

STUDIES IN 1 TIMOTHY

LAW NUMBER FOUR: "A Commitment to Leadership Is a Commitment to Prayer"

1 Timothy 2:1-8

Key Verse 2:1: "I am exhorting, therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made on behalf of all men."

TEXT:

v. 1 I am exhorting, therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made on behalf of all men,

v. 2 on behalf of kings and all those who are in a place of prominence, in order that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all piety and reverence.

v. 3 This is good and pleasing in the presence of God our Savior,

v. 4 who is desiring all men to be saved and to come to an experiential knowledge of the truth.

v. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus,

v. 6 who gave himself a ransom on behalf of all, which was to be attested to (the testimony) in its due seasons (at the right time).

v. 7 For which [testimony] I was appointed a herald and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) a teacher of Gentiles in faith and truth.

v. 8 I am desiring therefore that the men be praying in every place, lifting up holy hands, without anger or disputing (skeptical criticism).

INTRODUCTION:

OH, LORD, FORGIVE US . . .

A four-year-old fashioned his prayer after what he thought he heard in church. "And forgive us our trashbaskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

STANDING IN THE NEED OF PRAYER

A boy asked his politician father, "What does the chaplain of the Senate do?"

The realistic dad replied, "He stands up, looks at the Senators, and then prays for the country."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

SOMEBODY MISSED OUT

A small child attended church with his parents. When he knelt to say his prayers before going to bed that evening, he prayed: "Dear Lord, we had such a good time at church today. I wish You could have been there, too!"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

TOO LATE NOW

The minister of a church discovered at the last minute that he hadn't invited a devoted elderly member to attend his garden party. He called and asked her to come on over.

"It's no use," she informed him. "I've already prayed for rain."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

We are pursuing in this series of studies in 1 Timothy:
THE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP.

We have already considered:

LAW #1: "A Statement of Goal Is Essential in Leadership"

LAW #2: "Never Get Over the Privilege of Your Position"

LAW #3: "To Be a Leader You've Got to Be Willing to
Fight"

The greatest battles in the Christian faith are to FIND TIME
and to BE EFFECTIVE in the pursuit of the discipline of
prayer.

HINDERED BY SATAN

John Dorsey describes the devil's tactics in the following
poetic words:

"I had a battle fierce today
Within my place of prayer;
I went to meet and talk with God,
But I found Satan there.
He whispered, 'You can't really pray,
You lost out long ago;
You might say words while on your knees,
But you can't pray, you know.'
So then I pulled my helmet down,
Way down upon my ears,
And found it helped to still his voice
And helped allay my fears.
I checked my other armor o'er;
My feet in peace were shod;
My loins with truth were girded 'round;
My sword the Word of God.
My righteous breastplate still was on,
My heart's love to protect.
My shield of faith was all intact--
His fiery darts bounced back.
I called on God in Jesus' name,
I pled the precious blood--
While Satan sneaked away in shame,
I met and talked with God!"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

(The Set of the Sail by A. W. Tozer)

If we would be followers of Christ indeed we must become personally and vitally involved in His death and resurrection. And this requires repentance, prayer, watchfulness, self-denial, detachment from the world, humility, obedience and cross carrying. That is why it is easier to talk about revival than to experience it.

To avoid personal involvement with the cross we have become adept at finding or creating religious projects to soothe our conscience and make things look good. Among these may be named evangelism and foreign missions. These are good, scriptural activities, incumbent upon all Christians, but all presuppose that they who engage in them should be holy, Spirit-filled and totally committed to God.

To carry on these activities scripturally the church should be walking in fullness of power, separated, purified and ready at any moment to give up everything, even life itself, for the greater glory of Christ. For a worldly, weak, decadent church to make converts is but to bring forth after her own kind and extend her weakness and decadence a bit further out.

pp. 154-55

(The Hidden Value of a Man by Gary Smalley and John Trent)

History shows that at the beginning of every major revival, there has been a fresh realization of mankind's self-centered ways. When people finally understand how deeply they're concerned about pleasing themselves and how little they care about pleasing God, they begin to fall on their knees in repentance and seek each other's forgiveness.

Almost immediately they go to their brothers and sisters, people in their churches, people in their neighborhoods and towns, and seek reconciliation. It's such a stunning, supernatural turn of events that it pierces to the heart of any community. And then the dam breaks, releasing a great torrent of God's grace and power.

It's time for a group of bold men to say, "I've had enough of this love affair with myself. I'm going to repent. I'm going to swim against this irresponsible, playboy current of my culture.

pp. 100-1

(Laugh Again by Charles R. Swindoll)

Among other things she wrote:

Humor has done a lot to help me in my spiritual life. How could I have reared twelve children, starting at age 32, and not have had a sense of humor? After your talk last night I was enjoying some relaxed moments with friends I met here. I told them I got married at age 31. I didn't worry about getting married; I left my future in God's hands. But I must tell you, every night I hung a pair of men's pants on my bed and knelt down to pray this prayer:

Father in heaven, hear my prayer,
And grant it if you can;
I've hung a pair of trousers here,
Please fill them with a man.

The following Sunday I read that humorous letter to our congregation and they enjoyed it immensely. I happened to notice the different reactions of a father and his teenaged son. The dad laughed out loud, but the son seemed preoccupied. On that particular Sunday the mother of this family had stayed home with their sick daughter. Obviously neither father nor son mentioned the story, because a couple of weeks later I received a note from the mother:

I am wondering if I should be worried about something. It has to do with our son. For the last two weeks I have noticed that before our son turns the light out and goes to sleep at night, he hangs a woman's bikini over the foot of his bed. . . . Should I be concerned about this?

I assured her there was nothing to worry about. And I am pleased to announce that the young man recently married, so maybe the swimsuit idea works.
p. 21

(Purpose in Prayer by E. M. Bounds)

The prayers of God's saints are the capital stock in Heaven by which Christ carries on His great work upon earth. The great throes and mighty convulsions on earth are the results of these prayers. Earth is changed, revolutionized, angels move on more powerful, more rapid wing, and God's policy is shaped as the prayers are more numerous, more efficient.
p. 8

(Knowing Christ by S. Craig Glickman)

In this attitude, He once again left us an example to follow. Had he chosen to pray for angels to save Him, He would have ended His prayer with, "if it be Thy will." For he recognized that prayer is a request, and, like all requests, it may be either granted or denied. But had He leaped from the Temple, He would not have requested but demanded that the angels save Him. And He refused to "(PUT TO THE TEST) THE LORD (HIS) GOD." If He were to ask the Father to act, He would wait for the Father to answer.

