

## Powerless or Powerful

The same thing can seem **powerless** or **POWERFUL**

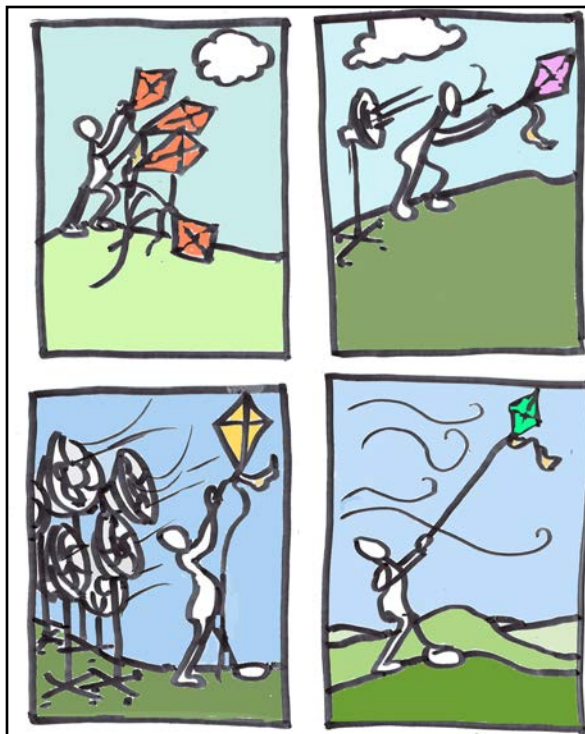
- What are some examples?
- What makes the difference?

What is your sense of our relationship with God?

God's intention for all His children: “**bearing fruit** in every good work, **growing** in the knowledge of God, being **strengthened with all power** according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and **giving joyful thanks** to the Father” *Colossians 1:10-12*

What is the source of this fruit, power, and joyful thanks?

1



When the wind  
blows...

Luke 3:21-38

[bib.ly/Lu3.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lu3.NIV)

2

*Luke 3*

- John the Baptist
  - His mission: Prepare people for Jesus
    - Baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins

**Immersed in water**  
**Sign of major life change**

**Re-aligning one's life  
 to match  
 God's purposes and values**

**Washing away  
 our ongoing failure  
 to be good like God**

3

*Luke 3:21-38*[bib.ly/Lu3.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lu3.NIV)

21-22:

- 23-38: • **Jesus** joined the baptism of repentance, even though He had no need to repent
- He fully identified with the people He came to save
  - He prayed as humans must pray → to talk with God
  - **Heaven was opened:** God's power & presence
  - **God the Spirit** empowered **Jesus**
    - Came to empower and guide Him
    - Jesus did not claim & use His rightful power directly
  - **God the Father** declared His approval of **Jesus**
  - **We get to see the Trinity active in relationship**
  - Jesus is a model for His disciples **then and now**

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*Luke 3:21-38*[bib.ly/Lu3.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lu3.NIV)

21-22: Jesus' baptism shows the Trinity active in ministry

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*Luke 3:21-38*[bib.ly/Lu3.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lu3.NIV)

21-22: Jesus' baptism shows the Trinity active in ministry

- 23-38: Jesus was the legal descendant of many generations who were waiting for the promise of God
- 30 years old: when priests began their ministry
  - For a few of these people: we know God's promises

6

*Promises to...*

**#1 Adam:** God will crush the evil one

God's word to the enemy of God:

“And I will put enmity  
between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;

**he will crush your head,**  
and you will strike his heel.”

*Genesis 3:15*

**By including Adam:** Gospel is hope for all of humanity,  
not just the descendants of Abraham

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*Promises to...*

**#1 Adam:** God will crush the evil one

**#10 Noah:** Never again will God bring total destruction

“**Never again will I curse the ground** because of  
humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is  
evil from childhood. And **never again will I destroy all  
living creatures, as I have done.**”

*Genesis 8:21*

8

*Promises to...*

**#1 Adam:** God will crush the evil one

**#10 Noah:** Never again will God bring total destruction

**#21 Abraham:** All peoples on earth will be blessed

“I will make you into a great nation,  
and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,  
and you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,  
and whoever curses you I will curse;

and **all peoples on earth  
will be blessed through you.**”

*Genesis 12:2-3*

9

*Promises to...*

**#1 Adam:** God will crush the evil one

**#10 Noah:** Never again will God bring total destruction

**#21 Abraham:** All peoples on earth will be blessed

**#34 David:** David’s throne will be established forever

“The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ... **Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.**” *2 Samuel 7:11, 16*

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***Luke 3:21-38***[bib.ly/Lu3.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lu3.NIV)

21-22: Jesus' baptism shows the Trinity active in ministry

23-38: Jesus was the legal descendant of many generations who were waiting for the promise of God

- 30 years old: when priests began their ministry
- For a few of these people: we know God's promises
- For almost all these people: we know almost nothing
  - Let alone the women and the other men God used...

