

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Inside-Out: Inworking and Outworking

by Dan Trygg

“...work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for God is the One inworking in y'all, both the to-desire and the to-inwork for His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12-13

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. ⁶ There are varieties of effects (inworkings), but the same God who in-works all things in all persons. ⁷ But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good... ¹¹ But one and the same Spirit in-works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.” 1 Corinthians 12:4-7,11

“In Christ... neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith in-working through love.” Galatians 5:6

“For this also I labor, wrestling according to His inworking *which is* inworking in me in power.” Colossians 1:29

“For a door was opened to me, great and in-working, and there are many adversaries.” 1 Corinthians 16:9

We have been considering how God has introduced something new and powerful into our lives. He has created us new. We are *not* the same as we were before. We have been born from above, by the Spirit of God. We are recipients of a New Covenant whereby He has given us new hearts, ...ones that are inclined to obey Him..., and a new spirit, ...His Holy Spirit..., to be our animating energy and motivation of our lives. He has put His light within us. **We are new on the inside, but *His abiding radiance is working through us*, so that people can see His presence shining out from us.** He is transforming us from the inside-out, so that this inner change will become visible in the way we live. **Even though we still *have our old self***, our “outer man”, that remains sinful and selfish, **we *are a new self*** that has been created in righteousness and devotion to God, and **we can choose to live out from that new identity.** We are no longer bound to live by works of the fleshly orientation we used to live by. **We can live by the Spirit, and bear His fruit, ...a life that looks like Jesus. In fact, that is our goal, to make *the life of Jesus* visible *within ours*.**

Today's lesson helps us to focus in on that process a bit more. **There are a number of passages in the NT that describe how God will work *within us*, ...and we are to give *outward expression* to that. We do that by choosing to partner with the leading of the Spirit which is taking place inside of us.** Philippians 2:12,13 is the clearest expression of this principle. Verse 12 exhorts us to “work out your salvation”, and the reason given is found in verse 13, “because God is working within you.” **We are to “work out” what God is “working within” us.** Let's look a little closer at this passage.

The word translated as “God is *working in you*” is the Greek word, *energeō*. You can see the English word “energy” is derived from this Greek word. **It is a compound word from the word for “work, function, activity, to be at work, to operate, to be active, to effect” and the preposition “in” or “within”.** In other words, there is an inner activity, a motivation or empowerment to do something, that is stirring inside. **God is activating something in you**, giving you ability to do or accomplish something. **This stirring, or agitation, or prompting, or motivation, is being initiated by God Himself, ...and it is happening *within you*!** The verse gets more specific. It is an “inworking *to will* or *to do* for His good pleasure”. **God is the One inworking in you both the desire or “want to” do what is His good pleasure, and the “ability-to-do” what He desires.** His inworking is both the *inner motivation* and the *inner strength* to accomplish what He is purposing. Desire and ability prompted and initiated by God. It is *God's* inworking in *you*.

But notice that **this is only half of the picture.** Verse 12 exhorts us to “work out” this result of our salvation. The word for “work-out” is another compound Greek word, from the verb which means to work, *ergazomai* (Can you see the same three-letter stem, “erg-” as we saw in “*en-erg-eō*”?), and a preposition, *kata*, which means “according to”. So, the word means to “work according to” or “to work out” or “produce”. It refers to accomplishing something successfully, or thoroughly perform or carry out what was intended. The “according to” aspect indicates either the fulfillment of a plan, or the outworking of one's nature. For us, **it means we are to respond to and carry out the initiative that God is working within us in a manner that is consistent with His inner-working.** In other words, we don't sense a prompting, and then just do things on our own. We continue to work in partnership with what He is doing. We work responsively and carry it through to completion.

This fits with what Jesus said was His *modus operandi*. He said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for what things the Father might do, these things the Son also does in like manner.” So Jesus was ***paying attention to see what the Father might be initiating.*** **When He noticed that, He responded to that activity by partnering with what the Father was doing.** Notice that as He joined what God was doing, He responded appropriately, ***...in like manner.*** He adjusted Himself and His approach to what He could perceive that the Father was doing. **How did He know? “For the Father loves the Son, and shows**

Him all things that He Himself is doing; and will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.” The word for “show” here simply means “to make known”. It can come through a visual cue, something heard (literally or within one’s own mind), or some demonstrative circumstances. The point is that even Jesus was paying attention to what was going on inside of Him, and around Him. He was responding to the initiative of what God was doing. **What about you? Does God love you? Then, it would be appropriate to ask Him to indicate to you what He is doing, so that you could respond to Him and join with Him as a partner.** Philippians 2 is an indication that this is exactly His plan.

