

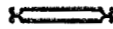
PART THREE

GOOD READING ON PRAYER

By OTHERS

**(Mostly delivered at a rally devoted exclusively
to the subject of prayer)**

HOUSECLEANING TIME



Prayer must mean something to us if
it is to mean anything to God.

Just Why Should We Pray

By ARCHIE WORD

Read Gal. 4:4-7 and Eph. 6:18.

Generally speaking real prayer has been left in the background if not left out completely in most of the churches over the land. Yet we claim to be a Bible people. Most churches' prayer meetings run less than 20% of the membership, and MORE than 1/2 of those who do come do not pray. Most large congregations average less than 5%, and some less than 1% while others close up, and have no prayer meetings at all. But socials are promoted, pink teas are served, breakfasts are cooked, dinners are spread, entertainment is even hired, bazaars bloom, rummage sales boom, amateur circuses zoom, and slumber parties "doom".

Fasting and praying are OUT, and feasting and playing are IN! Then in order to have "additions", they hire a hotshot organizer and promoter to hold a "Campaign" that is highlighted with entertainment. The church reports additions but not conversions. Soon these unconverted members who have never known the Lord are voted into office. Then worldliness like an army of termites comes in to kill the devour the church of God, His temple.

If you believe the Bible at all, when you read Eph. 6:18 you will be impressed with prayer's importance: "With ALL prayer and supplication (entreaty) praying at ALL seasons, in the Spirit, watching (literally sleeplessness) thereunto, in ALL perseverance and supplication (asking). for ALL the saints." Note all the "ALLS"!

Paul knew man is lazy and forgetful by nature. The tendency is to slack off, get sleepy, and quit. It is hard work to pray earnestly. Church member sinners would much rather visit with their neighbors than talk with God

I propose to speak to you on "Why should We Pray?"

A. We should Pray because There is a Devil.

He is cunning, subtle, mighty to deceive, and untiring, and he never takes a vacation. He is plotting

the ruination of every man, woman, and child. Read the context of our text (Eph. 6:12,13). There our armor is described, and we are brought the "Holy Spirit's climax" in verse 18. The New American Standard puts it this way: "With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints." We are to add to the shod-feet the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit--and then PRAYER! Constant prayer, persistent prayer, untiring prayer, sleepless prayer in the Holy Spirit. Why? Because there is a devil, and God knows that prayer works.

Before you went around knocking this rally, did you pray? If you had prayed, would you have said what you did? Before you took out that cigarette and lit up, did you pray? If you had prayed, would you have defiled your temple? Before you went to the dance or attended the theater, did you pray? If you had, would you have gone? Before you read that dirty, cheap novel, did you pray? If you had prayed, would you have indulged? Before you stayed home and deserted the church that Jesus died for, did you pray? If you had prayed, would you have done it? Before you hobnobbed with evil companions, gossiped, or cheated God, did you pray? If you had prayed, would you have done so? Before you backslid and quit really serving God, did you pray? If you had prayed, would you have quit the Lord who died to save you? There is a devil in the world, and prayer really puts a dent in his armor.

2. Prayer is God's Appointed Way to have His Children Obtain His Blessings.

The great secret of our "poverty" is our NOT asking. Jas. 4:2 says, "Ye have not because ye ask not!" The subtle secret of our powerless poverty is neglected prayer, and often the direct result is unconverted children in the home. Ask yourself, "Why is it that I make such slow growth in my Christian life? Why so little fruit from my efforts? Why is my Bible school class unconverted? Why do the members where

I preach not pray? Why do I not overcome worldliness? Why do I have no abiding joy in Christ?" The answer is often (too often) neglect of your prayer life. In Luke 11:9,10 God says, "ASK and ye shall receive; SEEK and ye shall find; KNOCK and it shall be opened to you." Your prayers prove what you sincerely believe.

3. We should Pray because Jesus has Set the Example.

In Mark 1:35 it is recorded, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there He prayed." He was a very busy person, but He took time to pray even though at times He robbed Himself of sleep to do so. Luke 6:12: "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." He was also up all night the night before He died on the cross to save you from sin and Hell. All NIGHT! That night He gave the farewell discourse material of John 14, John 15, and John 16; He prayed the prayer of John 17; He prayed and agonized in Gethsemane, was arrested, was given six trials (which were a disgrace and a farce), was condemned, scourged, abused, mocked, and crucified about 9:00 in the morning. Then you think you cannot get up and get to church by 9:45 Sunday morning. If you had been praying and bleeding and agonizing all night for a lost world, you would have no difficulty on Sunday morning to get to the assembly to worship Him who gave up everything to save you. Christ set the example. If He needed to pray, do you not think we do too?

The same Spirit who moved Jesus moves the Christian. Do you have that Spirit manifest in you? If you don't, then remember Rom. 8:9 (you are none of Him).

Jesus was well pleasing to God. He prayed. Would you please God and be blessed of God? Then pray and follow the example of Jesus.

4. We should Pray because Intercession is the Important Ministry of Jesus Now.

Christ's ministry did not close with His death. His atoning death was finished then, but He arose, ascended to the Father, and there opened up a new office which was to complete His atoning death. He is

now our Intercessor. His atonement and intercession are inseparable and of equal value relative to our salvation!

Read Heb. 7:25: "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost, those that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." He saves from sin, even to the uttermost, by His death on Calvary. He takes us through to Heaven, to the uttermost, by His PRAYERS. This verse tells us why He lives--to make intercession for us. Jesus is praying right now in Heaven for you. Rom. 8:34: "Who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us."

Would you have fellowship with Jesus! Pray constantly, persistently, sleeplessly, and overcome in it! Every Christian CAN have a part in this ministry, BUT no one but a real Christian will! The shut in, the busy mother, the wash woman, the businessman, the preacher, the mechanic, the farmer--all may have part in this work of God.

You can be an elder in some churches and not pray, but you cannot be a Christian and not pray. You can lead a Sunday morning Bible school or be a deacon in some churches and not pray, but you cannot be a Christian and not pray. If you do not pray, you are not a child of God. If you are not a child of God, you are a child of the devil. If you are a child of the devil, you are on your miserable road to Hell. What a miserable end for the one who does not pray!

5. We should Pray Because It is God's Appointed Way to Impart His Mercies, Grace, and Help.

Heb. 4:16: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in times of need." This makes it plain that this is God's way for Christians to obtain grace, mercy, and help. It is by PRAYER: bold, outspoken, confident, constant, persistent, sleepless, and overcoming prayer.

We can approach the throne of grace where our sympathetic High Priest intercedes on our behalf, and we must, because we all need mercy, and grace is what we cannot do without. Without these two elements in our lives, we fail utterly. God's grace is of infinite height, depth, length, and width. The measure

of our personal appropriation of His mercy and grace is determined by our prayers.

6. We should Pray because of What Prayer Accomplishes.

We are here merely adding to what we have already stated. Prayer promotes our spiritual growth. Real Bible study and prayer go hand-in-hand. Prayer uncovers secret sins. In Psa.139:23,24 David said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me." David knew what prayer could do. Kneel in prayer, and pray that prayer. Immediately God sends His searchlight into the dark recesses of your soul, and sins you have forgotten about are brought to your mind again. Then through prayer God promises to forgive you, His wandering child. Compare Acts 8:22,23 and I John 1:9.

In answer to prayer God opens up the wonders of His Word. Psa. 119:18: "Open my eyes that I may

see wondrous things out of thy law." In answer to prayer God gives wisdom to know His way. Jas. 1:5: "If any lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not." Then God gives strength to walk in the way He has pointed out.