Similarly, we also should regard our prayer requests of the Father. We must never imagine that we can say certain magical words which force God to serve us. As children speaking to their Father, we must realize He is free to grant or deny the requests we make. Of course, some requests He has already promised to answer. He has promised forgiveness, for example, to everyone who asks with faith in Christ. But even a request like this, which He has already promised to answer, is not granted because we say magical words, but because we ask in faith. The other requests we make, which He has not explicitly promised to answer, we must leave to His wisdom and timing--even requests for things altogether necessary and appropriate.
pp. 42-43

(The Kneeling Christian by an unknown Christian)

We may rest fully assured of this--a man's influence in the world can be gauged not by his eloquence, or his zeal, or his orthodoxy, or his energy, but by his prayers. Yes, and we will go farther and maintain that no man can live aright who does not pray aright.
p. 22

(Purpose in Prayer by E. M. Bounds)

Thus, in every circumstance of life, prayer is the most natural outpouring of the soul, the unhindered turning to God for communion and direction. Whether in sorrow or in joy, in defeat or in victory, in health or in weakness, in calamity or in success, the heart leaps to meet God just as a child runs to his mother's arms, ever sure that with her is the sympathy that meets every need.
p. 27

(The Kneeling Christian by an unknown Christian)

Why are so many Christians so often defeated? Because they pray so little. Why are many church-workers so often discouraged and disheartened? Because they pray so little.

Why do most men see so few brought "out of darkness to light" by their ministry? Because they pray so little.

Why are not our churches simply on fire for God? Because there is so little real prayer.

The Lord Jesus is as powerful today as ever before. The Lord Jesus is as anxious for men to be saved as ever before.

His arm is not shortened that it cannot save: but He cannot stretch forth His arm unless we pray more--and more really.

We may be assured of this--the secret of all failure is our failure in secret prayer.

p. 10

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

From his concerns about false teachers, Paul turned to matters relating to the conduct of the church, broadly. Paul began with what he considered most important--prayer. What too often comes last in a church's priority should actually come first.

Wiersbe points out:

The late Peter Deyneka, Sr., my good friend and founder of the Slavic Gospel Association, often reminded me: "Much prayer, much power! No prayer, no power!" Prayer was as much a part of the apostolic ministry as preaching the Word (Acts 6:4). Yet some pastors spend hours preparing their sermons, but never prepare their public prayers. Consequently, their prayers are routine, humdrum, and repetitious. I am not suggesting that a pastor write out every word and read it, but that he think through what he will pray about. This will keep "the pastoral prayer" from becoming dull and a mere repetition of what was "prayed" the previous week.

p. 24

Lange says:

The Apostle now personally counsels Timothy what he must do to fight a good fight in his pastoral office, and what should be his first task in his relation to the church.

p. 27

Barclay says:

Before we begin to study this passage in detail we must note one thing which shines out from it in a way that no one can fail to see. There are few passages in the New Testament which so stress and underline the universality of the gospel. Prayer is to be made for all men; God is the Saviour who wishes all men to be saved; Jesus gave His life a ransom for all. As Walter Lock writes: God's will to save is as wide as His will to create." This is a note which sounds in the New Testament again and again.
p. 63

We come now to a study of LAW #4 in our series of the LAWS OF LEADERSHIP:

"A Commitment to Leadership Is a Commitment to Prayer."

v. 1 I am exhorting, therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made on behalf of all men,

This 1st verse is our KEY VERSE in pursuing LAW #4.

Hendriksen says:

Paul has something to "urge" upon Timothy. He is, as it were, "calling him aside" in order to exhort him with respect to a matter of utmost significance (note "first of all").
p. 91

Lenski points out:

Oun merely makes the transition to something else; it is our "then." Since the subject of foolish teachers has been concluded, "then" takes us to the next subject.
p. 537

Guthrie says:

The words first of all relate not to primacy of time but primacy of importance. It is essential, at the outset, to ensure the noblest approach to public worship.
p. 69

Hiebert points out:

The word here rendered "exhort" is translated "beseech" in Romans 12:1. In such connections it carries the meaning "to beg, entreat, urge." What follows is not presented as a command but as an appeal to their conscience and their love to do what is asked of them. The practice of prayer cannot be forced by an outward command but must be prompted by an inner conviction of its need.
p. 49

Barnes observes;

There is one great Intercessor between God and man, who pleads for our salvation on the ground of what he himself has done, but we are permitted to intercede for others, not on the ground of any merit which they or we possess, but on the ground of the merit of the great Advocate and Intercessor. It is an inestimable privilege to be permitted to plead for the salvation of our fellow-men.
p. 129

"I AM EXHORTING, THEREFORE, FIRST OF ALL, THAT PETITIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, GIVING OF THANKS BE MADE ON BEHALF OF ALL MEN."

The apostle uses 4 WORDS here in his description of the process of prayer:

1. "PETITIONS,"
2. "PRAYERS,"
3. "INTERCESSIONS,"
4. "GIVING OF THANKS."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

These terms more likely were designed to build one on another for emphasis. It should be noted that "thanksgiving" should have a prominent place in the church's prayer life.

Hiebert says:

The apostle employs four words to indicate the different elements in the public prayers offered in the church.

"Supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings."

These four words indicate the different elements which are to enter into the public prayers of the church.

(1) "Supplications" is a general word meaning a request or a petition and was used of petitions addressed both to men and God. Coming from a verb meaning "to lack," it signifies prayer which springs from a sense of need. A conscious sense of need is essential to all effective praying. (2) "Prayers" is distinctly a religious term in that it was used only of prayer to God. Although unrestricted as to its contents, it carries the thought of reverence in prayer. In public prayer irreverence in manner or content is inexcusable. Heartfelt reverence in public prayer is often sadly lacking. (3) "Intercessions," occurring only here and in 4:5 in the New Testament, suggests the thought of confidence in prayer. It does not have the limitation of being for others, as implied in our English term. It was used for a petition of any kind to a superior. It speaks of personal and confiding intercourse with God on the part of one qualified to approach Him. A life lived in fellowship with God gives confidence in prayer. (4) The three previous words indicate the character of the praying while the word "thanksgivings" points out the spirit in which our prayers are to be offered. It is the spirit of gratitude for blessings already received and those yet to be received. It is the complement of all true prayer.

p. 50

William Barclay also does an excellent job in distinguishing these 4 WORDS and bringing out Paul's emphasis in the passage:

In this passage, four different words for prayer are grouped together. It is true that they are not to be sharply distinguished; nevertheless, when we examine each of them in turn, they have something to tell us of the way of prayer.

