

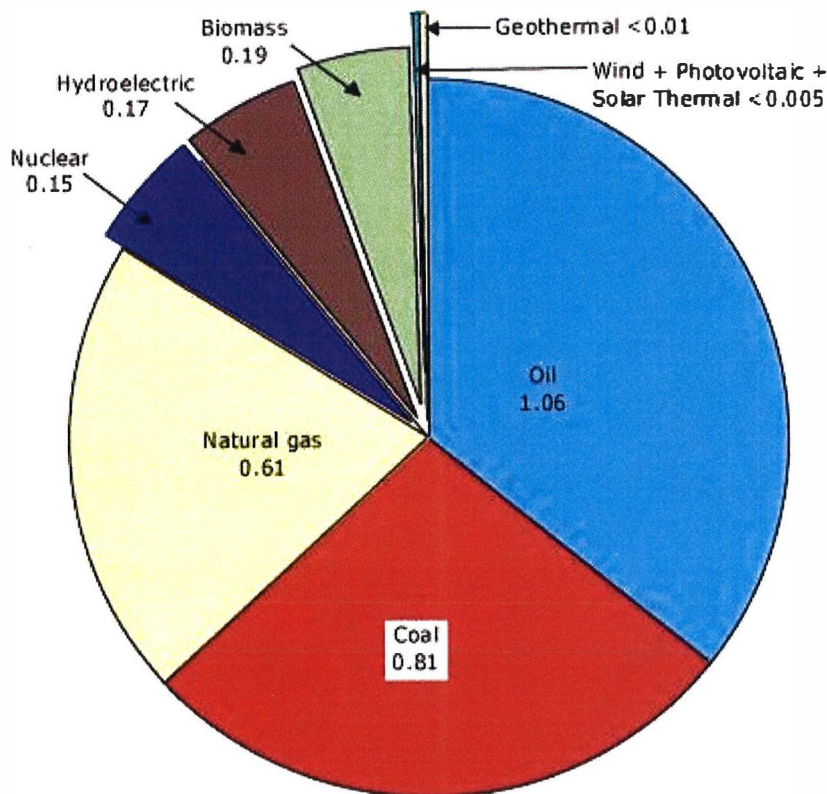
CHAPTER 2

The Need For Energy and Power

Americans are greatly dependent upon energy. What would modern **transportation** be like without energy? How would industry (factories, etc.) function without energy? How could Northerners heat their homes in the winter apart from energy? How could Southerners cool their homes in the summer apart from energy? What are some of the ways that we depend upon energy (especially **oil**) every day?

Have you ever experienced a power outage in your home due to a storm or due to some other problem? How long were you without power? Did this experience show you how dependent we are on electricity for much of what we do? Can you imagine when people lived without any electricity, without light bulbs, without autos, without computer, without cell phones? For example, people living in Bible times had none of these things!

Global sources of energy



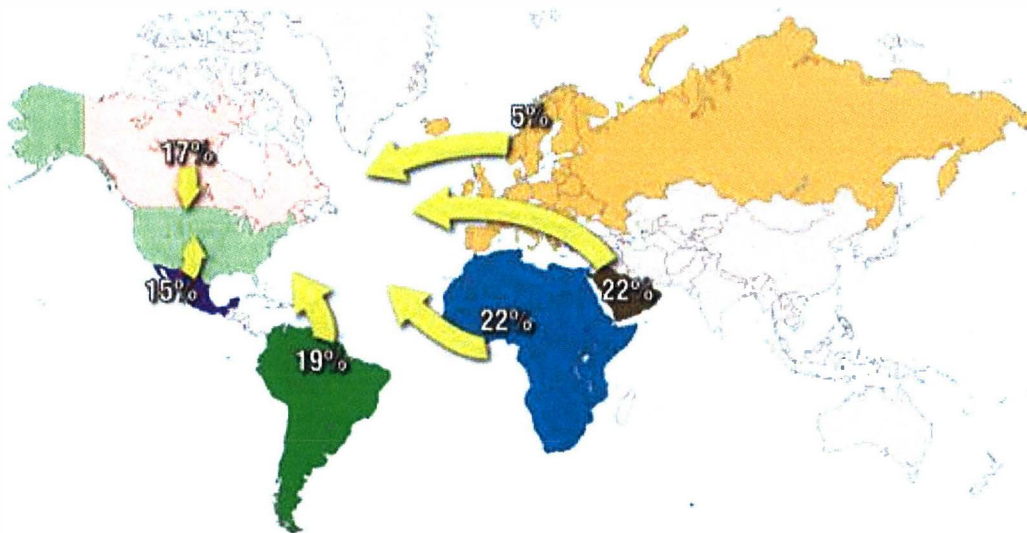
In 1859 in the town of Titusville, Pennsylvania, Edwin Drake struck oil and the great oil rush began. Ever since then men have been seeking this "black gold." In the days of George Washington men did not lose any sleep worrying about petroleum! Today oil is a major concern.

What would life be like if we suddenly were without oil and the products which are made from oil?

