


PRAYING WITH PURPOSE



Making a Difference with our Prayers

BOOK TWO

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A grayscale photograph of a person kneeling on their knees in a prayerful posture. The person's head is bowed, and their hands are clasped in front of them. The background is a bright, hazy light, suggesting an indoor setting with large windows. The overall mood is one of quiet devotion and contemplation.

*"It's hard to
fall when you
are already on
your knees."*

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Introduction

What is the WNOP?

The **World Network of Prayer** has been established to serve as a hub for receiving and distributing prayer needs among our fellowship. It is an instrument to help the United Pentecostal Church International to focus prayer with one accord. It is to provide the prayer agenda for producing the power of agreement.

Why do we need the World Network of Prayer?

- **Corporate, focused praying** is scriptural and powerful:
 "*...if two shall agree it shall be done....*" (Matthew 18:19)
 "*...they lifted up their voice to God with one accord....*" (Acts 4:24)
- A **prayer agenda** is scripturally appropriate:
 "*Pray ye ...the Lord of the harvest....*" (Matthew 9:38)
 "*After this manner ... pray ye....*" (Matthew 6:9)

How does the World Network of Prayer link up with the local church?

Prayer requests are sent to WNOP by telephone, fax, letter or e-mail. When prayer requests are received, they are prayed for immediately through a chain of prayer in the World Evangelism Center. Requests are appropriately shared with other prayer groups in the network.

Specific prayer needs are assigned to local churches: prayer covering for specific leaders, missionaries, nations, cities, crusades, conferences, etc. Crisis needs are relayed by telephone, fax, or e-mail to chains enlisting maximum prayer in minimum time.

Major communications from the WNOP are sent out through the year to all enrolled. Special communications are sent to pastors, preachers and missionaries. In addition, there are special communications with specific churches/prayer groups for assigned requests.

Through computer communication, we utilize e-mail and the Internet by posting prayer requests, receiving prayer requests, and posting brief inspirational messages.

We encourage individuals to subscribe to the free [WNOP Weekly Prayer List](http://www.wnop.org) at www.wnop.org. After subscribing, members will receive high priority requests once a week via email.

It is suggested that a local church prayer minister be appointed to assist the pastor in maintaining integration with WNOP as well as helping with local church prayer needs and maintaining the atmosphere of the church prayer room.

Churches, congregations, and individuals are encouraged to enroll in the World Network of Prayer.

Special prayer resources and supplies are available at the World Evangelism Center Bookstore (books, prayer cloths, fragrant oils, etc.)

Who does the World Network of Prayer need?

- ❖ We need a **network of churches who will commit to a special prayer** time for WNOP requests and world revival emphasis **during mid-week services**.
- ❖ We need **churches/prayer groups to commit to special prayer** for all WNOP requests and the monthly world focused view requests sent to them via e-mail or posted on the WNOP home page.
- ❖ We need **churches/prayer groups/prayer warriors to pray IMMEDIATELY for urgent requests** which come in on the toll-free number or via e-mail.

ANNUAL corporate prayer

- ❖ At the request of our General Superintendent, Brother Haney, every UPCI church should plan to dedicate the **first week of January to prayer and fasting**.
- ❖ There will be a **World Day of Prayer** for the United Pentecostal Church International on the Wednesday preceding the annual General Conference.
- ❖ Churches in the United States are encouraged to observe the Presidential proclamation of a **National Day of Prayer** for our nation on the first Thursday of May.

World Network of Prayer – A National’s Perspective

Article written by James Poitras, Ghana
of a lesson taught by Leonard Fiatsuwo – Togo, West Africa

Leonard Fiatsuwo is a gentle-spirited, quiet national minister in Togo, West Africa. Having the privilege of teaching him during his three years of Bible School in Ghana heightened my interest in hearing what he had to say. He was speaking concerning the **World Network of Prayer** at the National Convention in Togo. Leonard serves as the National Coordinator of WNOP in this French-speaking nation. I intently listened as he explained this worldwide prayer ministry from a National’s perspective. I was challenged by what he had to say. I hope that you will be too!

PRAYER is the language of someone’s burden. We cannot carry these burdens alone. We need a united prayer effort. United Prayer is when people join together in intercession. When two or three gather together in prayer something happens. **“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 18:19)** United prayer produces results.

United Prayer helps us to lift burdens. Isaiah said, **“And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.” (Isaiah 10:27)** Some burdens are a heavy load. Alone the burden will not be removed. It can be done when we work and pray together. We are all looking for a city where there will be no more burdens. Until then we must keep the unity of prayer. It is a must. If we fail to pray, it becomes a sin.

The early church was blessed with this type of unity. They were of the same mind. As a result, God was able to pour out His Spirit upon them. They continued as a united force with just one goal – the progress and expansion of the church.

Prayer affects circumstances and situations. In Acts 16: 25-26 Paul and Silas prayed together and the foundations of the prison were shaken. They were able to be released. When the Early Church Network of Prayer met in Acts 12, Peter was released and came knocking on the Prayer Room door.

In the early church “prayer” was the ingredient that brought about the successful spreading of the gospel. We want to see this duplicated in the modern day church.

The disciples gathered together in the Upper Room. They focused their prayers and the Holy Ghost fell. From house to house they prayed and revival

spread like wild fire. The church prayed, together, and signs and wonders were performed. “Prayer” is mentioned more than thirty times in the Book of Acts.

Why the World Network of Prayer? The World Network of Prayer is not another program or project. It is a way that we can place prayer in its proper priority. It is a ministry where people from around the world can be connected together in prayer. Together, as one body, we can collectively take our burdens to the Lord.

The World Network of Prayer is a “network.” We have to be unified to make up this network.” Our plan is to destroy the enemy. **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:12)** Did you notice who does the wrestling? It is not one person alone. You have to be very wise to track down and destroy the enemy. WNOP gives us unity of purpose and action. We come together, from around the world, to ask God for the answer. Do you remember God’s mathematics of spiritual warfare? **“And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.” (Leviticus 26:8)**

Together our prayers are a strong force. We remember the needs of other people and countries because we are part of the one body (1 Corinthians 12:18). Prayer changes situations. Without using this avenue of prayer, we can be defeated. WNOP is the strategy we use to pray for our leaders, missionaries, so that the power of God will work in their fields of service. Missionaries are sent to people and a land that they don’t even know. They need us to uphold them in prayer. They need our HELP and cooperation! Prayer is the answer. It allows us to see what they are facing in their lives. When the church comes together in prayer, we are always stronger as a result. Burdens are lifted and problems solved.

WNOP opens our minds to how we can share the burdens of others. Sometimes a Christian or Preacher faces the enemy alone. It is not necessary. World Network of Prayer is there to share the burden. It ministers like Aaron and Hur when Moses was in battle. WNOP lifts up the burdened hands so that we can prevail against the enemy.

Thanks, Pastor Leonard for putting it in perspective. **Prayer is the language of a burden and the mother tongue of the World Network of Prayer.**

Hindrances to PRAYER— A Lesson on Repentance & Forgiveness

Vickie Richardson

Sometimes we pray and seemingly there is no answer to our prayer. Could it be that the answer is not the answer we wanted to hear? We may think that God just did not deliver to us on time – meaning, of course, according to our time.

We may not always understand Him, but He definitely knows what is best for each of His children. His plan has eternity connected with it, whereas most of the time our plan is for the temporal. (Read Isaiah 55:8-11.)

Even though it may seem like God is not on time, He definitely is on time. There is no question about His knowledge and authority. He has all power and wisdom in heaven and earth! He definitely knows what He is doing, even though we may not understand.

Of course, the lack of a faith hinders our prayers being answered. We must believe that “He is and he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

There are two other hindrances to prayers. They are closely related to each other. One is sin and your need for repentance of that sin, and the other is forgiveness, or rather the lack of forgiving those who have wronged you in some way.

I. REPENTANCE

*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9*

We read of a great man in the Bible—“a man after God’s own heart,” David, the great King of Israel. But there was a time when David sinned. Certainly David’s sins were not “after God’s own heart.” But his sin was revealed to him, he repented.

The doctrine of Repentance is one that has remained constant throughout every age of God’s dealing with mankind. Sin is a separator. Repentance is an admission of sin. One will not and cannot repent without first acknowledging the presence of sin.

Repentance is a feeling of remorse, but it is also a change of heart. It is leaving the old way and turning around walking back towards God. The access to God’s saving grace and to His cleansing blood that atones for sin is only through the door of REPENTANCE.

Even after one is saved initially, repentance is necessary in living a real spiritual life. Paul said, "I crucify myself daily!" I have to take this woman to the altar of repentance often. No one else can repent for me. It is a personal responsibility if I want to remain in fellowship with my pure God.

Let's look a minute at David's sin:

1. David committed a sin he should never have committed. Every child of Israel knew the laws against adultery. From a child, the ten commandments were deeply engraved in David's mind, but in his moment of passion, David transgressed the Word of God—brought shame to his position as King, and overrode his sensitivity to God's Spirit.
2. David never intended to commit the crime of murder. But sin begets sin. Adultery led to lies, treachery and finally, the murder of an innocent man.

Read David's Prayer in Psalm 51. David wrote this passage to outline his own path back to God's favor. David had faith that God would forgive him, no matter how great the sin.

Our sins did not make us sinners—we were born sinners, and therefore we sin. We cannot do anything ourselves about our sins, but confess them to a God who is ready and waiting to forgive. David recognized his inability to help himself when he said, "Create in me a clean heart."

Sin is like dirt. It cannot just be covered over; it must be cleansed, washed in the blood of Jesus. The holy nature of God will accept nothing less than true repentance. David said, "For thou desireth not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delighteth not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou will not despise" (Psalm 51:16-17). God desired to bring about righteous judgment and to restore David to divine favor. David's repentance was a genuine act of contrition.

God always welcomes the truly repentant sinner. He responds with His forgiveness. God has great joy in forgiving the one who repents of his sins, and the Bible says that all of Heaven rejoices with Him when one finds his way back to the favor of God.

Do not let unrepentant sins remain in your heart for they truly can hinder you from seeing your prayers answered.

II. FORGIVENESS

*"Be ye therefore merciful as your father also is merciful.
Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not and ye shall not be condemned.
Forgive and ye shall be forgiven!" Luke 6:36-37*

Our relationship with one another definitely affects our relationship with God. How can we say – “I love God” and yet hate our brother or sister. The Bible says one that does this is a liar for how can you love one you have not seen, if you cannot love one you have seen.

Forgiving Self – Many times we find that one of the first people we may have to learn to forgive is our own self. How many of us are happy with everything we have ever done? How many of us may have shame over past failures? Just as Jesus forgives you, He wants you to forgive yourself.

I want to tell you about Kenny, my brother, 49 years old at the time of this writing, and he is dying. He was raised in an Apostolic home – taught from an infant to put God and church first, but he decided to do things the way he wanted – instead of doing what God wanted. As a young adult, his life started going downhill – drinking, drugs, two bad marriages, lost custody of his two small boys. It took a miracle, but God brought him to his senses, much like the prodigal son in Luke 15.

Kenny came back to the Lord, repented of His sins. God forgave him and in his heart he knows he has been completely forgiven, but he cannot truly forgive himself for his past failures. He has let these failures rob from him the joy of the Lord in victorious living.

I have talked to him many times about God’s forgiving power. But it has been during this terrible illness that he is beginning to forgive himself and letting God work in him yet another miracle! He may never be healed, but he is learning to like himself for who he is and forgive his past.

Do you possibly live with regret because you compare what is with what might have been? Have you failed to do something you desperately wished you had done? No matter how much you wish you had done that thing you cannot go aback and change the past. But you can create self-respect by responding to your circumstances today. Responding in a right manner will make you proud tomorrow.

Forgiveness frees you of the past so that you can make good choices today. Look at Jesus’ example; He was nailed to the cross between two thieves, forgiving them, so that you and I can stop nailing ourselves to the cross between two other thieves – regret of yesterday and fear of tomorrow. Do not let these thieves take your victory and joy.

Now let us talk about forgiving others – those who have done wrong to you. Do you still hold grudges for what someone did against you years and years ago? This unforgiving spirit can hinder your prayers.

I heard it said that a pastor who had been wronged by someone, falsely accused. But years after the incident, he still said, “I will never, never forgive him for what he did to me.”

Peter came to the Lord one day in Matthew 18:21-35. He asked the Lord a question (v. 21). Jesus gave a parable in reply to Peter's question which teaches us how we should forgive others.

It was almost as if Peter was keeping a record of the wrongs his brother may have done. How many times did he have to forgive? V. 22—"I do not say to you seven times, but up to seventy times seven" 490 times! That's a lot of times to forgive. I believe Jesus was not actually setting limits. He was simply telling us that we must always be willing to forgive.

Read verses 23-27—In this parable, we are like the servant who owed a great debt and could not pay. Jesus, our Lord, forgave the debt. This was a great debt He forgave, so we also should be able to forgive others of their debts.

Verses 28-35—What do we see happening here?

A person who holds grudges and has an unforgiving heart brings judgment and punishment upon themselves. It is like a cancer that will destroy. Forgiveness is the only cure for that cancer!

Jesus spoke beautiful words of forgiveness from the cross—"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." If then has forgiven us we can and must forgive others! We do have the power to do so!

Lesson 2

Being a Man the Devil Knows

James Poitras

“Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered, and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?”
(Acts 19:14-16)

That would have been an interesting sight. Name forgers had an evil spirit insult them, jump on them; beat them up, and they escape by running down the street naked and wounded.

Dutch Sheets, in his book **Intercessory Prayer** related a story concerning a bodybuilder who visited Africa. The village chief asked him what he did with all of his muscles. He proceeded to give the chief an exhibition of his strength by flexing his biceps, triceps, and his bulging calves and thighs. After admiring this muscle man for a few moments the chief asked, **“What else do you use them for?”**

“That’s about all,” answered the muscular man.

“That’s all you use those huge muscles for?” inquired the chief, visibly puzzled.

“Yes,” replied the man flexing his bulging muscles.

“What a waste,” muttered the chief in disgust. **“What a waste.”**

We have been well equipped to deal with the devil and should never be like the bodybuilder mentioned in this lesson.

I. Spiritual Bodybuilders Needed

**“...And exercise thyself rather unto godliness.
For bodily exercise profiteth little:
but godliness is profitable unto all things...”**
(1 Timothy 4:7-8)

We need to develop spiritual biceps, triceps, and muscles by completing our spiritual exercises. Once building up our muscles in the Spirit we cannot just stand around flexing our muscles in competition and never attack the adversary of our souls.

Spiritual Exercises

1. Be born again (Acts 2:38)
2. Wrestle (Ephesians 6:12)
3. Put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-17)
4. Prayer (Ephesians 6:18)
5. Fasting (Matthew 6:16; 17:21; Mark 9:29)
6. Faith (1 Thessalonians 5:8; Hebrews 11:1)
7. Challenge Satan by using Jesus' name (Acts 4:12; 16:16-18)
8. Study the Word of God and use it (Ephesians 6:17; Psalm 119:11,16)
9. Pray in the Spirit (Acts 6:4)
10. Cast out Devils (Matthew 10:1; Mark 16:17; Acts 5:16; 16:18; 19:12)
11. Plead the blood of Jesus
12. Pray for the Gifts of the Spirit to be manifested in your life. Remember, they are the power tools of the church. (Acts 4:29-33; 10:38; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11)
13. Use spiritual weapons (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)
14. Resist the devil but submit to God (James 4:7)
15. Live your life committed to truth and righteousness (Romans 12:1-2)

*“Blessed be the Lord my strength,
which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.”
(Psalm 144:1)*

⇒ Through these spiritual exercises and disciplines we will make sure that our names are written in heaven and also recognized by the devil.

⇒ We will be a man that both God and the devil knows.

II. We Have An Enemy

The name “**Satan**” is used 52 times in the Bible and means “**adversary.**” Satan is our enemy. There are three enemies that we must overcome and conquer.

- **The Flesh**
- **The Devil (god of this world)**
- **The World**

We Are Not Ignorant of His Devices

“...for we are not ignorant of his devices.” (2 Corinthians 2:11)

A Woman’s Guide to Spiritual Warfare highlights a personal experience of co-author **Ruthanne Garlock**. She had visited an ancient city in Antigua, Guatemala. This area had been inhabited years before by the Mayan Indians. These Indians had fought with

bows and arrow and were considered to be very fierce. Spanish soldiers had an advantage because they wore armor, had horses and used guns. Horses were unknown to the Mayan Indians and when they saw the swift animals with the armored soldiers they thought it was all one creature. They aimed their bows and arrows at the horse not knowing that their real enemy was on the horse. They were able to kill a lot of the horses with their arrows but the soldiers just jumped off and shot the Indians with their guns. Hundreds of Mayans were killed. They did not realize that the real enemy was riding on the horse's back. Today, Christians do the same type of thing. We shoot at each other instead of fighting the devil. The devil is crafty (Genesis 3:1); deceiver (Genesis 3:13); a liar and father of lies (John 8:44); the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10); and the tempter (Matthew 4:3; I Thessalonians 3:5). The enemy in battle would not like for you to understand much about him and his location. He will use deceit, lies, and tricks to create a false understanding of his position and battle plans. We are not ignorant of the devil's tactics, plans, and his weaknesses. He would like to deceive us, tempt us until we fall, and then accuse us.

1. What is the opposite of "up"?
2. What is the opposite of "light"?
3. What is the opposite of "good"?
4. What is the opposite of "God"?

In question number four did you answer **"the devil or Satan?"** Satan is not the opposite of God. God is distinct and has no opposite. Satan is the opposite of angels like Michael and Gabriel. He lost his job because he wanted to exalt himself to be like God. He wanted to enter God's office and sit at his desk and control everyone. (Isaiah 14:14)

I have another question to ask, **"Where is the devil at right now?"** Did you say **"in hell"**? The devil is not in hell. Many people believe that Satan goes down into the fire and burns there for awhile and comes back up to check things out on the earth. He is not in hell now, but he is going to hell. Hell was created for the devil and his angels. Satan is the **"god of this age"** (2 Corinthians 4:4); **"the ruler of the kingdom of the air"** (Ephesians 2:2); and is walking around like a roaring lion seeking who he can devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

III. We Are in a Battle

*"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities,
against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness in high places."
(Ephesians 6:12)*

However, many of us stop the Scripture at, **"We wrestle not!"**

“Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house” (Matthew 12:29).

We learn in Mark 3:27 and Matthew 12:29 that spiritual conflict against Satan involves three aspects:

1. Declaring War against Satan.
2. Entering Satan's house (anywhere he has a stronghold).
3. Carrying away his possessions and setting the captives free.

IV. We Will Win the Battle

“And it came to pass, when they brought those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings, And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage, for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight” (Joshua 10:24-25).

The armies had been defeated and their five kings had hidden in a cave. They were captured and brought to **“Joshua”** (is the Hebrew equivalent to the name of **“Jesus”** in the New Testament). Joshua is an Old Testament type of Jesus whose job was to bring *“many sons unto glory”* (Hebrews 2:10). Tradition dictated that those captured lie down on the ground and that the victor would place his foot upon the necks in order to symbolize the victory. In this case Joshua called for his captains to place their feet upon the necks of the Canaanite kings. He was transferring the authority to his captains much like Jesus has done to us.

*“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman,
and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head,
and thou shalt bruise his heel.”*
(Genesis 3:15)

*“And having spoiled principalities and powers,
he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”*
(Colossians 2:15)

“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly...”
(Romans 16:20)

*“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions,
and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.
Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you;
but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”*
(Luke 10:19-20)

It is time to declare war. One man said, "Mr. Devil, I have some thoughts for you to think about. The Lord is going BEFORE ME, the blood of Jesus is OVER ME, the everlasting arms of God are UNDER ME, and His goodness and mercy are BEHIND ME, following me all the days of my life."

*"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them:
because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."
(1 John 4:4)*

Don't Give an Inch to the Devil

It is sad when we allow the devil to be the one to place his foot upon our neck. "Neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). Don't allow him to have a foothold in your life!

