

Everyday, Part 3

We're starting 2010 with a series called "EVERYDAY" - so we can learn (or relearn!) some of the biblical steps that build us into disciples. None of them are dramatic. None of them are quick fixes. And none of them work if we only do them sporadically or if we quit after a week or two. But all of them are powerful if we just take a few minutes "EVERYDAY" to invest strategically in the only part of our life that will outlive our life! Some things you just need to do EVERYDAY.

Today we want to talk about the second of "5 discipleship habits" ...

ENLIST (ministry) VOICE (prayer) EXTEND (evangelism) READ (Bible)

YIELD (time, talent, treasure)

Romans 10:8-11 ⁸ But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; ⁹ That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

The answer to what we need is NEARER than what we ever could have hoped – WE JUST NEED TO VOICE IT!

David learned a key spiritual concept during his life that helped him get strength from God in his trials and silence his enemies, something so simple that even a small child can practice it!

Psalms 8:2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

Because the devil launches so MANY attacks against the children of God, the Lord has given us ONE weapon that will stand strong in the face of every assault and silence the enemy every time! Jesus referred to this same concept during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. As He came into the city and the people began to realize WHO JESUS WAS, they began to enthusiastically praise Him!

Matthew 21:16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

Notice that DAVID said "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength" while

JESUS said “out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.” Jesus did not misquote David; rather He interpreted the Scripture and explained the truth David had discovered. THERE IS SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH LOOSED ON OUR BEHALF WHEN WE PRAISE GOD! Your simple act of praise is bigger than you are, because it connects with a God who is bigger than you are! Praise accomplishes what we cannot accomplish, because it LAUNCHES SPIRITUAL WEAPONS at the enemy that demolish his strength and silence his voice. The Bible teaches that the MOUTH is the center of spiritual warfare! The mouth can either launch the DEVIL’S weapons or GOD’S weapons.

Proverbs 18:21 **Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.**

Deuteronomy 30:14-15 **But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;**

Psalms 89:1 **I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.**

Psalms 149:6 **Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;**

The word “high” in this verse means “to rise up, to get one’s self up, to lift one’s self up” (the word “praise” is not even there, just implied). Literally, get some “get up and go” in your mouth!

But with all the powerful things that praise can do, there is one thing that it CANNOT do. Voicing praise will never replace voicing PRAYER!

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

1 Timothy 2:1 **I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;**

Prayer and praise are not meant to compete with each other, but to complement each other. But while we have made great strides in the realm of worship, PRAYER IS A DYING ART IN THE CHURCH! We can talk all day on the phone or spend hours counseling with someone who can’t do anything about our problem, but we have a hard time praying for five minutes to the One who can fix it! We can survive without many things in life, but we can’t survive spiritually without prayer!

Matthew 6:10 **Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.**

God’s will is ALWAYS done in heaven, but SELDOM done in earth. Why? Because that depends on PRAYER! It depends on your VOICE!

No wonder this has become Satan's entire strategy to deceive the human race for 6000 years – don't call on the Lord! Be clever, be organized, plan a lot, depend on talent and technology, but don't use your VOICE to talk to God! The devil is not the least bit afraid of our best human efforts, but what he really gets scared of is when we lift up our hands, our hearts and our voices to call on the name of the Lord. It has always been the sign of God's people that they call on the Lord and He answers. But all bets are off if we don't call on the Lord! There's not a promise in the Bible that works if we don't call on the Lord!

THE CHURCH WAS BORN IN A PRAYER MEETING! Does it bother anyone that today prayer meeting is the worst attended service in most churches – if they even have a prayer meeting?! We have parents who get all upset because they don't allow prayer in schools, but they never bring their kids to prayer meeting at church! They didn't have prayer in first century Roman schools – but the church called on the name of the Lord! The political figures of the first century were more corrupt than anything you can imagine, and yet you don't see Paul wringing his hands in worry – the church just called on the Lord! They used their VOICE!

God is not interested in our excuses; all He wants to know is, "Are you going to be a people who VOICE their prayer and praise?" Do you long to see God let loose in His church? Do you love the presence of God? If not, why would God ever let you go to Heaven? That's all there is in Heaven! If you don't crave the presence of God, it doesn't matter what doctrine you believe, you are not a New Testament Christian!

Acts 2:42 **And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

- We didn't start out with as much "class" as we think we have today! First, it was 120 people about 2000 years ago who worshipped so intensely that they appeared drunk to onlookers! We are their descendents!

Acts 2:15-16 **For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;**

Next, it was 60 people about 100 years ago in a decrepit old building at 312 Azusa Street in the industrial part of Los Angeles. The revival they had ran non-stop in day and night prayer meetings for over three years!

In 1905 William J. Seymour, a one-eyed 34 year old son of former slaves, was an interim pastor for a small holiness church in Houston, Texas. Neely Terry, who attended a small holiness church pastored by Julia Hutchins in Los Angeles, made a trip to visit family in Houston late in 1905. While in Houston,

she visited Seymour's church, where he preached the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the Evidence of speaking in tongues, and though he had not experienced this personally, Terry was impressed with his character and message. Once home in California, Terry suggested that Seymour be invited to speak at the local church.