Finally my "short time friends", have you been a constant, persistent pray-er, watching and overcoming in your prayer life? Have you really ever prayed. Have you been faithful in your time spent in prayer? Are you faithful right now? Have you repented of the sin of not praying? Did you know it is a sin not to pray? I Sam. 12:23-24: "Far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you." There is a way of escape from the penalty of this awful sin. Do you know how it is forgiven? Humbly come to God in prayer and ask Him to forgive you. Read I John 1:6-10 and then obey it.

God loved us, and He still loves us, and He is waiting to hear from your heart via your lips, His Name called in prayer. Do it today. Do it right now and receive His promised blessing.

Just Why We Don't Pray

By RODNEY REYMAN

Is it because we aren't taught? No, I think not. When anyone in the church wants to know a good subject on which to teach, I usually suggest "Prayer". Prayer is the subject for study and discussion in many of our assemblies.

This title suggests that we don't pray as we should. We do not pray with enough earnestness, faith, and submissiveness to God. We do not "strive in our prayers to God" as Bible prayers did.

I prayed about this lesson and tried to figure out why we do not pray and finally decided to ask different ones of the saints. I was somewhat surprised to find that most of them answered me in the same general way. Most of them said, "We just forget about it much of the time and fail to stop and think about how great God is and how much we need Him." In this answer to the question, I'm sure that most of them ailed to realize just what is involved in a

confession of forgetfulness.

We want to discuss the problem of forgetfulness of God and how to deal with it. This is a heavier subject than we may think at first, and if we can come to grips with this problem and correct it, only Heaven would fully reveal the results.

1. The Problem of Forgetfulness

This is an age-old problem of God's people. It is more tragic than we realize. We will see that it is a very subtle affliction of the soul, and we should know the mind of God regarding it.

God is near WHEN we call on Him (Deut. 4:7-9). When we forget Him in prayer, we begin to look to something else for help. We look to our own wisdom, friends, doctors, government, horoscope, fortunetellers, books, etc. (Deut. 4:23,24).

Prosperity has always had a tendency to make man forgetful of God. This was taught in the warning verses that Moses gave the Israelites (Deut. 6:10-12; 8:11-19). Also the thought in Hos. 13:6 is similar. Jesus taught us that over-indulgence was a cause of forgetfulness, and I'm sure when we become extremely concerned about the body's needs and desires, we tend to forget God (Luke 21:34-36). Our affluent society is not conducive to prayer. We are commanded not to forget (II Kings 17:38; Prov. 3:1). Many people have testified they were happier when they were poor and were not so involved in business and taking care of the many material assets God has given them.

The more you consider the matter of forgetfulness, the more serious it becomes. It is an evil (Judg. 3:7). It makes us godless and is a mark of God's enemies (Job 8:13,14; Psa. 119:139-141). People who forget God let their children go to the dance, and the children forget God also and hate anyone who tries to remind them of the importance of prayer meeting. Read it in Job 21:11-15.

We forget the good things God does for us everyday and therefore fail to thank Him in prayer (Psa. 78:11; Psa. 106:13,14,21). When God is forgotten, fearfulness takes over in our hearts. Though we are in the very midst of the handiwork of God, we fail to realize His presence (Isa. 51:12-13). God has commanded us to be alert (Eph. 5:14; II Tim. 1:7). Forgetfulness is habit-forming (Jer. 2:32,33). It becomes a willful forgetfulness since we see ourselves as so very guilty of rebellion and ingratitude (II Pet. 3:5).

Forgetfulness of God is just plain backsliding (Jer. 3:21,22). Some assume they are cleared of guilt when they say, "I forgot." God doesn't look at it this way. We can never know the true mind of God without revelation. Man's ways are not God's ways (I Cor. 2:9; Isa. 55:8,9).

Forgetfulness makes people crooked and dishonest (Eze. 22:12). Do you pray about business deals? Do you prayerfully bring your tithes and offerings to the Lord? Prayer keeps all other phases of our relationship to Christ and others as it should be. Prayer about everything is essential (Phil. 4:6). When we put God in the background and go our own ways, we must bear the guilt of our own sins (Eze. 23:35).

When God is forgotten, men try to use all kinds of carnal devices to build God's church. They

try various organizations, association, all sorts of advertising, build showy buildings, and continually boast of their accomplishments. God has little place in their plans, and they drift away from the spiritual pattern for the church (Hos. 8:14). In Rev., chapters 12 and 17, you can notice the contrast between the true bride and the harlot church. We should analyze ourselves and see where we stand with God. God's work is not dependent upon material things and schemes of man for its progress but upon the power of God (Zech. 4:6).

We are in need of continual exhortation. We need many times of meeting together for fellowship because we are so given to forgetfulness (Heb. 12:5). Some churches are known to forget to have a time of fasting and prayer when men are set aside for the ministry. It is amazing how many serious things are forgotten! Peter said that some people even forgot they were baptized (cleansed--II Pet. 1:9). This seemed strange to me, but just yesterday while visiting a lady in her sixties at the hospital, she said she couldn't remember if she had been baptized or not.

Some say, "We hear so much of the same old thing at church that is gets tiresome. It doesn't if you like it. I eat about the same stuff for breakfast everyday, and so do you, but you still like it. Stores stock the same stuff month after month because people come back for it over and over again. If you like something and are interested in it, it doesn't get tiresome.

Many forgetful people need to be converted to Christ. They have a form of godliness and are denied the power thereof. That's why God doesn't like it when people forget Him. He is our very source of life and breath and all things, yet we forget Him "Days without number"! God's wrath was prayed down on those who neglected family worship (Jer. 10:25). The very God who gives us our homes, our strength, and our daily bread is ignored day after day in many so-called Christian families. When families are too rushed to take time for daily prayer together, they need to stop and set some new priorities. Nothing is more important to a family than daily worship together!

2. What shall We Do about This Problem of Forgetfulness?

The first thing we need to do is get stirred up

about it. Too many are like those mentioned in Isa 64:7. Don't be passive about this condition. God's wrath is revealed against it, and it's the raging wrath of a jealous God! Timothy was told to stir up the gift that was in him (II Tim. 1:6). After Peter had warned against the danger of forgetfulness, he thought it right to stir up people's memories (II Pet. 1:12-15; II Pet. 3:1,2). Let the good, old Word stir you up and then do these three things:

FIRST, establish a definite time for private prayer each day. Jesus said, "When thou prayest enter into thine chamber, and having shut thy door pray to thy Father" (Matt. 6:6). Now, don't do a lot of talking about it. You will ruin it if you do. That's what the devil would like you to do. Just do it in secret between yourself and God. Surely we will pray with our families or other Christians as the occasion arises and also at various times throughout the day, but set a time for private prayer also. It's best at the beginning of the day. If you cannot do it then, work out a schedule so it fits into your day somewhere. David prayed in the morning (Psa. 88:13), and of course this was true of our Saviour (Mark 1:35).

SECOND, make a list of requests. This helps your memory. For a trivial thing like going shopping, most people make a list. You don't just go to the market and say, "Give me 20 dollars worth of groceries." You put some thought and planning into it. How much more should we with prayer! We have discovered that it's no small offense against God to forget, so we need every possible encouragement to remember to pray and to pray as we should. We don't want our prayers to be casual and programmed and shallow. We want to pray with a fervent spirit and in a definite way. A list helps a lot. It keeps us from a lot of meaningless nothings in our prayers.

THIRD, learn to practice self-defense. Every Christian must carefully study self-defense if he is ever to live a life of submission to God. I mean, spiritual defense, and I mean the James-method (Jas. 4:7). This is two-fold. Go only half-way, and you are defeated. There are many times that I have not felt like praying and had a terrific struggle. If you will follow the method in Jas. 4:7, you will experience victory, and angels will minister to you.