V. Our Ultimate Goal

*"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light,
and from the power of Satan unto God..."
(Acts 26:18)*

To be spirit-empowered you must first be spirit-filled. (Acts 1:8)
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Lesson 3

The Power of PRAYING

Thetus Tenney

International Coordinator—World Network of Prayer

It is absolutely beyond the natural mind to believe that a little band of believers on their knees have the power to determine destiny, to rule kingdoms, to chart the course of events, to loose, to bind, to destroy, to give life, to bring revival; but it is verified in the Word of God.

- More than once, Moses' prayers saved his nation from destruction (Deuteronomy 9, 11, 16, 21).
- Elijah strangled the economy of a nation and then, with one prayer, broke the drought as a witness to the power of God.
- Hosea prayed a hedge of thorns around his wayward wife until she would be redeemed (Hosea 2:6).
- A prophet's prayer blinded and subdued a destroying army who then took orders from him (II Kings 6).
- Praying women initiated revival on the continent of Europe (Acts 16:13-15).
- Cornelius prayed down an angel and a revival in an unlikely place with unlikely people (Acts 10).
- A home prayer meeting dispatched an angel to unlock prison doors (Acts 12:5-7).
- The prayer and praise of Paul and Silas provoked an earthquake that broke open a revival (Acts 16:25-34).
- Peter prayed, Dorcas was raised from the dead, the whole city heard about it, and many believed (Acts 9:40-42).
- Paul prayed, the governor's father was healed and became a witness to the power of God (Acts 28:7,8).

Consider that small group praying had major effect on nations, heathens, enemies, continents, the economy, strange people, family, prisoners, angels, the sick, and the dead. What an awesome thought, and most of it was done on location of daily living—in homes, on the street, or in public. The power of aggressive prayer is easily accessible to all of us.

The early church prayer warriors not only prayed strong prayers bolstered by faith, but they were not afraid to exercise the authority that Jesus had given them. Their bold prayers were accompanied with bold words. They perceived through the Holy Ghost.

In Acts 4:29-31, they decidedly spoke against the hindering forces and prayed for boldness accompanied with the miraculous. There was no sign of timidity in their prayers. Neither their ability nor worthiness was considered. Their petitions were not made from a beggar's stance. Their unshakable confidence was in God and He shook the place to vindicate their primitive faith.

- Peter not only prayed miraculous prayers (Acts 5:1-11; 8:20-24), but he also spoke judgment and rebuked with the power and perception of the Holy Ghost.
- Peter and John, without pseudo humility, could say, "Look on us," and then with unshakable faith could say, "...rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).
- Peter visited palsied Aeneas and brought strong words of command rather than simple words of cheer. "...Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise..." (Acts 9:34).
- Paul, on a downtown street, commanded: "Stand upright on thy feet" (Acts 14:10).

This same authority and power has been given to us. Read Matthew 10:1, 7-8; Mark 16:17-18, 20; and Acts 1:8. Timidity, inferiority, and self-consciousness have no place in the spiritual life of a believer. Let us raise our sights, enlarge our borders, and become bold enough to pray prayers and speak words appropriate to the power of our God. In His divine wisdom, He has decreed to respond to us in proportion to what we ask of Him. *"Whatsoever ye ask...."*

The telecommunications revolution has changed our world. Almost everyday breakthroughs surprise us as to the extent of how man has learned to communicate. Can we imagine the breakthroughs possible in communicating with God through prayer? The power of aggressive prayer, rooted in faith by the Word, and executed in boldness of authority by the Name, can change our world.

Lesson 4

World Changing PRAYERS

Vickie Richardson

Coordinator—Africa Network of Prayer

Prayer evangelism is organized prayer that focuses on lost souls. It is urgent for us to lift our eyes above our needs and unselfishly look on the needs of an unreached world. If we do not pray for them, who will?

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send for labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38).

When we combine evangelism and prayer, we will see a greater harvest of souls. Prayer moves God! It is the key to evangelizing communities, cities, and nations. Begin each evangelism effort with prayer. Intercede first, and then follow up with other personal or mass evangelism methods. The church needs to be serious about taking our cities and nations for God. We do not fight battles in the natural realm. We operate on a higher dimension—spiritual warfare.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Our enemy, Satan was defeated over 2,000 years ago. We continually defeat him as we use the authority given to us in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus has dominion over all principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness. Through the power of prayer, we have the victory in this spiritual battle.

As we pray for laborers and souls, we triumph in this war. Through prayer, we pull down the strongholds of Satan that binds people’s lives. We speak to the hearts of people. Intercession sets in motion the hand of God on behalf of those to whom we witness. Our prayers will bind the enemy from operating in their minds and emotions. God begins to work in the situation.

Prayer evangelism is the primary way we will see our cities won for Christ. Souls depend on the prayers of the intercessors (even though they may not be the ones out knocking on doors and witnessing in the streets). Their prayers are felt and results are seen. Intercession is the power force behind effective evangelism.

Jesus is the Lord of the Harvest. Ask Him to go before us and prepare the way to successful evangelism. It is beautiful to see God change hearts and transform lives. Pray that He will send laborers into the Harvest. Make yourself available in reaching the lost.

“By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

We show God’s love best when we share His love with others. His love will compel us to have a heart for souls. It will move us to pray for those we do not know. God responds to prayer. Can we accept the challenge to step into another dimension of prayer and allow God to give us His heartbeat for the lost? He is looking for willing vessels. He wants to pour His love and compassion through us.

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (I Timothy 2:1).

Ed Silviso in *Prayer Evangelism* reminds us, “The apostle indicates that we pray for everybody, including those who are in authority, we will see a dramatic improvement in the spiritual climate around us.” We can reach into our cities and unreached nations with the gospel, just as the early church did. When we consider our prayers as a type of evangelism, our prayers will be able to go where we cannot.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Lord of the Harvest commands us to preach the gospel to everyone. What a great opportunity—and a big task. Where do we begin? First things first—begin with prayer. God has power everywhere, in heaven and on earth. We can ask Him for anything (John 14:14).

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession” (Psalm 2:8).

Silviso continues, “This is the heart of prayer evangelism and, when properly implemented, it is capable of doing much more than leading a few neighbors to the Lord. Prayer evangelism can change the spiritual climate over entire cities and regions.”

O, Let it happen, Lord! Friend, never underestimate the power of prayer! When we pray for others, according to God’s will, miracles will follow. Our prayers change the world!

Lesson 5

PRAYER - The Force Behind Evangelism

James Poitras

Coordinator - Africa Aflame and Vision for Africa Ministries

Prayer is a propelling factor in evangelism. Andrew Bonar said in 1853 (but it is still true) that prayer is the church's power against the world. Prayer evangelism begins when we talk to God about others before we talk to others about God. Prayer could be your most powerful means of getting into the heart of someone who does not know Jesus. How often have you heard someone testify about coming to the Lord because of a praying mother, brother, wife or friend?

Ron Hutchcraft in *Called to Greatness* explains that we often trust in persuasion, programs, promotions, and personality to win our friends to Jesus. We should be trusting in prayer, the drawing of the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God.

Hudson Taylor, pioneer missionary to China insisted, "How important to learn to move man, through God, by prayer alone." His son, Howard, once remarked about his father, "For forty years the sun never rose on China that God didn't find him on his knees."

Prayer in the Early Church

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

In this description of the early church four pillars can be identified: doctrine, prayer, fellowship, and giving. Prayer is a necessity in reaching out.

Prayer in Today's Church

Colin Whittaker in a chapter entitled *The Miracle of a Praying People* gives the following account of prayer in Korea:

"In the West, we believe in prayer; in Korea they believe in praying! There the level of praying is inspiring. They all pray, they are always doing so, and they intercede in every way possible. They pray alone and in twos; they pray in small groups and in their homes; they pray in their churches and on their mountains; they pray in their own language and they 'pray in the Spirit' in other tongues; they pray silently and loudly (sometimes very loudly); they pray with tears and with holy laughter; they sing their prayers and sometimes they groan their prayers as they intercede and get under burdens which the Holy Spirit lays upon them; they pray in the morning and in the evening; they pray at midday and at midnight; they pray with fasting and they pray

over their meals; they pray for their friends and for their enemies; they pray for their neighbor and for their nation; they pray for the church and for the world; they pray for everyone and about everything.” (As quoted in *Firestorm of the Lord* by Stuart Piggin).

Vickie Richardson, Regional Coordinator of the Africa Network of Prayer often quotes the motto of the Asian church, “Much prayer, much power; little prayer, little power; no prayer, no power.”

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The church is able to invade the devil’s territory through intercessory prayer. In the early church each congregation was an army that took a stand against the devil and the world. They battled for their neighborhood and won.

Who do we fight?

The book of Ephesians is considered the textbook on spiritual warfare. It reveals that we do not battle with people, but against wicked forces.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

How do we fight?

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (Ephesians 6:18-19).

Who do we fight?

The devil is our enemy. He must be resisted (James 4:7), and never given a foothold in our lives (Ephesians 4:27). An unbeliever is trapped by the devil. He cannot resist him or break free from Satan’s grip. We know his strategies in keeping people under control (2 Corinthians 2:11). He must be bound so that the gospel can be shared effectively.

“Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house” (Matthew 12:29).

What weapons are available?

Our weapons in spiritual warfare are powerful and include prayer, fasting, unity of the body of Christ, and the power of the living Word of God. *“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds)”* (2 Corinthians 10:4).

Samuel Chadwick said, "The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray."

METHODS OF PRAYER EVANGELISM

Personal Devotions:

Keep a prayer listing of unsaved family and friends that you want to see come to God. Maintain a list of different prayer requests they may have shared with you. Watch God move on their behalf, and rejoice over every breakthrough.

"Don't be weary in prayer; keep at it; watch for God's answers, and remember to be thankful when they come. Don't forget to pray for us too, that God will give us many chances to preach the Good News of Christ for which I am here in jail. Pray that I will be bold enough to tell it freely and fully and make it plain, as, of course, I should. Make the most of your chances to tell others the Good News" (Colossians 4:2-5, TLB).

- Pray that the Lord will give you an open door.
- Pray that God will open their hearts (Acts 16:14).
- Pray that God will anoint you as you open your mouth.

The most important need a person has is his salvation. He also has "felt needs" -- what he feels is his most important need. Usually the two are not the same in the mind of the unbeliever. The devil has blinded his eyes from seeing his number one need (2 Corinthians 4:4). When you pray for a person's felt need you deeply touch his heart.

Prayer Meetings:

God birthed the New Testament church in a prayer meeting. Three thousand responded positively to Peter's preaching. Within weeks Jerusalem was filled with the doctrine (Acts 5:28). What happened? Prayer and evangelism were walking hand-in-hand.

Prayer meetings need to be established to collectively take burdens to the Lord. God wants the local church to be called "a house of prayer." Jesus said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." (See Mark 11:17, NKJV.)

Jesus promises that He will attend our prayer meetings. "I also tell you this-if two of you agree down here on earth concerning anything you ask for, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I will be right there among them" (Matthew 18:19-20, TLB).

It was after an assembly-shaking prayer meeting that the disciples were able to witness with boldness. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

“You can tell how popular a church is by who comes on Sunday morning. You can tell how popular the pastor or evangelist is by who comes on Sunday night. But you can tell how popular Jesus is by who comes to the prayer meeting.”

(Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire by Jim Cymbala).

Jim Cymbala describes prayer meetings as the engine that drove the apostolic church. Should it be any different today? He established a weekly prayer meeting and his church started thinking of themselves as a spiritual emergency room where people in spiritual trauma could be rescued.

Prayer and evangelism must remain priorities to the church if we are to reach the world. If not the church becomes crippled. Samuel Chadwick in *The Way to Pentecost* said, “Confusion and impotence are the inevitable results when the wisdom and resources of the world are substituted for the presence and power of the Spirit.”

Following is a testimony from a prayer meeting that will show the power of prayer. This one is from history--1858 to be exact – when 480 towns reported fifteen thousand conversions in their churches. This was because of a prayer awakening:

The prayer leader stood and read a prayer request, “A praying wife requests prayer for her unconverted husband that he would come to know the Lord. Suddenly, a fat man jumped up and said, “I am that man. I have a praying wife and I know this request must be for me. I want you to pray for me.”

As soon as he set down another man jumped up and said, “I am that man. I have a praying wife. She prays for me and now she has asked you to pray for me. I am sure that I am that man. I need prayer.” Several other convicted husbands asked for prayer, convinced that it was their praying wives that handed in the prayer request. (Adapted from *Evangelism for a Changing World* by Timothy K. Beougher and Alvin L. Reid).

People have problems, not solutions. Prayer helps them to realize there is Someone greater and more powerful than they are. Answered prayer for felt needs shows that God is able to take care of both the physical and spiritual needs.

Pray Everywhere:

“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere” (1 Timothy 2:8, NKJV). There are many examples of public prayer in the Word of God. Lydia and her ladies’ group were having a prayer meeting by the riverside when Paul met them (Acts 16:13). Paul and Silas prayed in jail, and others listened to them and were comforted (Acts 16:25). Peter prayed on a housetop (Acts 10:9). Paul took food, and gave thanks to God, and all 276

on board the ship ate (Acts 27:37). Peter and John prayed for a crippled man as they were on their way to a prayer meeting (Acts 3:1-4).

Be sensitive to divine appointments that daily come across your path. If someone mentions a personal problem, and asks for prayer, take advantage of the opportunity. Give a faith-building scripture and pray for them right then and there. If they refuse prayer in this setting tell them that you will pray about their need in your private devotions. An act of kindness expressed through offered prayer plants seeds in a hungry heart. It is possible that the person you are praying for has never heard his name mentioned in prayer. Your prayer will communicate with the Lord, but also to your unsaved friend. It conveys love, care, relationship, and trust.

Ron Hutchcraft in *Called to Greatness* has found that, "Lost people in hurting times are far more ready to be prayed for than we are ready to pray for them."

Prayer Cells:

Another way to pray everywhere is for your church to organize prayer cells. Small group prayer meetings are arranged on a regular basis in homes. These become neighborhood prayer centers. Your neighbors will eventually identify your place of prayer, and will bring their needs to you. Doors will be opened for you to lead them in welcoming Jesus into their lives.

World Network of Prayer:

Together our prayers are a strong force. The network remembers the needs of people and countries. The World Network of Prayer is a strategy we use to pray for leaders, missionaries, and people, so that God will work in their area of need. Prayer requests can be shared through email, Internet, letters, telephone calls, or through word-of-mouth.

The prayer network is instrumental in breaking up the fallow ground and preparing the soil for the seed of the Word of God. There are many people and places that have never been reached with the life-transforming gospel.

William Carey is considered to be the father of modern missions. As a young man, he worked in a shoe cobbler's shop. He saved discarded bits and pieces of shoe leather and made a makeshift globe. He sketched in ink the outlines of the continents and various countries on his crude leather globe. It is said that Carey's tears of intercession for the world literally blurred the outlines of the nations on his handmade globe. He became a missionary to India and changed the course of mission's history throughout the world.

Prayer Walk:

This is praying "on site with insight." Christians go into the streets and quietly pray in response to observations and researched targets. Intercession is offered for the

besieged area. Prayer walks have been proven to increase the receptivity level of people needing to receive the gospel.

Prayer Station:

“Youth With a Mission” has found an effective way to reach people is to stop them on the street, and ask them if there is anything they need prayer for. A small table with a banner marked, “Prayer Station” can be set up. Many are open to having someone pray over their needs. Why not try this simple method that deeply touches the hearts of people?

Prayer Fair:

Ed Silvoso in *Prayer Evangelism* explains the “Prayer Fair” concept. On Wednesday, pastors and saints get together and have a prayer walk in the targeted area of the city. They quietly bless each home and slip an invitation under the door asking people to attend a prayer fair on Saturday. Thursday and Friday are prayer and fasting days for the church. Saturday morning the targeted area is covered again. Each person encountered is asked, “Do you know that today is the favorable day of the Lord?”

Most people do not understand. They are told that “favorable” means that God wants to do them a special favor. When asked if they need a favor, most people respond positively. They are shown a newspaper ad or handbill that advertises the prayer fair. They are given a coupon for free admission to the prayer fair and for unlimited prayers.

Once people start arriving at the prayer fair they first pass through an information booth. Contact information is collected from each person for effective follow-up. From there they are directed to the booth that handles their particular problem and to those that are able to provide counsel. Booths can include family problems, healing, financial crisis, God’s will for future, deliverance, need for right relationship with God and other needs. A small map can be provided outlining where the person should go.

Once they reach the proper booth an intercessor or pastor shares a couple of scriptures to encourage faith, and the prayer team begins praying for the need. The person is free to go to more than one booth. This can be an evangelistic tool with many coming to the Lord right there at the prayer fair.

Final Word on Prayer Evangelism

“Finally, dear brothers, as I come to the end of this letter, I ask you to pray for us. Pray first that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and triumph wherever it goes, winning converts everywhere as it did when it came to you” (2 Thessalonians 3:1, *TLB*).

Prayer builds an overpass to evangelism and reaping a harvest. Why not start building today?

Lesson 6

Kingdom PRAYING

Lisa Marshall
Strategic Prayer Coordinator
World Network of Prayer

“God please help me. I need a financial blessing. Please help me get a better job with good benefits. I ask your intervention in this situation in my neighborhood. I need encouragement and direction. I need healing in my body. God bless my family. Help me be a witness.”

Sound familiar? How about this one? “God I ask you to open doors for the Gospel to be spread all over the world. I ask you for a mighty outpouring of your Spirit on all flesh. I ask that doors open in countries with no established works. I ask that you send laborers forth to the fields which are ripe for harvest. I pray for a spirit of giving on your people to finance the sending of missionaries. Let them be victory over Satan’s kingdom. Break yokes of bondage that have people bound. Reveal Yourself in a mighty way to those of other religions. Let the powers of darkness be overcome by Your light.”

Which of these prayers do you identify with most? The Bible says in Matthew 6:33 to “*seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*” Another translation says, “*Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern*” (NLT).

Could it be that we have it backwards when we pray for our needs first? Could it be that we pray the wrong prayers to get our needs met? What would happen if we prayed kingdom prayers first? Would we not begin to line up with the Scriptural example?

While it is not necessarily wrong to pray for our needs, the problem comes in when we put our needs and desires first and leave God’s purpose until the last.

Have you ever thought about what might happen if our prayers were answered the instant we asked them? My guess is that many people would be healed and blessed, and financial problems would go away, and we would all like our jobs, and so on. But what impact on the kingdom of God would there be?

The way I see it, God is basically saying, “If you will handle my business before yours...then I will bless yours.” God wants to be first in all areas of our lives—including our prayers.

How do we do this? We begin by asking God to show us His will (which can be found in His Word) and we begin to pray it. We pray for the family of God all over the world instead of just our family and local congregations. WE pray for the deliverance, healing and salvation of lost people throughout the world. We pray for the Spirit of God to bring understanding to the unsaved. We pray for unity in the body of Christ worldwide.

Our prayers will carry the greatest power and have the greatest impact if we get our priorities right. It is time to enlarge our vision. It is time to lose our tunnel vision and see the big picture.

Do your prayers show how concerned you are for the Kingdom? If not, start today putting the things of God first. If you will, from this day forward, I promise there will be a difference in your life. The principle works! When you handle God's business first. God is going to take care of you. You can count on it because you have got it in writing.

ARTICLE:

(From the World Network of Prayer)

Prayers that Reach the World

Lisa Marshall, World Network of Prayer

A great deal of the prayer life of the typical believer is spent in prayer that is intensely focused on self. "God bless me, my family, my health, my bank account, and my happiness." Certainly God can and does bless us in all these areas and more, but when this is the exclusive focus of our prayers, it reflects that we have lost sight of some very valuable targets of prayer. The prayer focus is inward and temporal rather than outward and eternal. While God is certainly concerned about physical needs, He also wants us to seek His will and direction for the advancement of His kingdom and our involvement in His larger purposes. With a little planning, you can achieve a healthy balance between eternal and temporal prayer concerns.

