority over the natural world.
	+ Jesus has power and authority over the spiritual world.
	+ Jesus has power and authority to give us eternal life where everything is made right.

Explain to students that if God has all of this power and authority over every single part of creation, He has that same power and authority to work in and through us for His glory. Say something like:

* **Today we'll be looking at how God works in and through us. But even more importantly, we'll be learning *why* God works in and through them. It is all for His glory!**

THEN, read or have a student read Ephesians 3:20-21. While students are finding the passage, provide some context using the Bible Background. When the student has finished reading, explain that this passage is called a doxology. You could say something along the lines of:

* **This passage in Ephesians is a doxology: a short hymn of praise to God. It is almost like an exclamation. Paul has been talking about the Gospel and God's love, and he gets so excited about these things that he can't hold in the praise. He bursts out with this hymn of praise. God's love makes him that excited.**

Ask students to recall passages from the Bible where God did amazing things by His power. After the students have responded, ask:

* **What was the purpose of these events? Why did God do all of these amazing things throughout the Bible?**
	+ *Answer:* God did all of these things out of love for His people and for His glory, which is what we see in Ephesians 3. God did all of these things, from creation to Abraham and Sarah, to the Exodus, to Jesus and His miracles, and to the death and resurrection of Jesus, to redeem His people, to show His love, and, ultimately, to bring Himself glory. This was the prayer of Paul for the Ephesians. He prayed that they would see the love of Christ. This love of Christ brought Paul to proclaim the power and glory of God.
* **We’ve been talking about God’s power in the natural world, in history, and through God’s love in Christ.** **Where else does God show His power?**
	+ *Answer:* Allow students to wrestle with this a bit. Then help them see that God also works in and through us.
* **What does it mean for God’s power to work in and through us? We hear that phrase a lot, but have we ever stopped to think about what it means?**
	+ *Answer:* First, God’s power *in* us means that, when we receive Christ, we are filled with the Holy Spirit. God dwells in us. To say that God’s power is in us means that God is in us.Second, God working His power *through* us means that the Holy Spirit that dwells in us empowers us to do good works and grow in holiness that is expressed outwardly for others to see.

NEXT, have a student readPsalm 23:3. Explainthat this verse contains the two elements mentioned above: God making us holy, and God being glorified. Lead students in a short discussion. Ask:

* **What does “for his name’s sake” mean?**
	+ *Answer:* “This phrase basically means ‘for God’s glory.’ More literally, it means so that God’s character is upheld in the conduct of His people.”
* **One of the great comforts in this passage is that it is not all up to us to act like what we say we are. This verse says that God leads us. Why is this comforting for us?**
	+ *Answer:* God tells us the way we should go.

Remind students that for us as Christ-followers, this way is revealed in the Bible and through the Holy Spirit. But the Bible doesn’t just say that God leads us in righteousness. Remind them that He actually gives us the power to do what He has called us to do!

THEN, have a student read 2 Corinthians 9:8. When he or she has finished, explain that this verse gives us hope because God gives us the grace necessary to do all that he has called us to. Ask:

* **When you think of all the things you are to do and not do as a Christ-follower, do you feel overwhelmed? Why or why not?**
	+ Answers will vary.
* **God gives us grace to obey Him and do His will, but what makes this grace? If grace is unmerited favor towards sinners that don’t deserve it, why is it considered grace for God to use His power to enable us to follow Him?**
	+ Answer: Christ's righteousness is ours so that when we fail, God still accepts and loves us, giving us the confidence to try again. And the Holy Spirit gives us the power to do what we could never do on our own—grow in Christ-likeness.

Help students see that if left to ourselves, we would not follow God or His commands. Even now that we are saved, we have traces of sin in our lives. Explain that even though the Holy Spirit lives inside of us, we are still works in progress. We can never fully live up to God’s standard or do what He has called us to do. Ask:

* **Despite the remnants of sin in our lives, why does God still love us?**
	+ *Answer:* Because we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ! His obedience became our obedience, and our sin became His sin. This is the first step in realizing that it is grace to be enabled do the will of God. Even when we still sin, we have confidence that we are still accepted by God. Even when we fail to do God's will in our lives, He gives us the grace to keep trying because He sees us clothed in Christ's righteousness!"
* **Does God owe it to us to give us the power to do His will?**
	+ *Answer:* God does not owe us anything. All that He gives us, from salvation to the power to do His will, He gives freely. He gives us the power to do His will out of His love for us, and His desire to be glorified. It is grace because we don’t deserve it and are not owed it based on our merits.

FINALLY, explain to students that the purpose of God giving us this power is all for His glory. Explain that God’s power in us and through us, making us holy, is to show the power and the character of God to others. Through the life He empowers us to live, we give glory back to Him. Say something like:

* **When we give glory to God, we act in a way that reflects God's character to others. When God's power works in and through us, it isn't for the sake of our name. People shouldn't look at us and praise us. When God's power is displayed in our lives, it is for the sake of His name—when people see that power their praise is directed towards God.**

**The Last Word**

* **Goal:** To have students think of ways God’s power is at work in them.
* **Set-Up:** None

FIRST, divide students into groups of two or three. Instruct them to do the following:

Come up with two or three examples of how God’s power has moved in their lives in the past.

Share a specific situation or two where God is calling you to have His power work in and through them today, or in the future. (For example, maybe they have a family member or friend who needs to hear the Gospel, or maybe they have a hard decision they need to make or a specific sin-habit that needs to be dealt with.) Allow them a few minutes to make this happen.

THEN, after the students have shared, ask them to articulate, in their own words, how God’s glory would be displayed in these situations where He’s working in and through them. Challenge students to think practically here. (For example, if it’s sharing the Gospel, God would get glory by His name being made known. If it’s overcoming a sin-habit, God would get glory by your life reflecting His character more and more.) Allow time for students to process through this.

FINALLY, instead of closing the whole class in prayer, have the students pray for one another in their own groups.

* Don’t forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you’re posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
* Use the *Social Media* guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

**We Want To Hear From You . . .**

* Do you have questions about a lesson?
* Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
* Something that didn’t work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.