You must submit to God, saying something like, "Now my will, but thine be done." Then you must resist Satan like Jesus did. The reason you have a struggle in prayer is because the devil doesn't want you to pray. You must quote a Scripture to Satan, one that pertains to your need for prayer and God's help, and then say, "Get thee behind me, Satan," or tell him to leave you. You must say this in Jesus' name because he won't pay any attention to you otherwise. He's stronger than you are but not stronger than the Spirit of Jesus Christ! Now please try this when you have a problem with prayer. Please speak to Satan in Jesus' name and ask him to leave, and you will experience a power and freedom in prayer and the ministry of angels that will make your prayer time worthwhile. All you do, of course, must be in Jesus' name (Col. 3:17). Never be disrespectful or rash with Satan. He has tremendous power. Remember what it says in Jude 9.

The way to defeat Satan is by the Spirit's Sword, but you must use it (Matt. 4:1-11). We must realize this tardiness in prayer is not just a physical handicap but is simply the "oppression of the devil". He must be resisted in the same way Jesus did! When I do this, I experience a different Spirit take control of me. Pray for a fuller measure of the Spirit in your life. Just as the Holy Spirit helped the disciples remember as the need arose, so also He will cause you to remember to pray and remember what to pray for too.

Conclusion: We see that a deep reason for prayerlessness is forgetfulness. We can see the seriousness of this offense against God. We can see how to overcome it. There is suffering involved, but the ministering of angels and the victories won make it well worth the effort. Psychological studies at the University of Michigan have shown that people aren't haphazard about the things they remember. They remember the things they really care about. Also what you remember about another is a strong indication of the relationship you have with that one.

How is our relationship with God? Do we care about Him and His will? "If you love me," said Jesus, "you will keep my commandments." He has commanded us to pray. Will you remember?

God's Promise and God's Power for Prayer - Do We Really Believe?

By RODNEY REYMAN

Nature's laws seem unchangeable. Some feel, "Why pray? God rules the universe by unchangeable natural laws." We have found out by experience, however, that we can tap the resources behind natural law by prayer. "Tremendous power is made available through a good man's earnest prayer," Jas. 5:16 (Phillip's). This is not unscientific. Dr. Alexis Carol, a scientist of renown, said, "The most powerful form of energy one can generate is prayer." Though he had witnessed power demonstrated in the mechanical, electronic, and even atomic form, he said, "Prayer power is greater."

Since prayer has great power in its effects, and the world seems to be governed by natural law, how can harmony exist between these two ideas? The reign of law cannot be denied. There is law and order in all of God's creation, witnessed even in the vast expanse of space. It makes modern science possible with all of its various applications. The use of gravity, modern space travel, and electricity all work with the natural laws.

Is prayer merely subjective? Does it simply readjust our thinking so that we work better with existing circumstances? Think about this: Creative and purposive personality can manipulate natural laws and use them. Ordinarily a heavy substance falls to earth, but at this very moment I hear the roar of a heavier-than-air machine in the skies above. This shows that man can use the laws and forces of nature to his own advantage.

Water normally flows downhill, yet everyday it flows freely uphill in the highest buildings through the power of creative personality.

Many scoffers criticize the incident recorded in II Kings 6 of an axe head floating, yet everyday the iron steamships sail the seas.

In short, personality can work the most wondrous effects by simply using natural forces to serve personal ends. This adds a new dimension to cause-and-effect. With man's personality injected into

the picture, things happen that natural law could not produce. The sun and the wind can remove the snow and ice from the road. But so can men with salt and a blade. The Straits of Gibraltar are explained by natural forces. But personality explains the Suez Canal. We can, therefore, see that the injection of the personal will into the picture bring changes in the situation without breaking any natural laws. If such is true on the limited human level, what could be said concerning God's relation to natural law? He is master of all laws. Our knowledge is partial; His is complete. God has forces entirely unknown to man at His disposal! He does things that are so entirely unexplainable from the human viewpoint that we simply call them miracles. This is not to say that God necessarily suspends natural laws. It may seem that He does simply because of limited human comprehension (Job 9:9-12). This simply means that God can do for us what purely natural law could no more raise a man from the dead without divine intervention than natural forces could send a man to the moon without human intervention. Prayer-power then is the result of man's aligning himself with the divine personality of our Creator in such a way that things take place that never would otherwise. This does away with the argument against prayer based on the unchangeableness of natural law and forces. Whatever God does in response to prayer is perfectly natural to Him and the use of His laws. We can ask of Him in complete confidence (Psa. 84:11).

We do not pray presumptuously. There is a difference in "faith in prayer" that makes prayer a wizard's wand to command anything into existence and "prayer in faith" which approaches God in submissive faith, ever desiring to align ourselves with His all-powered divine purpose, who "works all things after the counsel of his will."

In consideration of the subject of this message let us first think briefly upon

1. The Promise of Prayer.

Though it is by no means the first or last promise, it is always refreshing to read Matt. 7:7-11. James tells us that the greatest hindrance to the realization of this promise is failure to ask, or asking with a greedy motive (Jas. 4:3).

The prayer-promise of Isa. 58:9 is also in the definite context of unselfishness. The promise of answer to prayer before we even carefully ask of our desires is set forth in Isa. 65:24. Many of us have experienced the truth of this promise!

Other promises that are simply stated and the results followed are: Abraham's prayer for Abimelech (Gen. 20:17,18); Israel during their captivity (Jer. 29:12-14); the children of Israel's understanding God's promise to answer prayer (I Sam. 7:8-13); even wicked old Jeroboam understood God's promise to answer prayer (I Kings 13:6); Hezekiah experienced God's promise to hear and answer many times (II Kings 20:1,2,5,6). It is quite obvious that God has promised to hear and answer prayer. This seems to be the pattern in both Old and New Testaments.

Let us give some thought to

2. The Power of Prayer.

There is one Old Testament character who was a special example of power in prayer: Elijah. He is chosen in the New Testament as an example for us in prayer. There are many others, however, in both the Old and New Testaments who prayed and prevailed. Jacob's prevailing prayer caused his name to be changed to Israel. Moses was a man of prayer whose intercessory prayers saved Israel over and over again. Daniel was a habitual pray-er. There are many others from Abraham to the last of the Old Testament prophets, including kings, priests, prophets, soldiers, judges, reformers and sufferers of all sorts. But why was Elijah chosen as the outstanding example of prayer for us?

The Old Testament story offers no explanation for his power. The narrative simply tells of his dramatic experiences and ends with the most dramatic of all: the way he left this earth! He dwelt in solitary places, and his plaintive cry is often heard: "I am alone."

You can't be a gad-about who is always socializing if you want power in prayer. You must

separate yourself for long periods of time, even from your dearest ones on earth, to be alone with God if you expect to experience prevailing power in prayer. The Old Testament closes with Elijah's promise to return, and the New Testament begins with its fulfillment. Now the New Testament's explanation of the man and his work is simply that he prayed. On the surface of the Old Testament record we notice that Elijah prayed, but the New Testament shows that prayer was the entire explanation for his power. He stands out as a long figure, yet in the New Testament it says he was a man of like passions as we. James makes it plain that he was a man of like passions with us--but HE PRAYED--and that makes the difference. We don't pray like we should!

Anyone who really prays is going to be different too. He's not going to be in want, defeated, bound by lust, and always making mistakes.

The main difference there is in preachers can be found in that some pray, and some don't! A while back a brother said that if a preacher feels he must move to a different field, usually all he needs to do is fast and pray for a couple of days and go back to work where he is because the problem is probably entirely with himself. People who are always wanting to go somewhere else to "get away from it all" can never do it because there is no way to get away from yourself but to go to God, and He is everywhere! It's not the altitude that needs changing; it's the attitude. It's not the view that needs changing but your viewpoint. The change needs to be in the inner man, not the location!