We need to pray "Kingdom Prayers." Someone has said that if you would look after God's business, then God would look after your business. Jesus said, "So do not worry about having enough food or drink or clothing. Why be like the pagans who are so deeply concerned about such things? Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, and he will give you all you need from day to day if you will live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern" (Matthew 6:31-33, NLT).

Rick Warren in *The Purpose Driven Life* wrote the following: "Shift from local thinking to global thinking. God is a global God. He has always cared about the entire world. 'God so loved the world.' From the

beginning he has wanted family members from every nation he created.

"The first way to start thinking globally is to begin praying for specific countries. World-class Christians pray for the world. Get a globe or a map and pray for the nations by name. The Bible says, 'If you ask me, I will give you nations; all the people on the earth will be yours.'

"Prayer is the most important tool for our mission. People may refuse our love or reject our message, but they are defenseless against our prayers. Like an intercontinental missile, you can aim a prayer at a person's heart whether you are ten feet or 10,000 miles away."¹

Jesus taught His disciples to pray for the establishing of God's Kingdom on earth before they asked for 'daily bread' (praying for our own needs). Getting our priorities right means putting 'first things first'; placing God's purposes and desires ahead of our own.

You can make an eternal difference in the lives of people across the world. You can bring change to the nations of the world. How? Shift from local thinking to global thinking.

¹ Excerpts from *The Purpose-Driven® Life* by Rick Warren. Copyright ©2002, Used by permission of Zondervan Publishers. All rights reserved.

PRAYING for Others Making a Difference !

Vickie Richardson

“Intercession is the mother tongue
for the whole family of Christ.”
-Dora Greenwell

Love on its Knees—Intercessory Prayer

Jesus Himself interceded on our behalf. He paid the price for our salvation. But not only is our salvation related to intercession, but all we do is affected by it. What is intercession?

Intercession comes from two Latin words *inter* and *cedere*: *inter* meaning “between,” “among,” “involved,” “intervention”; and *cedere* meaning “to go,” “to yield,” “to move,” or “to pay the price of.” So intercession means “to go between” as when stepping between someone and his enemy. Intercession also describes one who “yields himself”. Intercession is a “moving in the direction of involvement” regarding the needs and hurts of others. Finally, intercession is “to pay the price of intervention.”

Jesus is the greatest example of all the above definitions. He is the perfect “go-between.” He gave Himself “...a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). And just as Jesus’ greatest gift to a lost world is Himself, our greatest gift to a lost world is our intercession. Through our intercession the world will come to know their Saviour.

What is an intercessor? An intercessor is a man or woman—or child—who fights on behalf of others. This is one activity that identifies us with Christ. To be an intercessor is to be like Jesus because that is what Jesus is like. (Read Hebrews 7:25 and Romans 8:34.)

1. It is our “privilege” to be an intercessor—It is a pleasure to be involved in this important task. By being involved in intercessory prayer for others, we are partnering with Jesus in the ministry of reconciling humanity with Himself.
2. We must understand our “position” as an intercessor—We understand that “position” does not mean our physical position of sitting, or kneeling, or praying walking about. In Ephesians 2:6, Paul said to the believers that God

“raised us up together, and made us sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”
Jesus elevates us as intercessors.

3. There is a promise to us as intercessors—We are operating under the promise that our prayers will be answered. Our prayers do make a difference. Mission researchers say that some 17,000 ethnic groups are yet to be reached with the Gospel. Intercessors know that with the answering of their prayers, chains of bondage will be broken and these groups and people will come to the knowledge of the One who loved them enough to give His all for them.
4. We have power as intercessors—“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Luke 10:19). We see that we possess a dynamic power that we sometimes do not exercise. Our Lord is saying that those who move in the direction of involvement and are willing to pay the price of intervention will have all the power necessary to confront demonic forces. “...the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” [the church] (Matthew 16:18).

Compassion in Action

We prove our love in many ways. We know that words are not enough to show we really love someone. Even our love for God is proven in the way we live, the way we give, the way we love others. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

When we pray for others, we again are proving our love for them. Love brings about action on our part. The action is intercessory prayer.

- 1) Intercessory prayer is **servicing**. No one prays affectively for others without having the servant spirit of Jesus.
- 2) Intercession is also **fighting**. It is engaging in a battle against devil to see the Will of our Father reign in our life and in the lives of those we love and for whom we are praying. In Romans 15:30, Paul requests prayers from the Roman believers, “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake; and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”
- 3) Intercession is **sharing**. “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8). We give ourselves to others in prayer.
- 4) Intercession is **weeping**. It is brokenness before God. The scripture teaches us that those who “sow in tears” shall “reap with joy” (Psalm 126:5, 6). Charles Spurgeon expressed it this way: “Tears are liquid prayer!”

Finally,

- 5) Intercession is **dying**. It is a death to self, to our selfish desires, and to our own will.

Praying for the Lost

Before His ascension into Heaven, Jesus commissioned His disciples to “*go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...*” (Matthew 28:19, 20, NIV).

Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah: “*...and he was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors*” (Isaiah 53:12). *The Living Bible* reads, “*He was counted as a sinner, and he bore the sins of many, and he pled with God for sinners.*” To plead for sinners, to make intercession for the transgressors, is to pray for the lost.

Paul also admonitions, “*Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men...*” (I Timothy 2:1-2). The call for intercession behalf of “all men” clearly includes the lost.

The more we study the subject of prayer, the more we see the vastness of this subject. It seems that the more we are burdened about a particular situation or person, the more prayer is required of us. The more we strive to become like Jesus, the more we are burdened with the lost. After all, He came “*to seek and to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10). As Christians, we must have the same mind of Christ. For “*now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God*” (I Corinthians 2:12).

“Lord, make me more like Yourself, less like myself.”
Lester Case

ARTICLE:

(From the World Network of Prayer)

Prayer Works – God’s Orchestration

Testimony of Matt Ewing

“Early one Sunday morning in Sunday school, our youth group had a prayer meeting. During the course of the prayer meeting, I felt a burden for a fellow sophomore at my high school. Later that afternoon I felt to call him. Not knowing his father’s name made it nearly impossible to find his number since his last name is Thomas. I was already late in getting ready for church, so calling every number for two or three pages was not an option. Knowing the impossibility of the situation, I prayed, “God, if it be your will for him to come, then show me the number.” The very first number I called happened to be his and he was there to speak to me. When he picked up the phone, I told him that earlier that day I had a burden for him and how God had revealed his number to me. With God

orchestrating everything (like He always does), I told him that I felt it was the will of God for him to come with me to church. Since he was not ready and it was almost time for service when I called him, we were about 30 minutes late to church. We walked in and God had already set the stage for the service. After we found a seat, God began to move in a mighty way. To make a long story short, I invited him to the altar and on his first visit to a Pentecostal church, and he received the Holy Ghost!

“I would encourage all young people to pray and seek God, and always be sensitive to His “still, small voice.” He will use you to lead your friends to know Him.”

What an awesome testimony of how prayer works!

Lesson 8

Intercessory PRAYER

Theresa Richardson

As Spirit filled Christians, prayer should always be a very integral part of our life. In certain situations we yield to the spirit to intercede for a particular person and/or situation. We become the vessel the spirit uses to intercede. The spirit within us groans and travails in anguish. In the spirit, we have entered the place where battles are fought against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12) We begin to travail - to reach out to bring the hand of God into that situation and/or person of need. Intercessory prayer senses the need for someone to pour out their soul before God on behalf of that particular situation and /or person. When that is done, God will touch the situation. The Bible gives us some examples when someone poured out their soul and interceded.

I SAMUEL 1

The situation—Hannah was barren. Her adversary provoked her sore and made her fret.

The solution—Hannah came to the temple. She began to intercede for this situation. She asked the Lord to look upon her affection, to remember her and to give her a son. She asked God to touch this situation. When Eli came to her, she told him that she had poured out her soul before the Lord, out of the abundance of her complaint and grief she spoke. Eli told her to go in peace, because God would grant her her petition. God did give her a son. Samuel was born. But he did not stop with just Samuel; God blessed her with three more sons and two daughters.

ISAIAH 53

The situation—“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) There was a need for an intercessor.

The solution—Isaiah prophesied in verse 5 of chapter 53 that Jesus was “wounded for our transgressions, busied for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with His stripes we are healed.” All through Isaiah 53, he tells us about the grief and sorrow that Jesus would go through but that was still not enough. There had to be a sacrifice - there had to be a sin offering - there had to be an intercessor. Finally, Isaiah tells us in verse 12 that Jesus “poured out his soul unto death and made intercession for the transgressors”. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” BUT we have been redeemed because Jesus poured out his soul unto death and became the sacrifice - He interceded for us - He redeemed us by his

blood. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...by whom, we have now received the atonement." (Romans 5: 8-11).

PSALM 42

The situation – David's soul was thirsting for the Lord.

The solution – David cried out "Where is my God?" He had a need. His soul was thirsty for God. He felt that God was distant from him. He longed for the presence of God. When he began to remember the things of the past, he poured out his soul. He remembered going to the temple with joy and praise. Then he said, "Yet will I praise him." When he came to the place that he poured out his soul – when he reached out to take the hand of God and pull it toward his situation THEN he realized he still had hope. He realized in the midst of everything he could still praise Him because He is our God.

LAMENTATIONS 2

The situation – Jerusalem has fallen and the temple has been destroyed.

The solution – Jeremiah laments for the fall of Jerusalem and for the temple. He cries out to the Daughters of Zion. He tells them that their children have poured out their souls into their mothers' bosom. He challenges the Daughters of Zion to pour their hearts like water before the face of God and lift up their hands toward God for the lives of their children. Zechariah gave them hope. " Rejoice greatly, O daughters of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." (Zechariah 9:9) Many years passed but an answer came. When Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, the multitudes took palm branches and went to meet Him crying " Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." The daughters of Zion poured out their hearts to God and the scriptures were fulfilled. "And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written. Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold, the King cometh, sitting on an ass." (John 12: 12-15). But the cry of the prophets, the cry of the Daughters of Zion will join with us as we behold "the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Revelation 21: 2-3)

ISAIAH 59

The situation – "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor."

The solution – The sins of God's people separated them from Him. God looked for an intercessor and found none. Therefore His arm brought salvation. He provided for us. He provided armour for us. (Isaiah 59:17 and Ephesians 6:13-18). So when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. He promised that the words he puts in our mouth would not depart. As we abide in Him, He abides in us. He has provided a way for us to intercede. When we repent, are

baptized in Jesus Name and filled with His Spirit, we are washed, cleansed and filled with HIS spirit. He has provided a way that you and I can be intercessors. “ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searched the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” (Romans 8:26-27) As we feel the need, the spirit within us reacts to that need. As we yield ourselves to the spirit, we fight spiritual battles, not alone, but with the Spirit within us. We become the vessel His spirit uses to intercede. As we pray groaning in the spirit, as we pour out our souls – situations change, people change. God sees that there are men and women today that are intercessors.

TODAY

The situation – We have situations in our lives that need a touch from God. We know people that need a touch from God.

The solution – We can pour out our soul and touch God. We can reach out towards Him and bring the situation/person in contact with Him. Paul tells us in I Timothy 2:1-4 “that, first for all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” We the people of God need to intercede for our country, for our families, and for all men.

We have a promise that if we call, he will answer; if we cry, he will say, “Here I am.” Isaiah 58:9-12. “And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy the soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. Any they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations: and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.” Are you willing to be a repairer? Are you willing to be a restorer? Are you willing to be an intercessor? Are you willing to pour out your soul?

ARTICLE:

(From the World Network of Prayer)

Prayer Works – Praying for Prodigals

Testimony of Paula LeJeune

After hearing Sister Tenney's message on "Seasons of Life" at a conference last year, I was very encouraged. A heavy load was lifted when I figured out my season and what I felt was expected of me at this time in my life.

At that time, I also purchased one of her books. The chapter concerning the mother's prayers for her wayward son struck a cord in me—not for a son, but for my nineteen-year-old nephew, Benjamin. He had left his home (and his relationship with God) at age seventeen. Most of the time, we didn't even know where to find him. I read the chapter to my sister and we cried and prayed together.

Soon after, things became worse. My sister was forced to press charges against Ben. Driven by his addiction to drugs, he

threatened to kill her if she did not give him money to support his habit. During the confrontation, he told her that being raised in a Pentecostal home had been the source of his problems.

In spite of this heart-rending blow, we never gave up. At our ladies prayer group, we laid hands on a picture of Ben and asked God to work in his life. One week later, I had the privilege of laying hands on Ben and watching as God renewed him in the Holy Ghost.

He is such a beautiful person and we are excited about getting to know him again. He is soaking up everything like a sponge! He is even witnessing to his former "friends" and bringing them to cell group. Praise God for His awesome, life-changing power!

Paula LeJeune is a pastor's wife from Jennings, Louisiana

CAN GOD TRUST YOU WITH THE FUTURE?

Barbara Westberg

Genesis 18:19 – *“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him”*

When God called Abraham, he wanted him to be sure to lead his whole household in the ways of the Lord. His children were of utmost importance—even though it was many years after god’s first call of Abraham before he bore Isaac! God KNEW Abraham well enough, that He could trust him to do this important task. What does God know about YOU? Can God trust YOU?

God could trust Abraham:

- ❖ Abraham was going to become a great and mighty nation
- ❖ All the people of the earth were going to be blessed by this nation
- ❖ God knew Abraham would command his children and his household so they would not only know, but keep the ways of the LORD
- ❖ God knew Abraham’s people would do justice and judgment

So why was it so important that God know these things about Abraham? Because the nation that he was going to father would be different from any race, tribe or group of people on the whole earth! They would eat differently, dress differently, worship differently, marry for different reasons, and follow a totally different code of ethics—all of which would only be possible IF they were taught AND trained to follow the ways of the Lord!

And how are we any different today? Are we not a chosen generation? Did God not call us His royal priesthood? Have we not become a holy nation? Are we not branded as a peculiar people? (See I Peter 2:9.) All of this is for what reason? That we should show the world the glory of God—the One who has brought us out of the darkness of sin into the marvelous light of His life and love. We cannot show the world Jesus unless we follow His ways. How can we follow His paths unless we know where they will lead us? Only God’s Word and its truth will show us that path. And someone must teach us what is found in its pages. God will reveal His secrets to a people that he can trust to command their children in His ways. WE will become a great and mighty church, if WE will teach our children the ways of the Lord.

There is a story in II Kings, chapter 20 (verses 1-19) about a certain king who was not trustworthy for God's plan. This man was the king of Judah. His father had been a godless man who had even erected idols in the temple of Solomon. He did not learn of God from his home, but he knew how his people were supposed to live. When his father died, Hezekiah became king. He restored the Temple to its rightful place of importance, and removed the idols all around that his father had allowed. He did many good things for Judah, and even led them to defeat some of their major enemies. But God sent the prophet Isaiah to tell him that he was about to die. Instead of accepting God's will, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall reminding God of all the good things he had done and asked for more time on earth. God granted his request, and gave him 15 more years of life (verses 1-11).

It was during this extra 15 years of life that his sons were born. It was also during this time that he made some big mistakes. A distant king sent one of his sons to greet this king of Judah, and so Hezekiah decided to show off all of his possessions, and all that he had accomplished while he had been king. He revealed all the secrets of his kingdom (verses 12-15).

When the prophet returned to rebuke him, Hezekiah was not even sorry for what he had done. He was not worried about anything because all of the trouble that the prophet had foretold was to come after his death! He did not care that his sons would be carried away into captivity! He was not concerned that his family would be destroyed. He was not a bit dismayed that the king after him, his own son, Manasseh, would lead the people into terrible acts of idolatry and wickedness. Manasseh was only 12 years old when he began to rule Judah and would be ruler for 55 years, much longer than Hezekiah himself. What did Hezekiah have to say to the prophet? (See verses 16-19.)

"And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, hear the word of the LORD. Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah. Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?"

He was only concerned with the fact that his days would be lived out in peace; he cared nothing for the future of his children. Hezekiah could not be trusted with his children. He never bothered with training them in the ways of the Lord. Even after this prophecy, he did not attempt to lead his son to do right. What a sad story!

What are we doing with the "future" that god has placed in our hands? As families – we have a job to do. But the church of god has the greatest task! We must take care of our FUTURE! We must be careful to provide well for those who follow in our footsteps – our children.

Isaiah 54:13-"*All the children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.*"

When we consider the tactics of Satan and his desires to attack our children in any and all areas of their lives-through their friends, through the school system, through the entertainment and amusement media. It really puts a tremendous responsibility on us as parents, grandparents and the whole church to "*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it:*" (Proverbs 22:6).

Satan would have you to think that children are of no consequence, that they, after all, are only children, not to be taken seriously, that their programs are of no importance. But Jesus said, "*Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me, for such is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. 9:14). Children are important!

We live in a modern fast-paced age. Technology has brought much progress. There are things that we did as children that our children and grandchildren will never have to experience. Change is good—we are thankful that our children will not have to know some of the hardships we may have known. BUT—we must guard against shortcutting their training in the ways of God.

Heaven & earth may change, styles and lifestyles will change, educational methods will change, but God's Word must remain sure in our hearts as the whole truth. We must teach our children in the things of God. The Word of God must be made a priority in our life and the lives of our children as they grow up to love God and His Truth.

These are lessons that are not taught in the modern school systems. It is important that we train up our children! Teach them on their level; teach them to have their own relationship with God, which leads them to their personal experience with God. This must be taught in sincerity.

Let the children pray! They love to pray! Jesus loves to answer the prayers of little children. Children pray sincere, focused prayers. Children pray for everything—from their sick dog to the war in their neighboring country. Children believe with honesty and sincerity. They take God at His Word. They believe he can and will do anything. Their faith is pure.

This great United Pentecostal church has a rich history of those before us who fought and suffered so that we could have the freedom to know God in His fullness as we do. We have a rich inheritance to guard. But if we do not take care of our future, we will die! The only way any church can continue is if they guard their future and make sure that it not only has a real understanding of the past, but also sees the responsibility of the future in front of it!

We must train our children to walk in the ways of the LORD, and to love His Word. Will be like Abraham, or will we care only for the things of our lifetime like Hezekiah? Can God trust us with the future?

Prayer Guide:

(From the World Network of Prayer)

HOW TO PRAY FOR FAMILIES

Families are the building blocks of society and the church. We cannot sit idly by and allow Satan to destroy our families.

When Sanballat heard that Nehemiah was building the walls of Jerusalem, he was filled with great wrath and conspired to fight against him. Today when we seek to build godly homes, the enemy continually seeks to hinder. Our only hope is to follow Nehemiah's example: "*Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God and set a watch against them day and night*" (Nehemiah 4:9). The determined Israelites held in one hand a tool with which to build and in the other hand a weapon to fight the enemy. Only vigilant, intercessory prayer and spiritual warfare will lead us to victory for our families. Let us take courage from Nehemiah's advice: "*Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great . . . and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses . . . our God shall fight for us*" (Nehemiah 4:14, 20).

Pray for husbands to:

1. Be spiritual leaders in their homes (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). It is difficult for a woman and children to find their proper place in the divine scheme for the family when the father is out of his place. He is designed to be the spiritual head of the family. When he fails to be the spiritual leader, his wife is unfairly forced to assume this role. Pray that the husband's love and devotion to God and his steadfast faithfulness will set the example for his family to follow.

2. Love their wives as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). Love is not a gushy feeling of the moment. Love is commitment--through the good

times and bad. Pray that the husband's love for his wife would be as pure and eternal as Christ's love for the church.

3. Raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Fathers teach children how to bait hooks and how to drive the family automobile. However, the greatest lesson they can teach their children is to fear the Lord and to walk humbly before Him. Pray that fathers would teach Christian principles to their children by precept and example.