11

***God's work in the lives of...***

- Heli, Matthat, Melki, Jannai, Esli, Maath, Joda, Rhesa (and the list goes on and on...)
- "I do not have time to tell about..." *Hebrews 11:32*
  - So we don't know their stories
- Every one of the 76 generations lived lives of hopes and fear, doubts and assurances, questions and answers
- Every one (except one...) eventually died
- God used each of them in the journey of bringing us Jesus

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- All these generations **only make sense together**

“These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that **only together with us would they be made perfect.**”

*Hebrews 11:39-40*

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*Luke 3:21-38*

[bib.ly/Lu3.NIV](http://bib.ly/Lu3.NIV)

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*The Big Idea of the Passage*

**Jesus' humanity-changing ministry  
was the culmination of God's work  
through all generations  
through the perfect collaboration  
of God the Father, Son, and Spirit  
through the prayer and work of the Son**

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*The Big Idea for Us*

**The work of God in humanity  
flows through countless generations  
around the world  
through the perfect collaboration  
of God the Father, Son, and Spirit  
as the church is faithful  
in repentance, in prayer, and in the Spirit**

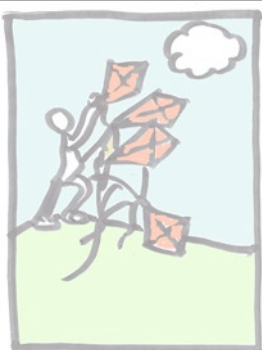
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Without wind, kites simply fall to the ground  
 Without breath, humans cannot live  
 Without the Spirit, the Christian life is empty and powerless  
 Sometimes we tell ourselves that this is normal