Seymour arrived in Los Angeles on February 22, 1906, and within two days was preaching at Julia Hutchins' church. During his first sermon, he preached that speaking in tongues was the first Biblical evidence of the inevitable baptism in the Holy Spirit. On the following Sunday, March 4, he returned to the church and found that Hutchins had padlocked the door. However, not all members of Hutchins' church rejected Seymour's preaching. He was invited to stay in the home of congregation member Edward S. Lee, and he began to hold Bible studies and prayer meetings. Seymour and his small group of new followers soon relocated to the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry, at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street. Families from local Holiness Churches began to attend as well. The group would get together regularly and pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. On April 9, 1906, after five weeks of Seymour's preaching and prayer, and three days into an intended 10-day fast, Edward S. Lee spoke in tongues for the first time. At the next meeting, Seymour shared Lee's testimony and preached a sermon on Acts 2:4 and soon six others began to speak in tongues as well, including Jennie Moore, who would later become Seymour's wife. A few days later, on April 12, Seymour spoke in tongues for the first time, after praying all night long.

News of the events at North Bonnie Brae St. quickly circulated among the residents of the city, and for several nights, various speakers would preach to the crowds of curious and interested onlookers from the front porch of the Asberry home. Members of the audience included people from a broad spectrum of income levels and religious backgrounds. Hutchins eventually spoke in tongues as her whole congregation began to attend the meetings. Soon the crowds became very large and were full of people speaking in tongues, shouting, singing and moaning. Finally, the front porch collapsed, forcing the group to begin looking for a new meeting place. A resident of the neighborhood described the happenings at 214 North Bonnie Brae with the following words:

“They shouted three days and three nights. It was Easter season. The people came from everywhere. By the next morning there was no way of getting near the house. As people came in they would fall under God's power; and the whole city was stirred. They shouted until the foundation of the house gave way, but no one was hurt.”

The group from Bonnie Brae Street eventually discovered an available building at 312 Azusa Street, which had originally been constructed as an African Methodist Episcopal Church in what was then a black ghetto part of town. The rent was \$8.00 per month. Since the church had moved out, the building had served as a wholesale house, a warehouse, a lumberyard, stockyards, a tombstone

shop, and had most recently been used as a stable with rooms for rent upstairs. The only sign that it had once been a house of God was a single gothic-style window over the main entrance. Discarded lumber and plaster littered the large, barn-like room on the ground floor. Nonetheless, it was secured and cleaned in preparation for services. They held their first meeting on April 14, 1906.

Frank Bartleman, an early participant in the revival, recalled that "Brother Seymour generally sat behind two empty shoe boxes, one on top of the other. He usually kept his head inside the top one during the meeting, in prayer. There was no pride there ... in that old building, with its low rafters and bare floors ..."

By mid-May 1906, anywhere from 300 to 1,500 people would attempt to fit into the building. People from a diversity of backgrounds came together to worship: men, women, children, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, rich, poor, illiterate, and educated. People of all ages flocked to Los Angeles with both skepticism and a desire to participate. The intermingling of races and the group's encouragement of women in leadership was remarkable, as 1906 was the height of the "Jim Crow" era of racial segregation, and fourteen years prior to women receiving suffrage in the United States.

Worship at 312 Azusa Street was frequent and spontaneous, with services going almost around the clock. The Los Angeles Times and other newspapers were not kind in their description:

"Meetings are held in a tumble-down shack on Azusa Street, and the devotees of the weird doctrine practice the most fanatical rites, preach the wildest theories and work themselves into a state of mad excitement in their peculiar zeal. The night is made hideous in the neighborhood by the howlings of the worshippers, who spend hours swaying forth and back in a nerve racking attitude of prayer and supplication. They claim to have the "gift of tongues" and be able to understand the babel."

"There is a disgraceful intermingling of the races ... they cry and make howling noises all day and into the night. They run, jump, shake all over, shout to the top of their voice, spin around in circles, fall out on the sawdust blanketed floor jerking, kicking and rolling all over it. Some of them pass out and do not move for hours as though they were dead. These people appear to be mad, mentally deranged or under a spell.

They claim to be filled with the spirit. They have a one eyed, illiterate, Negro as their preacher who stays on his knees much of the time with his head hidden between the wooden milk crates. He doesn't talk very much but at times he can be heard shouting, 'Repent,' and he's supposed to be running the thing ... They repeatedly sing the same song, 'The Comforter Has Come.'"

Little could the subscribers of the Los Angeles Times have guessed that in years to come, historians

would say that the Azusa Street revival gave birth to modern Pentecostalism and became the most significant revival of the twentieth century in terms of world evangelism.

A prophecy was given during this revival, at some unknown point by some unknown person. Nearly a hundred years later, it sounds a warning for us in the Apostolic movement ...

“In the last days three things will happen in the great Pentecostal Movement ... there will be an overemphasis on power, rather than on righteousness; there will be an overemphasis on the gifts of the Spirit, rather than on the Lordship of Christ; there will be an overemphasis on praise, to a God they no longer pray to.”

- So the question is, are we going to be a DIFFERENT church than the book of Acts? Are we going to be a DIFFERENT church than the one at Azusa Street? Or are we going to be the SAME kind of church?

We already have the DOCTRINE that they preached – and it still works! But we are in desperate need of the DISCIPLESHIP that they had!

Ephesians 6:18-20 **Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

2 Chronicles 7:14 **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.**

Habakkuk 3:2 **O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.**

- (NIV – “renew them in our day, in our time make them known”) USE YOUR VOICE (PRAISE AND PRAYER) ... EVERYDAY!