Pray for wives to:

1. Seek God and love His word supremely (Matthew 6:33). Just as diet helps to determine our physical health, what we read, watch, and listen help to determine our mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Pray that the wife's love for the Word would keep her thoughts pure and holy.

2. Be subject to their husbands as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:24). Eve was created to be a helper suitable for Adam. Although she was not inferior to him, she was to follow his leadership. Pray that the wife would have a godly respect for her husband.

3. Teach their children to have faith in God (II Timothy 1:5). The mother is a child's first teacher. She instills many of her values subjectively through her priorities and actions. Pray that the mother's example of holiness and dedication would transmit her faith in God to her child.

4. Be content and not given to covetousness (Hebrews 13:5). Modern advertising and the values of a new generation have made what once was luxuries now seem necessities. In such an environment it is easy for the wife to want what the family cannot afford and put undue pressure on her husband and family. Pray that she would be thankful for the bounty that God has already provided.

Pray for children to:

1. Become sensitive and responsive to God at an early age (I Samuel 3:1-14). Samuel's childhood and youth show that children can be sensitive and responsive to God at an early age. Pray that they would keep their hearts attuned to God. Pray that parents would have the wisdom to recognize their children's sensitivity and guide them.

2. Be obedient to parents (Ephesians 6:1). The fifth commandment is the only one with a promise. Pray that the parents would have the wisdom to discipline their children properly (Ephesians 6:4). Pray that the children would receive the discipline as an act of love (Hebrews 12:5-8).

3. Heed their parents' godly teaching and example (Proverbs 1:8). Although parents are still the greatest influence in a child's life, school, media, and friends are also sources of influence. Pray that children would be more swayed by the example of their godly parents and the teachings of the Word of God than by peer pressure or worldly environment.

4. Follow Christ's example and grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52). Luke wrote that Jesus was subject to Mary and Joseph and that He grew mentally (wisdom), physically (stature), spiritually (God), and socially (man). It is God's will that our children be well-rounded individuals. Pray that they would develop in each of these areas as they grow. Families are the building blocks of society and the church. We cannot afford to sit idly by and allow Satan to destroy our families. We must be vigilant and pray for our families to be protected from evil and to be a place of safety. As Nehemiah built the walls of Jerusalem, so can we build walls of prayer and faith around our families. We must do it for Jesus' sake and our own.

Lesson 10

Senior Saints Serving through PRAYER

Fredi Trammell

Our sweet elders who have faithfully served the Lord for many years need not be left out of service to the Lord because of their years. Remember Anna? It is recorded in Luke 2; Anna was a prophetess and was of great age. After having been married for only seven years, she was widowed. She had been a widow for about eighty-four years...but the scripture states she served God with fasting, prayers, and thanksgiving to the Lord night and day.

Too often, as our elders grow older and their activities diminish, their ministry to the body of Christ is terminated for lack of opportunity to serve. Many elderly people, who perhaps are unable to serve to the full measure they once did, can continue to bless others through channels of utmost importance.

While ministering to the elderly I have noticed a consistency, especially in those who have been intensely in love with Jesus for many years. Their habit of living in the Word and keeping up a consistent prayer life somehow plants within their soul an eternal illumination, a knowledge that never dies. And even though their abilities to remember, think, or even converse may no longer be as they once were, when it comes time to pray, they immediately snap into action. Suddenly they can become fully aware of what is going on and pray passionately and with a sound mind. This, at times, has astounded me, but then I realize they are praying by the power of the Eternal Spirit and not in the earthly realm.

There are some of our beloved elders who have clear minds and still carry the burden of the Lord just as they have for so many years. When the times comes that they can no longer care for themselves physically, attend church services, and take an active part in the work of God, they are devastated. They still desire to be involved in the Kingdom of God in some way.

This is true in the life of our dear Vennia Puckett, celebrating her 98th birthday this year. As a resident of a local nursing facility, she felt useless after having served in the ministry along with her pastor husband for many years.

Sister Puckett has been my friend since I was a very young woman. She has encouraged and uplifted my spirit innumerable times. One day while visiting with her, I showed her the WNOP prayer list, explaining how important and desperate

these prayer needs were and inquiring if she would join with WNOP in prayer for these. She has plenty of time to pray every day and now she prays daily for each request with heartfelt compassion and strong faith knowing from years of experience God can do anything! This dear woman has been a powerful intercessor for most of her life. The World Network of Prayer requests offers her an outlet for her burden and fulfills the deep longing that has never waned to be profitable to the Kingdom of God. She rejoices mightily as she reads the praise reports of prayers that have been answered. She knows she has been instrumental in the answer to these desperate needs all over the world!

There is a wonderful worldwide ministry available for our senior saints through the World Network of Prayer.

The last days outpouring of the Holy Spirit described in Acts 2 is totally inclusive - your sons, your daughters, your young, your old - will be involved. Include them in your local prayer ministry.

(From the World Network of Prayer)

Generation to Generation

"Shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord."

"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I shall command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:4-7).

The above words of Moses emphasize the imperative that biblical truths must be passed from generation to generation. Fathers and mothers must teach their children that God is love, that He is one, that they must be born of the water and Spirit, and that we must live holy before the Lord, for He is holy.

Our responsibility does not end with our children or their generation. The truths that we have received must be transmitted not only to our children but also to our grandchildren and their generation. A vehicle to help with the transmission is Generation to Generation, a prayer program of the World Network of Prayer patterned after Simeon and Anna.

Consider Simeon and Anna. They were sensitive, spiritually-minded, senior citizens in Jesus' day. They were the ones

who gave the gentle touch on the shoulder and the appropriate word of encouragement. They were the ones standing in the background yet close enough that their applause could be heard. They were the ones who held on to the promises of God for a new generation and who spent their days and nights in prayer and fasting.

Our world is in desperate need for modern Simeons and Annas. We need those that will devote extra time to pray for:

- children and grandchildren, born and unborn
- their pastor's children
- the children and teens of their church
- the children and teens of their community
- the missionary kids around the world
- revival at home and abroad

If other modern Simeons and Annas would daily occupy the prayer rooms of their churches, their actions would send a powerful message of love and concern to our youth and would invite God into their young lives. Marvelous changes could be wrought in the lives of our children and grandchildren because of our intercession! The prayers of our generation will affect the generations that follow.

PRAYING for Children

Paula Richardson

Committee Member: Reaching Africa's Children

"Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me."

Matthew 18:2-5

This Scripture shows how important children are in God's eyes. Throughout the Bible, children are used in miracles and to illustrate lessons and parables. Jesus healed many children during His years of ministry. Children are very special. They give their love with their whole heart ~ unreservedly and unconditionally. Children are a treasure that we must guard. Their minds are open to receive and learn. For this reason, we must pray a protection around their mind. Satan would like nothing more than to fill their minds with evil at a young age. Our children need our prayer! They are the future of our church! Statistics show that 45% of the African population is under the age of 15. We must pray for our children. We must intercede to God for them.

We have many promises in the Bible that assure us that God hears our prayers and will answer. In Jeremiah we find one such example:

*"This is what the LORD says: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, **Rachel weeping for her children** and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more." This is what the LORD says: "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, **for your work will be rewarded**," declares the LORD. "They will return from the land of the enemy. **So there is hope for your future**," declares the LORD. "Your children will return to their own land" Jeremiah 31:15-17.*

This is a great promise that God hears our prayers for our children. There is hope for our future when we pray! Our work will be rewarded when we pray for our children.

Another great example of the power in the prayer is found in the first two chapters of I Samuel. We find a woman named Hannah who desperately wanted a child. Hannah prayed and promised the Lord that if He would bless her with a son, she would give him back to the Lord for His Kingdom. God heard Hannah's prayer, and she gave

birth to a son, who she named Samuel. When he was old enough, she carried Samuel to the Lord's house and gave him to the priest, Eli. And in I Samuel 1:27-28 we read her words, *"I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD."* Mothers, there is great power in your prayers! God listens when you travail for your children!

In Lamentations the prophet talks about the destruction of Jerusalem because of the anger of God against His people. In chapter 2 we read that Jerusalem's children were fainting in the street. Whether you take this literally or not, you can still understand that the children were suffering. Then the writer says in Lamentations 2:19: *"Arise, cry out in the night...; pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord. Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children..."* Clearly there is power when we pray for our children! We can intercede to God for the lives of our children. Just before Jesus was crucified, as He was being led up the hill to Golgotha, there were many people following Him, weeping and mourning. But Luke 23:28-29 gives us Jesus' reply: *"Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children."* He knew that perilous days were coming in their lives. And He encouraged them to weep for their children. We are living in perilous times. We must weep for our children!

In these last days that we are living in, there are many spirits that come against our children. There are spirits of dishonesty, cheating, laziness, discontentment, jealousy, immorality, disobedience, and ungodliness. In our world today, these things are portrayed as being acceptable. Children see these things daily in the lives of others on television, in schools, in our neighborhoods, etc. In a child's mind, it is hard to understand why lying is wrong when they see their teacher or best friends doing it. Why must we live holy when we see others doing wrong and not being punished, it seems? That is why our prayers are so important for our children. We must plead the blood of Jesus over their minds every day when they go to school or out to play. We must ask Jesus to guard their hearts and minds from the evil of this world. Teaching our children the ways of the Lord is very important, but praying for them is also very important!

There are many things we can pray about for our children:

- Pray for their salvation ~ that they would see the importance of their own salvation. Acts 2:38-39 tells us, *"Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your **children...**"* Your children need salvation!
- Pray for their health ~ physically and emotionally. Pray that God would keep them from harm and illness. Pray for a sound mind and emotional strength.
- Pray for their education ~ that their minds will be eager to learn.
- Pray for their future ~ that they would seek God's direction in their life as they choose a vocation. Pray that their minds will be open to God's will for their life.

- Pray for their talents ~ God has given everyone a measure of talent. Pray that your children will find that talent and use it for His glory.
- Pray for their marriage ~ even when they are young you can begin to pray that they would choose a good spouse. After they are married, you can pray for God to bless their marriage.
- Pray for their character ~ that they would develop a strong character, be a good friend to those around them, and become a strong, honest person.

You can begin praying for your children even before they are born. Pray for them while they are young, when they start school, and as they grow up to be young adults. And do not stop praying for them after they are grown! As they grow older, their responsibilities increase as they marry and have children of their own, and they still need your prayers! Every stage of their life is filled with difficulties and lessons to be learned. You can help them through life by strengthening them with your prayers.

We also need to pray for the children of our church. Some children do not have godly parents to pray for them. You might not know what situations they are facing at home. Your prayer can make the difference in the life of a child. We need a burden to pray for the children around us. Pray for the lost children of your brothers and sisters in Christ. Help share their burden! We are a family ~ let us pray for one another.

As Christian parents it is part of our duty to pray for our children. God has trusted us with the responsibility of raising our children. And one part of raising our children is praying for them. The scripture in I Samuel 12:23 says it well, *“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right.”* Could we be sinning against the Lord when we fail to pray for our children? Let us bombard the gates of heaven with prayers for our children! Refuse to give your children over to Satan! *“Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him”* (Psalm 127:3). Our children are a heritage and reward from the Lord ~ they belong to Him! Pray for your children. Lift them up to the Lord. Weep for your children.

“Lord, do not forget my children. May your blessings be upon them continually. Guard their hearts and minds from evil. May they stand strong on Your truth. May they be honest, loving, upright, and godly in Your sight. Let them abide under the shadow of Your wings. Give Your angels charge over my children, to keep them in all their ways. Thank you for entrusting them in my care. I give them back to you, Lord!”

Prayer Guide:

(From the World Network of Prayer)

HOW TO PRAY FOR CHILDREN

“Children are an heritage of the Lord”
(Psalm 127:3)

A burdened heart...arising in the night...crying out to God...uplifted hands...flowing tears...desperation. This is the picture in Lamentations 2. It is the “daughters of Zion,” the church, pleading with God for their young children swooning (dying), fainting because of hunger (both spiritual and natural in the street (Lamentations 2:11);!

Too often your children are considered insignificant and unimportant when it comes to spiritual matters. When this nonchalant attitude toward young children exists, they are neglected in prayer. If we choose to follow the example of Jesus, children will be an extremely vital part of our prayers. Jesus pressed little children and infants close to His heart. He prayed for them and blessed them. He prayed for them and blessed them. When He was criticized for this action, He was moved with indignation and emphatically declared, *“Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God”* (Mark 10:14). Also see Luke 18:15-18. When religious leaders of Jesus’ day observed the wonderful things Jesus did and the children crying in the Temple, “Hosanna to the son of David,” they were irate and demanded of Jesus, “Do you hear what these children are saying?” Jesus answered, *“Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?”* (Matthew 21:15-17). Also see Psalm 8:2.

Pray for the children of the world.

Satanic influence begins, in too many cases, before the birth of a child. Drug-addicted, sin-laden, idol-worshipping parents are oblivious to the effects their lifestyle perpetuates upon their offspring. Look for news reports about places and people whose lives are bound with idolatry and other ungodly practices. Pray for the innocent children brought into these situations. Pray for the children who live in these nations. Focus on the troubles of those nations and pray accordingly. Never give up praying for the Lord to send laborers into these places to bring the good news of the power of God to deliver from sin and fill these lost souls with His Holy Spirit.

Who will put forth the time and effort to maximize instead of minimize the influence God will have upon a child’s life if prayer is made for them?

Along with this prayer, pray for the 6children around the world who are mistreated, abused, and erroneously led into false teachings that will cause their souls to be lost in eternity unless they are reached with truth.

Pray for your children and your friend’s children.

Your won children and those of your friends are most familiar to you. These children are the closest to you. You know

many of their needs. In many cases you are aware of their spiritual standing with spiritual things. Pray for them to use their talents and gifts for the glory of God and His kingdom.

Pray for your neighborhood children.

Every neighborhood has its own set of problems. Instead of complaining, pray! Prayer will make a difference! Pray for the unruly child in your neighborhood. Pray for the neighborhood bully. He may only need to know somebody loves him and is praying for him. Pray for all the children in your community that they will be blessed of the Lord. Jesus loves them no matter what home they have and no matter how sinful and mischievous they may be. As we pray, we must also love them as Jesus loves them.

Pray for children of leaders.

There is a furious attack from the devil upon leadership in the end time. The enemy knows he can cause within leaders frustration, confusion, and often despair when he attacks their children. Satan is no gentleman. He is ruthless. He barges in, if he possibly can, and wreaks havoc in children's lives. He has no care just because they are innocent children. His vicious venom is prepared to contaminate the children of leaders. Pray for your church leaders' children—the minister's children, the Sunday school teacher's children, and all other leadership's children.

God. Pray for their salvation. Pray that God will strengthen their weaknesses in Pray for your local, state, and national leaders' children. You may sense a special anointing when you pray for leaders' children. If this is so, possibly God has called you for special intercession in this area.

Search until you can find the names of all the children for whom you are praying. Perhaps it will be possible to find some of their most crucial needs. Focus your praying. Pray specifically for these children by name and for their individual needs. In your spirit, hold them close as you would hold your own children and love them with your heart!

The prayers of the righteous avail much!

Thousands of tons of snow have been known to thunder down a mountainside because one skier shouted a few words. The snow was ready to move. It only needed a small disturbance.

So it is with prayer when it moves the Holy Spirit into action. A few words, focused, fervently and fitly spoken in prayer with faith in the name of Jesus, can set off an avalanche of God's power in the lives of children throughout the world.

Pray for children.

--Contributions by Fredi Trammell, edited by Dorsey L. Burk

Lesson 12

Teaching Our Children to PRAY

Vicki Simoneaux

Committee Member: Reaching Africa's Children

"Pray without ceasing" I Thessalonians 5:17.

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. One of our main responsibilities should be to teach our children how to pray. In order for us to teach them we must first develop our own prayer patterns and life. There is nothing that can take the place of prayer in your own life. James 5:16 tells us that our prayers will benefit us much. Pray for your children. Teach them to pray. Let them know that you need their prayers as well. Prayer is like breathing, without doing it we cannot live. Teach by example, let them see you as you go to prayer meeting; let them see you praying at home. Jesus not only told us to pray, but He was our example.

I Thessalonians 5:17 is very short so it is important that we explain the verse. To "pray without ceasing" does not mean that we go around praying out loud all of the time. It does mean that we should pray about and before everything. When something good happens we should pray. When we are sick we should pray. Before we eat we should pray. Before we sleep we should pray.

As you begin to pray with you children, allow them to share some prayer needs. Explain that as you begin to pray that you should remember these needs and pray about them, not only in the prayer together, but even during the week when they pray. Also, encourage them to recognize when their prayers are answered. It is important that we build up faith in them by helping them know that there is power in their prayers. We can do this by letting them see that God answers their prayers. Even very simple answered prayers can build big faith!

What is Prayer? Prayer is communication with God. What ways do you communicate with your family and friends? You do so by talking and expressing your feelings with them. It is also listening to what they are saying to you. That is exactly what prayer is. Talking and expressing your feelings with God and listening to what He is saying to you.

Matthew 6:5-7 - "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is

in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.” NKJV

Read verse 5. What is a “hypocrite”? It is someone that tries to act like they are someone or something that they are not. Jesus told us not to be like that. We are not praying so that other people can hear or see us. Our prayers should be communication with God not man. In the Bible there were people that liked to pray loud prayers so everyone could hear them. Jesus did not like this.

Read verse 6. What is a “prayer closet”? Does it mean that we must get inside of our cupboards at home when we pray? That would be funny, don’t you think? A prayer closet is anywhere that we can pray without being interrupted. It is an atmosphere of being alone with God. Have you ever tried to carry on a conversation in a busy market? It is hard to do, is it not? Where are some places that you can pray? These are prayer closets. We are not praying to have people watch and hear us. When we are praying we need to be thinking about God.

Read verse 7. What are “vain repetitions”? “Vain” means something that is ineffective; it does not do you any good. “Repetition” is doing or saying something over and over. Have you ever asked for something and been told “No”? And then you just keep asking over and over? That is vain repetitions. That does not usually make that person happy to have to tell you no again and again. When we are praying we should not say the same thing over and over. Prayer is just like talking to your family and friends, remember we said that already? So, you ask Him for what you need then you thank Him for it.

Jesus gave us an example prayer in these verses in Matthew. We often call it a “model prayer.” He did not mean for us to repeat His words. It was meant only help us as we pray. We can use these attributes of prayer to teach our children the correct to pray.

Let us look at Matthew 6:9-13.

- **Worship** – *Our Father which are in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.* Begin your prayer with worshiping Him. Do you know what our Father’s name is? (Jesus)
- **Praying for others** – *Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.* We should pray for God’s will be done in the lives of others. It is His will that they receive the Holy Ghost so we should pray for our family and friends that have not yet received His Spirit in their lives. Children should know that they can pray for others.
- **Physical Needs** – *Give us this day our daily bread.* God had promised to supply all of our needs so we should not be shy to ask. Bread is not only food but whatever we need.
- **Repent** – *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* If we do not forgive others He will not forgive us and then we are praying for nothing. It is very important that our children learn the importance of repentance.

- **Spiritual Needs** – *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* It is all right to pray and ask God to keep us from doing evil things. Evil things are things that are a sin.
- **Worship** – *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.* We should always begin to pray by worshipping Him. It is also right to end our prayers that way.

Remember that Jesus did not say that we should pray this prayer. He said that in this manner we should pray. That means that we should pray a prayer like this one.

Children are easily taught to pray and they pray very sincerely. They should always be encouraged to pray. Yes, we have taught them to pray for the food as we sit down at the table. But, there is so much more that we need to teach them. There is power in the prayers of our children.

Lesson 13

PRAYING with Children to Receive the Holy Ghost

Linda Poitras

Committee Member: Reaching Africa's Children

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"
(Acts 2:38).

How many times have we read or quoted this verse? This is the foundation of our faith. What about the verse that follows?

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39).

God sets no age limit on His promises. He has always been concerned with the salvation of children, because He knows they will quickly become adults. He also knows that as they get older, their doubts and questions grow. He understands that the time to touch them is when they are tender and full of faith. He spoke of this often to His followers.

