

Spiritual Weapons Are Our Most Powerful

Followers of Jesus, there are two extremes we must avoid when working for cultural reformation. One is to become entirely spiritual in our approach, relying only on prayer, fasting and preaching the gospel while neglecting the many practical, more “earthly” things we can do as well. The other is that we place all our emphasis on those practical, more “earthly” things (from feeding the poor to voting and from getting involved in the school systems to learning to be effective social media influencers) while neglecting the spiritual aspects of our calling. To do the former will handicap our efforts; to do the latter will sabotage them completely.

But since the foundation of all our work is spiritual, the most effective weapons we have are spiritual (and therefore, by the Spirit, supernatural), and the thing that sets us apart from the world is our spiritual—and genuine—relationship with God. Everything we do—and I cannot stress this strongly enough—must flow out of this Spirit-first emphasis. If we can keep this balance, then we can see radical change come.

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These words of Jesus speak to us forcefully and directly, reminding us of the utter folly of trying to accomplish God’s work in human strength:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine,

neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples" (John 15:1–8, ESV, author's emphasis).

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We would do well to meditate on these words regularly all the days of our lives. They are always on target and never grow old.

Think back to Paul's letter to the Galatians. Although the context was vastly different from our current discussion, the question he asked them is quite relevant to us today: "Are you that stupid? Having begun with the Spirit's power, do you think you can reach the goal under your own power?" (Gal. 3:3, CJB). So, if God by His Spirit fuels the fires of a powerful season of revival, giving us a vision to see our community (or city or nation) changed, why do we think that we can now accomplish this goal by means of human effort alone?

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