(i) The first is the word deesis, which we have translated request. Deesis is not exclusively a religious word; it can be used of a request made either to a fellow man or to God. But the fundamental idea of deesis is a sense of need. No one will make a request unless a sense of need has already awakened a desire to make that request. Prayer begins with a sense of need. It begins with the conviction that we cannot deal with life ourselves. It begins with a sense of our own inadequacy. It begins in a sense of human weakness. That sense of human weakness is the basis of all human approach to God.

"Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of Him."

Prayer begins with the realization of the helplessness of manhood.

(ii) The second is the word proseuche, which we have translated prayer. The basic difference between deesis and proseuche is that deesis may be addressed either to man or God, but proseuche is never used of anything else but approach to God. There are certain needs which only God can satisfy. There are certain needs that can only be brought to Him. There is a strength which He alone can give; a forgiveness which He alone can grant; a certainty which He alone can bestow. It may well be that our weakness haunts us because we so often take our needs to the wrong place.

(iii) The third word is enteuxis, which we have translated petition. Of the three words this is the most interesting word. It is a word with a most interesting history. It is the noun from the verb entugchanein. Originally, the verb entugchanein meant simply to meet or to fall in with a person; then, it went on to mean to hold intimate conversation with a person; then it acquired a special and technical meaning; it meant to enter into a king's presence and to submit a petition to him. Enteuxis acquired the technical meaning of a petition offered to a governor or a king. That tells us much about prayer. It tells us that the way to God stands open to us; that there is given to us this priceless gift of intimate talk with God; that we have the right to bring our petitions to one who is a king. The Christian is the man who has the right to take his needs into the royal presence of God.

"Thou art coming to a King;
 Large petitions with thee bring;
 For His grace and power are such,
 None can ever ask too much."

It is impossible to ask too great a boon from the King.

(iv) The fourth word is the word eucharistia, which we have translated thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is an integral part of prayer. Prayer does not mean only asking God for things; prayer also means thanking God for things. For too many of us prayer is an exercise in complaint, when it should be an exercise in thanksgiving. Epictetus, who was not a Christian but a Stoic philosopher, used to say: "What can I, who am a little old lame man, do, except give praise to God?" We have the right to bring our needs and our desires and our requests to God; but we have also the duty of bringing our thanksgivings continually to Him.
 pp. 65-67

Psalm 100:4

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
 and his courts with praise;
 give thanks to him and praise his name.

Luke 17:15-17

Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine--where are they?"

Lock, when speaking on "enteuxeis", says:

Here and 4:5 only in N.T. [does this word occur. It means] "To chance upon," then "to have an audience with a king," to have the good fortune to be admitted to an audience, so to present a petition; . . .
 p. 24

"I AM EXHORTING, THEREFORE, FIRST OF ALL, THAT PETITIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, GIVING OF THANKS BE MADE ON BEHALF OF ALL MEN."

Wiersbe says:

"All men" makes it clear that no person on earth is outside the influence of believing prayer. (We have no examples of exhortations that say we should pray for the dead. If we should pray for the dead, Paul certainly had a good opportunity to tell us in this section of his letter.) This means we should pray for the unsaved and the saved, for people near us and people far away, for enemies as well as friends.
p. 25

HOW ARE YOU KEEPING YOUR APPOINTMENTS WITH GOD?

The president emeritus of World Vision International says, "God is as important as the Rotary Club. We must not treat our appointments with Him with less respect. Write your appointment with God on your calendar. Treat the relationship as you would the partner in a good marriage. Make yourself accountable to a small group of other Christians." Engstrom lists three strategies that have worked in his life. 1) "I deliberately place myself daily before God to allow Him to use me as He wills. 2) I isolate a known point of spiritual weakness and work with the help of the Holy Spirit to correct and strengthen this area of my life. 3) I ask God at a specific time daily to reveal His strategy and will for me that day."

"How are you keeping your appointments with God?" by Ted W. Engstrom. Ministry, Jul 1989. Pages 4, 5.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

(Laugh Again by Charles R. Swindoll)

Just before Luther's audience with the pope, the prelates, the cardinals, and the emperor, a friend moved alongside the maverick monk and asked, "Brother Martin, are you afraid?" Luther responded with a marvelous answer: "Greater than the pope and all his cardinals, I fear most that great pope, self."
p. 105

It is indeed our SELFISHNESS and our SIN that keep us from our appointments with the Lord.

Genesis 3:8

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Let us meditate for a few moments on some verses on PRAYER:

Hebrews 7:25

Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

1 Peter 3:7

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

1 John 5:14, 15

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

Isaiah 55:6-9

Seek the Lord while he may be found;
 call on him while he is near.
 Let the wicked forsake his way
 and the evil man his thoughts.
 Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him,
 and to our God, for he will freely pardon.
 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
 neither are your ways my ways,"
 declares the Lord.
 "As the heavens are higher than the earth,
 so are my ways higher than your ways
 and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 59:1, 2

Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save,
 nor his ear too dull to hear.
 But your iniquities have separated
 you from your God;
 Your sins have hidden his face from you,
 so that he will not hear.

Psalms 66:18

If I had cherished sin in my heart,
 the Lord would not have listened;

Jeremiah 33:3

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and
 unsearchable things you do not know.

Philippians 4:6, 7

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

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give
 thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

(Over the Edge and Back by Joe White)

Prayer is like having a cellular telephone in your
 pocket. The red "hold" button is always blinking. God is
 always on the other end of the line. Just push "line one"
 and start talking.

Pray about everything! Pray when you're scared. Pray
 when you're doing great. Pray when you're failing. Pray
 when you're noble. Pray when you're selfish. But at all
 times, pray to your Daddy in heaven who not only is the
 "All-Sufficient One," but also cares for you beyond your
 wildest dreams.