"And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them; but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:15-17).

Prayer is simply talking to Jesus. Many times children think they have to be grown before Jesus will listen to their prayers, but this is not what the Bible says. When small children were brought to Jesus, He stopped what He was doing to bless them. He rebuked His followers for not seeing the importance of children. The mistake we often make is believing that God wants us to wait until they are grown before we bring our children to Him. This is not what the Bible says.

"And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:13-16).

According to Peter on the Day of Pentecost, children were included in the promise of receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:39). The Book of Acts (our record of the original pouring out of God's Spirit on the first church) records a number of times when the whole household received the gospel. According to *The Revell Bible Dictionary*, the writings in Acts and the Epistles refer to "house" and "household" by the Roman standard. This included "not only family members with their slaves and servants, but also persons who were under some obligation to the head of the family." Family members surely included children, unless we assume that none of these people had any children living under their influence:

- * In Acts 10 - Cornelius called together his kinsmen and near friends (v. 24), and the Holy Ghost fell on everyone who heard Peter's message (v. 44).
- * In Acts 16:1-5 - Lydia and her household obeyed.
- * In Acts 16:16-34 - the Philippian jailer included "all his" household (v. 33) in obedience to the gospel.
- * In Acts 18:8 - Crispus believed with all his house.
- * In 1 Corinthians 16:15 - Stephanas and his household.

The New Testament emphasizes the importance of the church leaders influencing their family members to godly living. Paul listed this as a job requirement for elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3:4, 12). If a man could not lead his immediate family (wife and children especially) to follow God, how could he lead strangers to do the same thing?

From the days of Abraham, God has always expected children to have a part in the faith of their fathers.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19).

God requires fathers to share His laws with their children.

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Of all the people who know Jesus, 85% found Him when they were between the ages of four and fourteen years old. In these early years, we feed and clothe them, and hopefully show them our love. Sadly, many times our children's eternal souls are not a concern until they are grown and gone from our house. God's Word speaks of sharing

His laws when children are young, tender, and small, and continuing this training throughout their lives.

The prophet Eli is a good example of the serious mistake of not enforcing God's laws. (Read 1 Samuel 2:13-36; 3:1-21.) Eli's failure to lead his family spiritually had some far reaching results:

- God's judgment on Eli, his sons, and his family for ever (1 Samuel 4: 17-18);
 - The loss of respect for the office of the priesthood (1 Samuel 2: 17);
 - The general spiritual decline of the whole nation of Israel (1 Samuel 2: 22-24);
- and
- The loss of the glory of the Lord from Israel (1 Samuel 4: 21).

These terrible results should be a warning to parents everywhere—especially those involved in the work of God.

The prophet Malachi spoke of the trouble God's people found themselves in. He explained why their prayers seemed to go nowhere. They had forgotten the reason for producing children.

"Didn't the Lord make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. And what does he want? Godly children from your union" (Malachi 2:15, NLT).

Having children (especially boys) to carry on the family name is important in many cultures. It means that a family, tribe, nation, and race will continue. God reminds us that we do not just need children—we need godly children. To produce this type of seed, we must share the gospel with them from infancy. We must train them to love God's Word, understanding that His Word is the final authority on right and wrong. In other words, our lives should be devoted to making sure our children become the godly seed that God intended. All children may not follow their parents' training. But the probability of them doing so increases greatly when they begin at an early age to know and love the Lord and His ways.

A Personal Testimony from the Author

I remember well the night I received the Holy Ghost. I was flat on my back on the floor in front of the altar in the small church where my father was pastor. My hands were raised as high as I could get them, and my eyes were closed tight. I could hear my mother praying beside me. Every little while she would whisper something in my ear to encourage me. Those whispered words sound as loud today as they did over forty years ago when I was a seven-year-old girl. Sometimes what she was saying sounded like prayer, but it was very clear to me.

"Worship the Lord." I knew what she was talking about because I had been part of a worshiping church all of my life. I knew I was supposed to fall at Jesus' feet and give myself totally to Him. I knew I was supposed to turn my whole life over to Him. I wasn't sure how to do that, but I knew it was important.

I heard her encourage me with this prayer: *“Lord, help my baby understand how to give herself totally to You. Help her to yield her life to You, Jesus.”* When I heard my mother pray like that, I started praying the same thing. She told me to try to picture in my mind what Jesus looked like and just think about speaking to Him—He was listening.

Then, my mother whispered in my ear that my best friend had just received the Holy Ghost. She asked me if I really wanted it. *“The day you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him”* (Psalm 119:10). Those words made my heart pound. I really did want the Holy Ghost. Why not that night?

“Don’t beg for the Holy Ghost, just talk to Jesus. Tell Him what you want.” By then, I was really feeling like I could have the Holy Ghost that night. But I kept asking Jesus for it, even though I knew it was a gift—already paid for and waiting. All I had to do was accept it and allow Jesus to work in my life.

“Do you believe the Holy Ghost is for you tonight?” I knew the Holy Ghost was for me because I had been hearing Acts 2:39 all my life. My parents had always encouraged us to believe the Lord, and these Scriptures had always been a part of our family. *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”* (Hebrews 11:6).

“Praise Him for the gift He has promised you.” I remember those words so clearly because they changed the way I was praying. I started to thank the Lord for the Holy Ghost He had promised, and I remember feeling something so wonderful. I knew it was the Holy Ghost, and I got so excited!

“Yes, Yes! That is the Holy Ghost that you feel. Now just yield to Him and don’t worry about what you are saying with your mouth. Let Jesus take control of your tongue.” After that, I could hear noise around me, but it was not important. I knew I was talking to Jesus. I heard someone speaking in a language I couldn’t understand—then realized it was me! I got even more excited then, and just allowed God to speak for a long time. It felt so good—like someone was holding me close. I remember feeling the love of Jesus so strong, and it was wonderful! I didn’t want to stop talking to Him, but finally I did.

When I opened my eyes, there was my mother, with tears running down her face and the biggest smile you have ever seen. She grabbed me and hugged me tight, and we both cried and praised the Lord some more. Then, I went looking for my father—my pastor. He was in the prayer room, interceding for his baby girl. I remember telling him, *“Daddy, I got the Holy Ghost.”* I knew it was true, and he did too.

How was it possible for me to receive the Holy Ghost at this early age? Was I special or different from other children? NO! The difference was in my history.

- God blessed me with parents who understood the importance of sharing God’s Word always—just like Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says.

- Watching my parents and siblings act out the Word gave me an example to follow.
- Knowing God's laws and promises from infancy in our home increased my faith.
- Godly and loving discipline taught me the need for repentance.
- Hearing the Word of God in Sunday school and church added to the understanding required to claim God's promises for myself.
- Being given the opportunity to act on that faith and the conviction in my heart was another blessing.
- All of these things added together led to obedience to the gospel by repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

I know that everyone does not have the blessing of living in a godly home, but they should. This is the plan of God for producing godly seed. We must start here, and now to follow God's plan by training saints in what God's Word says. Then, give regular opportunities to those who listen and believe the gospel to receive it—children and adults alike.

How to Pray with a Child Seeking the Holy Ghost

- Praying with a child seeking the Holy Ghost begins with an attitude. I must first understand that each child is important in God's kingdom. He is an eternal soul that needs my help. I remember that God hears every prayer and has promised the Holy Ghost to children too. (Acts 2:39).
- Start by asking the child what he is praying for. Sometimes he comes seeking God in repentance. Other times he may be hurting or afraid of something or someone and come to God for help.
- If he is not seeking for the Holy Ghost, do not make him go away. Pray with him for healing or whatever problem he mentioned. Then, try to lead him toward a desire for God's Spirit in his life to help him overcome every difficulty.
- Be sure he understands what repentance means, then lead him to tell God about it. Children are quick to repent of their sins.
- Make sure that he understands what the Holy Ghost is—God living in his heart and helping him every day to do right.
- Encourage him to praise God for the promised gift of the Holy Ghost. God has already bought that gift, now it is time to receive it.
- A child can copy what they hear very well, so be sure they are praising God. "Hallelujah" and "Thank You, Jesus" are good praise words. (Hallelujah is the same in every language, and actually means "Praise the Lord.")
- Encourage the child to think about who he is talking to. Get a picture in mind of Jesus as a real person.

- Look for signs that the Holy Ghost is taking control: tears, laughter, and stammering lips are some obvious ones.
- Do not be afraid for the child to show his excitement.
- Allow the Spirit to take control of their speaking. When the Holy Ghost controls what the child says, it is a sign that He is taking control of the whole life.
- Remember there is no set position for a child to be in when he receives the Holy Ghost. Those on the Day of Pentecost were sitting (Acts 2:1-4). In Acts 4:31-32 the place where they were assembled was shaken. Allow God to move in His own way. He will not cause bodily injury to anyone when His Spirit moves.

If we teach children God's Word and ways, they will quickly believe and receive. Many children have never been taught their need for the Holy Ghost, or what it is. They do not know that God has promised them the same help to live for Him that He gives big people. They do not know how special they are in His kingdom, and they are afraid because of this lack of understanding.

When we share God's Word and love with children—both at home and at church—they will listen and follow God's voice at an early age. When we give them opportunities to seek God, He will fill them with His Spirit and use them in His kingdom.

I was seven years old when God filled me with His Spirit, and as the old song says, "I was there when it happened, and I guess I ought to know!"

Leadership PRAYING

James Poitras

*“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple
at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.”
(Acts 3:1)*

Leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less. As Christian leaders we are in the business of influencing men toward God. We influence men to come to salvation, live righteously and in obedience to the Word of God. These things cannot be done by force. We can best accomplish this through persuasion and setting an example. Paul said, **“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...”** (2 Corinthians 5:11).

Paul also reveals that our battle is not with people (under our leadership.) It is a spiritual battle. We do not have difficulty with people but with their actions. Our problem is with Satan’s influence in their lives. As leaders we must be careful never to attack a person but deal with the behavior. **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”** (Ephesians 6:12)

One way that we can increase our influence with those we are leading is to be involved in **“Leadership Praying.”** We often think in terms of members (followers) praying for the pastor (leader) but little is said about pastor (leader) praying for the members (followers).

Additionally, prayer plays an important role in evangelism. One man has said, **“Talk with God about men before you talk to men about God.”**

A limited prayer and fasting base in the local church will limit power in the church. **“As prayer goes so the church goes.”**

The Book of Acts began with leaders gathered together in the Upper Room in an extended prayer meeting. The Holy Spirit was poured out. Souls were won through the anointed preaching of the Word of God. The Church was established. Prayer remained a priority in the Early Church among leaders and members alike. Leadership always led the way in prayer.

Leadership Priorities

Leaders reemphasized their priorities in Acts 6. Prayer was placed first among **Ministerial Priorities**. Men of God stated their main concerns in the ministry as:

- ❖ Give ourselves continually to prayer.
- ❖ Give ourselves to the ministry of the Word.

What kind of prayers do you think that these leaders continually prayed for? Was it just selfish prayers asking for personal petitions?

God is Looking For A Praying Man

“ And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor...” (Isaiah 59:16) **Here God looked at all of Israel’s sins and recognized that there was not an intercessor that would intercede for Israel to turn away from their sins. He looks for intercessors that are willing to “...stand in the gap...” (Ezekiel 22:30) for a lost world.**

Leaders That Pray

1. Abraham Intercedes

“Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing--to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.”

(Genesis 18:20-25, 33 NIV)

2. Nehemiah, A Leader That Prays

“When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said: "O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you.”

(Nehemiah 1:4-7 NIV)

Nehemiah fasted for several days but prayed for several months. From this God gave him a vision of how he could minister to the people.

3. Paul Prays For His People

“I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,” (Philemon 4)

“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;” (1 Thessalonians 1:2)

“Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;” (Ephesians 1:16)

4. Jesus Prays For His Followers

“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:31-32)

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

When Leaders Pray

In the Book of Exodus alone there are more than fifty prayer conversations between God and Moses. His famous prayer is recorded in Exodus 32:31-34:

“And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, *lead the people* unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.”

God had already decided to kill His people and start again with Moses. Because the leader interceded for the people, God changed His mind. Prayerful leaders have influence with God.

Stuart Lassetter in **Manna from Moses** says, “Powerful forces are unleashed when a leader travails in prayer before God. The leader has access to God and, like any other child of God, can come boldly into the throne room of God’s presence. When a leader will be burdened for the needs of the people, God will listen to his unselfish, intercessory prayer. Tremendous benefits and blessings to the people can be directly attributed to a leader’s prayer.”

How Do You Measure Up?

Vesta Mangun, in her lesson, **Leadership in Prayer--Indispensable Example** tells us that you can:

- Measure your love for your people by your prayer life.
- Measure your concern for your people by your prayer life.
- Measure your vision for your people by your prayer life.
- Measure your leadership of your people by your prayer life.

How can we increase our level of influence?

John Maxwell in **The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day** informs us that leadership impact rises as influence increases. Most leaders are anxious to increase their leadership impact. They realize that when there is little influence only little is accomplished. On the other hand, with much influence, much is accomplished. How can we increase our level of influence? How can we make maximum impact and secure much is accomplished? One important way for this to be achieved is through leadership involvement in **prayer and fasting**. (This is not to suggest that a leader does not need to develop leadership skills.) Following are some ways to more efficiently organize your prayer life (and amplify your level of influence.)

To remember the various needs of your people compile a "**Prayer List**." This list will become your "**Prayer Planner**." It will help you be organized in your prayer life.

Maintain a personal "**Prayer Partner**." If married, you should have your wife as a prayer partner. You can also have another person (of the same sex) that you pray with on a regular basis. It is always good to be around people who motivate you to have a deeper walk with the Lord. Such people are "**Growth Partners**" (they help us grow.)

Have a regular "**Prayer Time**." Give God the best time of your day. If you are more alert in the morning, pray in the morning.

Have a quiet "**Prayer Place**." This needs to be a place where you can communicate with heaven without earthly disturbances. "Now **Peter and John** went up together into the **temple** at the **hour of prayer**, being the **ninth hour**." (Acts 3:1)

Three things to notice about this Scripture.

- Prayer Partners** (Peter and John)
- Prayer Place** (Temple)
- Prayer Time** (Hour of prayer, ninth hour)

You may want to have a "**Prayer Team**." This would consist of a group of prayer warriors.

Research and pray for unreached areas. This could be countries, cities, towns, and communities that are yet to be reached. Be involved in **“Prayer Evangelism.”** Prayer should precede evangelism.

Jesus often asked, **“What do you need?”** Find out what prayer needs your people have. Take note of the needs and pray for each one (until something happens). Focus in on the **specific prayer requests** of your people. When you pray specifically God answers specifically.

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Prayer is a great way to express your care.

When you see someone that you prayed for mention, **“I prayed for you (today)?”** When possible you might want to mention the need that you prayed for. It would also be encouraging to send an occasional note to someone you’ve been praying for. Let them know that you care and that you have talked to the Father on their behalf. Establish in the hearts and minds of your members (followers) that you understand and care about their needs.

Prayer Agenda: When you get together for National, Regional, or Local Board Meetings make sure prayer is a major part of the Board Agenda. Prayer shows who you are depending on. When you pray you are showing that you are depending on God. To discuss and decide things (concerning the kingdom) without prayer shows you are depending on your own abilities. Make prayer a priority!

Rev. H. E. Scism has said, **“The POWERHOUSE for the Church is not the BOARD-ROOM but the PRAYER ROOM.”**

Have a regular prayer meeting with your leadership team.

When a member verbally mentions a prayer need take advantage of the present and pray for them immediately. You are a minister. Take advantage of each opportunity to minister.

Warren Wiersbe in On Being a Servant of God believes ministry takes place when, **“divine resources meet human needs through loving channels to the glory of God.”** Ministry takes place when needs are met by God, through you and your prayers.

Leaders should also be committed to fasting. Fasting is a regular, normal activity of leaders. Each of the three extended fasts (of forty days) recorded in the Bible were completed by leaders (Jesus and twice by Moses.) Paul indicated that he was involved in **“fastings often” (2 Corinthians 11:27).**

The Leader That Lasts
The Leader that Fasts
The Leader That Stays
The Leader That Prays

Leadership Prayerlessness is Sin

The Prophet Samuel considered it to be a sin not to pray for the people that he was leading.

“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:” (1 Samuel 12:23)

Dan Southerland in *Transitioning (Leading Your Church Through Change)* talks about the Elijah Sickness that some leaders have. Elijah saw God do some tremendous miracles. “But Elijah got so busy working for God that he did not make time to seek God. Soon the same leader who had been used in such big ways...” was running from a wicked woman. “The problem with not spending time in prayer is simply this: those who talk with God ...hear God best. And those who do not talk with God...do not hear Him at all. The number one hindrance to answered prayer for...leaders today is prayerlessness. We just don’t pray.”

***“The devil is in constant conspiracy against a preacher who really prays,
for it has been said that what a minister is in his prayer closet
is what he is, no more, no less.”***

(Vance Havner)

Prayer Guide:

(From the World Network of Prayer)

HOW TO PRAY FOR LEADERSHIP

The most underutilized source of spiritual power in our churches today is the intercession for Christian leaders.

In his book, *The Prayer Shield*, C. Peter Wagner states that, "The most underutilized source of spiritual power in our churches today is the intercession for Christian leaders." He further states, "No question exists in the minds of those who have experienced it; committed, faithful intercession brings increased spiritual power to Christian ministries."

John Wesley is frequently quoted as saying, "God will do nothing on earth except in answer to believing prayer." You and I help to determine what happens to our leadership-blessing or cursing-whether God's goodness is released in their ministries or whether the power of sin and Satan is permitted to influence them!

The apostle Paul knew the importance of praying for leaders. He requested prayer five different times in his epistles.

Brethren, pray for us (I Thessalonians 5:25, NKJV). Paul told the Thessalonians that he was praying for them and affirming their gifts of faith, hope, and love (I Thessalonians 1:2-3). At the end he asked them to pray for him, probably expecting them to pray for his faith, hope, and love to be increased.

Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me (Romans

15:30, NKJV). This is a more specific request for personal intercession. He asked them to pray that his trip to Jerusalem would be successful and that he would be protected from enemies waiting for him there.

You also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many" (II Corinthians 1:11, NKJV). In the preceding verse of Scripture Paul spoke of being delivered from death. As Paul asked the Corinthian believers for prayer; he knew intercession could be a matter of life and death.

For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:19, NKJV). Paul depended on the prayers of others for justice to be done and for him to be released from prison.

I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you" (Philemon 22, NKJV). This reference could easily be overlooked, but Paul again wrote from prison and wanted to visit his friend Philemon. He had faith that God would answer Philemon's prayers to that effect, and in the effectiveness of their ministries. A 1990 survey says, "There exists a tremendous reservoir of untapped prayer power in every church which can be affirmed, trained, and deployed to see the lost won, the apathetic revived, the backslider restored, and the committed made more effective."

Our leaders are chosen by God to move His kingdom forward. Faithful, specific prayer

and intercession will release them to be all God wants them to be. To the degree the intercessors pray, the leaders gain protection against the fiery darts of the wicked one, over and above the whole armor of God they are responsible for using. Prayer is one of the most important elements of a successful ministry today!

Prayer for leadership is not an option, but rather a necessity!

Christian leaders need a greater concentration of prayer and intercession because:

They have more responsibility and accountability.

They are more subjected to temptation.

They are more targeted in spiritual warfare.

They have more visibility and are subject to gossip and criticism.

Prayer and intercession for leadership are important to release God's plan for the church to reach its potential. Praying for leadership will cause a positive change in their effectiveness

Seven Ways to Pray for Our Leadership

In her book *The Mighty Warrior*, Beth Alves, president of Intercessors International, suggests seven ways to pray for our leadership:

Day 1—Favor with God

- Pray for the leaders to walk in the Spirit, pleasing to the Lord.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give personal direction, teaching, vision.
- Pray for ever-increasing knowledge of God.
- Pray for leaders' work to be the best.
- Pray for leaders to have strength to withstand fiery tests.
- Pray for leaders to be sensitive to God's voice, to have spiritual ears and hearts.