Prayer with Elijah was divine force. One translation of Jas. 5:16 says, "The energized prayer of a righteous man is of great force." Elijah never discussed natural law. He never doubted what we call supernatural law. He prayed, and there was no rain. He prayed again, and it came in floods. He prayed for life to come again to the dead child of the widow, and it came. He prayed for fire from heaven, and God sent it. He did not argue about prayer. He prayed.

Prayer today will solve the problem of prayer. Do you believe it? There have always been problems about prayer. In the wilderness the Israelites questioned how God could possibly provide for them, but Moses prayed, and God answered. We stand on the very threshold of unexplored worlds, and what seemed impossible to man a few years back has now happened. If so much is possible with man, who can say that anything is impossible with God? Words of

men can be heard by men hundreds of thousands of miles away, so who dares say God can't hear us? He who made the heavens and the earth and all therein is surely greater than what He made! Who can believe He is imprisoned within His own laws!

No one denies the power of prayer to influence the mind and develop character and purify the will and motives, but that is not all. Prayer is force. Prayer changes things when we get in touch with "the Lord God of Elijah".

Everyone who truly prays has found there is no explanation but God for the things that follow. I am reluctant to give personal examples of answer to prayer, but I can, and you can too. The language of the psalmist is often on my heart, "I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live."

I will say that the way I find prospects is, I pray. The way I study is, I pray. The way I preach is, I pray. The way I keep out of debt, live joyfully with the wife of my youth, the way we reared our children, and the only way I ever get anything worthwhile accomplished is by prayer. If we don't pray right, it is doubtful that we can do anything right. "Apart from me you can do nothing," Jesus said.

Now it's not just any kind of prayer that works. It is the energized prayer that is of great force. Elijah was a man of passion in all he did. God can't stand lukewarm hearts, but He responds to hearts aflame (Jer. 29:13,14). Of Elijah it says in the footnote of the American Standard that in "prayer he prayed". There is some prayer that has little praying in it. When he went into the death chamber, he put himself into the prayer. Hear him plead the honor of God on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18:36,37). In true prayer of God's saints it's always the same: Abraham pleading for Sodom; Jacob wrestling in the night, saying, "I will not leave thee except thou bless me;" Moses standing in the breach, pleading; Hannah pleading, full with sorrow and desire; Samuel in prayer, crying to God all night for Saul; David in prayer, heartbroken in grief; Jesus praying with "strong crying and tears" and bloody sweat!

Such praying prevails and is powerful in its working. It changes people. It brings rain. It brings life. It brings fire. It brings God onto the scene! In the case of Elijah he was fed by the birds, fire came from heaven, the dead were raised, needs were abundantly

supplied, rain ceased, rain came again, and the New Testament attributes all this to prayer and says we should have similar results from similar prayers.

This type of prayer is more effective in secret. It takes an abandonment of self. The truth of the passage in Jas. 5:17,18 is that Elijah prayed with energy and vitality. The Greek meaning of the passage brings out this truth. This righteous man got his face down between his knees and kept up the persistent petition for seven times (and it wasn't any vain repetition either), and finally the little cloud appeared, and the flash flood came! Read it and weep that we aren't more like Elijah (I Kings 18:42-44)!

3. Do We Really Believe?

Much of the time it doesn't appear that we do. I hate to say anything against the church since Jesus loved it, and I do too, but love carries with it chastening (Rev. 3:19). The pattern for prayer that Jesus gave us in Matt. 6:9-13 shows the necessity of daily family prayer. More time is spent in lamenting the evil in our day than in prayer to overcome it. Natural law need not be set aside for God to work. This we have discussed. Jesus said, "Have faith in God." Faith is so powerful, it is so precious, it is reckoned for righteousness. It brings great peace. And it is from God (Eph. 6:23). He wants us to have it. Let us pray, "Lord, increase our faith."

Conclusion: Our God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Recently a man went to a dealer to buy a Rolls Royce. Money was no object to him, but being a practical business man he said, "I'd like to see the motor." The salesman said, "I'm sorry, Sir, we never show the motor. The company trains your chauffeur in maintenance, and you have no need to see it. It's guaranteed." The customer asked the horse power, and the salesman said he didn't know. The wealthy man about to spend big dollars for the car told the salesman to wire the company immediately and find out. He did. The wire came back and simple read: "Horse power adequate." Our God is that way too. His power is adequate to cleanse our doubtful and wayward hearts and to make us partakers of His power through prayer.

Will you really believe Him?

You are not Spending Enough Time in Prayer

By JERRY WELLER

Text: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (Samuel to Israel in I Sam. 12:23).

Lengthy fellowship with God was one of the privileges of Adam and Eve in Eden. Since then it has been the desire of godly men such as Enoch ("Enoch walked with God," Gen. 5:23), Samuel ("It grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night," I Sam. 15:11), Moses ("I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights! I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger... Thus I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the Lord had said he would destroy you," Deut. 9:18,25), and our Lord Himself ("It came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God," Luke 6:12).

This need has been felt even by Gentiles ("When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking," Matt. 6:7) and Pharisees ("Scribes and Pharisees... for a pretense make long prayers," Matt. 23:14).

To help us maintain proper spirituality the Scriptures warn us against both a lack of prayer and of lengthy prayers for a show.

Proposition: Let us consider the charge and then the challenge of our title: "You are not spending enough time in prayer."

1. The Charge.

You are not spending enough time in prayer when you consider various Bible passages. Note the capitalized words in the following verses:

"Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face CONTINUALLY" (I Chron. 16:11); "Men ought ALWAYS to pray" (Luke 18:1); "Praying ALWAYS"

(Eph. 6:18); "Pray WITHOUT CEASING" (I Thess. 5:17); "CONTINUING instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12); "Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face EVERMORE" (Psa. 105:4).

While reflecting on the above passages, fill in the proper blanks below:

I do _____, don't _____ have a prayer time daily.

I spend _____ minutes daily in prayer.

I am _____, am not _____ satisfied with my prayer life.

My biggest hindrance to prayer is _____.

You are not spending enough time in prayer when you consider various Bible characters and their prayers. Consider the praying of the following Bible characters: Cornelius ("Prayed to God alway," Acts 10:2); David ("Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice," Psa. 55:17; "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up," Psa. 5:3; "I prevented (anticipated) the dawning of the morning, and cried" Psa. 119:147); Daniel ("He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime," Dan. 6:10); the apostles ("It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables... We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word," Acts 6:2-4); the early Christians ("Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him," Acts 12:5); Paul ("Night and day praying exceedingly, "I Thess. 3:10; "We give thanks to God... praying always for you. Since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you", Col. 1:3,9); Anna ("She... departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day," Luke 2:37; Compare I Tim. 5:5: "She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and

day”); and Jesus (“In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed,” Mark 1:35; “And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land,”

Mark 6:46,47; “He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God,” Luke 6:12).

In view of these thoughts are you spending enough time in personal, family, and congregational prayer? Yes _____, No _____.

You are not Earnest Enough in Your Prayers

By MALBURT PRATER

Jas. 5:17 “He prayed earnestly.”

I presume that some who hear these charges feel the speakers are presumptuous and have no right to bring such accusations. Brethren, I did not plan this rally, and I did not choose this topic, but I AGREE with this proposition. For a long time I have felt that we are short on fervency and earnestness in prayer.

Generally speaking if there is fervency in petitioning our God, the person learned this from a Pentecostal or holiness group and not a Church of Christ. It is like the little lady who attended a very formal assembly for the first time. The robed clergyman with manuscript in hand climbed into his preaching stall. He read a verse of Scripture, and the little lady responded with a hearty “Amen!” It startled the rector, but he considered it a favorable response. He quoted another verse from memory and received the same response whereupon an usher tapped the lady on the shoulder and said, “We don’t do that here.” She said, “I cain’t hep it; I got religion.” “I can’t help it if you have--you didn’t get it here.” That’s right.