The mystery of great, effective prayer opened up for me when a very wise man pointed out in the Bible six hurdles that make prayer ineffective. If you'll keep these six hurdles off the track, you'll understand clearly why your prayers get the answers they do.

1. The first hurdle is found in James 4:3--"You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures." A selfish purpose in prayer robs prayer of power.
2. The second hurdle is found in Isaiah 59:1-2--"Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that He does not hear." Sin hinders prayer. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me" (Psalm 139:23-24).
3. The third hurdle is found in Ezekiel 14:3--"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all?" Idols in the heart cause God to refuse to listen to our prayers. An idol is anything that is the supreme object of our affection.
4. The fourth hurdle--the lack of unselfish generosity--is found in Proverbs 21:13--"He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered." It is the one who gives generously to others who receives generously from God. "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will pour into your lap. For whatever measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt to you in return" (Luke 6:38).
5. The fifth hurdle is found in Mark 11:25--"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions." An unforgiving spirit is one of the most common hurdles to prayer.

6. The sixth hurdle to prayer is found in James 1:5-7--
 "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord." Prayers are hindered by unbelief.

pp. 140-41

(The God-Players by Earl Jabay)

Our prayer-life is vastly different. Formerly we prayed for God to give us strength to overcome our problems. This made God our assistant. This was God used in the service of our egoism. Now we ask only to accept and do His will. We ask to follow Him, trusting that He will be the power in these new lives. It has finally gotten through to us that there is a vast difference between saying "God give me strength," and "Lord, You are the power in my life."
 p. 130

(Welcome to the Family by Stephen W. Brown)

The Christian who doesn't understand the biblical doctrine of prayer is like Batman without his Batmobile. He has the possibility of power, but he doesn't have the tools to make the possibility a reality.
 p. 56

Every day, set aside a specific time for prayer; don't allow anything to interfere with that time except a funeral--yours.
 p. 60

When you encounter Satan, get on your knees and pray. Then when you turn to do battle with Satan, you may find no one is there. John Bunyan was right: "Pray often; for prayer is a shield for the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan."
 p. 102

(The Body by Charles Colson with Ellen Santilli Vaughn)

Prayer is the act by which the community of faith surrenders itself, puts aside all other concerns, and comes before God Himself. It brings us, inevitably, as Archbishop William Temple once wrote, "the nourishment of mind with his truth; the purifying of imagination by his beauty; the opening of the heart to his love; the surrender of will to his purpose--and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for all that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin." p. 142

(The Kneeling Christian by an unknown Christian)

Do we realize that there is nothing the devil dreads so much as prayer? His great concern is to keep us from praying. He loves to see us "up to our eyes" in work--provided we do not pray. He does not fear because we are eager and earnest Bible students--provided we are little in prayer. Someone has wisely said, "Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray." All this is so familiar to us--but do we really pray? If not, then failure must dog our footsteps, whatever signs of apparent success there may be. p. 15

(Purpose in Prayer by E. M. Bounds)

We do not pray as Elijah prayed. John Foster puts the whole matter to a practical point. "When the Church of God," he says, "is aroused to its obligation and duties and right faith to claim what Christ has [promised--'all things whatsoever'--a revolution will take place." p. 24

(Let's Live by C. C. Mitchell)

Yes, Christian, God is still in the prayer answering business. Quietly, irresistibly, unassumingly God answers prayer. Often it is answered in such seemingly natural fashion that you do not realize that an actual prayer miracle is taking place.

Paul said, "Be instant in prayer," James said, "You have not because you ask not." Jesus said, "If you ask . . . I will do." Now people, it either works or it doesn't. The Bible is either telling the truth or it isn't.

I challenge you to put God's Word to a simple test and find out for yourself. When a problem arises, when something needs to be done, pray! Instead of doing, ask! Instead of organizing a committee, agonize! I am persuaded that if we had more agonizing and less organizing among the saints, more would be accomplished for God's glory. I know that the human thing to do as situations arise is act, but God says ask, and He will act. I know it doesn't make sense humanly speaking, but God has a way of making good sense out of nonsense. Try it! I'm positive that you will be amazed and pleased. Prayer is where the action is!

p. 136

(Purpose in Prayer by E. M. Bounds)

Do not we rest in our day too much on the arm of flesh? Cannot the same wonders be done now as of old? Do not the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth still to show Himself strong on behalf of those who put their trust in Him? Oh that God would give me more practical faith in Him! Where is now the Lord God of Elijah? He is waiting for Elijah to call on Him.

--James Gilmour of Mongolia

p. 5

Prayer

He who has charge of planets
Is mindful still of me;
Though I am weak and sinful,
He heeds my faintest plea.

From scenes of radiant splendor
He notes one crimson drop
Of my heart's lonely bleeding;
The choiring angels stop

And gaze, all lost in wonder.
As He, the undefiled,
Stoops low in love to succour
His sinful, suffering child.
--Martha Snell Nicholson

(The Seven Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross
by Arthur W. Pink)

This first of the seven cross-sayings of our Lord presents Him in the attitude of prayer. How significant! How instructive His public ministry had opened with prayer (Luke 3:21), and here we see it closing in prayer. Surely He has left us an example! No longer might those hands minister to the sick, for they are nailed to the Cross, no longer may those feet carry Him on errands of mercy, for they are fastened to the cruel tree; no longer may He engage in instructing the apostles, for they have forsaken Him and fled;--how then does He occupy Himself? In the Ministry of prayer!

C. H. Spurgeon said years ago:

You have no place in which to pour your troubles except into the ear of God. If you tell them to your friends, you but put your troubles out for a moment, and they will return again. Roll your burden onto the Lord, through prayer, and you have rolled it into a great deep out of which it will never by any possibility rise. Cast your trouble where you cast your sins; you have cast your sins into the depths of the sea, there cast your troubles also. Never keep a trouble half an hour before you tell it to God in prayer. As soon as the trouble comes, quick, the first thing, tell it to your Father in prayer.

William Carey, the great missionary, said:

Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God. Pray in accordance with the promise of God. Claim the promises by faith.

Dr. Henrietta Mears, after a long and fruitful ministry, frequently stated:

If I had my life to live over again I would just believe God.