- Pray for leaders to speak the Word with boldness wherever they go.

Day 2—Favor with Man

- Pray that people will be sensitive to financial needs of spiritual leaders and support them.
- Pray that there will be no gossip, deceit, or unbelief
- Pray that God will send His ministering angels to guard the leaders.
- Pray that all leaders will be in unity and attuned to the Holy Spirit for direction, that they will be supportive of one another.
- Pray for God to give leaders a spirit of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, strength, and obedient and reverent fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2).
- Pray that the leaders will witness effectively and boldly to the lost.
- Pray for God to prepare the hearts of those with whom the leaders share the gospel.

Day 3—Pure Vision

- Pray for God to clarify His vision for ministry to the leaders.
- Pray for helpers in carrying out the vision.
- Pray for keen discernment between God's wisdom and human wisdom.
- Pray for pure motives, purged by God through the Word and their personal prayer time.
- Pray for discernment against impure motives.
- Pray for God to lead and direct their paths.

Day 4—Spirit, Soul, and Body

- Pray for divine health-physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually.

- Pray for all effects of tiredness and discouragement to be loosed from the leaders' minds and bodies.
- Pray for fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
- Pray for total submission to the Lord in every aspect of life.
- Pray for a spirit of unity, not competition; humility, not superiority; cooperation, not defensiveness.
- Pray for leaders to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace.
- Pray for leaders to feed daily on the Word of God and maintain a faithful prayer life.

Day 5—Warfare and Protection

- Pray that God would send angels to guard our leaders, their families, and property, to put a hedge of protection around all that is going in, coming out, the air above, and the ground below.
- Pray that the angels would go before them and do battle in their behalf.
- Pray that God foils all attacks and traps of the enemy.
- Pray against all occult activity—curses witchcraft divination, sorcery.

Day 6—Priorities

- Pray that the Lord will cause the leaders to abound in prosperity—body, soul, and spirit.
- Thank God for providing all the needs—personal, family, ministry.
- Pray for leaders to learn to be wise stewards of time, to become disciplined.
- Pray for leaders' relationship with God to always remain the top priority.

Day 7—Family

- Pray for unity and understanding among the family members.
- Pray that there would be no resentment when sacrifice is required.
- Pray for God to meet the emotional needs.
- Pray that leaders will spend quality time with their families—both leisure time and spiritual time.
- Pray for the family to discern each other's needs—emotional, physical, material, and spiritual.
- Pray for them to overcome pressures and stress.
- Pray that the children will be free from expectations put on them that are not in line with God's will.

Lesson 15

Prayerless Leaders = Prayerless Churches

(taken from "My House Shall be Called a House of Prayer",
compiled and edited by Jonathan L. Graf and Lani C. Hinkle)

There is one large church that has Tuesday night prayer meeting every week. There is more than 2,000 people who are in attendance for this special time. But if you had the opportunity to attend this church at this special time, you would notice that the first three rows across the church are roped off. These rows are reserved for the leaders of the church. They are expected to be there—down front—and visible to the rest of the congregation. That was their place as leaders of prayer for the church. This pastor understands that godly leaders need to stop out by faith in the direction that God lays out before them, and the people of God will follow—especially in the area of prayer. The local church will not become a House of Prayer until *its leaders become people of prayer*. When prayer has its proper place in the life of the church leaders, it will move to a place of importance to the rest of the church.

Three Steps to Get Your Leaders Praying

- 1) Teaching—Believe it or not, the concept of a prayer ministry is new to many leaders. They assume that Christians pray and that there will always be some degree of prayer within the church. But in order for leaders to understand the biblical view of the church as a house of prayer, teaching is necessary. This instruction needs to be on two levels.

First of all, among the church leadership itself, there should be regular times of studying the biblical concepts of a praying church. Then, on a broader level, the entire congregation needs to be exposed to prayer lessons.

- 2) Practice—One of the most important steps for prayer ministry leadership is "just do it." Set a time that works for your leaders and get together regularly for prayer. If possible, include "regularly attends leadership prayer meetings" in the job description of your leadership positions. When leaders pray together, it allows them to call the rest of the church to prayer with integrity, it unifies them in a vision for the church, and it gives them confidence to lead others in prayer.

What should church leaders pray for when they come together?

- A. A spirit of prayer.** One of the most powerful things that leaders can ask God is to pour out a spirit of prayer upon their congregation. This request assures that they are not looking at prayer as just a program of the church, but that they are completely dependent upon the Lord to transform His people. It never works to “guilt” or shame people into praying; but God can pour out a burden for prayer upon them. Ask Him to do it!
 - B. Church members.** When leaders commit to pray for the church on a regular basis, it can be a wonderful spiritual adventure. Gather names, divide them among your leaders, and begin to cover your congregation in prayer. It is an exciting way to demonstrate love and leadership.
 - C. Each other.** Do not forget to pray for each other. Ministering to one another in prayer is a great way to built unity as a leadership team.
- 3) Vision—In most churches, at least if they are completely honest, becoming a house of prayer is not a typical vision. If your church is going to become a house of prayer, a clear vision must be developed and communicated.

In the early church, virtually every church meeting was a prayer meeting. Leaders in Jerusalem church understood that their God-given priorities were “prayer and the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4). Godly leaders came together in prayer to see the face of God, to spend time with Him in prayer, and to allow the One who is Head of the body take leadership over His body. As this begins to happen within leadership structures of the local church today, congregations will begin to follow. Prayer will not be simply an add-on program in an already busy church—it will be the very center of its life.

The prayer movement that we see happening in the world today is not the latest fad that will be replaced when some other new movement comes along. But rather, it is a restoration of a lifestyle that the Lord has always expected us to live. Godly, praying leaders are the key. It’s time for them to step out in prayer and lead their congregations back to the power of God.

Lesson 16

History's Greatest PRAYER Meeting

James Poitras

"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Acts 1:14

"And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen." Luke 24:53

The opening two chapters of Acts find the disciples in the "**Prayer Room**" waiting for the **PROMISE**. When we enter our "Prayer Place" we are going there to wait for an **ANSWER**. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" 2 Corinthians 1:20. Also read Matthew 7:7-8.

Did you ever notice how Jesus prayed? (Matthew 14:23) We see about seventeen instances of Jesus praying in the Gospels. Jesus generally made a distance between himself and His every day distractions. It is so important for us to have a designated **Prayer Place** where we can talk to God. Jesus called this our prayer **closet** (Matthew 6:5-7).

Many times we call an all night prayer meeting but this was more than just a one-night stand. They continued in prayer for ten days. Most of us would have a difficult time in having ten days to set aside for prayer. Some find it hard to pray for ten minutes or one hour.

We say, "**I am too busy to pray.**" As one individual said, "**If you are too busy to pray, then you are simply too busy.**"

The **Agenda** for the Prayer Meeting was set by the Lord. He said, "**And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high**" Luke 24:49.

As we come to the Lord in prayer we should also have an agenda from the Lord or a prayer list of what we are praying for. Fill out a list of things to do in your prayer room. Plan your schedule for the day in your prayer room. List down everything that is going to happen during the day and go down the list one by one and submit it to God and His will.

As they continued in the “**Prayer Place**” they prayed, and worshipped.
There is an unbeatable formula for drawing close to God. It is:

Praise and Worship + Prayer and Supplication = Drawing Near to God

Jesus said that the Church was called the “**House of Prayer.**” It is so fitting that His Church started in the midst of a prayer meeting.

When the disciples had come into the Upper Room to pray they had no idea how long that they would have to stay there praying. The only hint that Jesus had given them was that they “*shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence*” **Acts 1:5.**

They prayed, and they stayed until the promise came. This is persistent prayer: praying until you have received, without any doubt in your mind, an answer from God. Sometimes He assures you that He has answered your prayer, and sometimes He lets you know that the answer is on the way.
He usually has four answers to prayer requests:

- ⇒ **Yes**
- ⇒ **No**
- ⇒ **Wait**
- ⇒ **Stop**

I wonder if God would have responded to their prayers if they had stopped praying? Would He have poured out His Spirit?

They continued in one accord. Any reason for disunity had been put aside. Praying together is called **Corporate Prayer** and is more effective, at times, than **Solitary/Private Prayer.** Of course when we pray alone, God hears. However, there is something about two agreeing together that is powerful. “*...If any two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that ye shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven*” **Matthew 18:19.** This demonstrates for us that there is power in corporate prayer, especially when the people agree together on what they are praying. This is sometimes called, “**The Principle of Agreement.**” In one part of the church world the people say “**Let’s touch and agree!**”

Why is corporate, united praying so powerful? The secret is told in **Matthew 18:20,** “**FOR where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**” If two are better than one, one hundred and twenty must have been something else.

One of the advantages of corporate, unified prayer is called “**Synergy**” by the **World Network of Prayer.** This simply means that “**whenever there is cooperation, the result of the efforts expended will be greater than the sum of what each can do**

separately. As many a surprised farmer has discovered, one horse can pull six tons of weight, but two harnessed together can pull not twelve, but thirty-two tons! The Old Testament equation is one can chase a thousand, but two can put *ten thousand* to flight! If two agree on earth- all heaven is behind them!"

In prayer we get the attention of God and then God begins to reveal Himself by getting the attention of man. A man named **Hopkins** has said, "**Our prayer and God's mercy are like two buckets in a well; while one ascends the other descends.**"

In the Book of Acts

They prayed...

In a Group Acts 2:42

In Private Acts 10:9

They prayed for...

Outpouring of the Power Acts 1:13-15; Acts 2:1

Specifically for people Acts 9:40

Situations Acts 13:2

Effectiveness of the church Acts 14:23

For rulers and leadership Acts 28:8

With the importance of prayer so evident it is still surprising to note that the **prayer meeting** is one of the least attended meetings in the churches' weekly program. Mary the Mother of Jesus Christ was last seen in the Scripture at a **Prayer Meeting** (Acts 1:14). The explosion that rocked the world and set the church off at Pentecost was an answer to prayer at **History's Greatest Prayer Meeting**.

Shall we pray?

Article:

(From the World Network of Prayer)

What if She Had Not Been Faithful to Prayer Meeting?

Thetus Tenney

I know this title may seem a little long, maybe a little strange, but you don't understand how important it is to me. My salvation, my whole life as I have known it, probably depended on a simple saint that was faithfully committed to prayer meeting.

It was in the early '30's when walking was more common than driving. Port Arthur, Texas was the place. A young couple from central Texas had moved there to work in the oil refinery. They called a small apartment 'home', for themselves and their three young children.

Church attendance was not on their weekly agenda. In fact, it wasn't on their agenda at all. But a faithful prayer warrior changed that.

Every morning at a little before nine o'clock, a little lady passed in front of their little apartment with her Bible under her arm. To the young mother inside the little apartment it soon became a part of her morning routine to watch for the little lady who always passed her door a little before nine o'clock.

Where is she going every day? Why does she always have a Bible under her arm? Who is she? What is this about?

Then one morning, some would say as fate would have it, she stopped and knocked on the door. (From my vantage point, I know it wasn't fate, but unspoken faith from a fertile heart.) When the young mother stood face to face with the lady from the sidewalk, she received an invitation to an old-fashioned tent revival. Few words were spoken, but the simple invitation seemed to speak to the young mother all day from its resting place on the dresser. By five-thirty in the evening, the children were bathed and dressed for going out and supper was on the table. A little bewildered, the hardworking young man looked at his lovely 'dressed-up' wife, wondering.

"We are going to church tonight," she explained.

Willingly, he agreed.

It was a strange experience--the tent, the people, the praying, the preaching. But at the close of the service the young father said to his wife, "You go and pray. I'll stay with the children."

Kneeling at an altar, she was totally transformed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost!

Among those gathering around was the little lady from the sidewalk with the Bible under her arm.

"Where do you go every morning?"

"We have nine o'clock prayer meeting every day."

"Could we come?" asked the young couple.

"Well, we normally don't have prayer meeting on Saturday morning," the Pastor interjected, "but we will if you want to come."

Saturday morning, nine o'clock prayer meeting found the young couple joining the faithful saints. Prayer was made. Baptism was explained. Both agreed to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. Now, it was the young man's turn for transformation as he broke the waters of baptism, speaking in tongues, filled with the Holy Ghost.

The young couple was my mother and father, E. W. and Johnnie Ruth Caughron. These events transpired before my birth. Consequently, I was born into a Spirit-filled home. My parents dedicated ministry carried them in soul-winning revivals and building of churches from Texas to Alaska. Dozens and dozens of preachers were called and hundreds and hundreds of saints were impacted by their ministry.

What if the little lady on the sidewalk with the Bible under her arm had not been faithful to prayer meeting? I shudder at the thought—I probably wouldn't be writing this now.

PRAYING Like Jabez

Lindas Poitras

*“And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren:
and his mother called his name Jabez, saying,
because I bare him with sorrow.
And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying,
Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast,
and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil,
that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.”*
(1 Chronicles 4: 9 - 10)

INTRODUCTION:

Who in the world is Jabez? He was from the family of Judah (one of Jacob’s sons) but did you ever read a story about him in the Bible? Our key verses are the only time this man is ever mentioned in God’s Word. He never became a king, and he was never an apostle Paul, but we see something very important in the few words the Bible has to say about this man.

Jabez is first introduced to us as someone who is “more honourable” than his brethren. According to Webster’s dictionary, this word means, “showing great respect”. The Bible doesn’t tell us *how* Jabez was more honourable, just that he *was*. Maybe he was more respectful to his parents, his elders, or those in authority. We don’t know for sure, but God’s Word (both Old & New Testaments) speaks often about the importance of this type of honour.

A Bad Beginning:

The worst thing about Jabez was his name. Do you know anyone by his name? It was not a common name, because his mother gave it to him for a special purpose. She was not trying to honour her son, but was reminding herself, him, and the rest of the world that this baby had been born in sorrow. We don’t know what the sorrow was, but all of his life, Jabez had to carry this bad introduction around.

What did he do about it? Did he cry and moan and complain? We already learned (before we found out what his name meant) that he was honourable. The Bible says that he “*called on the God of Israel*” (1 Chronicles 4:10). Even though his very name was bad (made people think of all the sorrow he caused), Jabez understood where to

go for help. Somehow, he knew that he could overcome the circumstances of his bad name by calling on his God.

We know that too, but many times we don't do it. We try to figure things out for ourselves. We work and plan, (sometimes even telling lies) to accomplish what we believe is good for us. But what *should* we do?

*“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth;
and to him that knocketh it shall be opened”*

(Matthew 7:7-8).

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive”

(Matthew 21:22).

A Good Prayer:

Even when we ask and seek and knock we don't always get the answers we want from God. Why not? The Bible gives us several good reasons:

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts”

(James 4:1-3).

What do these verses tell us about not getting what we pray for?

- ❖ We do not have because we do not ask.
- ❖ We ask and do not receive because we ask amiss (with secret sin or against God's will).
- ❖ We ask for things for our own selfish gain or pleasure.

How do we know that Jabez did not pray like this? Because the Bible says, *“And God granted him that which he requested” (1 Chronicles 4:10b)*. This is amazing! God gave Jabez everything he asked for. Let's find out why.

Verse 10 divides his prayer like this:

- ❖ Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed!
- ❖ Oh, that You would enlarge my territory!
- ❖ Oh, that Your hand would be with me!
- ❖ Oh, that You would keep me from evil that it may not grieve me!

What can we learn from each of these requests?

“Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed!”

For many of us, the word “bless” means material things. We think of cars, more money, a nice house, or other *things*. This was not Jabez's definition at all. Jabez did not ask God for anything that he could get for himself. He asked for God to bless him

- in whatever way God wanted to. He left the time, place, amount, and blessing itself entirely up to God. What made this kind of praying different from the way we usually pray? The Jabez "blessing" focused on the desire to have nothing more and nothing less than what GOD wanted.

When we seek God's blessing like this, we become a part of His will and power and purpose for us. All our needs are secondary to what we should want - to become totally a part of what God is trying to do in us, through us, and around us for His glory.

Miracles follow this type of blessing, because God is not hindered by our small idea of what is good in our lives. We are moving in the same direction and desiring exactly what God desires.

How would you like to find out that God had twenty-seven special blessings for you today, but you got only one? What could be the reason? James 4:2 says we don't have because we don't ask. Even though there is no limit to God's goodness, if we don't ask Him for blessings, we don't get all that He longs to give us.

Has God already given you many blessings? Do you think He has used yours all up? Do you believe that since God has blessed you so much, you shouldn't expect Him to send any more good things your way? Maybe He should send some trouble just to even things out, right? WRONG!

How did God describe Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai? In Exodus 33:18 God said He was *"the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth"* (Exodus 34:6). God's blessings are limited only by the way we think, pray and live, not by His resources, power, or willingness to give. God's very nature is to bless. So why not pray like Jabez?

The second part of Jabez's prayer was this:

"Oh, that You would enlarge my territory!"

Now we are asking God to enlarge our life experiences so we can make a greater impact for Him. Jabez was looking for more than land. He wanted more influence, responsibility, and opportunity so that he could make a mark for his God.

This word "territory" can be translated "coast" or "borders". For Jabez and his fellow Israelites, it spoke of a place of one's own with lots of growing room. It hadn't been too many years since Joshua had led them to conquer Canaan, and divide it among the tribes. Jabez was asking God to take everything that was under his care, and make it bigger.

When we are doing a work for God (wherever and whatever that is) His will for us is to increase the area of our influence and responsibility for Him. This means that our opportunities and impact will grow, and we will touch more lives for His kingdom.

The beauty of this part of Jabez's prayer is that as our opportunities grow, our abilities and resources grow supernaturally. God will show His approval by His intervention and blessing. He wants to accomplish great things through us, and He will empower us for each and every God-given opportunity.

Whatever our gifts, education, or job, we are all called to do God's work on earth. We say we want God to work *through* us, but we really mean *with us*. But, if God is the one doing the work, and we are just a vessel, there is NO LIMIT to what can be accomplished. The limitations come when we use our finite minds to decide how much we are capable of doing. There is a familiar scripture that we use a lot: ". . . *Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts*" (Zechariah 4:6). If we really believe that His spirit does the work, our lives will be transformed.

God specializes in working through *ordinary* people who believe in a *supernatural* God to do His work *through* them.

My willingness and weakness + God's will and supernatural power = My growing territory.

When we begin asking sincerely for more influence and responsibility so we can honour God, He will bring opportunities and people to us. He will never send us more than we can handle, and He will always be with us, giving us the power we need to get the job done right - for His glory.

*"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them:
because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world"*
(I John 4:4).

When we pray for larger borders, we are asking for a miracle. A miracle is when God intervenes to cause something to happen that could never happen without His help. That is what Jabez had to have to overcome his name and change his circumstances. When we get right inside of God's plan to reach the world with His truth, we can plead with Him, "*Lord, use me - give me more ministry for You!*" - and we will see the signs and wonders that Jesus promised would follow those that believed and obeyed (Mark 16:17-18).

Now we have gone into territory that is more than we can handle on our own. But that is the whole idea. We are not praying for something that we can take care of - this is

God's business. This feeling is called "dependence", and it means that we are *walking with Jesus*. No one else can help us, and we don't even ask them. We are learning to *live by faith* and after all, isn't that how we are supposed to be living? When we are in this place, we are forced to cry out with Jabez's third desperate plea:

"Oh, that Your hand would be with me!"

This prayer releases God's power to do His will and bring Him glory by accomplishing impossible things. When we become dependant on the strong hand of God, He becomes great *through us*. Everyone will know that God did it because it is not possible for mere man to do. God's power in us, moving through us to help us is what makes dependence become an unforgettable experience of completeness. Paul said it best:

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"

(2 Corinthians 3:5-6).

In the Bible, the term "the hand of the Lord" is talking about the power and presence of God that is working through His people. In Acts 11:21, we read: *"And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."*

The early church was continually seeking "the hand of the Lord" and allowing God to work through them. Not only was it necessary for the task they had before them, but it was readily available.

