

Don't Underestimate Your Prayers

Ephesians 6:18 KJV Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

I. INTRODUCTION -- PRAYER

A. Quotes on Prayer

Guy H. King—No one is a firmer believer in prayer than the devil; not that he practices it but that he suffers from it.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones—Prayer demands no special dress. Prayer demands no special place. Prayer demands no special eloquence. Prayer demands no special scholarship. Prayer never struts. Prayer seeks no applause. Prayer defies definition. Prayer eludes explanation. Prayer is birthed in time, but it grasps eternity. Prayer strengthens the weak and weakens the strong. Prayer touches the power of the world to come. It avails because it prevails. Our ultimate position as Christians is tested by the power of our prayer life.

Leonard Ravenhill—There are, I am sure, acres of undiscovered truth about prayer in the Bible. Prayer is the most unexplored area of the Christian life. Prayer is the most powerful weapon of the Christian life. Prayer is the most hell-feared battle in the Christian life. Prayer is the most secret device of the Christian life. Prayer is the most underestimated power in the Christian life. Prayer is the most untaught truth in the Christian life. Prayer is the most demanding exercise in the Christian life. Prayer is the most neglected responsibility in the Christian life. Prayer is the most conquering outreach in the Christian life. Prayer is the most opposed warfare in the Christian life. Prayer is the most far-reaching ministry in the Christian life.

B. Personal Thought on Prayer

It has been at least 20 years ago that I was encouraged to do a particular activity with my own personal prayer life. With that admission, I am realizing how quickly that time passes by and that the clock never slows down its march. A good friend of mine, Brent Rashall, who at the time was assisting his father in the Woodlands, a suburb of Houston, told me that there are elements in a place of prayer that we can literally

move things. Obviously being those things that are the will of God.

He told me that there are times in prayer that you will get down and begin to pray and after a little while, you break into that realm of the Spirit where Heaven almost seems to be at attention. These times are always marked by tongues and a strong sense of the presence of God.

What happens to most of us when we get into this particular place of prayer is that we spend about 5-10 minutes there and then end our prayer meeting. We do that because we have received much encouragement in our own spirit and feel as if God has answered our prayers to which there is enough evidence that this has happened. But there is an element of going beyond this little episode. It is moving beyond that place of encouragement and literally began to push back the forces that oppose us, our families, and the apostolic Church.

I can distinctly remember him telling me that when you find yourself in that place of prayer to refuse the temptation to stop your prayer. There is a place in the world of the Spirit that we can become an incredible force for God and see

Him accomplish so much. The challenge for most of us is that we far too often underestimate the power of our own prayers. The devil does his best to discourage our efforts at pressing beyond. In fact if he can keep us prayer-less, he will resort to every trick he has in his proverbial bag.

-Let me encourage you to press your prayers as you never have before. There are mighty things that can happen when you do this:

- This kind of prayer is mountain moving prayer (Mark 11:23).
- This kind of prayer is what enlarges us in our distress (Psalm 4:1).
- This kind of prayer refuses the hindrances of the edicts written by kings (Daniel 6:10).
- This kind of prayer avenges us of our adversaries (Luke 18:1-7).
- This kind of prayer releases captives from their prisons (Acts 12:5).
- This kind of prayer is a continuing prayer that bolsters hope and waits out tribulation (Romans 12:12).
- This kind of prayer does not cease (1 Thess. 5:17).
- This kind of praying wrestles down blessings and transformation (Genesis 32:24-28).

- This is the kind of praying that causes us to receive the crumbs that fall from the Master's table (Matt. 15:25-28).
- This is the kind of praying that will get bread at midnight (Luke 11:5-8).

-This is the kind of prayer that puts you on the front-lines of the battle.

- It is crying prayer.
- It is loud prayer.
- It is pleading prayer.
- It is sweating prayer.
- It is stout prayer.
- It is unwavering prayer.
- It is confident prayer.

-We have not done it in long time, but it probably would do us good if about one Saturday night every other month that we spent all night in prayer as we did a number of years ago. Pair that up with our prayer revivals that are now taking place the first part of every month and it would astound us.

-I remember well coming to the Church and manning the 1 to 3 AM slot. See, all of that was part of my own spiritual development!

-I really had no idea what God was doing I just felt like that I wanted to help pray this Church in the direction of a heart-felt, joyous, and prevailing revival. We can do it again! The spiritual potential is unlimited when a lot of saints get their souls in gear to pray for a global move of revival to take place.

