

OBEY GOD-DEFY TYRANTS #28

I. Introduction

My title tonight is...

"The Power of One"

I want to show you the biblical basis for believing that God has given each one of us, as individuals, the ability to make a difference in this world by...

The Power of One

The theory that one person's actions can actually change the lives of many

The Power of One

The power of one refers to the individual's ability to initiate and create positive change, influence others, and make a significant impact through their actions, ideas, or beliefs.

This is not some "New Age" teaching or seeker-sensitive subject for itching ears. There is a biblical basis for us to believe in the Power of One.

Joshua 23:9

For the Lord has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day.

Joshua 23:10

One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you.

One shall chase a 1000!
Why do we need this message so much right now?

Theme

When tyranny and injustice rise all around us, we can begin to feel that we, as individuals, are powerless in the presence of all the problems confronting us today.

Theme

But the truth is that the individual is far more powerful than commonly believed!

Let me begin with giving you the biblical basis for belief in the power of one.

II. The Power of One

A. The Biblical Basis for Belief

1. Remember: The power of one is the theory that one person's actions can actually change the life of many. The ultimate examples are Adam and Christ!

a. We see the power of one in the sin of Adam, where one person's action changed the life of many;

Romans 5:12,18

...through *one man* sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men...through *one man's* offense judgment came to all men resulting in condemnation...

b. But we also see the power of one in Christ's work on the Cross...

Romans 5:15,18

For if by the *one man's* offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of *the one Man*, Jesus Christ, abounded to many... even so through *one Man's* righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

Romans 5:19

For as by *one man's* disobedience many were made sinners, so also by *one Man's* obedience many will be made righteous.

Abigail Nelson, Episcopal Church relief executive

"In God's economy, one man redeemed the world by stretching out his arms and giving of himself a perfect sacrifice for us all. This was one man."

2. We see the power of one in the Great Flood of God's judgment in...

Genesis 6:7-8

So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth — men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air — for I am grieved that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

a. God saved the human race through the power of one!

3. Of course we can't compare ourselves to Noah, much less Christ; but the principle of the 'power of one' is at work throughout the Bible.

a. Most everyone knows the story of Esther; a young Jewish girl God used to save the nation.

b. But no one even knows the name of the servant girl in 2 Kings 5 whose testimony led to the healing of the great general Naaman, who was a leper.

2 Kings 5:3-4

Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." And Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel."

c. Everyone knows the story of Jesus feeding the multitude; but no one knows the name of the little boy whose sack lunch made it possible!

John 6:8-9

One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

4. This is an object lesson for us today; standing amidst much need; feeling like we have little to offer...but little is much when it's given to God!

5. The power of one can change the lives of many, especially when it works through what seems to be weakness; as God told the Apostle Paul: "My strength is made perfect in weakness".

6. The Power of One has been at work throughout human history through the most unlikely candidates.

a. Consider the case of Anne Frank.

Anne Frank

Anne Frank may well be the most famous 15-year-old author of the 20th century. She wrote one book, a diary, while hiding from the Nazis during the German occupation of the Netherlands.

"The Diary of Anne Frank"

The diary chronicles 2 years of hiding in an office building with her family before they were discovered and killed in a Nazi concentration camp. Anne died in 1945, just 3 months before her 16th birthday.

And yet the words of one little teenager have inspired the courage of millions; words like these about the power of one...

Anne Frank

"How wonderful it is, that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

Helen Keller

7. Consider also the case of **Helen Keller, who became deaf and blind at 19 months of age as the result of an illness.**

a. **At the age of 7, she met her first teacher and life-long companion Anne Sullivan, who taught Keller language, including reading and writing.**

b. Keller went on to attend the Radcliffe College of Harvard University and became the first deaf/blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.

c. The power of one worked through Anne Sullivan to help one little deaf/blind young girl who went on to inspire generations of handicapped people around the world. Keller commented...

Helen Keller

I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.

8. I have taken all this time to present the principle of the Power of One because this belief in the power of the individual is the only effective way we can combat tyranny and maintain the health of our society.

Will and Ariel Durant, "The Story of Civilization"

A study of history reveals that a healthy society depends upon individuals with clarity of mind and energy of will, capable of effective responses to new situations.

9. The great Christian historian Arnold Toynbee agrees...

Arnold Toynbee, English historian (1889-1975)

Of the twenty-two civilizations that have appeared in history, nineteen of the them collapsed when they reached the moral state the United States is in now.