Richard Foster has said in his new book Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home:

The truth of the matter is, we all come to prayer with a tangled mass of motives--altruistic and selfish, merciful and hateful, loving and bitter. Frankly, this side of eternity we will never unravel the good from the bad, the pure from the impure. But what I have come to see is that God is big enough to receive us with all our mixture. We do not have to be bright, or pure, or filled with faith, or anything. That is what grace means, and not only are we saved by grace, we live by it as well. And we pray by it. (quote from flyleaf)

One day a friend of mine was walking through a shopping mall with his two-year-old son. The child was in a particularly cantankerous mood, fussing and fuming. The frustrated father tried everything to quiet his son, but nothing seemed to help. The child simply would not obey. Then, under some special inspiration, the father scooped up his son and, holding him close to his chest, began singing an impromptu love song. None of the words rhymed. He sang off key. And yet, as best he could, this father began sharing his heart. "I love you," he sang. "I'm so glad you're my boy. You make me happy. I like the way you laugh." On they went from one store to the next. Quietly the father continued singing off key and making up words that did not rhyme. The child relaxed and became still, listening to this strange and wonderful song. Finally, they finished shopping and went to the car. As the father opened the door and prepared to buckle his son into the carseat, the child lifted his head and said simply, "Sing it to me again, Daddy! Sing it to me again!"

Prayer is a little like that. With simplicity of heart we allow ourselves to be gathered up into the arms of the Father and let him sing his love song over us.

Dear God, I am so grateful for your invitation to enter your heart of love. As best I can I come in. Thank you for receiving me. --Amen.
pp. 3, 4

v. 2 on behalf of kings and all those who are in a place of prominence, in order that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all piety and reverence.

The apostle in verse 1 has said that these prayers should "be made on behalf of all men."

Now in verse 2 he gets specific:

"ON BEHALF OF":

1. "KINGS,"
2. "ALL THOSE WHO ARE IN A PLACE OF PROMINENCE."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

Paul is one who was recently released from prison. He is aware of the deteriorating political atmosphere. Here he is requesting prayer for kings--and one of these is Nero.

Romans 13:1

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

One of the things we can really do in this situation is pray for their salvation if they do not know Christ as Savior.

(Laugh Again by Charles R. Swindoll)

Recently I read a funny story that perfectly illustrates this fact:

A tourist was standing in line to buy an ice cream cone at a Thrifty Drug store in Beverly Hills. To her utter shock and amazement, who should walk in and stand right behind her but Paul Newman! Well the lady, even though she was rattled, determined to maintain her composure. She purchased her ice cream cone and turned confidently and exited the store.

However, to her horror, she realized that she had left the counter without her ice cream cone! She waited a few minutes till she felt all was clear, and then went back into the store to claim her cone. As she approached the counter, the cone was not in the little circular receptacle, and for a moment she stood there pondering what might have happened to it. Then she felt a polite tap on her shoulder, and turning was confronted by--you guessed it--Paul Newman. The famous actor then told the lady that if she was looking for her ice cream cone, she had put it into her purse!

p. 126

Barnes says:

The meaning here is, that while all men should be the subjects of prayer, those should be particularly remembered before the throne of grace who are in authority. The reason is, that so much depends on their character and plans; that the security of life, liberty, and property depends so much on them. God has power to influence their hearts, and to incline them to what is just and equal; and hence we should pray that a divine influence may descend upon them.

p. 129

Guy King says:

There is no doubt that, by the mighty ministry of intercession, we can all of us help to strengthen and to sweeten, the life of the nation, . . .

p. 41

Lange says:

There is in intercession for others the purest exercise of love for others.--One of the best and most valuable kinds of tax which we owe and may pay to our rulers, is to pray for them, and to thank God heartily for the good we receive through them.--Anton: Prayer is a real Noah's ark, in which we may shut ourselves amidst threatening floods.--We cannot else pass through the tossing world. . .
p. 31

J. Vernon McGee says:

We need to pray for our country, and we need to pray for those who have authority over us. If you are a Republican and a Democrat is in office, pray for him. If you are a Democrat and a Republican is in office, pray for him.

"For kings." Paul says we are to pray for the kings who rule. You may ask, "Yes, but are we to pray when the government is a corrupt one?" Paul is saying we are to pray even if it's a corrupt government. We are to pray for whoever is in power. Remember that the man who was in power in Rome when Paul wrote was bloody Nero, yet he says we are to pray for kings, whoever they are.
p. 436

Hendriksen says:

In explanation of the expression "in behalf of all men" the apostle continues: **in behalf of kings and all who are in high position.**

How necessary, this admonition! Even today! The apostle is probably thinking, first of all, of sovereign rulers of states, as they succeed one another in the course of history; and of all other functionaries subject to them.

He must have had in mind the then-reigning emperor Nero, and further: the proconsuls, Asiarchs), the town-clerk (a rather influential position), etc.
p. 94

"ON BEHALF OF KINGS AND ALL THOSE WHO ARE IN A PLACE OF PROMINENCE, IN ORDER THAT WE MAY LEAD A PEACEFUL AND QUIET LIFE IN ALL PIETY AND REVERENCE."

Now Paul in this LAST PHRASE expresses the purpose behind his exhortation for prayer. It is:

"IN ORDER THAT WE MAY LEAD A PEACEFUL AND QUIET LIFE,"

and this life is to be lived in:

"ALL PIETY AND REVERENCE."

Guthrie says:

The purpose, rather than the content, of such prayer is now stated. That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life means that government may achieve conditions of peace and security, enabling the Christian and his fellow-men to pursue their own lives. The twin synonyms eremos (quiet) and hesuchios (peaceable) both mean 'quiet' and 'tranquil' and seem to be linked here to emphasize the importance of calmness and serenity in social affairs.
p. 70

Wiersbe takes it farther when he says:

"Quiet" refers to circumstances around us, while "peaceful" refers to a calm attitude within us. The results should be lives that are godly and honorable.
p. 26

The word that I have translated "PIETY" is the word for "godliness." It occurs 10 times in Paul's writings, and all of them are in the PASTORAL EPISTLES.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The times of political and social upheaval are excellent times in which to die for Christ but hard times in which to live for Him.

(Prayer Summits: Seeking God's Agenda for Your Community
by Joe Aldrich)

The cycle of spiritual decline is no mystery. Alexander Fraser Tytler (1747-1813) wrote a book describing the fall of the Athenian Republic. He suggested that nations progress through the following sequence:

1. from bondage to spiritual faith;
2. from spiritual faith to great courage;
3. from courage to liberty;
4. from liberty to abundance;
5. from abundance to selfishness;
6. from selfishness to complacency;
7. from complacency to apathy;
8. from apathy to dependency;
9. from dependency back into bondage.

p. 138

1 Chronicles 4:10

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.