A man told me he hadn’t been a Christian very long when he was called on to lead in prayer. He prayed fervently. He told me it was the only way he knew to pray. Well, praise God, but after the meeting a sister took him aside and said, “That is not the way we pray in the Church of Christ.” Brother, wouldn’t it be wonderful if this rally would operate on our prayer lives and give us some of the old time fire and fervency that we need so that when we go back to the home congregations, prayer meetings would be happy

meetings where we could share our prayer burdens and pray earnestly to a great big wonderful God? Maybe we can change the attitude enough so that in ten years people in the heretical groups will say, “You pray like the Church of Christ people.”

What causes the leaders of this rally to formulate a charge like this: “YOU ARE NOT EARNEST ENOUGH IN YOUR PRAYERS”? They have been in our prayer meetings, and they seem as wells without water, dry cisterns, rivers that are only beds of dry sand. That’s right. The prayers have dried up, the prayer meetings are dried up, and we hold onto a form.

Listen, friend, Jesus would put our lives at floodtide--no ebb tide, no rise and fall, but constant flowing in and filling up and flooding out. John 7:38: “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters.” But, oh, what God sees in our prayer lives! DRY, DRY, DRY as moon dust. Look at the Bible descriptions of prayer; “With the heart” (Jer. 29:13); “with the whole heart” (Psa. 119:58); “pouring out the soul” (I Sam. 1:15); “a desire to be heard” (Neh. 1:6); “importunity” (Luke 11:8,9); “weeping” (Hos. 12:4); “seeing” (Matt. 7:7); “pleading” (Gen. 32:9-12); “fasting” (Acts 13:3); “kneeling” (Acts 20:36); and “crying” (Psa. 27:7). BUT this is not the way we do it!

My brother, how long has it been since you poured out your soul to God in prayer? How long since you were in a meeting where anyone else did? God has tried to teach us to do this. He said Elijah was like we are, and he prayed earnestly! You may say, “But I’m not like Elijah--he was an inspired

prophet, he was gifted." Brother, he was like we are; God says so. God wants us to pray like Elijah.

We are too much like the little girl whose mother asked if she had said her prayers before going to bed. "No, Mom, I didn't need anything tonight." While the normal state of affairs exists, we think we don't need anything, so we say a little poem we learned or a little prayer we said last week. But if your loved one goes to the hospital and is about to die, or if you are in a foxhole with enemy fire all around, THEN YOU PRAY EARNESTLY! If we could just get our minds off the material world and see Heaven and Hell. If we could see terrible Gethsemane and horrible Calvary and the great Judgement Day, our prayers would be earnest prayers. When Peter started sinking in those powerful waves of Galilee, he didn't quietly say, "Lord, save me." He wanted to be heard: "LORD, SAVE ME!"

I tell you our prayers are so cut-and-dried they sound like we just want men to hear us. Well, it is the truth. And I confess that too many times mine are just like yours--no seeking, no pleading, and no weeping. We do not pray earnestly enough.

Have you been where one person breaks down weeping in prayer? What effect is there? Well, other hearts respond, our eyes well up, and we weep with those who weep. That's when I feel like we have touched the heart of God. People, we are too dry-eyed. We would rather talk and criticize and gossip and hate people than we would cry and pray to God for them. No, you are not earnest enough. "Hear O Lord, when I cry with my voice" (Psa. 27:7).

This charge has done me more good than it can ever do you. When I began to prepare for this, I decided I had better get some earnestness myself, so I began to fast for about twenty-four hours. If you don't believe the flesh is weak, try fasting. Some say that was just Old Testament, but the early Christians fasted (Acts 13:2), the apostles fasted (II Cor. 6:5), Paul fasted (II Cor. 11:27), and Jesus fasted (Matt. 4:2). God is able to bring sin before your eyes if your

stomach isn't too full. David said, "I humbled my soul with fasting." When a man goes without food and drink so he can pray more earnestly, God hears prayers from a heart like that--He knows you mean business. Paul said I want you to strive together with me in your prayers. If you want a picture of earnest prayer, look at Luke 22:44 or Heb. 5:7.

There are two other things I just mention in connection with earnest prayer.

One has to do with posture. Twenty years ago most of the prayer meetings had most of the Christians on their knees, but not today. This may be my option, but I believe kneeling shows a little more earnestness than standing. It shows more humility before a great God, and God hears the humble. In Acts 20:36 Paul knelt down and prayed.

Then importunity shows earnestness. "Shall not God avenge his elect which cry day and night?" (Luke 18). Brethren, we need some "day and night" praying.

I must say something about forgiveness. Many Christians and whole congregations are kept from having peace that prayer brings and are actually suffering physically because they are too stubborn to forgive. Oh, my people, the Bible teaches "forgiveness as you forgive."

Earnest prayers are the only ones the Lord hears. You know and I know that most prayers are not heard. This "yes, no, wait awhile" explanation is a cover for half-hearted, cut-and-dried, hypocritical prayers. Jas. 5:16 says the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, and any other kind doesn't avail very much.

Are you one of the many among us who would have trouble digging up one successful prayer? One with an answer that is really definite? We ought to have a prayer testimony every week; yea, if burdened and earnest, every day.

WE HAVE NOT BEEN EARNEST ENOUGH IN OUR PRAYERS.

You are not Thorough Enough in Your Prayers

By RODNEY REYMAN

In the event you resent this accusation, please bear with us as we consider the subject, and then if you are still inclined to resent it, you may be heard.

When I was assigned the subject, I regarded it as being personally addressed to me. There seems to be two realms in which I neglect prayer, and having personally been convicted by the subject, I have sought to rectify them. They are:

1. The seemingly difficult and unlikely.
2. The seemingly trivial and unimportant.

I do not always ignore these areas of prayer, but my neglect is more prevalent in them.

It is evident that all prayer requests seem to include people in them. Whether it is for famine or rain, prosperity, food, mercy, or healing, people are involved. Since people are of high value, prayer is too.

Proposition: The following Scriptures relating to prayer make us aware that we have need for more thoroughness in prayer.

1. Praying for civil rulers (I Tim. 2:1-4).
2. Praying for laborers in the harvest of souls (Matt. 9:36-38).
3. Praying for all saints in the right way at the right time (Eph. 6:18).
4. Praying definitely for certain preachers (Col. 4:2-4; II Cor. 1:11,12; Heb. 13:18,19).
5. Praying for the afflicted and sick (Gen. 20:17; II Kings 20:1-11; I Sam. 1:9,10).
6. Praying for health and prosperity (III John 2; Neh. 1:11).
7. Praying for food (Matt. 6:11; Prov. 30:7-9; Gen. 28:20-22).
8. Praying for deliverance (Exo. 2:23-25; II

Thess. 3:2). We need deliverance (II Cor. 1:10; Acts 12:5).

9. Praying for discernment (Gen. 24:42-48; Acts 1:21-26).

10. Praying for friends (Job 42:10).

11. Praying in unity for certain needs (Takes forethought to get together--Matt. 18:19,20).

12. Praying for enemies (Matt. 5:44; Acts 7:60).

13. Praying for the lost (Rom. 10:1).

14. Praying for the weak and wayward (Luke 22:21,22; Acts 8:24).

15. Praying for mercy (Psa. 51:1; I John 1:9; Psa. 119:132).

16. Praying for wisdom as Solomon did (Jas. 1:5-8).

17. Praying for the church (Eph. 1:15-23). (Note the detailed requests for their spiritual development.) In most of Paul's letters he testified of his praying in detail for the church. The thoroughness of his prayers for the church alone makes me feel my lack of it.