II. THE TEXT—EPHESIANS 6:18

-Consider with me this text that we read. It culminates a portion about the spiritual war that every saint is involved in. Paul lists all the parts of the armor, the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit.

-Then he tacks on the powerful assistance that prayer brings to us in this fight.

Ephesians 6:18 WEYMOUTH Pray with unceasing prayer . . . on every fitting occasion in the Spirit, and be always on the alert to seize opportunities for doing so, with unwearied persistence and entreaty on behalf of all God's people,

Ephesians 6:18 MOFFATT Praying at all times in the Spirit. . . be alive to that, attend to it unceasingly. . .

Ephesians 6:18 J B PHILLIPS . . . pray at all times with every kind of spiritual prayer, keeping alert and persistent as you pray for all Christ's men and women.

Ephesians 6:18 AMP Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God's consecrated people).

Ephesians 6:18 MESSAGE . . . prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

III. PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS

A. Why Pray at All?

-Why pray? If God already knows how it is going to turn out, then the humanistic conclusion would be to ask why should we even pray at all?

Suffice it to say that first of all that prayer is a commandment. There are multiple biblical references that encourage us to pray—Luke 18:1; Luke 21:36; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Colossians 4:2; and 1 Peter 4:7.

Secondly, one can see from numerous examples in the Bible that men changed the course of history with their praying—Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Samson, and David are just a few.

-Sitting in this congregation, I am certain that some of you would testify to the fact of God answering prayers that you have prayed in the past. That should simply be enough of a motivation for us to pray—not so God can become a cosmic Santa Claus—but to fulfill the purpose of God in the earth.

-There is an ability given to us by God and empowered by the Holy Ghost that will help a saint or a Church to push through the difficulties and obstacles that come to us in the course of serving. It forces Satan and his outnumbered hordes back and it fulfills the will of God in the earth.

B. The Benefits of Prayer

-There are a number of benefits that come to us when we give ourselves to prayer.

1. The Salvation of Souls

-Our efforts at prevailing prayer allows the Lord to draw men to the Church. When a Church starts praying for the lost, God will convict their conscience. That hidden preacher will suddenly come to life and trouble them.

Romans 2:15 KJV Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

-This where the real battle takes place. . . in the heart and the mind of those who are lost. . . this is why the devil will do his best to deaden their mind and kill their conscience. Serious prayer can help save even the man who is in the darkest place.

-I am encouraging you to not give up in your praying for those who are lost—whether backslidden, cold, lukewarm, indifferent, or have never been filled with the Spirit—keep on praying for them! You must. . . .

E.M. Bounds—Fire is the life of prayer; heaven is reached by flaming importunity rising in an ascending scale.

-Put some passion in your prayer! God will never be moved by listless, dull, boring, and spiritually lazy prayer. . . God responds to the authority that His saints demonstrate in their prayer. . . It is not their authority so much as it is the authority of faith! If you believe that God can answer the prayer, it pours more faith into what you are praying!

I heard Brother John Harrell of Bridge City, Texas tell of a church up in the piney woods of east Texas that begin to have a tremendous breakthrough revival. An evangelist came in and they started their series of meetings and from the beginning of the meeting, all sorts of people started coming to the Church. Backsliders coming out of the woodworks and folk who had never before received the Holy Ghost started praying through. After about a month of it, the pastor could not understand what or why the revival had hit like it had.

One day he was down praying and began to question the Lord about it. During that prayer time, the Lord prompted his mind to one of the quietest little ladies who had been a saint for a

long time. That night at the service, the pastor slipped around to her and conveyed to her what had happened that morning when he was praying. He then asked her if she had some explanation for what it.

The little lady broke down and started crying and told him that for well over a year, that she had been writing down the names of all the guests who had been coming to Church and during the week at her house she would get down and pray over all the names. . . it took her a little over a year but God brought a revival to that Church that to this day has been unrivalled. It took Elijah seven times to muster up that cloud but he did not quit until they had been doused with rain. . . He did not quit. . . . YOU CAN'T EITHER!!!!!!!

2. Overcoming the World and Our Flesh

-A saint who prays will find that he is not as susceptible to worldly seductions. Although the Bible gives some examples of men who had temporary setbacks, prayer can do much to help us overcome the wayward voices of the world.

1 John 5:4 KJV For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

-To accomplish this kind of praying, we will have to overcome our own carnal nature and its tendencies to minimize spiritual things. Praying to overcome the world can be spiritually exhausting. . . until you can get into that “zone” for lack of a better term.

-Far too many are spiritually anemic and weak because they cannot prevail in prayer for more than just a few minutes. You cannot afford to hold back and not be involved in prayer, it is your life source in the Spirit.