Luke 1:74, 75

To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

v. 3 This is good and pleasing in the presence of God our Savior,

The word "THIS" points us back to the prior purpose in verse 2:

"in order that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all piety and reverence."

This kind of life is:

"GOOD AND PLEASING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD OUR SAVIOR."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

As in modern times, some in the Ephesian church were prepared to question the validity of a prayer for the salvation of all men. Thus, Paul defended his instructions by pointing out that such a prayer is good and pleases God. Many prayers are unacceptable but not this one.

Hendriksen says:

To the eye of God such praying is excellent or admirable. To his heart it is acceptable, most welcome. This stands to reason, for his name is "God, our Savior" (see on 1 Tim. 1:1). Though men may at times feel inclined to skip prayer for kings and those who are in authority, especially when the co-operation from the side of princes is not what it should be, in God's sight the matter looks differently. He does not see things as we see them (1 Sam. 16:7). In more ways than one, conditions of tranquility and calm promote the spread of the gospel of salvation. And it is he "who desires all men to be saved."
p. 95

Hiebert says:

The word "good" means that it is excellent in its nature and characteristics and is well-adapted to its ends. "This practice of praying for all men is a fine thing in itself; it approves itself to the moral sense of mankind." It is good and wholesome in the spirit which it reveals and beneficial in the results that it achieves.
pp. 52-53

WHEN YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE IS DRY

"Above all, in the desert place we must remember that without faith it is impossible to please Him."

Every Christian goes through times of spiritual dryness when God seems far away. Here are ten questions to ask yourself to stimulate spiritual growth--even in the desert.

(1) Do I expect too much? Unrealistic expectations of what the Christian life is like can come from biographies that focus on the exciting aspects of a great Christian's experience but say little about his or her discouraging times. Yet even David had down times when he felt like God had left him, but even then he trusted God.

(2) Do I need to confess and repent of sin? Harboring sin in your heart dulls our sensitivity to God, and He can't get through to us. Saul and David both confessed their sin, but David had a heart to turn from it. We must guard against hypocrisy.

(3) Am I doing things that make me spiritually insensitive? Some believers will be bothered by some things that pose no problem to the consciences of others. Each individual must discern what activities (movies, music, people, etc.) hinder his relationship with God.

(4) Do I consistently practice spiritual disciplines? The benefit of spiritual disciplines is not gaining God's favor (which would be legalism) but rather a renewed appreciation for His love and grace.

(5) What used to help me feel close to God? Thinking back to times when God seemed especially near can help you recover that "first love." Remembering how things used to be can prompt repentance and renewal.

(6) Am I just going through the motions? It may be helpful to re-evaluate your motives for attending church, praying, and reading the Bible. If these have just become habits and do not help you meet the real Person, look for ways to revitalize your conversations with God, such as singing psalms to the Lord.

(7) Are physical problems getting me down? Spiritual dryness can result from fatigue, chemical imbalance, or illness. God's prescription for the despondent Elijah was sleep.

(8) Am I praying about my spiritual life and asking others to pray for me? Petitioning God to reveal Himself to you and garnering the prayer support of others will sustain you through times of drought.

(9) Am I connecting with others who are alive in Christ? Even though you are responsible for your own spiritual walk, God designed us to express the life of Christ corporately, too. The benefit of being in contact with even one other growing Christian can be significant.

(10) What does God want to teach me through this time? Perhaps there's nothing wrong. This could be just a time of testing like Jesus went through those 40 days in the wilderness. God used the desert to teach Moses and others the importance of depending on Him. Most important, we must continue to have faith in Him even in the barren wasteland.

"Ten questions to ask when your spiritual life is dull and dry" by Jean Fleming. Discipleship Journal, Nov/Dec 1991 [#66]. Pages 41-44.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

v. 4 who is desiring all men to be saved and to come to an experiential knowledge of the truth.

The little word "WHO" takes us back to verse 3 where we find that the "WHO" refers to "God our Savior."

He is "DESIRING ALL MEN":

1. "TO BE SAVED,"
2. "TO COME TO AN EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out that the reason we can effectively pray like this is that we are praying according to God's will.

1 John 5:14, 15

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

Hiebert points out that:

"All men" is emphatic by position.
p. 53

This means that the "ALL MEN" is in the 1st position in the Greek sentence.

Hiebert says further:

God's desire for the salvation of everyone springs spontaneously from His love for a lost race. But that does not mean that all will be saved. If Paul had used the active infinitive "to save," rather than the passive, that might have been implied. That some men are not saved is not due to any inefficacy or deliberate limitation in the divine will, but is due to man's rejection of God's appointed means of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.
p. 53

Guy King says:

Such is this inspired proclamation of the wide sweep of the Divine purpose, plan, and provision--there is not a person, never has been, nor ever will be, whom God does not wish to save. He has done all that can be done to accomplish that end. In the words of the moving parable of Isaiah v. 1-4, "What could have been done more . . . that I have not done . . . ?" Alas, what hinders is the will of man--which is the one thing that God will not force, for that would render him more a machine, and less than a man. The only reason for a soul's being lost is, in the Saviour's words, in John v. 40, that "ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life". In spite of all His pleadings, the stubborn, sinful will of man persists in rejecting His loving overture, and in refusing His wondrous gift. How all too frequently is the tragedy of Matthew xxiii. 37 re-enacted, "How often would I . . . and ye would not". That settles it! God can do no more! What a challenge is here for redoubled earnestness in prayer--that the presentation of the Gospel message may meet with wide acceptance by the will of men everywhere.
p. 43

Lange says:

If God is minded to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth, who do not wilfully shut their eyes to it; if Christ has given Himself in death for all, that they may be kept from eternal ruin, we ought also, as holy children, to follow this example of God and Christ, gladly encourage all to seek their eternal health and salvation, and omit nothing which may aid toward it. . .
p. 31

QUICK-QUOTE: PRAYER

"There is nothing that makes us love a person so much as praying for him."

--William Law
(in Praying, May/Jun 1992)

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

"WHO IS DESIRING ALL MEN TO BE SAVED AND TO COME TO AN EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH."