18. Prayer for deliverance from temptation (Psa. 141:2-5).

19. For unity among God's people (Jesus gave us an example--John 17:20,21).

Now in compiling this list I skipped over so many prominent passages! It could be doubled and tripled! I meditated for an hour and decided I could remember way over a thousand people whom I know personally (and I am sure I forgot some!)

Are we thorough in our prayers? The main prayer I can think of in the Bible is the one in Luke 18:13: "God be thou merciful to me the sinner."

Jesus has Shown us How to Pray

By DONALD HUNT

The Holy Spirit inspired the writer of Hebrews to show that Jesus' earthly life was a life of prayer--earnest prayer. He wrote, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." This is the way we should live our lives on earth!

Jesus' constant earthly companions, the apostles, were much impressed with what prayer meant to Him, for one day they waited until He had finished praying and then asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). It should be a rebuke to our prayer lives if we have never had anyone ask us to teach him or her to pray because of the way we pray!

Jesus' prayer life was indeed impressive, and it is an example to us. He prayed at His baptism (Luke 3:21). He prayed before He ate (Luke 24:30). He prayed all night before choosing the twelve apostles and before preaching the most famous sermon on record, the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 6:12). He prayed for Peter even when His own burden was getting heavier and heavier (Luke 22:31,32: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee"). He prayed instead of sleeping in Gethsemane (Luke 22:41-44). He prayed mercy upon His heartless crucifiers (Luke 23:34). The last thing He did before He died was pray (Luke 23:46: "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit"). What a wonderful way for us to leave this world. And He prayed as He left the earth to return to Heaven in His ascension (Luke 24:50,51: "He lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven"). What an example of prayer Jesus has left us!

Let us look into that prayer life to see what we can find for our own needs.

1. Jesus did not Try to Get along without Prayer.

He knew He had accepted a dependent role

when incarnated. Heb. 2:10-14 brings this out. Let us look at verse 14 of that section: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." How different this was from the eternal glory and power He had previously known when He was with the Father. Now He was a man on His maternal side. Now He was subservient to the Father. Now He was cast into the role of a servant, of a dependent. How well He lived the teaching of Prov. 3:5,6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Jesus realized one's spiritual life cannot exist without prayer any more than one's physical life can exist without breathing. Do we realize this?

If God can get it through our heads and into our hearts that we should not try to get along without Him, without Christ, without the Holy Spirit, then we would pray like Jesus prayed. But if we think we can get along without God, watch the subtlety of the human heart. It will lift itself up and forget God instead of lifting up one's voice to God in constant, fervent prayer. We sing this dependence in various songs. We sing, "Jesus is all the world to me: my life, my joy, my all; He is my strength from day to day; without Him I would fall." We also sing, "I must tell Jesus, I must tell Jesus; I cannot bear these burdens alone; I must tell Jesus, I must tell Jesus; Jesus can help me, Jesus alone." Four words in that last song are emphatic: "I cannot" and "Jesus can". When we truly realize there are many things we cannot do in our own strength and understanding, then we will seek Him who is "able to exceeding abundantly above all that we ask" (Eph. 3:20). But if we don't think this way, we won't pray.

2. Jesus Got away from Everybody Else to Pray.

Mark 1:35 tells us what He did one morning at Capernaum: "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary

place, and there prayed.” He could have remained where He was and prayed, but He wanted to get away and be with His heavenly Father all alone. This is the essence of true spirituality. Another time, after feeding the 5,000, He sent the apostles away by boat and the people by land, and “He went up into a mountain apart to pray.” He was there alone. Thus reads Matt. 14:22,23. Jesus went “apart” to pray. He got where He could be “alone” as He prayed. Is this a part of your prayer practice? Do you love to be alone with God? Do you ever get up early to pray? Do you have a solitary place where you can pray?

Listen to the words of this beautiful song: “On Mount Olive’s sacred brow Jesus spent the night in prayer; He’s the pattern for us all, all alone. If we’ll only steal away in some portion of the day, we will find it always pays to be alone. There are days I like to be with the sanctified and blessed; there are days I like to be all alone. These can never grace impart to my weary, sin tossed heart. There are days to fast and pray for the pilgrim in this way; there are days to be with Christ all alone. We can tell Him all our grief; He will give us quick relief. There are days I like to be just all alone. Where a heart is broken up with the bitter, woeful cup; there’s the time to go to Christ all alone. In our blessed Lord divine, there is peace and joy sublime when we take our sorrows all to him alone.”

Group-prayer at church is good. Family-prayer is also good. And so is praying with one’s mate. But there is really nothing like a Christian’s being all alone with God in prayer. We can tell Him everything. We can say it just the way we feel. We don’t have to be concerned about what others think or how much of their time we are consuming. We don’t have to bother them with things that concern only ourselves and God. In these “alone-with-the-Lord” sessions we can have the very closest communion, and we can see why the altar of incense (Old Testament type of prayer) was the nearest place to the Holy of Holies! We can take our time. We can search our hearts. We can talk things over as friend with Friend. We can do what we feel like doing even when we wouldn’t do the same when praying with others. Sometimes it is good just to bow quietly before the Lord, ask Him to receive you in Jesus’ name, and sweetly and lovingly converse with Him. Oh, the blessing sometimes of meaningfully and personally saying the words of certain songs to the Lord, like, “My Jesus, I love Thee; I know Thou

art mine. For Thee all the follies of sin I resign. My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou. If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now. I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me and purchased my pardon on Calvary’s tree; I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow. If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now.” And then as other similarly appropriate songs come to your mind, say them over to God personally. Oh, what a season of refreshing your soul will have from the Lord! Try it. You will see. And when you pray like that, all alone, you know you are sincere about it. You are not praying because others are. You are not praying because others hear you. You are praying because you want to, and you are praying to God to be heard of Him.

3. Jesus Prayed When He was Getting Popular.

The many, many miracles of His great Galilean Ministry seemed to climax in His feeding the 5,000 with the 5 loaves and the 2 fishes. They wanted Him to become their king. With Him at the head they would react against Rome just as the courageous Maccabees had in their inter-testament history period. John 6:15 says they were about to come and make Him king by force. What do we find Him doing that night? Praying (Luke 9:18).

Then there was the big day of miracles at Capernaum early in His ministry. The next morning they were all out seeking Him. He had attained a quick popularity with them. This was the morning of Mark 1:35 when He rose early in order to spend more time than usual in prayer. But this is not when many people pray.

Each of us has those times when things seem to be coming our way. That is the time to pray. When you get promoted, don’t forget prayer. When you are honored, pray. When people seem to love you and cling to you more than usual, don’t trade God for people! Pray. Jesus did.

4. Jesus Prayed Himself into Subjection to God’s Will.

One of the ways we could describe temptation would be a time when our own will is seeking to assert itself in opposition to God’s will. And don’t forget that Satan is a tempter. He tempted Jesus in

three strong temptations immediately after His baptism (Matt. 4). He tempted Him again through Peter (Matt. 16:23). And in Gethsemane He was seeking to make Jesus' will something different from the Father's. We see this when Jesus prayed, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). The coming ordeal of the cross was the greatest test of Jesus' obedience. He knew beforehand what it would be. When a part of the Godhead, He shared in the facts about the crucifixion written ahead of time in Psa. 22, which begins, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But He found power in prayer--power to help Him submit when nothing else could help.

Why don't you come to grips with yourself and the will of God through prayer--if you are a child of God, of course? Maybe at this very time you are tempted to drop out of the church. Maybe things aren't going just as well there as they should. But would quitting be God's will? If it isn't, pray, "Not my will, but thine, be done." You may be tempted not to preach when you have already started out to preach. What is the matter? Why not pray for the Lord to make you a preacher in spite of all the difficulties you have encountered?