There was a time when our nation produced a lot of oil and America exported oil to other countries! We had oil and oil to spare! We had enough oil for ourselves and enough to share with other nations. Later things began to change. In 1960, 20 percent of America's oil came from abroad. Today about half the oil we use is supplied by foreign sources. Thus our nation has become more and more dependent upon foreign oil, including oil which comes from the politically unstable Middle East. If these foreign countries should decide to cut off their supply of oil (as was done during the oil embargo of 1973-1974), then our nation would be seriously choked! More than 20 million barrels of oil (including a large amount of foreign oil) are consumed by Americans **every day**. Another problem is that foreign oil is very expensive! It would be much better to produce our own oil than to buy it from other countries.

The following map shows where this foreign oil comes from:

United States Oil Imports



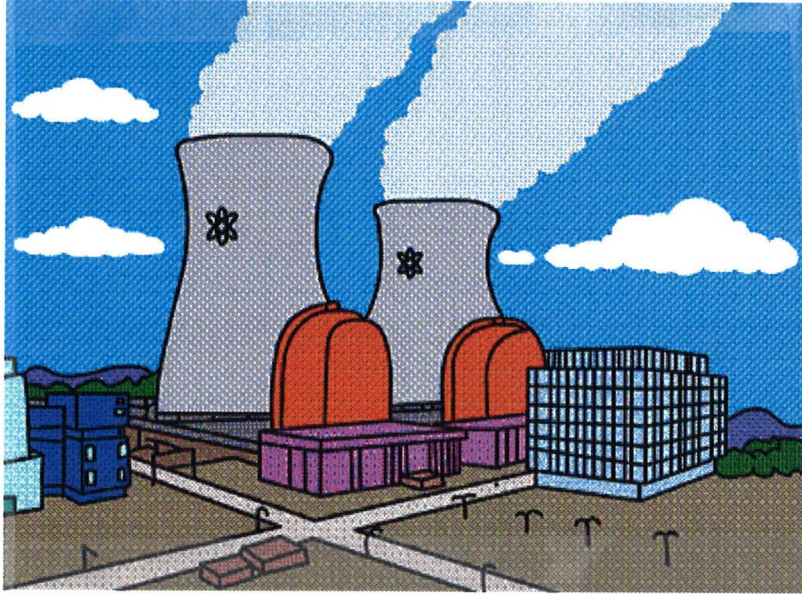
Is Our Nation Running out of Energy?

The world uses about 85 million barrels of oil each day. The world does not have an infinite supply of oil, so it is obvious that the oil supply will not last forever. However, there is still an amazing amount of oil in our world and in our country. God knew about autos and airplanes long before they were ever invented, and God has provided a vast amount of oil to be used by mankind.

Oil can also be recovered from what is called "oil shale." Scattered around the world are sedimentary basins in which porous rock has absorbed an oily substance called "kerogen." When the rock is heated, the kerogen flows out and is subsequently refined to make petroleum fuels of all kinds. In addition to oil shale, the Lord has provided lake-bottom sediment which is soaked with oil. These deposits are called "tar sands." North America's largest tar sands deposits are in Alberta, Canada, but they are also found in the western U.S., especially in Utah.

Petroleum is not the only source of fuel. America has been especially blessed with coal. The countries which produce the most coal are China, the United States and India.

Consider also the vast potential of nuclear energy. Many countries have nuclear power plants which provide electricity. Nuclear energy also powers our submarines.



As long as the sun continues to burn we have another unending source of energy, although at present solar energy is expensive and not practical on a large scale. Windmills can also provide a source of energy.



Other sources of energy may be developed and discovered in the years ahead.

What is the Problem?

If we have all these resources and all this potential energy, then why is there such a problem? If there is an abundance of fuel in this country then why is there not always an abundance of fuel at this country's gas stations? Why are we so dependent on foreign oil?

Energy resources are available, but are we really taking advantage of what we have?

The real problem is not a shortage of fuel. The real problem is that men have not taken advantage of the rich supply of energy that is available. Men have failed to make adequate use of the rich resources God has provided in this nation. Men (especially those who are leaders in government) have discouraged and hindered the development and use of our nation's available energy. The problem is not that America is running out of energy. The problem is that we are in many ways like the story of the aged silver miner who had spent all his life searching for silver in the mountains of the Old West. When he died, the handful of people who came to bury him found in his possessions a note instructing them to bury him under his cabin. As the shovels full of earth were turned over a lustrous gray material began to appear. It was a huge vein of silver! The silver was there! It was available! The silver miner never made use of the wealth that was right under his cabin!