When we speak of the truth we speak of:

the WRITTEN TRUTH,
and the LIVING TRUTH.

John 8:31, 32

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

John 17:17

Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

Paul now wonderfully defines that TRUTH in verses 5 and 6:

v. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus,

The emphasis here in verse 5 is upon the word "ONE":

"THERE IS ONE GOD,"

"AND ONE MEDIATOR,"

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out 3 TRUTHS here in verses 5 and 6:

1. ONE GOD
2. ONE WAY TO APPROACH HIM
3. GAVE HIMSELF UP TO DIE AS A RANSOM

Guy King says:

How grand an answer is this to Job's perplexity, ix. 33, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both". The figure is that of the man who stands between two disputants and reconciles the argument. The fact is that God has provided for us a Divine Daysman to stand between us and Himself. In His twofold nature, He is in a position to "lay His hand upon us both"--a hand touching Deity, because He is God, a hand touching Humanity, because He is "the Man CHRIST JESUS"; and each hand scarred with the cost of our redemption, the seal of the mediation effected between sinful Humanity and holy Deity, the price of our ransom, demanded by God's righteousness, and paid by God's love--and that "for all", on behalf of all, whether they take advantage of it or not. It is, thus, by the way of sacrificial atonement that our salvation is made possible: that is the method that the Gospel proclaims. Let us pray that, in these days of self-confidence and self-reliance, when men are seeking to save themselves by another method, preaching and believing "another gospel: which is not another" Galatians i. 6-7, for there is no other but the one--no other method, "none other name . . . whereby we must be saved", Acts iv. 12: let us pray, I say, that a mighty movement of the Spirit may bring it to pass that a multitude may "come unto the knowledge of the truth".

p. 44

J. Vernon McGee says:

Job's heart cry even in his day was, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both" (Job 9:33). In effect, Job was crying out, "Oh, if there were somebody who could take hold of God's hand and then take hold of my hand and bring us together that there might be communication and understanding between us!"

Well, my friend, today we have a Mediator--the Lord Jesus Christ has come. He has one hand in the hand of Deity because He is God. He is able to save to the uttermost because He is God, and He has paid the price for our salvation. He is a Mediator because He has also become man.

He can hold my hand; He understands me. He understands you; you can go to Him, and He is not going to be upset with you. He will not lose His temper or strike you or hurt you in any way. You may say, "Well, I've failed. I've done such-and-such, and I've come short of the glory of God." My friend, He knows that, and He still loves you and wants to put His arm around you.

p. 437

McGee says further:

I don't put my hand in His; He puts His hand in mine. That is the wonder of it all! He has come down and put His hand in mine and taken hold of me, but He also holds on to God because He is God, and He has brought us together.

p. 437

(Prayer Summits: Seeking God's Agenda for Your Community
by Joe Aldrich)

Archie Bunker and his son-in-law Meathead were having a theological discussion. As usual, Archie had the last word:

He [God] made everyone the same religion . . . Christian, which he named after his son, Christian . . . or Christ for short. And that's how it was for years. One religion until they started splitting them up into all them denumerations. But there's still only one religion: His up there.

For once in his life, Archie was right. It's one thing, however, to analyze a problem; it's something else to bring those "denumerations" together.

p. 193

THE UNFINISHED WORK OF CHRIST

Robert Murray McChesney once remarked, "If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet the distance makes no difference. He is praying for me!"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

v. 6 who gave himself a ransom on behalf of all, which was to be attested to (the testimony) in its due seasons (at the right time).

We had the little word "who" start verse 4, referring back to "God our Savior,"

and now here in verse 6 we have the little word "WHO" referring back to "Christ Jesus" in verse 5.

It is:

"WHO GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM ON BEHALF OF ALL."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

A ransom can be given for a slave or a prisoner.

Matthew 20:28

just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

This verse tells us that Jesus paid our "RANSOM," and He did it "AT THE RIGHT TIME":

Galatians 4:4, 5

But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Hebrews 1:1, 2

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Wiersbe says:

Since there is only one God, there is need for only one Mediator; and that Mediator is Jesus Christ. No other person can qualify. Jesus Christ is both God and man, and, therefore, can be the "umpire" between God and man. In His perfect life and substitutionary death, He met the just demands of God's holy law. He was the "ransom for all." The word "ransom" means "a price paid to free a slave." His death was "on behalf of all." Though the death of Christ is efficient only for those who trust Him, it is sufficient for the sins of the whole world. Jesus said that He came "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

p. 28

Hendriksen says:

Prayer must be made in behalf of all men (verses 1 and 2) because:

- a. salvation was intended for all, regardless of rank, station, race, or nationality (verses 3 and 4);
- b. there is but one God and one Mediator for all (verse 5), not one for each group; and now:
- c. there is but one ransom for all: **who gave himself a ransom for all.**

p. 98

(Bold Love by Dan B. Allender & Tremper Longman, III)

Love is a sacrifice for the undeserving that opens the door to restoration of relationship with the Father, with others, and with ourselves.
p. 32

(The Grace Awakening by Charles R. Swindoll)

Augustus Toplady wrote it this way:

The terrors of Law and of God
with me can have nothing to do;
My Savior's obedience in blood
hide all my transgressions from view.
p. 30

Some time ago, while digging deeply into this subject of God's amazing grace, I happened upon a piece by Dorothea Day, in which she answers Henley's "Invictus" with words that cut to the heart of his humanistic philosophy. She calls it "My Captain."

MY CAPTAIN

Out of the light that dazzles me,
Bright as the sun from pole to pole,
I thank the God I know to be
For Christ the conqueror of my soul.

Since His the sway of circumstance,
I would not wince nor cry aloud.
Under that rule which men call chance
My head with joy is humbly bowed.

Beyond this place of sin and tears
That life with Him! And His the aid,
Despite the menace of the years,
Keeps, and shall keep me, unafraid.

I have no fear, though strait the gate,
He cleared from punishment the scroll.
Christ is the Master of my fate,
Christ is the Captain of my soul.

pp. 32-33

(What Makes a Man? by Bill McCartney)

I talked a few days ago with Charles Colson who founded Fellowship Ministries after prison for his part in Watergate. Colson had just been down to Brazil where Prison Fellowship runs a prison. They don't just have volunteers in the prison; they run the prison and staff it with Prison Fellowship volunteers.