Ephraim prayed that his fellow-Christians at Colosse would "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12). Is it this way with your life, or are several things "out of step" with the will of God? Please let me ask, "Just what part of God's will do you know you have not bowed to? Or what duty have you been running from, and you know it? Or what important, spiritual decision have you been putting off and putting off?" Won't you follow Jesus'

example and sincerely take these matters to the Lord in prayer? You will find "grace to help" in your time of "need" (Heb. 4:16).

And what about prayer itself? It is a part of God's will. Are you spending enough time in prayer? Are you earnest enough in your praying? Are you complete enough in the things you pray about? Are you sincere enough? Are you accomplishing enough through your prayers? These are heart-questions. What is your answer?

In closing let us give special notice to the appropriateness of Rom. 3:10-13,18. That is the passage that begins, "There is none righteous, no, not one." And then it proceeds to specify some of the things that are universally wrong with each human being, and the first two things he mentions are: "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Doesn't the preaching done in this rally help these statements be realized as never before? We have not understood as we should. We have not had spiritual understanding. We have not been as spiritually discerning as we should. Oh, don't you feel this way at times when you meditate on the greatness of God, His majesty, His mighty power, His omniscient wisdom, and His great plan? We have nothing to be proud about--we grasp so very little of God's total. No wonder, then, that none of us seeks God as we should. This is a serious charge but true. As we study the prayer life of Jesus, let us get some more spiritual understanding; let us truly seek God as we should. In short let us follow His teaching and His example. Let us pray as He prayed. Let us pray as we should and as we can!

Let Us Restore Prayer as 100% as We have Baptism

By LAFE CULVER

“And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance...And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works that he had done for Israel” (Judg. 2:6-10).

The period of the judges in Israel’s history was saturated with the evidence of SPIRITUAL DECAY! One cannot study the book of Judges without being impressed with the sin-bondage-anguish-repentance-deliverance cycle of their history. One might blame it on the lack of respect for authority for, “in those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 21:25). Yet our initial text, I believe, reveals the real cause, the true underlying problem: “And there arose another generation after them which KNEW NOT THE LORD.” Now who was to blame for this situation? Obviously the parents! Like many of our parents today, they had taught their children everything but the Lord. They had educated them in every necessity but the need of their soul. They had fed them well-balanced and nutritional meals and at the same time starved their souls. They had provided every necessity for their young people but the spiritual necessities. Is not this same attitude prevalent today? It is the curse of America and the plague of the church! We have turned out a generation of well-fed, educated, and pampered UNBELIEVERS! We have hatched out (you cannot say “raised up”) a generation that does not know the Lord. We now have a generation “that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother” (Prov. 30:11). The same people who are wringing their hands and bemoaning the

wayward walk of today’s youth are the same parents who lived hypocritical lives before their children. They are the same people who never studied the Bible at home with their family. They are the same people who have seldom if ever knelt in prayer with their own offspring. They were parents who were too busy amassing material goods and too busy fussing with their neighbors and fighting with people in the church to take care of the matter of teaching their own flesh and blood to KNOW THE LORD!

The same book that reveals what our problems are also gives us the solution to those problems regardless of whether it is on the scale of home, church, community, or nation. “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (II Chron. 7:14). We will never solve our problems unless we follow this formula. Until we restore these spiritual practices in our hearts and homes, we will continue to suffer an endless chain of disappointments and defeats. If we repent and pray, if we start putting first things first, if we humble ourselves and cry out to God for help, He will forgive us and heal our land.

Many people seem to be unaware of the fact that there is a constant war raging about them as unseen forces grapple for possession of their souls. Israel was not aware of any war going on the day that Moses died on Mt. Nebo, yet Jude 9 reveals that Michael, the archangel, was at that very time contending with the devil over the body of Moses. Daniel was not aware of why his prayer was not being answered until an angel came and told him Satanic forces delayed him from coming to Daniel for 21 days (Dan. 10:1-21). An unseen spiritual war rages around your head like a swarm of angry mosquitoes as demonic forces grapple for the control of your mind, trying to dictate the eventual damnation of your soul. Satan circles the saint, seeking for an opportunity to thrust his fiery darts between the cracks in one’s

spiritual armor. If one could suddenly make this spiritual battle physically apparent, there would be more fireworks than a 4th of July celebration! How the ground would shudder and tremble as Satanic forces clashed with the Angelic hosts of God! Christian friend, this battle is going on around you right now! As you stand in the amphitheater of life, a fight-to-the-finish is in progress. The victorious saints of the past make up a cheering crowd, urging you to be faithful to the last (Heb. 12:1). How we need to **PRAY FERVENTLY** once we are aware of such circumstances.

But I hear someone say, "Now really, preacher, are you sure all that is going on in the unseen world?" Yes, friend, I am sure that all that is going on and a whole lot more. Do you believe your body is being shot full of needle-size holes right at this moment? Scientists tell us it is true. Cosmic rays constantly bombard us from outer space though we are physically unaware of it. How many radio waves do you think are in this auditorium right now? They are there all the time whether or not we have a set to receive them. The atmosphere and ionosphere are literally bouncing with radio waves on a hundred different frequencies. If you had powerful enough electronic equipment, think of how many AM and FM stations could be picked up in this room--and if you had enough sets, you could have them all playing at once. Add to that all the stations or channels that CB operators could pick up. Add to that all the conversations that could be going on if Ham operators had their equipment set up too. Man has filled this room with hundreds of competing and confusing radio waves. Messages are being transmitted that go right through houses and buildings with no trouble at all. If man can land on the moon and at the same time converse with his friends back on earth, why would we find it hard to believe God can hear us when we pray? The many testimonies and obvious proofs of answered prayer demand a better explanation than that of just coincidence! When we pray in Jesus' name, we have a 'hot-line to Heaven"! Satan's interference can be blasted out of the way just as easily as a station of 50,000 watts can come booming in and drown out a feeble station of 1,000 watts. And to think that with all these blessed promises and privileges, **WE STILL DO NOT PRAY!** If there is any sight that troubles Satan, it is to see a saint of God on his or her knees. Obviously he will do everything possible to keep us

from praying as we ought, for once we come to God in prayer, the devil loses his advantage over us.

Prayer needs to be restored. Prayer needs to be preached on just as we have preached on baptism because the rest of the world has overlooked the importance of this basic truth. But what can be done to help us restore prayer? I have two basic suggestions.

1. Get Convicted.

I was somewhat apprehensive when I saw the theme of this year's rally. An entire rally on prayer? Would people come for such a concentrated assault on their prayer lives? The size of the crowds at these services has caused my faith in God's people to be reassured. However, I am sure there are a good number of people who are not here who sorely need to hear these messages. I know of no better way to get convicted than come to a rally like this. No preacher can prepare a series of messages on prayer like we have heard and not be self-incriminated. No honest person can hear the messages on prayer we have heard and not feel deeply convicted. I can think of no better way to be convicted than have a brief running-review of all the preceding messages. And were you not convicted during the sincere sharing of ideas at the various discussion groups?

Brother Word certainly got the rally off to a convicting start with his message, "Just Why Should We Pray?" "Fasting and prayer is out and feasting and playing is in!" was one of his open statements. I'm afraid that fits too many churches. He rebuked us for our laziness and observed that most people would rather visit than pray. How true! How many times have we stayed up late visiting with old friends and then slighted our prayer life before we fell into bed? He gave us a series of questions that said, "Before you went into that worldly act, **DID YOU PRAY? IF YOU HAD PRAYED**, would you have done it?" He observed also that some people pray so repetitiously that they might as well send a tape-recording to services in their place. Who hasn't heard one of these "Cassette Christians" who pray like a tape recording? Some of them would probably feel right at home spinning a Buddhist monk's prayer wheel.