We have moved from more blessing to more territory to a need for supernatural power. Jesus may have given his followers a big job to do (*"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" - Mark 16:15*) but He also promised to be with them - if they would only ask, believe, and let Him work *through* them. God is watching and waiting for His children to ask for supernatural power to accomplish their best for Him. For God's children, dependence is just another word for power.

"(For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. . .)"

2 Chronicles 16:9.

The final portion of Jabez's prayer is very important also:

"Oh, that You would keep me from evil, that it might not grieve me!"

This request is so simple that most of us miss it. It is also a part of a prayer that most of us memorized when we were small children: *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;"* (Matthew 6:13).

What exactly does this mean? It is what Jabez prayed, many years before the Lord taught his followers how to pray. Instead of asking God to help us when we fall into temptation, Jesus was telling us (and somehow Jabez already had that lesson learned) to pray that we would not even be around evil. We have been programmed to believe that we will sin every day, so we must pray for help in our temptations. But the Lord's Prayer, and (Jabez's too) knew better.

It's like getting sick all the time. There are simple things we can do to prevent sickness instead of waiting until we are in a serious condition and then having to be treated. Why not just stay away from the things that cause the sickness to begin with?

Jabez understood what evil and sin did to him. He was asking God to keep him from the evil things that were all around him, and then he wouldn't have to go through the pain and heartache that sin brings. Sin affects not only our own lives, but so many others around us.

We just asked God for supernatural power to work through us, in spite of our weaknesses, and now we are asking for supernatural help to keep us away from Satan's strategy to defeat us.

As we grow in blessings, influence, and supernatural power from God, the devil is bound to fight back. He doesn't like this type of Christian living. And the most vulnerable times are when we have just seen great spiritual success. Many times, this comes through a wrong attitude - feeling like I have done great things for God.

We spend a lot of time talking and praying about spiritual warfare. But how much time do we spend simply asking God to keep us from evil? If we began to pray like Jabez, asking to be kept from temptation (evil), how often would we sin?

Even Jesus faced temptation, and had to battle the devil, but His Word does not speak of His earthly ministry as a constant spiritual warfare. Except when in direct confrontation with a demon we don't read of Jesus engaging in this type of battle. Since He taught His followers to pray that they would be kept away from evil, He must have prayed that way Himself.

When we are claiming new territory for God, we can expect to face spiritual attack. But we can face those battles with "the weapons of our warfare" that Paul talked about in 2 Corinthians 10:4. We need to stay out of the way of temptation whenever possible, but we do not need to fear when we meet the enemy on his turf. God's power and presence will never leave us, because He has already won the battle through His death on the cross (Colossians 2:13-15).

What are we waiting for? Let's pray like Jabez, and let God grant our every request.

(This lesson based on The Prayer of Jabez by Bruce Wilkinson.)

Lesson 18

Building a PRAYER Memorial

James Poitras

*“And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said,
What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a
memorial before God.”*

(Acts 10:4)

You may recall the words of the Apostle Paul, *“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.”* (Philippians 3:1)

There are certain things that are repeated for your protection. They are worth repeating. It is very important that you learn these lessons. They will mean a great deal in your Christian walk. Even though the matter of prayer has been discussed in the past we have not looked at **“building a prayer memorial.”**

Our lesson begins with a centurion named Cornelius. The centurions were the backbone of the Roman army. They held the office that would be like **“Captain”** in the army today. They had control over at least 100 men and reached their rank by proving to be strong, dependable, and responsible. Cornelius’ greatest strength was in his reliance on God. More than just being a good soldier, he was a devout man, who loved God, gave money, and prayed to God always. Let us not miss that point. Cornelius prayed to God constantly.

It is attention-grabbing that God spoke to both Cornelius and Peter at their prayer times. God speaks to us when we pray!

Pray Until Something Happens

“Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). (It is important that we continue to pray until the Lord gives us an answer. Sometimes He will say, **“Yes”**, sometimes **“No”**, and sometimes, **“Wait.”**)

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:4)
(Continuous prayer was a minister’s priority in the Early Church.)

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” (Acts 1:14) (Continuous prayer preceded Pentecost. They prayed until Pentecost happened.)

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42) (After Pentecost the Early Church continued in prayers.)

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” (Acts 12:5) (Continuous prayer resulted in Peter being released from prison.)

What Are Memorials?

A memorial is a way of observing the memory of a person, thing, or event. It is a reminder of something that has happened. In the Bible a memorial is **“an object or activity intended to help God’s people identify with God’s historic acts or words. Throughout the Old Testament and New Testament, ceremonies, words, acts, and physical objects were used to commemorate various ways in which the Lord and His people interacted.”** (The Revell Bible Dictionary) Memorials helped God’s people see that God acted both for their fathers and them as well.

Before we look at a small number of memorials mentioned in the Bible let’s look closer to home. What type of memorials do you have in your city or country? What are the memorials called? What are they intended to get you to remember?

Joshua’s Memorial

The pile of stones left in the bottom of the Jordan River was a memorial of the Israelites crossing into the Promised Land (Joshua 4:5-7).

Passover Memorial

This was a memorial of God sparing the firstborn of Israel in Egypt. It was intended to remind God’s people of how He delivered them out of captivity and oppression (Exodus 12:12-14).

Mary’s Memorial

The act of Mary anointing the feet of Jesus was to be spoken as a memorial of her (Mark 14: 9).

The Lord’s Supper

Communion is another memorial that we observe. Jesus said, **“Do this in remembrance of me”** (Luke 22:19). Read 1 Corinthians 11: 24-26 and see what Paul told the Corinthians.

Back to Cornelius' Memorial

In Cornelius' case his prayers were the memorial and were being remembered by God. Our prayers ascend to the Lord. He takes note of each appeal. Although God may not answer all of our prayers right away it seems like He sets them aside for a proper time of fulfillment.

Throughout Scripture it is not exposed how God keeps record of all our prayers. However, He does, and He remembers. God will answer. He always does!

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest no." (Jeremiah 33:3).

In John's Revelation there is repeated mention of the prayers of the saints. In this case it appears that the prayers are stored in golden containers. These prayers come up before God like incense.

" And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (Revelation 5:8).

"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (Revelation 8:4).

In the Jewish temple Priests would enter into the Holy Place to burn incense and offer prayers of intercession for the nation. This duty was given to the priest by lottery and he could be chosen only once in his lifetime. (Reference: "The Son" by E. L. Towns) In the Tabernacle the incense was a type of prayers and praises to God.

Our Prayer

"LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense..." (Psalms 141:1-2).

His Promise

"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Hebrews 6:10).

Lesson 19

God Listens To The Demands of the Desperate

James Poitras

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”

Acts 12:5

The believers in the New Testament handled desperate situations and persecutions with very strong, unceasing prayer. In the Scripture quoted in this lesson, it looked as if Peter had found himself in an impossible situation. James had already been killed and Peter was put into the hands of sixteen prison guards. However, our God majors in working through impossible situations in the lives of His people. “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Luke 18:27). The missing link between our questions and God’s answers is **persistent prayer**.

“...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

James 5:16

As the people persistently prayed over Peter’s situation their prayer was soon to be answered (Acts 12:6-7).

Jesus had proclaimed that, “*My house shall be called a house of prayer*” (Matthew 21:13). When the church was established in the Book of Acts they continued daily in prayer.

It has been said, “**The right decisions repeatedly done will eventually achieve compound success.**” This is true in the area of prayer because as we continue to ask, seek, and knock the answer comes to us.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

Matthew 7:7

Corporate, Group Prayer

In the Book of Acts

Acts 1:14

Acts 2:42

Acts 4:24-31

Acts 12:5,12

Acts 13:2

An old story is told for children concerning a turtle and a rabbit. The rabbit was very fast on his legs but the old turtle could not run and was very slow. All he could do was crawl. However, the turtle could persevere, was disciplined, and very determined. They both were put into a race. When the race began the rabbit leaped from the starting place, and zoomed past his competitor. He soon left the turtle far behind and decided to stop and rest for a while. He would then continue to run for a while and then rest for a while. The turtle just kept crawling along until he passed the rabbit sleeping near the finish line and eventually won the race. When we pray persistently we can also expect God to help us reach the finish line with His answer. Persistent, daily prayer is more beneficial than those who just choose to pray when they have an emergency need.

In the days of the Early Church prayer was so important that the Apostles decided to leave waiting on tables. They said, *"We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word"* (Acts 6:4).

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

Matthew 11:12

It is interesting that the NIV translation of this verse says, **"was forcefully advancing and forceful men lay hold of it."** Men and women are pressing their way into the kingdom of heaven (Luke 16:16)

Rev. J. P. Hughes, an International Bible Instructor cited four reasons why the desperate get their prayers answered.

1. **The desperate do not care what others say.** When you look at the lady with the issue of blood (Matthew 9:20) and Blind Bartimes (Mark 10:46) you find that they were desperate and it did not matter to them who knew it.
2. **The desperate do not care that what they are going to do has never been done before.** We are creatures of habit but people who are desperate will try anything, even though it has not been done that particular way before. One man said, **"What is popular is not always right, and what is right is not always popular."** Esther did not let the fact that she had been uncalled before the King stop her from interceding for her people (Esther 4:14; 16; 5:1-3).
3. **The desperate don't care how impossible the request is to be fulfilled. They pray and believe anyway!!** There was a time that a man prayed, the world stopped, and the sun stood still (Joshua 10:12-13).
4. **The desperate do not care if they must endure physical pain or hardship to get what they want.** Can you picture the lady with the issue of blood struggling to get through the crowd? What about Jacob wrestling with the angel for a blessing? (Genesis 32:24-28).

"A person who MAKES time to pray will find a God who TAKES time to answer."

A story is told about a missionary named Dan Crawford who was returning to his village mission in Africa after his furlough. Deep in the jungle he came across a flooded river that made it impossible to pass over. No boats were available to cross over the river; and it was too dangerous to swim. They decided to camp there and prayed that the Lord would show them a way to get across. During the night a huge tree fell into the water and in the morning he saw that his prayer had been answered. The tree was their bridge to the other side. Your prayers serve as the bridge between your questions (needs) and God's answers.

The words of a hymn seem so appropriate for this lesson.

***"Got any rivers that seem to be uncrossable?
Got any mountains you cannot tunnel through?
God specializes in things that are impossible.
And He will do what no other friend can do."***

*"Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I cry aloud:
and he shall hear my voice."
Psalm 55:17*

Let Us PRAY Boldly

Rosemary Louw

I. WE ARE COMING TO A KING—LARGE PETITIONS LET US BRING!

Some kings expect subjects to approach on their knees and fall on their faces. One does not leave the throne room until the king or queen has left. And, he backs out of the room as he leaves. Finding way through the web of procedure can be difficult at times.

In Namibia, you do not just walk up to the headman to make a request. You drive up to the kraal, park under a tree, and wait. Someone will see you and tell him. If he is in the mood to see you, he will send someone to invite you in. If he is not in the mood, it is better for everyone concerned that you wait until he is.

Hebrews gives insight on approaching the King of kings in prayer. Hebrews 4:13-16 says, *“Seeing we have a great high priest who is passed unto the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we, yet without sin. Therefore, let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain grace and help in the time of need.”*

II. JESUS—THE BASIS OF OUR BOLDNESS

Hebrews 4:16 opens the door for everyone to approach the Throne of Grace. “Let us come boldly...” What an invitation! We need not hang back, waiting for those of greater importance to go first. He said, “Let us...” That means everyone, great and small.

Verses 14 and 15 reveal the reason we can come into the presence of God. They give us the basis for our boldness. “Seeing we have a great high priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...” Jesus is the basis for our boldness.

Who is the only One who could bring the presence of God to man and man into the presence of God? Who is the only One who could know the glory of Deity and yet understand the pain and need of humanity? Our Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus.

Who took upon Himself the form of a servant so we could be a royal priesthood, and a holy nation? Who made Himself of no reputation and took on the form of man so we could be sons of God? Jesus.

Jesus is the One who bought our salvation with His blood. He alone is worthy of our praise and glory.

“A friend is someone who knows all about you – and loves you anyway.”

Jesus is touched with the feeling of our infirmities—He knows our shortcomings and yet He lovingly invites us to come to Him for grace and help in the time of need.

John 1:10-12 says, “He was in the world and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” The relationship between father and child is far closer than king and subject.

The Life Application Bible says, “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God” (I John 3:1).

When I saw my firstborn for the first time, a warm wave of love flowed over me from head to toe. I promised her my best. When I held my lastborn for the first time, the same warmth filled my heart. Sweet baby breath and fragrance, mixed with wonder at holding another new life overwhelmed me with love. Love promised my best. Although a mother’s love is one of the strongest emotions, Jesus’ love surpasses it. He promises His best.

Sometimes on our way to the throne room we meet with opposition. The enemy of our soul tells us we are not worthy to come to the throne of grace. He brings up every mistake, or problem he thinks could load us down and slow our steps into God’s presence. Satan does not care how much we talk, sing, or shout about prayer just as long as we do not pray.

We are bought with the precious blood of Jesus, and He bids us to boldly approach the throne.

III. THE BENEFITS OF BOLDNESS

“And this is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him” (I John 5:14-15).

How do we know the will of God? Do we wait for a light to shine on our path, and then follow it? Do we listen for a voice from heaven? How do we know for sure?

In my first week of attending Bible College, a visiting minister preached to the student body, and dealt with this subject. I was glad I got in the habit of recording sermon notes. I had my pen and paper near.

He gave three criteria for finding the will of God in various situations of life:

1. **Is it scriptural?** An example: If a lady who went to the altar to pray had placed her purse under your seat, you would not shout, “Hallelujah, the Lord supplied my need”, take the money, and run.
2. **Can I pray and not feel any drawbacks? Is there a check in my spirit about this?** As a child I would ask my mother if we could do something or

go somewhere and she would smile and tell me, "I'll pray about it. If I get the green light, we'll do it."

3. **Is it available?** As much as one might desire to be the president of our country, we need to consider life's circumstances, and see if our desire is available to us.

Sometimes these criteria are not applicable, but we do have a never-failing will (the Old and New Testaments) of our God.

It is God's will to save people. "*It is not His will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*" (II Peter 3:9).

I remember a particular day when I had to fervently seek the will of God in my prayer, and ask Him exactly what to request of Him.

It was a busy day, with preparations for a conference. The first service would be that night, with several days of services to follow. My dear friend and neighbor, Claire Steinbach, called in tears and said, "Rosemary, there is an emergency. Can I come over and pray?"

Claire and I had been prayer partners for a while. We had discussed the Oneness of God, baptism in Jesus' Name, and the power of Jesus' name in prayer. Now she was coming, in obvious distress, to call on that Name.

I saw Claire and another woman coming in through the front gate, and opened the front door. Claire introduced her friend as Lettie. Lettie's face was pale, and she had a handkerchief in her hand, shredding it into small pieces. Claire was weeping, with tears dropping unheeded off her chin.

"Rosemary, Lettie's little boy, Martin, drowned at daycare today."

As I was trying to process this shocking remark, she went on. "He and a little friend, both about three years old, worked out a plan to boost him over the wall to the swimming pool, and he fell in. His friend went to the teacher and not knowing how to explain said, "Martin – water!" The teacher, heavily pregnant, told him "Martin can wait for his drink of water till everyone else gets one," and remained seated. He returned to the swimming pool, then back again to the teacher. Finally, the child's distress caught her attention, and when she stood up, he grabbed her hand and led her to the swimming pool.

Martin lay face down in the water. Immediately they got him out and called the paramedics. The paramedics came and began to work with him. He was so swollen that they had to cut his clothes off. From the time they started working with Martin until the time he drew his first breath and his heart started beating, was at least ten minutes.

Lettie arrived only to be told they had given Martin an injection of medicine to quiet his brain and reduce damage. They told her to go home; they would take him to the hospital in an ambulance and work with him there.

There we stood – my friend whom I had witnessed to about the power of Jesus' Name, prayer, and baptism in His name. She believed.

We knelt down and began to pray. My heart sent up urgent pleas to God. "Lord, how should I pray? He is a baby and knows no sin. If You take him now, he is innocent. There will be brain damage, Lord; maybe he will never be able to walk, run, or read. If he were my son I would ask You to save him regardless.

Thoughts and confusion chased each other around in my mind until I felt the Spirit of the Lord. It seemed God put John 10:10 into my mind. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

It was His will that Martin have abundant life. It was His will to save and heal him so he could walk, run, read, and do the things little boys do.

The Spirit of God came down. We prayed in English, Afrikaans, and in other tongues. Suddenly the Spirit lifted and we opened our eyes. We knew God had heard.

Claire and Lettie went home, and I went on with my preparations, rejoicing in the Lord. After church I called the hospital to ask about Martin. What an answer I received! They said, "Martin is fine, and had said, 'Take this tube out of my throat, it is hurting me'." The tests he has taken since that time show a remarkable improvement over those taken before his accident in the pool. God's abundance is evident in his life.

We can pray boldly when we pray according to His will.

IV. LET US PRAY BOLDLY

During World War II (1939-1945), the strength of the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, Japan, and others) was intense. When Hitler and his army attacked Poland, the war in Europe started the march of defeat for those who had no defense against such great control.

Country after country fell, submitted, or was scarred forever by ruin as a seemingly unstoppable force came against them. Economies were crippled; curfews and harassment were the order of the day, with the best of everything being shipped to Germany.

People lost precious goods, and at least six million Jews died during this period of darkness.

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. The United States of America had carefully avoided entering the war, but it had enough and declared war on the Axis Powers. Britain and France were stumbling under the effects of the war, but were responding with great efforts and energy. In a united act, they planned the freeing of Europe, beginning with a landing on the beach at Normandy. Many gave their lives for the freedom of others. It looked like it was "too little, too late." But they fought, first gaining inches, then yards, and miles.

The Nazis were defeated on the beach at Normandy, but would not admit it. More people died because Hitler would not back down until soldiers entered Berlin.

The enemy was defeated at Calvary by the death, burial, and resurrection, but he does not want us to know. He is fighting to keep souls out of the kingdom of God.

Theories say AIDS is God's judgment on a sinful world. But could it be the enemy of man's soul is using HIV/AIDS to kill people. As long as there is life, there is the possibility of salvation.

I have cried over those who were taken before they could be reached with the Gospel. With each tearful prayer, I resolved anew to reach as many as possible for Jesus before it is too late.

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12). Unger's Bible Dictionary says violence in Greek indicates, "activity, strength in violent action, force." It also says in Matthew 11:12, "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence" indicating "a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought after with excitement and effort." The New International Version reads, "the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it."

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:3-5).

Rev. G. E. Wesson (my pastor) is a real man of prayer. When he spoke of prayer, we could be sure he had not only theory, but experience. Many people pray enough to speak in tongues, and feel they have reached the end. But when we are in the Spirit, it is the time to press in. We have God's attention, and can present our petitions before Him. Joy comes when we are before God's throne, focused on Him.

The song, "Draw Me Nearer," says, "Oh, the sheer delight of a single hour which before Thy throne I spend. When I kneel in prayer and with Thee my God, I commune as friend with friend."

Sometimes in prayer, we become deep in travail for the lost. Travail is not an easy thing, but it is a super weapon of the child of God.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

Joy Haney (wife of UPCI General Superintendent) told of people who come to her with problems and say, "Sister Haney, my children are rebellious, I do not know what to do." Or, they say, "I have a problem with my unsaved husband. I do not know what to do." Sister Haney replies, "We really do know what to do. We know to pray until we touch God. We know to pray until the glory of God comes down and deals with unsaved hearts. We know how to fast and pray."

Prayer is our wonderful, winning weapon. No one can remove this weapon from our hands, or from our heart. All we need to do is use it.

