

# The Nature of Power

*"No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." Matthew 6:24*

Comic books and movies based on them have always inspired conversations about the nature of power. From the beginning, superheroes always face a choice of whether they will use their power for good or evil. Before he died, Peter's uncle Ben told him that with great power comes great responsibility. In *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*, we see three very different types of power on display. As Spider-Man, Peter Parker uses his powers for good. He consistently puts himself in harm's way to confront evil and to protect/rescue innocent civilians from danger. Even though he has great super-powers, Spiderman reacts appropriately according to the strength of his opponent, often trapping villains for the authorities.

On the other hand, Aleksei Sytsevich/The Rhino uses his power for evil. When we first meet Aleksei, he and his fellow criminals are trying to rob a truckload of plutonium (itself a great, neutral source of power). Aleksei and his men let nothing stand in their way as they flee through the streets of New York, running over everyone in their way and firing at pursuing police officers with machine guns that could easily wound and kill bystanders. When Aleksei becomes the Rhino, his newfound powers only amplify his evil ways.

In between Peter Parker/Spider-Man and Aleksei Sytsevich/Rhino, we have someone like Max Dillon/Electro who gets caught up in forces beyond his control. When great power/opportunity is thrust on him, he does not know how to react. This frightens Max, who does not want to hurt anyone. Unfortunately, Spider-Man and the police mistake him for a villain and react accordingly. When he reacts in fear and anger, his powers get the best of him and he hurts people around him. As the story progresses, he is used by people like Harry Osborn for their evil plans.

## Discussion Questions

- 1 Even though you may be young, you have powers of your own. What are they?
- 2 Think about your power. How can you use it for good? How could it be used irresponsibly?
- 3 When have you seen others use their power for good? When have you seen others abuse their power?

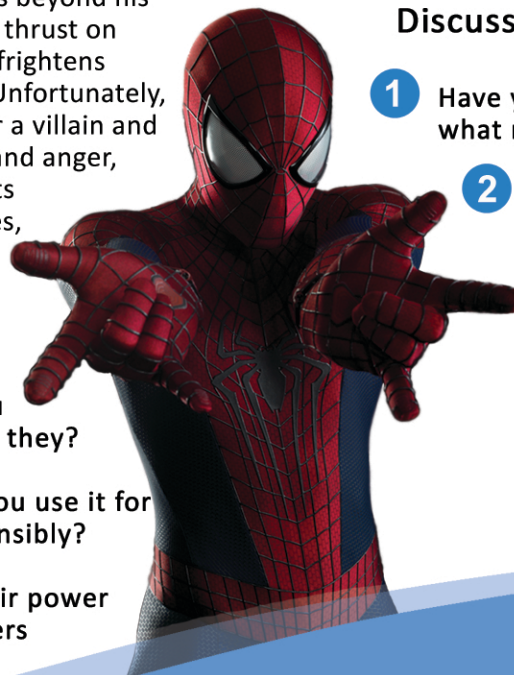
*"Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable." 1 Corinthians 12:14-22*

When Spider-Man first meets Max, Max is in a rush to get to work and doesn't realize that he's in danger. Spider-Man moves him out of harm's way and helps him retrieve his scattered blueprints for a brilliant electrical design. When Spider-Man helps Max to his feet and dusts him off, he says kind words to him as well. Max, who feels alone and unappreciated, says that he's just a nobody. Spider-Man tells Max that he's not a nobody but a somebody--he's his eyes and ears on the streets. This cheers Max up as he feels a sense of value and responsibility. Later in the film, however, when Max is in danger, Harry Osborn plays on Max's desire to be needed and talks him into helping him find and kill Spider-Man.

Like Max, whether you feel like it or not, you are a somebody. More than that, this world needs you. From your family and friends to your neighbors down the street or around the world, people need you.

## Discussion Questions

- 1 Have you ever felt like a nobody? Who or what made you feel that way?
- 2 Have you ever felt like a somebody, like you were important? Who or what made you feel that way?
- 3 In what ways have you made other people feel like nobodies or somebodies?



**You are Somebody Who is Needed**