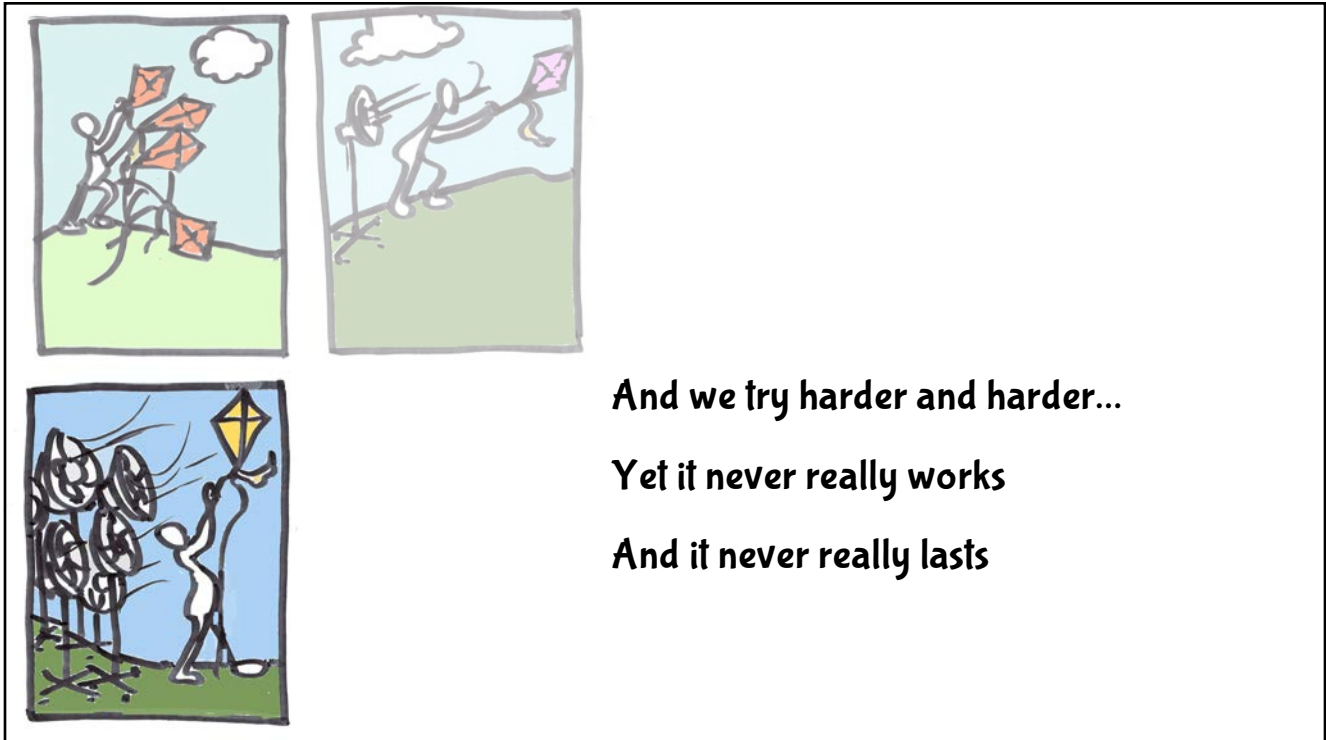
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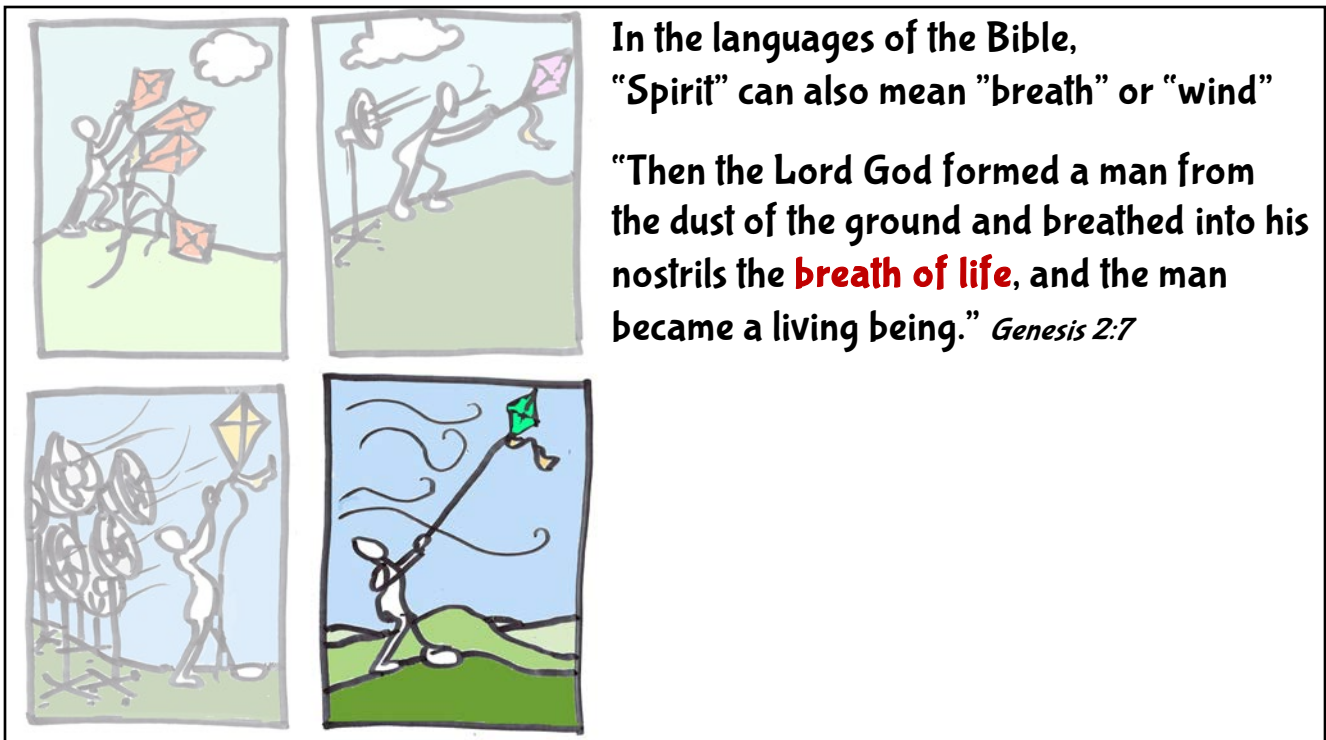
Sometimes we try to generate wind  
 to give life and power to our efforts  
 We try to generate the “wind” through...