LESSON:

(From *ACTS: God's Training Manual for Today's Church, Level T*)

Let Us Pray for Boldness

James Poitras

“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness”

(Acts 4:29-31)

When the apostles and leaders of the New Testament church came face-to-face with life threatening trouble, they did not run, hide, or stop preaching. They went to God in prayer and asked for boldness to speak the Word. God blessed their ministries, and boldness became a major theme throughout Acts. They had a burning desire to boldly proclaim God's Word (Acts 2:14; 3:11-12; 4:8, 13; 4:29-33; 7:54; 9:20-22; 13:46; 14:3; 14:21-22; 19:8).

Paul prayed he might be able to speak the gospel boldly. *“And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak”* (Ephesians 6:19-20).

The Opposite of Boldness—Fear

John Ortberg in *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get out of the Boat* claims fear is the number one reason people are tempted to avoid what God asks them to do. It is a big obstacle in trusting and obeying God. Ortberg believes that fear will sink us faster than anything else. He suggests that fear whispers to us that God is not big and strong enough to take care of the situation at hand.

One area where fear surfaces its ugly head is in evangelism. The two stories that follow illustrate this point.

“Sir, do you brush your teeth!”

On a plane a missionary sat down beside a little girl who had Down's syndrome. After a few moments, the little girl looked at the missionary and asked, “Mister, do you brush your teeth?”

Somewhat surprised, the missionary answered, “Well, Yes, I brush my teeth.”

She then said, “It's good thing. If you didn't, your teeth could rot and fall out.”

After a couple of minutes of peace, the little girl continued, “Mister, do you smoke?”

“Well, no, I don't smoke.”

“It's good thing, because if you did, you could die of cancer.”

The next question came sooner than the missionary had hoped. “Mister, do you know Jesus?”

The missionary proudly responded, “Yes, I know Jesus!”

“It's a good thing, because if you didn't, you could die and go to hell.”

Another man came and set down beside the missionary and the little girl.

“Ask him, ask him!” the little girl said.

Reluctantly, the missionary asked, “Sir, the little girl wants me to ask you something. Do you brush your teeth?”

The man somewhat taken aback answered, “Yes, I brush my teeth.”

“It's good thing. If you didn't, your teeth could rot and fall out.”

“Ask him, ask him,” the little girl prompted with insistence.

“Sir, the little girl wants to know—do you smoke?”

The man answered, "No, I don't smoke!"

"It's good thing, because if you did, you could die of cancer."

"Ask him, Ask him!" she insisted.

"Shhh! That is personal!" said the fearful missionary.

"Oh, come on. Don't be afraid. Ask him, ask him!"

"Sir, the little girl wants to know—do you know Jesus?"

"No, I don't know Jesus. But I've been having serious problems for some time now, and I sure would like for someone to introduce me to Jesus."

"Lord, is this a sign?"

Norman Cates shared a story of a man who prayed each morning, "Lord, if you want me to witness to someone today, please give me a sign and show me who it is."

One day he was sitting on a bus when a huge man sat beside him. The shy, fearful Christian anxiously waited for his stop so he could get off the bus. Suddenly, the man beside him burst into tears and cried out, "I need to be saved. I'm a lost sinner and I need Jesus. Won't somebody help me to be saved?"

The believer bowed his head and prayed, "Lord, is this a sign?"

This humorous story hits on a true point. We often are fearful of witnessing for Christ. Feelings of inadequacy (I am not able); fear of failure and not being accepted, grip our hearts and make us incapable of speaking for the Lord. Charles Stanley in *Success God's Way* says, "Fear is the uneasy feeling that we are inadequate."





Fear is one of the biggest enemies of evangelism and doing something for God. This fear does not come from God.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

Satan tries to use fear to paralyze us and rob us of our strength. The possibility of rejection makes us fearful in witnessing. Ananias in Acts 9 is a prime example of someone who was fearful when told to witness.

**"The majority of Christians believe they cannot be successful in sharing their faith."
(The Barna Group)**

Fear can be conquered and even overcome by:

-  **Prayer.** Commit your fear to God and ask for His help to boldly proclaim the Word. Ask God to increase your confidence to witness.
-  **Preparation.** Preparing for witnessing and possible situations minimizes fear. This includes studying the Word.
-  **Practice.** We gain confidence to witness and speak through practice (by doing it).
-  **Passion.** Fear needs to be replaced with boldness and passion. Anthony Mangun explains that passion is the God-given ability to feel so strongly about something that it causes the person to move toward the object with great desire. It is the fuel that ignites the fire of our desire. It is the burden that compels us to action. The human soul on fire for God is a powerful witness.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

John Ortberg asks, "What would you guess is the most common command in Scripture?" He answers, "The single command in Scripture that occurs more often than any other—God's most frequently repeated instruction—is formulated in two words: fear not."

There are more than 365 verses in the Word of God connected with not fearing. This indicates fear plays a destructive role in the lives of people. God will help us get and maintain victory over fear. Let us pray for boldness!

"For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Lesson 21

An Overcoming PRAYER Life

Patricia Grosbach

A Chinese woman once prayed, "We are going home to many who cannot read. So, Lord, make us to be Bibles so that those who cannot read the Book can read it in us." Others will know our prayer life by the way we lead our daily lives.

The Prayer of Thomas Aquinas:

*Give me, O Lord, a steadfast heart,
which no unworthy affection may drag downwards;
give me an unconquered heart,
which no tribulation can wear out;
give me an upright heart,
which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside.
Bestow on me also, O Lord my God, understanding to know you,
diligence to seek you,
wisdom to find you,
and faithfulness that may finally embrace you,
Jesus Christ my Lord, Amen. (Revised)*

PERSERVERANCE

*"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,
and watching thereunto with all perseverance
and supplication for all saints."*

Ephesians 6:18

What is perseverance? Perseverance is when one continues to do something in spite of difficulties, obstacles, etc. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God" (Philippians 1:27-28).

We must never give up. Without persistent prayer, we will be tossed to and fro and we will never survive life's storms. Romans 8:35 says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ...?" We will never reach heaven without perseverance. (Study 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 3: 6 & 14, and Colossians 2: 4-5.)

Prayer of an African Girl:

"O great Chief, light a candle within my heart that I may see what is therein and sweep the rubbish from your dwelling place."

REPENTANCE

*"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy;
break up your fallow ground: for it is time to
seek the Lord, till he come
and rain righteousness upon you."*

Hosea 10:12

No matter what our position in life, whether minister, minister's wife, or saint of God, we must all find a place of daily repentance. As Christians we are not like the world, however, we do live in this world. Every day the things we see and hear affect us. If we are not careful the things we see and hear will find a resting- place in our hearts. These things will become a part of us. So often attitudes are contagious, they are like the measles. If one person gets them the whole group will get them if they haven't been vaccinated with "the prayer vaccine". The attitudes of your friends and co-workers can become your attitudes. Philippians 2:14 reads, "Do all things without murmuring and disputing. The more we allow worldly things to become a part of our lives, the harder our heart becomes."

Prayer will allow God to reveal our sins to us. Take responsibility for your own actions, attitudes, and wrongdoings. Confess before God. Plant Philippians 4:8 into your heart. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

(Also study: Psalm 66:18, 1 John 1:9, Job 11:13-18, Lamentations 4:40, and 2 Corinthians 11:28, 2 Corinthians 13:5.)

Prayer of Martin Luther King:

*And now unto him who is able to keep us from falling
and lift us from the dark valley of despair to the bright
mountain of hope, from the midnight of desperation
to the daybreak of joy; to him be
power and authority, forever and ever.*

ASSURANCE

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything
by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.
And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,
shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus..”*

Philippians 4:6-7

In the scriptures above they seem to say it all. When we pray, God will give us an assurance. If we are constantly troubled about our daily lives, we are not praying effectively. Prayer is the single most significant thing that will help turn inner turmoil into peace. Prayer should bring us peace. We can be confident that God has heard our prayer and that he is in complete control. **One of the most important things prayer accomplishes is that it “Changes Us.”** When you and I pray, *we change*, and that is one of the major reasons prayer is good when we are worrying. So go ahead and tell God everything that is on your mind and in your heart. Then sit back and wait for the voice and the peace of God. God may not always do things how and when you ask, but He will give you peace in the midst of the storm. (Study Romans 8, Matthew 11:28-30, Philippians 4:19, 2 Corinthians 5:1, Colossians 2:1-5, 1 Thessalonians 1:5 and 2 Timothy 1:12.)

Prayer of Desiderius Erasmus:

*Sever me from myself that I may be grateful to you;
May I perish to myself that I may be safe in you;
May I die to myself that I may live in you;
May I wither to myself that I may blossom in you;
May I be emptied of myself that I may abound in you;
May I be nothing to myself that I may be all to you.*

YIELDED

*“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:
but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead,
and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”*

Romans 6:13

Study Romans chapter 7. Paul was struggling with his carnal nature. Romans 7:23 says that he saw another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind. He had to bring these thoughts into captivity. He did this through prayer. Ephesians 6:12, *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”*

In Matthew 26:41, the devil will always use our mind and flesh in an attempt to win this spiritual war. But prayer can keep us focused (Ephesians 4:23.) James, in chapter 3 tells us we must not just yield our mind only, but also our tongues. We must pray often and ask God to guard our tongues. If we are praying, we will be sensitive to the voice of God and *“think before we speak”* (Colossians 2:13-23).

Prayer of Francis of Assisi:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon,
Where there is doubt, faith,
Where there is despair, hope,
Where there is darkness, light,
Where there is sadness, joy.*

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, not so much to be understood as to understand, not so much to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying, that we awake to eternal life.

EFFECTIVE

"...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

James 5:16

We can see in 1 Peter 4:19, in order to pray effectively we must pray in God's will. **You must get a new view of God—a God who never makes mistakes.** James 4:3 says if our prayers are unanswered, it is because we ask amiss. The word "amiss" means that our prayers are selfishly motivated or out of God's will. Sometimes, God will say yes. There will be many times when God tells us no. Very often God will tell us to wait. In John 15:7 we are taught that we must abide in Him. And Hebrews 11:6 says that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Things will happen when we pray. Prayer will produce results. **Our prayer life will not only affect us, but it will also affect those around us.** If you are having problems in relationships with others, pray more.

(For more study read: 2 Timothy 2:24, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 1:27, Galatians 6:2, and Acts 24:16.)

A Prayer of John Donne:

*O Lord, never suffer us to think that we
can stand by ourselves, and not need thee.*

RELIANCE

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:3

The poor in spirit are those who know that without God they can do nothing. **Prayer is a way of telling God we need Him.** If we do not pray, we are trying to direct our own lives. In Proverbs 3:5-6, He has promised us that He will direct our ways. *"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool,"* (Proverbs 28:26). Only fools trust in their own hearts. (Read 1 Chronicles 16:10-11, Deuteronomy 4:24-31, and 1 Corinthians 10:12-13.)

Prayer will make a way of escape. We must also pray for wisdom and spiritual understanding so that we might be fruitful (Colossians 1:9-10). "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast **enlarged** me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer (Psalm 4:1). The word *enlarged* here means *prepared for the task ahead*. *When we pray, we know we can rely on God*. When unexpected things come our way, we will be prepared to handle them.

Thomas Paine once wrote:

"What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; 'tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated."

SALVATION

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,
that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,
holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."*

Romans 12:1

Two days after Thomas Paine wrote his lines, America won their freedom from British rule. He challenged and inspired others to take action. Everything has its price. Christ paid the ultimate price for our salvation. *Prayer is a part of our reasonable service*. Lives are held captive by Satan's kingdom and it is only through our prayers that they can be set free. John 12:46 tells us that Jesus came as a light in a dark world. Today, His light shines through us as we bring light to a dark and sin-sick world. Paul said that he would travail again (Galatians 4:19). There are unsaved souls, we must travail. There are those who are still weak in faith, therefore, the strong must travail again until Christ be formed in them. Prayer will help us to have answers (Colossians 4:2-6). "... *always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*" (Colossians 4:12). We must recover those who are in the snare of the devil (2 Timothy 2:25-26).

Conclusion:

God is not asking us to physically die; He only asks that we pray. As we pray, God will lead us into greater depths of His understanding, His love and His truths. **Is the price of prayer too high for you?** Let us not stand before God in the judgment as one who just couldn't find the time to pray. Prayer is not only what introduced us to salvation; prayer is the major discipline that will keep us saved.

Persistent PRAYING

James Poitras

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication...”
Acts 1:14

“Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him” (Acts 12:5).

The Apostle Paul admonishes us to “*Pray without ceasing*” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). He also practiced what he preached. “*For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers*” (Romans 1:9).

Prayer is so important that the Apostles’ said, “*We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word*” (Acts 6:4). Edward Payson understood this when he wrote, “Prayer is the first thing, the second thing, the third thing necessary to a minister. Pray, then, my dear brother, pray, pray, pray.” Prayer helps us to see God’s view of things. It also strengthens our relationship with God. Prayer meetings produce God meetings. That is why they are aptly called, “prayer meetings.” It is here that we meet with God. Man was created to desire communion with God. This communion goes beyond “asking” into the realm of “seeking.”

Often prayer is treated like a market. We bring our list of shopping needs with us and trust that Jesus will fill all of the needs. We can move beyond just asking, into seeking the Lord, and even extend into intercession.

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it but I found none” (Ezekiel 22:30).

“Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way” (1 Samuel 12:23).

Many times the answer to prayer involves a lot of waiting. None of us like to wait. It has been said, “Patience is a virtue that carries a lot of weight.” It is not something that we do well. Spurgeon said that by perseverance “the snail reached the ark.” We

know that God answers all prayers. He gives four responses, "Yes, No, Stop or Wait." We must continue to pray until we receive an answer or until we receive the assurance from the Holy Spirit that our prayer has been heard and the answer is on its way. Andrew Murray says, "God's giving is inseparably connected with our asking."

Let Go and Let God

As children bring their broken toys
With tears for us to mend,
I brought my broken dreams to God,
Because He was my Friend.
But then, instead of leaving Him
in peace to work alone,
I hung around and tried to help
with ways that were my own.
At last I snatched them back and cried,
"How can you be so slow?"
"My child," He said, "What could I do?
You never did let go."
(Author Unknown)

EXPECT A MIRACLE

Don't give up! Your miracle is on its way!

Prayer is to be continual, unceasing, like a non-stop flight; not landing until it reaches its destination. *"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint"* (Luke 18:1).

Dutch Sheets in his book "Intercessory Prayer" explains that this does not mean, "It would be a good idea to pray. It is declaring that it is absolutely necessary-binding upon you - that you pray." As we continue to pray our prayers are stored in heaven. *"And golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints"* (Revelation 5:8). This is what happened to Cornelius in Acts 10. Because he was a devout man who feared God and prayed always, his prayers came up as a memorial before God. (Read Acts 10:2,4.) God considers our prayers a sacrifice to Him, and they remind Him of our perseverance.

"It sort of reminds me of the mouse and the elephant who were best friends. They hung out together all of the time, the mouse riding on the elephant's back. One day they crossed a wooden bridge, causing it to bow, creak and sway under their combined weight. After they were across, the mouse, impressed over their ability to make such an impact, said to the elephant, 'We sure shook up that bridge, didn't we.'

Kind of reminds me of some of the advertisements and testimonials. You'd think He was the mouse and we were the elephant. (Maybe that's why we don't shake many bridges)...Rise up! Better still, allow your Helper to rise up in you! Together, you can shake any bridge! Just make sure you know who the mouse is."

As we begin to intercede (stand in the gap in prayer) then Jesus also will work with us and accomplish the work.

"And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." (Mark 16:20).

Prayer must be persistent in order to be effective. This is what we see in the story of the Persistent Widow found in Luke 18:1-7. This story begins with a command to *"always to pray, and not to faint"* (give up). The judge in the story finally answered her because her *"continual coming"* would make him tired. Jesus then assures us that God will also answer *"His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though he bear long with them."* Don't give up. God will answer you if you persist. One day, Winston Churchill was addressing a group of students and all he said was *"Don't ever, ever, ever, give up!"* The mighty oak tree was once a little nut that held its ground. (It never gave up!)

As long as Moses persevered in prayer with his hands lifted up, the people of God were winning the battle (Exodus 17:11). As Moses lifted his hands towards God he was showing his dependence on God to win the battle. When the prayer of Moses ceased the flow of the divine power to the people also ceased.

This principle of persistence in prayer is also seen in the story of the Friend at Midnight. (Luke 11:5-13) These story appears immediately after the disciples asked Jesus, *"teach us to pray"* (Luke 11:1). This verse appears immediately after Jesus says to Martha *"one thing is needful"* (Luke 10:42). *"Ask, Seek, Knock"* were the instructions that Jesus gave. They seem to suggest that we must keep asking, keeping seeking, and keep knocking. When we continue to ask the Lord for something in prayer we are allowing Him to know that we have a need we can't fill on our own and strengthens the conviction that God does hear and answer prayer. The man at midnight kept knocking on the door until his friend finally got up and provided whatever he needed.

In Acts 12 Peter is in jail waiting for the death sentence to be carried out. While he was chained between two guards, sleeping the church was desperately interceding for a miracle. They were praying without ceasing. Heaven heard and the miracle happened. He went to a place where *"many were gathered together praying"* (Acts 12:12). He *"knocked"* (Acts 12:13) and the door was answered by a shocked girl who shared the miraculous news with an unbelieving group of prayer warriors. Peter *"kept knocking"* (Acts 12:16).

PRAYER Changes Things, PRAYER Changes US

James Poitras

It is often said that **“Prayer Changes Things!”** We should also add, **“Prayer Changes Us!”** It is true that your prayers will change things around you but sometimes your prayers change you. At times our situation even remains the same; but we are different.

The disciples in Acts 4 were threatened and warned not to speak or preach in the name of Jesus. They did not react by going to God in prayer pleading, **“Lord change things! Lord, change our circumstances.”** They rather asked that the Lord would *“...grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word...”* (Acts 4:29). Their attitude was, **“Do not change our circumstances; change us!”**

“For things to get better,
sometimes you must get better.”

We may change our circumstances and even seek for a more favorable environment but we will take ourselves with us wherever we go. Jesus asked us to *“consider the lilies (flowers)”* in Matthew 6:28. These flowers grow where they are planted. Many of us refuse to grow where we are placed and because of that we never take root anywhere. Instead we want to be planted in a better set of circumstances. One man said, **“I have found the problem and it is I.”**

There are things in all of our lives that must die through prayer, fasting, and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“It is not so important what happens to us;
It is more important what happens in us.”

The Psalmist David wrote **“The Penitent’s Psalm”** of Psalm 51. This Psalm was written after Nathan, the prophet had come to David revealing his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, and the murder of her husband. (Read 2 Samuel 12:1-13.) David did not ask for a change in his circumstances but cried out **“Lord, Change Me!”** Read about this in Psalm 51:1-19. He prays for a clean heart, and a right spirit. He knew that *“a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart...”* (51:17) were necessary for the Lord to make a change in him. David basically prayed, *“Lord, I have sinned against you! Clean me up! Change me so that I can be a blessing to your people.”* This attitude was quite different from that expressed by Saul. When he sinned, he said, *“...I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel...”* (1 Samuel 15:30). He was not interested in a real change in his life through repentance. He was more interested in how he appeared before the people.

Prayer allows us to become like Jesus. It is spending time with Jesus, our friend. It is said, **“You show me your friends and I will tell you who you are.”** The type of friends that we have serves as a good indicator of who we are. Jesus has promised to be our friend that *“...sticketh closer than a brother”* (Proverbs 18:24). In prayer we are trying to not only know Him; but also become more like Him. The Bible teaches, *“Everything reproduces after its own kind.”* (See Genesis 1:24.) God expects us *“...to be conformed to the image of his Son...”* (Romans 8:29). He accepts you as you are but will not leave you there. He wants you to be changed.

Max Depree in Leadership is an Art says, “It is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.”

The whole salvation experience begins with making a change (called repentance). Through obedience to Acts 2:38 God changes us with the born again experience and transforms (changes) our destiny.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

<p>Prayer Changes Things! Prayer Changes Us! Lord, Let Prayer Change Me!</p>
