

God Is Working In You To Do The Hard Things

*"You Can Do **Hard Things**" Series- Part 01*

Share/Connect time: *Who was your favorite teacher and why?*

A sad example yet often repeated:

A marine biologist placed a shark into a large holding tank and then released several bait fish into the tank. As expected, the shark quickly attacked and ate the smaller fish.

The biologist then inserted a strong piece of clear fiberglass into the tank, creating two separate partitions between the shark and the other fish. This time, however, the shark slammed into the fiberglass divider and bounced off. Undeterred, the shark kept repeating this behavior every few minutes to no avail. After a few days, the shark got tired of hitting the fiberglass divider and simply stopped attacking altogether.

When the glass partition was removed and the smaller fish swam wherever they wanted, the shark was trained to believe a barrier still existed between them and they were free from harm.

Like this shark, we find that we might believe that because we were unsuccessful in the past with a task, we will always be unsuccessful.

Can you relate to a time when you gave up on a task because you found it "too hard"?

Today, let's look at the writings of a man who is in a hard situation, writing to people who are living in a difficult time, and encouraging them that they can do the "hard things"!

Book: Philippians 2:12-18

Php 2:12 Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.

Php 2:13 For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.

Php 2:14 Do everything without complaining and arguing,

Php 2:15 so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.

Php 2:16 Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless.

Php 2:17 But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy.

Php 2:18 Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy.

Let's get into the Word:

The Scriptures are clear: We cannot work FOR our salvation, nor can we work to KEEP our salvation. What do you suppose Paul was asking when he said "*Work hard to show the results of your salvation*"? (and other translations state: "*work out your salvation*")

What does that effort look like and what results can be observed?

As your small group has described the activities involved in “working out your salvation” what efforts have been most challenging for you? What has been a failure that stills seems “impossible”?

Let’s break down verse 13: *For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.*

What is God doing and in what ways does He go about doing that?

Can you identify something that you felt was a “God-placed desire” in your heart?

How does the fact that God gives “power” affect our efforts to do the hard things?

Based upon the instructions given in verses 14-16, make a list for how we are to go about doing the hard things that pleases God:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

What do Paul’s words mean in verse 16 as it relates to a Christian life of doing hard things?

Paul states that joy should be the experience of those who “work out their salvation”. What can we celebrate as a result of “working out our salvation”?

How can I apply this lesson to my life:

Is there an area of your life that past experience have caused you to “give up” on ever finding success?

What does the scripture say about this goal or effort?

Do you believe this goal falls within God’s desire and power to give you victory?

What will you do next?