There are many ways that our government has discouraged and hindered us from getting the wealth of energy which can be found right here at home. Here are a few of the things our leaders in government have done:

1. Banned off-shore drilling which could provide access to an abundance of petroleum.
2. Restricted domestic drilling (drilling here in the United States), especially on government owned land (as in Alaska, for example).
3. Outlawed the use of much coal and some fuel oils because their sulfur content is too high and considered a pollution problem. Pollution should be addressed, but can be done so in a balanced and realistic way. God wants us to be good stewards of the natural resources He has given to us.
4. Hindered the development of nuclear power plants through legislation and excessive government regulation. Nuclear energy is needed but new nuclear power plants are not being built.
5. Discouraged the building of refineries through excessive regulations and environmental restrictions. Petroleum or crude oil must be refined before it can be used in cars (as gasoline) and for other purposes. Very few new refineries are being built in our country.
6. Slowed down the entire field of energy in the name of "the environment." Responsible use of our resources should be possible while still maintaining respect for the environment.
7. Etc.

In other words, there is energy available, but the government has so many laws and regulations and restrictions that it makes it extremely difficult for companies to develop old and new sources of energy. The Department of Energy spends billions of dollars every year, but what have been the results? We are still extremely dependent on foreign oil. We still are very reluctant to take advantage of the energy resources found right here in America.

The Spiritual Energy Crisis

God's power is available, but are we really taking advantage of what God has provided?

In Matthew 17:15-16, the Lord's disciples seemed to have a power shortage! What one word explains what the problem was (Matthew 17:19-20)? _____ Compare Luke 9:42-43 which speaks of the same incident.

Once in the town of Nazareth (the Lord's hometown—Matthew 13:54-56) there was a **power shortage** (see Matthew 13:58). The Son of God was unable to perform many miracles (see Mark 6:5). What was the problem (Mark 6:6; Matthew 13:58)?

Does God have all the necessary power to save a sinner (Hebrews 7:25)? _____ The gospel, according to Romans 1:16, is the _____ of God unto S _____. If God has **power to save**, then why are so many people unsaved? Answer TRUE or FALSE:

- a. _____ Because God is unwilling to save them (1 Timothy 2:3-4)
- b. _____ Because Christ did not die for them (1 Timothy 2:6 Hebrews 2:9)
- c. _____ Because men are unwilling to come to Christ and avail themselves of His saving power (John 6:40; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Timothy 2:4)

According to Romans 1:16, God's power to save is only given to those who _____. It is sad that God has power to save anyone who will come to Him (John 6:37), and yet so few come (John 5:40). Have you come (see John 6:35)? _____

Is there a power shortage when it comes to God's power to deliver, redeem and save (Isaiah 50:2; 59:1)? _____ Does the problem lie with God or with man (Isaiah 59:2)?

When a light bulb does not work, where is the problem? Do we usually conclude that something is wrong with the power source (the electrical generating plant)? _____ Usually the power is available, but something is preventing us from using it (the switch is off, the bulb is defective, a power line is down, etc.). Why do so many people walk **in darkness**, not having the light and power that comes from the Lord (John 8:12)?

Does God have the power and authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-10)? _____ Why do so few people actually have the forgiveness of sins? What must a sinner do to tap into this power (Acts 10:43—"remission" means "forgiveness")? _____

Consider 2 Corinthians 9:8. Why are there many Christians who are not "abounding" in good works as they know they should be? Read Hebrews 13:21. Why do believers often do things that are not pleasing to the Lord? Think about Ephesians 6:10. Why are we at times so weak and powerless? Why are we sometimes defeated and discouraged? Is God's power **available** to the child of God (Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:19; 3:20 Colossians 1:29)? _____

Are you making **full use** of this power? Are you tapping into it? Are you letting God do His work in you (Philippians 2:13)? Are you **quenching** (hindering, preventing, short-circuiting, putting out the fire of His Spirit) His mighty power (1 Thessalonians 5:19)? Are you allowing the Almighty to provide the **light and power** in your life?

Flashlight Object Lesson



The teacher can bring two flashlights to the class as object lessons. He turns on the switch of the first flashlight, but the students see that the light does not come on. What could be wrong? The teacher opens up the flashlight and shows the class that there are no batteries in it. There is no power source! This is a picture of the unsaved person who does not have the Lord in his life. He is lacking the source of power because he does not have the Lord Jesus living within. He can only walk in darkness. He needs the light of life (John 8:12).

Then the teacher switches on the second flashlight, but again the light does not come on. This time the problem is not the absence of batteries. The batteries are in the flashlight and these batteries are good (fully charged). There is, however, a problem with the connection. The two batteries were not arranged properly, and when the teacher puts the batteries in the correct position, the light comes on. This is a picture of the saved person who does not have a proper connection with the Lord. This believer is not allowing the Lord's light to shine through his life. The class can then discuss things that can happen to a believer which cause a bad connection: 1) sin in the believer's life (Psalm 66:18; Eph. 4:30); 2) insisting on going one's own way and refusing to yield to God (1 Thess. 5:19--quenching the Spirit is when we say "NO" to God's will and God's Word); 3) trying to live the Christian life on one's own and refusing to depend on the Lord (refusing to "walk in the Spirit"--Gal. 5:16). The teacher and class can discuss other problems which prevent the light of Christ from shining through believers.



God is willing. God is able. Are you willing to let Him be Almighty God in your life?

See 2 Cor. 12:9; Philippians 4:13