Brother Reyman's message, "Just Why We Don't Pray," was certainly enlightening. It seems his personal poll of Christians revealed a common excuse

for not praying: "We just forget." I am thankful he scorched us with Scriptures on the sin of forgetfulness. How true was the statement, "People remember the things they really care about!" That should stab every careless heart here! If you love someone, you just do not forget!

Then came Brother Weller's charge and challenge, "You are not Spending Enough Time in Prayer." When he passed out those slips to be filled out, and we were asked some very personal questions about our prayer life, it was very convicting. Who among us can say he is satisfied with his prayer life? He urged us to analyze what was our biggest hindrance, get rid of it, and then get down to the business of improvement.

We certainly needed Brother Prater's message, "You are not Earnest Enough in Your Prayers." How depressing it is to attend a dry, droning prayer meeting with long pauses between petitions. I am certain he convicted us all on the need for fasting and prayer. He pointed out that when we get desperate, we pray earnestly. What a shame as we are only earnest when the going gets rough.

Brother Reyman's second message emphasized God's promises and power in prayer. Time and space prohibit all that we could say. I especially recall the observation that many preachers who feel they must move to a different field just need to fast and pray for a couple of days and go back to work where they are!

Brother Hunt's message about our Lord's example was very stirring. If you truly want to feel convicted, just study Jesus' prayer life. An unforgettable question he asked was, "Has anyone ever asked you to teach him to pray?" No doubt we have failed to impress others with our prayer life. Another convicting observation was that we do not pray just because we don't like to! The flesh would rather do something else.

We were again convicted by Brother Reyman's message when he preached on not being thorough enough in our prayers. What a list of things he gave us to pray for! Then we were rebuked for not praying for those things that seem trivial or unimportant and also for ignoring requests that we might judge difficult for God to answer.

Brother Word's final message revealed just why our prayer meetings are so ineffective. How many of us come together to pray just out of a sense of duty! We come without faith, without repentance, and

without humility. He observed that some couples have a big fuss at home and then come to church and try to act spiritual.

Truly this has been a rally of deep conviction. I have sensed a spirit of contrition among us, especially during the discussion periods. We need to feel convicted because out of such feelings grow our CONVICTIONS! We preach, "Repent and be baptized," because Acts 2:38 convicts us of its importance. Let us not forget that the same book tells us, "Repent and pray", if our heart is not right in the sight of God (Acts 8:21,22). Let us begin preaching and practicing prayer like we do baptism! If we had a Scripture that said, "Baptize without ceasing", would we not pound that truth home? Would we demand that it be observed? Yes, we would, and you already know that we have that verse on prayer (I Thess. 5:17). We have just not been concerned enough to do much about it. What if God sent a divine messenger among us tonight to put a mark of preservation upon everyone here who was concerned enough to sigh and cry about our sins? What if the messenger only put a mark in the foreheads of those who had been EARNESTLY PRAYING? And then, just like Eze. 9 puts it, what if God sent His destroying angels to slaughter everyone who did not have the identifying mark? How few might survive such a test?

I believe if we sincerely repent and pray that our conviction will be contagious. Just as Ezra was so shocked over the abominations committed by his people that he wept and prayed, casting himself down in the presence of the people, and pulled out all his hair and yanked out his beard! Soon a great revival rumbled through the ranks of Israel, and people began to get right with God.

When we get convicted enough to get down on our knees and weep and pray, God will blast things wide open!

At this very time I sense a great depth of conviction among us. I feel all of us want to do something concrete to improve our prayer lives, so here is my final point:

2. Get Committed.

Get convicted, yes, but then get committed! You have been convicted over prayerlessness before. You promised yourself you were going to do better. But what usually happened? Gradually the conviction

drained away, and you slipped back into the old neglectful habits. I challenge you tonight to get committed! Set aside a special time to pray. Get a separate notebook and list all the preachers, churches, new works, training programs, relatives, etc. that you can think of, and start praying with a method. I challenge you to pray openly and honestly about your temptations and sins--NAME THEM IN PRIVATE! I challenge you to ask God to chasten you if it will help you be more spiritual. I challenge you parents to kneel down and pray earnestly with and for your children. I challenge you young couples to get Bible study and prayer established in your homes. I challenge you middle-aged people to set a definite time for prayer and do not let your work take it from you. I challenge you older people to deepen your prayer lives. I challenge my fellow preachers to go home and preach and practice lives of prayer.

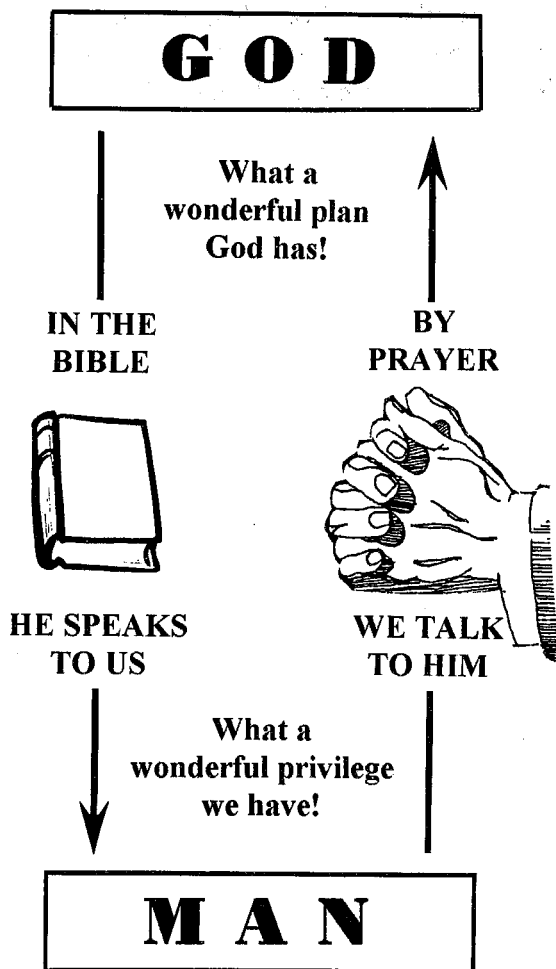
Now here is what I want you to do. If you are truly convicted and want to be committed, I want you to GO ON RECORD so the devil will not take this victory from you.

1. Stand up to indicate your desire to be committed (I will not think any less of you if you do not. Perhaps you have a better plan of your own.) Do not stand up if you do not plan to do anything in a definite way.

2. Ask someone to be your prayer-partner. Have some family or individual phone you each week to see how you are doing. Most of us are too sensitive to have anyone inquire uninvited, but if we request it, they will feel obligated to do so.

Brethren, if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knows how far we have slipped. Get committed RIGHT NOW!

**THE 2-WAY COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN
MAN AND HIS CREATOR/JUDGE**



The thought presented in this diagram is not new, but it is true and very significant.

In the Bible God is speaking to us just as in prayer we are talking to God. Realizing this will help us be more serious about our Bible study and our praying. God IS talking to us, and we ARE talking to God.

God is our Creator and Judge. Each person is God's by right of creation: "Remember thy Creator" (Eccl. 12:1); therefore, "give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord..." (Psa. 29:2). And each person will render an account of himself to God (Rom. 14:11,12).

Why do we pray to God using Jesus' name (John 16:23,24; Col. 3:17)? Because He is the mediator between God and us (I Tim. 2:5; John 14:6). It is because of our sins that we are not worthy to go to God directly but must go to Him through a mediator. And it is evidently for the same reason that God does not speak to us directly but through inspired ones whose words are in the Bible (Heb. 1:1,2).

This is a wonderfully devised system of God communicating with us, and for us it is a wonderful privilege to hear God and to get to talk with Him!