

# POTENTIAL

## *“Exceeding our own Expectations!”*

- **Nelson Mandela** was born in a small village located in the district of [Umtata](#) on 18 July 1918.
- When Mandela was nine, his father died of tuberculosis and he became an ward of the state.
- Mandela became the first member of his family to attend a school. He attended a [Wesleyan](#) mission school.
- At age sixteen, he attended Clarkebury Boarding Institute. Mandela completed his [Junior Certificate](#) in two years, instead of the usual three.
- In 1937 Mandela moved to the Wesleyan college in [Fort Beaufort](#). At nineteen, he took an interest in [boxing](#) and [running](#) at the school.
- After [enrolling](#), Mandela began to study for a [Bachelor of Arts](#) at the [Fort Hare University](#), where he met [Oliver Tambo](#). Tambo and Mandela became lifelong friends and colleagues.
- At the end of Nelson's first year, he became involved in a [Students' Representative Council](#) boycott against university policies, and was told to leave [Fort Hare](#).
- Later in his life, while in prison, Mandela studied for a [Bachelor of Law](#).
- Before his presidency, Mandela was an anti-[apartheid](#) activist, and the leader of the [African National Congress](#).
- [South African courts](#) convicted him on charges of sabotage, as well as other crimes committed while he led the movement against apartheid.
- Once convicted, Mandela served 27 years in prison, spending many of these years on [Robben Island](#). He was released from prison on 11 February 1990.
- Following his release from prison, Mandela helped lead reconciliation and the transition towards multi-racial democracy in South Africa.

Mandela was quoted as saying; *“During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to the struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”*

- He became the [President](#) of [South Africa](#), the first to be elected in a [fully representative](#) democratic election, who held office from 1994 to 1999.
- Mandela has received [more than 250 awards](#) over four decades, most notably the 1993 [Nobel Peace Prize](#).
- In November 2009, the [United Nations General Assembly](#) announced that Mandela's birthday, 18 July, is to be known as 'Mandela Day' marking his contribution to world freedom.

#### **Illustration:** *“Movie Invictus.”*



As Nelson Mandela struggled for decades to survive in a South African prison, few ever expected that he would become the president of that nation. Once elected, Mandela steers a course toward reconciliation between the factions tearing the country apart, and he chooses, as one of his paths is through sport.

The national rugby team, the Springboks, are loathed by many black South Africans as symbols of oppression. But the Springboks are loved by the white South Africans as a symbol of their nation. Mandela invites Francois Pienaar, captain of the Springboks, to join forces with him and use the upcoming World Cup as a means to bring the country together.

When Nelson Mandela was thrown into prison in 1964, no one expected that he would one day be released, dismantle apartheid, and change South Africa forever, including him. He exceeded everyone's expectations, including his own.

What did it take?

Inspiration, encouragement, and hard work: these are the elements necessary to build a nation. They are also the elements needed to build God's Kingdom.



**It's not where we start that matters  
but where we finish that counts!**

*(Illustrate on the white board - scale -5 to +5 vs 0 to +10)*

**Ephesians 3:20** (kjv) *Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.*

## **...Three great statements about God.**

### **i. God's Ability**

*"Now Unto Him Who Is Able..."*

No situation or circumstance can weary God – nothing is too difficult for Him!  
Every problem, need, debt, sin, disease – our God is able to fix!

**Our God Is 'Omnipotent'** (meaning 'He is all powerful')

He has the power to do whatever He chooses to do.

### **ii. God's Active**

*"Now Unto Him Who Is Able To Do..."*

**God is able to do!** God is also willing to use that power on our behalf!  
God is not only able – but He willing to act for us! Why? Because He can!

### **iii. God Answers**

*"According to the power that worketh in us."*

Paul tries to convey to us the staggering dimensions of God's willingness and ability to answer our prayers:

But we may complain and say how rarely we get what we ask for, let alone abundantly more!

The answer lies in us. Paul says that God's ability is conditioned by our ability. Greek word (**dunamis** – ability or power) is used twice.

Of God *"Now unto Him who is ABLE..."* and of us *"...according to the POWER that worketh in us."* God has POWER ... according to the ABILITY at work within us!"

Basically it comes down to this; ***"if we do our best then leave the rest to God!"***

## ....Challenge

How can you make a difference to make the world around you a better place?

Nelson Mandela made a difference by.....

Remembering this; **it's not where we start that matters but where we finish that counts!**