- Passion or emotion
- Careful planning and strategy
- New techniques or ideas
- Ancient techniques or ideas
- Spiritual practices
- Religious activities
- “Gifted” people
- Human skill
- Hard work
- And the list goes on...


18



19




20



“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be **baptized with the Holy Spirit**. ... **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you**” *Acts 1:4–5, 8a*

“Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a **violent wind came from heaven** and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were **filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” *Acts 2:2–4*

21



“And the disciples were **filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit**.” *Acts 13:52*

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, **be filled with the Spirit**,

- speaking to one another with **psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit**.
- Sing and **make music from your heart to the Lord**,
- **always giving thanks to God the Father for everything**,

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

*Ephesians 5:18–20*

**Ministry grows when the Spirit is active**

22

- Jesus entered into the experience of human disciples
  - Mystery, temptations, waiting, joys & sorrows
  - Obedience when it was intensely painful
  - Modeling repentance, though He had no need
  - Relationship with the Father through prayer
  - Being empowered by the Spirit  
through the Spirit's action to come

**Jesus modeled for us how human beings can walk in relationship with the all-powerful, all-holy God**  
**Genuine joy and goodness is found in living as He lived: repentance, prayer, and the Spirit**

23

*The Big Idea for Us*

**The work of God in humanity  
flows through countless generations  
around the world  
through the perfect collaboration  
of God the Father, Son, and Spirit  
as the church is faithful  
in repentance, in prayer, and in the Spirit**

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### *Application*

See all of life in the light of God's full plan for humanity

- God's plan is not about us or our "people" or our church
- God's plan is not about this day, this month, this year, or even this century
- **God has planned something far, far better that will be amazingly beautiful in its time!**
- Until then, we may experience Paul's description
  - Hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted, struck down
  - But not crushed, in despair, abandoned, destroyed

*2 Corinthians 4:7-12*

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### *Application*

See all of life in the light of God's full plan for humanity

**Pray!** rather than hoping God will be susceptible to us

- The goal: "make ourselves susceptible to" hearing God's will, whatever it might involve
  - susceptible = "likely to be influenced by"
  - We naturally resist what is contrary to our own ideas
    - "wanting to justify ourselves..."
    - wanting an easier path, to be told we're right, ...
- Intentionally look for God's action and communication
  - First message to Jesus: 40 days of intense trial & temptation

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Follow Jesus' model of prayer in Luke...

- At baptism: "As he was praying..."
- "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."
- "Jesus went out to a mountainside and spent the night praying to God"
- "Once when Jesus was praying in private..."
- "Jesus took Peter, John and James and went up onto a mountain to pray"
- Jesus told His disciples "that they should always pray and not give up"
- "Be always on the watch, and pray..."
- "And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly..."

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### *Application*

See all of life in the light of God's full plan for humanity  
Pray!

#### Walk in the Spirit

- We imagine that we can 'get' and 'use' the Spirit.
  - In reality, the Spirit takes possession of us!
- Not a resource at our disposal
  - Rather: "In Him, we live and move and have our being"
- Trust & obey & depend upon the Spirit and His work
  - Apart from God, we **have nothing good** *Psalm 16:2*
  - Apart from God, we **can do nothing good** *John 15:4-5*

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### *Application*

See all of life in the light of God's full plan for humanity  
Pray!

#### **Walk in the Spirit**

- Watch and listen for the Spirit
- Follow the Spirit through God's Word
  - ~~Even~~ when the path seems hard or confusing or costly

#### **Especially!**

- Depend upon the Spirit for what seems impossible
- Depend upon the Spirit for what seems possible

29

### *The Big Idea for Us*

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What is your sense of our relationship with God?

God's intention for all His children: “**bearing fruit** in every good work, **growing** in the knowledge of God, being **strengthened with all power** according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and **giving joyful thanks** to the Father” *Colossians 1:10-12*

Let's be faithful...

- in repentance: realigning our lives with God's will
- in prayer: being susceptible to the will of God
- in the Holy Spirit: being filled and strengthened

**Watch and rejoice when God speaks and moves among us!**