-Prayer helps us. . .

- To overcome the intimidation of being the godly leader in our homes, our job, and the Church.
- To have boldness to confront those whining inner Jezebels that compromise our spiritual power.
- To ignore critical words spoken about us.
- To fight off the spiritual tendencies of a Saul who would kill David because of his jealousy over his success.

- To stir up the gift that God has placed within us.
- To honor and uphold holiness and righteousness that God longs for in us.
- To fight against the defeated, pessimistic spirit that often traps our faith.
- To overcome the choking materialism that destroyed Balaam.
- To determine to live on a higher spiritual plane at all times.
- To overcome malicious gossip that could discourage us.

-When a saint starts exploring these areas and gains the victory over them, suddenly there is a hunger to pray. . . there will be a time of rejoicing for the extra time in prayer. . . there will be a willingness to sacrifice other things so that you can pray. . . don't underestimate the power of your prayers.

-Prayer can change the way that you think!

IV. CONCLUSION—DON'T LOSE HEART WITH YOUR PRAYING

-I dare say that every one of us get weary sometimes with pressing on with our prayers. To a man among us, we cannot afford to quit our

praying. . . . 2010 is going to be a remarkable year for this Church. . . . There will be things happen here that will amaze us but we have to keep the prayer commitment ratcheted up.

-Brother Fred Childs pastors a church up in Illinois and I was recently given a copy of a book that he wrote compiling some of the notable miracles that he had either experienced or had been in contact with in his life.

-One of those had to do with prayer and I am certain it will be an encouragement to you to keep praying.

It took place in the early '80's. The church they attended had been on a year-long prayer effort for revival both locally and globally. During this year, both he and his wife had developed a much disciplined prayer life. As the year drew to a close they decided to take a vacation and in turned into a disaster. Car trouble and foul weather delayed them in getting back to the Beaumont, Texas area after a trek to the Smoky Mountains.

As they started back, both Brother and Sister Childs begin to feel the pressure because of an enormous work load that would be awaiting

them at the office. In addition they were limping back home on a car that was mechanically unsound.

Both were missing their prayer time at the Church. Actually the more disciplined your prayer life becomes the more effective that it becomes and the more you miss it. He writes, "If you have not been praying effectively you never miss it, but when you have been praying consistently and get away from it you really begin to long for it, but it seemed as if everything on the trip was designed to keep them from praying. Our frustration level was building every day."

They were riding with an uncle to Fulton, Mississippi and it was sleeting and travel was becoming difficult. Brother and Sister Childs were riding in the backseat and finally he leaned over and whispered to her about how frustrated and weary that he was. He told her that he really felt like they were fighting the devil and hell at the same time. So they decided that what they would do was pray that someone at their church in Beaumont would feel a burden to pray for them.

They got home late on a Friday night and on Saturday morning, out of desperation they went to the prayer meeting at 10 A.M. After the prayer

meeting, a brother in the church came up to him and asked how the vacation went and Brother Childs told him that it had been terrible and the man then said something to the effect that he was glad they were home. He then told him that he had seen him earlier in the week at the prayer revival but did not get a chance to speak to him. Brother Childs told the brother that actually he had not been there as he had only gotten home late on Friday night.

On Sunday morning Brother Childs' brother, Joel, came up to him and asked him about the vacation and he told him that it had been a horrific affair. Then Joel mentioned that he seen him earlier in the week at the prayer revival but had not gotten the opportunity to speak to him before he left. Brother Childs is now dumbfounded and tells Joel that he did not get in until late on Friday night and it was impossible for him to have been at the prayer meeting.

Joel was shocked and began to tell Brother Childs that he was indeed at the prayer meeting. Because he knelt down beside him just like he always had and that he took out his handkerchief just like he always had and prayed beside him for one hour just like he had for the whole year. Brother Childs told him that it was impossible

because he hadn't even been in the state during that time. Joel then told him, "I know I saw you because you waved at me when you were leaving."

Brother Childs was astounded and then he started putting it together. On the night that he had been "seen" at the prayer meeting was when he and Sister Childs had been praying in the car hoping that someone would intercede for them.

Brother Childs would later find that a host of credible witnesses saw him praying in Beaumont, Texas when he was in a car heading to Mississippi.

Hebrews 13:2 KJV Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Amazingly an angel was manifested in a prayer meeting to pray for his needs. . . Our faith needs to grow to a level that doesn't resist the awesome potential of our God!

-Keep praying. . . .