

God at Work

Hebrews 13:20-21

“Now (may) the God of peace ... equip you in every good thing to do His will, **working in us** that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The first half of this benediction of Hebrews focuses on a description of the character of the Most High.

1. *He is the God of peace* ... for through Him the war within is won; He ends our rebellion against Him.
2. *He is the God of power* ... “who brought up from the dead the Shepherd of the sheep” (v. 20).

There’s no greater joy than knowing God really loves you, is all-powerful, and is always on your side.

The second half of this benediction is a prayer on behalf of “the sheep” who follow the Great Shepherd.

1. The author prays that God will **equip us** to do His will.
2. The author prays that God will equip us by **working in us** what is pleasing in His sight.
3. The author prays that God will equip us to do His will by working in us **through Jesus Christ**.

I. You can’t do His will until you are equipped.

Anybody who works at anything realizes that you must have the proper equipment to do a good job. You’ll never be able to do God’s will until you have the tools from God that make His will possible.

A. “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God for you in Christ” (I Thess. 5:18).

There is some equipment that is needed before you can give thanks in all your circumstances.

B. “The will of God is your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality” (I Thess. 4:3).

It is impossible for you to be set apart and abstain from sexual immorality without God’s equipping.

C. “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put others to silence” (I Peter 2:15).

All of us have felt the internal battle between doing good for others and striking back at others.

D. The will of God is felt through the influence of the Holy Spirit within you (i.e. ‘led by the Spirit’).

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” (Luke 6:46). We need equipping.

II. The equipping God gives to us is *internal*.

Some of us wish God would give us better voices, greater influence, bigger ministries (externals). But the equipping that God gives to His saints, and that which we are to pray for, is all internal. “*He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ*” (Phil. 1:6). Hebrews 13:21 explains that God not only equips us, He also works in us to produce that which is pleasing in His sight. The good works that we produce are indeed our works, brought by God’s grace. These works, commanded by the author (see 12:12–17; 13:1–19), are a matter of internal strength.

A. When you blame others for your failures, you are missing the internal strength to do His will.

B. When you blame your circumstances for your lack of commitment, you lack internal strength.

C. When you blame *anything outside of yourself* (church, experiences, past, etc.) you are off track.

III. The internal strength comes *through Christ*.

John Calvin commented that “What we do in life, perfumed by the odor of Christ’s grace, emits a sweet fragrance in God’s presence, while otherwise all our actions would have a putrid smell.”

A. An illustration from Joseph’s life ... hated by his brothers, sold into slavery, everything lost in life.

As Joseph rode south to Egypt, he rode in a wagon full of balm from Gilead (Gen. 37:25). You can find internal strength when you *see the Savior* in the midst of every trial, healing our souls.

B. An illustration from Job’s life ... lost everything in a series of calamities; “curse God and die.”

Job’s response, “I see my God in **all things** in my life” – He is more important than my comfort. Internal strength comes when we, like Job, treasure *more who God is than what God gives*.