Arnold Toynbee

A loss of creative power in the souls of creative individuals is one of the key factors that leads to the breakdown of civilizations.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"The antidote to the abuse of formal government power is the influence of private character, the growth of the Individual."

B. The Salvation of a Nation Begins With the Power of One

1. It is human nature to believe that political change can only come by collective action; if we can get a big enough crowd to vote for the right people, all will be well again. But, as one website reminds us....

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While collective action, in the sense of cooperation among groups of people to achieve common ends, is obviously an important vehicle for manifesting change...

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...it will be ineffective at bringing freedom to an unfree world if people do not first strive to set themselves right to free their minds of the incessant indoctrination they have been exposed to, and in the process develop into strong, independent and effectual beings.

2. We tend to forget that the individual is not a reflection of a nation; the nation is a reflection of its individuals. Or as the brilliant Swiss psychologist said...

Carl Jung, "Civilization in Transition"

"The psychology of the individual is reflected in the psychology of the nation. Only a change in the attitude of the individual can initiate a change in the psychology of the nation."

We can and should pass good laws; however...

Carl Jung, "Civilization in Transition"

"The great problems of humanity were never yet solved by general laws, but only through regeneration of the attitudes of individuals."

a. Christ did not come to change the world by giving new laws; the laws God gave were good laws; Christ came to change the hearts of individual men so they would desire to keep God's laws!

3. America's goodness did not come from her greatness; America's greatness came from her goodness; the goodness that resided in the souls of regenerated individuals, our founding fathers.

a. These individuals were role models of how we became free and how we will remain free.

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It should be clear the crucial role that individuals must play in the creation of a free world. For what is needed most in a society dominated by oppressive government is role models who show by example what it means to be free.

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Without such people, no collective action, no mass movements, no election of a new leader who promises “change” will ever bring about anything but temporary and superficial relief.

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One who has freed their mind, set themselves right, and in pursuit of the truth is unafraid to boldly speak their mind even in the face of severe opposition, has, in the words of Carl Jung, “unknowingly and involuntarily become a leader” – a role model which others will naturally strive to emulate.

Academy of Ideas

Such an individual will have become one less pawn in an oppressive system, and whether they are aware of it or not, will have assumed a crucial role in the regeneration of society.

b. The next national election may be the most important election in our history; all candidates are already promising change. But American law professor Butler Shaffer tells the truth...

Butler Shaffer, “Boundaries of Order”

This is the only way in which any meaningful social change can ever take place; it will either arise within each individual, or it will not occur at all. Those who insist upon change coming from above, as something to be imposed upon mankind by institutional authorities, have given up on people.

Butler Shaffer, “Boundaries of Order”

They have lost their confidence in the life processes that exhibit themselves only within individuals. It is now time to give people a chance to bring order to the world by bringing themselves to order.

4. We lose confidence in the power of the individual, the power of one, because we disobey the command...

C. Don't Despise the Day of Small Things

Zechariah 4:10

Do not despise the day of small things.

1. God gave this word to His people in a day of discouragement when they were trying to rebuild their Temple; they struggled to believe the days of former glory could return. They were tempted to do nothing.

D.L. Moody

People are being left out of all that God is doing because they only want to do "great" things.

2. But Jesus likened His kingdom to small things: a mustard seed; a pearl; a pinch of leaven. He judges us in the 'small things'.

Luke 16:10

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

3. To be faithful in what is least means to celebrate the Power of One; to be faithful in our calling, great or small.

Arnold Toynbee, English historian (1889-1975)

Do not let yourselves be discouraged or embittered by the smallness of the success you are likely to achieve in trying to make life better. You certainly would not be able, in a single generation, to create an earthly paradise.

Arnold Toynbee, English historian (1889-1975)

Who could expect that? But if you make life ever so little better, you will have done splendidly, and your lives will have been worthwhile.

III. Close

A. Review

Theme

When tyranny and injustice rise all around us, we can begin to feel that we, as individuals, are powerless in the presence of all the problems confronting us today. But the truth is that the individual is far more powerful than commonly believed!

This is what we call...

The Power of One

The belief that one person's actions can actually change the lives of many

Let me leave you with one final word of warning about how evil governments guard their power...

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Brute force is not enough to maintain tyranny; rather a tyrannical regime will only maintain power if they can control the minds of their subjects.

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When one realizes that gaining control of the minds of individuals is the most vital means for controlling a population it becomes clear that the first step in countering tyranny is to undergo the difficult process of freeing one's own mind.

In other words...

Making America great again begins with the individual-with the Power of One!

Joshua 23:10

One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you.

Closing Prayer

Title