1 Corinthians 12 indicates that our spiritual gifts operate in this same fashion. The Holy Spirit does something inside of us. He is the author or initiator of the gifting that He intends to use to build up others in the body of Christ. **We are to work-out, or express outwardly, what He is doing within us. We are partners with Him in the use of our spiritual gifts.** God intends for us to work in correspondence to what He is prompting within us. What happens if we *don’t* express outwardly what the Holy Spirit is prompting inwardly? **If we don’t respond to the Spirit, ...or if we do not allow for the expression of the Spirit..., then we are quenching the Spirit.** We are aborting what He is attempting to do in and through us. **When that happens, we miss out on experiencing the flow of His energy through us, and those we were intended to serve do not receive the ministry that God intended for them.** This is important. God has made us to be co-workers, fellow-participants with Him. **If we don’t do our part, then what He intended to do through us will not happen.**

In 1 Timothy 4:14, Paul told Timothy not to be careless about his spiritual gift. The word for careless means “to pay no attention to, to disregard, be unconcerned about, or unresponsive to, to neglect, or overlook”. In the next verse, Paul writes, **“Cultivate these things, be absorbed in them, in order that your progress might become visible to all.”** The word for “cultivate” means to “think about, meditate upon, give serious consideration to, fix your attention on, attend to, ponder, practice by trial”. **Clearly, this does not happen passively. We must be attentive and responsive participants.**

Galatians 5:6 adds another dimension to this idea. Paul is addressing the powerlessness of external religion, contrasting that with the power of the Spirit, which comes by grace through faith. He says, “So then, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any power, rather faith in-working by means of love.” **Religious externals have no power. Faith being activated and energized by the agapē-love of God is where power becomes effectual. Where does agapē-love of God come from? It is from God.** Only those who are born of God and experientially-know Him have the capacity to express that kind of love (1 Jn. 4:7). **The agape-love of God is produced by the Spirit within us, but faith is the response of our will that puts that love into practical expression.** The *apapē* is the prompting, faith brings what is inward into outward expression.

In Colossians 1:29, Paul described the inworking of God’s power that worked within his ministry. He said that the ministry he and his co-workers were called to involved proclaiming Christ, reminding and teaching every person with all skill, in order that they might present every person mature in Christ. **This was the task that he himself labored hard at, wrestling according to the inworking-energy of God inworking in him in power. This is what made Paul effective. It was not just his own training, experience or skill. The power of God was at work in him.** That is what we want. Like Jesus said, we can do nothing out from ourselves. Apart from Him we can do nothing. **The optimal ministry arrangement is when we are operating according to the inworking of His power. When we are working in correspondence to His inworking, ...expressing, or working-outwardly, what He is working within us, then we will see the power of God do amazing things in the lives of people.**

1 Corinthians 16:9 gives us a glimpse into how Paul evaluated ministry opportunities. In light of our discussion up to this point, this only makes sense. “For a door has been opened to me (and remains open), ...great and inworking..., and many are set against me.” **Paul was paying attention to where he could see God was at work. God had opened up an opportunity, ...a “door”..., a door that was large, widely open, ...but more importantly a door where God was operating already. Even though there were many adversaries, ...many who were set against him, and what he was doing..., he was going to remain right there, because he could see that God was at work.** If God was at work, he was not going to go anywhere else, until God directed him to leave. It is like finding a fishing hole where the fish are biting, ...why would you go anywhere else, when the fish are biting *here*?

The challenge for us, I believe, is to trust that God is and will be working-within us. He is and will prompt, motivate, and empower us to do what He desires for us to participate with Him in. He *is* and *will be* at work in the world around us, ...and He *will* reveal to us what He is doing, so that we *can* partner with Him. He *is* and *will* work-within us spiritual gifts that He desires that we express to one another. And He *is* and *will* open doors for ministry where He is already at work. **We need to recognize His in-workings, and respond according to what He is doing.** We must press in to ask for and expect God to work-within us, and learn to effectively work that out in practical action.