The inmates run the security. It's tough but they run it; they have Bible studies and rehabilitation programs. The return rate to the prison is less than 5 percent. Often, at other prisons, it's 70-90 percent.

When Colson went to visit, he said as he always does, "Do you have a solitary confinement cell?"

"Yes."

"Can I see it?"

"Do you want to?"

"Yes."

So they took him downstairs and he walked through this basement, past where the former junta's torture chambers were located, down to the end of the corridor where they stopped at a big door.

The guide said to him, "You sure you want to go in?"

"Sure I want to go in," Colson replied.

So he opened this big, heavy door, turned the handle, and began to pull it open, stopped again, and repeated the question, "Mr. Colson, are you sure you want to go in there?"

Colson said, "Of course, I always go in to visit whoever's in solitary."

So they pulled the door open, and Chuck Colson told me, "I walked inside that cell and there was a table with two candles and some flowers and a picture of Jesus Christ on the Cross." The inmate guide said, "That's the Guy who is doing time for us."

pp. 24-25

v. 7 For which [testimony] I was appointed a herald and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) a teacher of Gentiles in faith and truth.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

There were some exclusive Jews in Ephesus and this statement is made for them. God desires everyone to be saved and the call to truthfulness is a stylistic device designed to stress the importance of his point.

We see this in:

Romans 9:1

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,

2 Corinthians 11:31

The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

Galatians 1:20

(Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.)

Leviticus 19:11

Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another.

(Prayer Summits: Seeking God's Agenda for Your Community
by Joe Aldrich)

Ultimately, our actions are controlled by our dominant thoughts.

If I sow a thought,
I'll reap an act.
If I sow an act,
I'll reap a habit.
If I sow a habit,
I'll reap a character.
If I sow a character,
I'll reap a destiny.

If in the secret recesses of my mind I mull over that which is wrong, fantasize over evil, a day will come when that which populates the theater of my mind becomes reality.

Satan will see to that! That is why we are to bring all thoughts into captivity to Christ.

p. 144

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

(The Body by Charles Colson with Ellen Santilli Vaughn)

A meeting had been called for late that summer afternoon in the Enfield meetinghouse, a white clapboard building at the town's center. The planned speaker had to cancel, but local officials prevailed upon Jonathan Edwards, a well-known pastor from Northampton, Massachusetts, to come and preach. Since the thirty-seven-year-old Edwards was then recovering from a debilitating illness, he was somewhat frail. Some wondered if the long ride on horseback would unduly drain his strength.

The bare wooden pews of the Enfield meetinghouse were full that afternoon, although there was an air of levity as the service began. Staring at the faces of the congregation, Edwards thought, How thoughtless, loose, and vain these people seem. They stared back at him as if to say, "We aren't going to be carried away with all this foolish emotionalism we've heard about."

Edwards strode into the pulpit, took out his sermon manuscript, and began to read in calm, measured tones, "My text this evening is found in Deuteronomy, chapter 32, verse 35: 'Their foot shall slide in due time.'" Then, as he began profiling the wrath of the mighty Lord of heaven and earth, the listeners lost their smug looks. And the long sermon that followed shook not only the town of Enfield, but all of New England.

"There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God," Edwards proclaimed. "God holds the righteous and the wicked for His purpose. Perched perilously on the slippery slope, the wicked stand under condemnation. . . ."

"The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire . . . His wrath towards you burns like fire . . . He is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in His sight. . . . You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince. . . ."

As Edwards continued, the men, women, and children crowding the narrow pews before him began to shake with moans, tears, and shrieks. Several times he had to pause and ask the people to quiet down so he might continue. He did so relentlessly.

"Moreover, God is exceedingly angry with some yet living. His wrath is burning, the pit is prepared, the fire is hot. Yet, many of these do not realize their fate. They flatter themselves; they are unaware that God's wrath is like waters being dammed up before exploding. . . .

"Yet it is nothing but His hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you were suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eye to sleep."

Men and women were out of their pews now. Some fell to the floor.

"O sinner!" he proclaimed. "Consider the fearful danger you are in: It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit. . . . You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it . . . you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you have ever done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment."

Men and women were clinging to the pillars of the place as if to keep their feet from sliding out from underneath them, and their cries continued even after Edwards finished.

Another pastor, Eleazer Wheelock, stepped into the pulpit and offered a prayer which quieted the congregation. Then he and Edwards mixed with the people.

As the people filed out of the meetinghouse, however--as an eyewitness later wrote in his diary--their countenances were cheerful. And thereafter Enfield was swept up in the wave of righteousness surging across the American colonies.

It was the Great Awakening, out of which a new nation was born.

Jonathan Edwards's sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," is most frequently thought of as a classic example of "hellfire and brimstone" preaching. Most imagine Edwards as a passionate orator, playing upon the emotions of frontier farmers, adept at producing the kind of remarkable outpouring which occurred that day in Enfield. Picturing him in the mode of today's revivalists, they see him gesturing wildly, shouting words of wrath and shame at the quaking congregation. But that is far from the truth.

Standing solemnly at the pulpit, hunched over the tiny writing on the pages of his thick manuscript, Edwards read his sermon. As was his custom, he delivered the incendiary words in a monotone, looking up now and then to stare without expression at the back wall of the meetinghouse.

pp. 118-19

v. 8 I am desiring therefore that the men be praying in every place, lifting up holy hands, without anger or disputing (skeptical criticism).

"I AM DESIRING THEREFORE THAT THE MEN BE PRAYING IN EVERY PLACE."

Paul now returns to his thought from verse 1:

"I am exhorting, therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made on behalf of all men."

"LIFTING UP HOLY HANDS."

This was a custom practiced in the early church. It revealed the dedication in the lives of those praying. Now there are those who lift up their hands in services today, and they are sometimes criticized for it. There is nothing wrong with lifting up your hands if it is something you feel you want to do. Personally, I have always hesitated to do it because I am not too sure about my hands, whether they are clean or not--clean physically or otherwise.

Notice that Paul says "HOLY HANDS." This would mean that they are hands dedicated to God's service. My friend, you ought not to poke up your hands in a meeting if those hands are not used for the service of Christ.

Hiebert says:

The important matter is not the bodily posture but the inner life. The one leading in prayer must have "holy hands," hands unstained with sin through employment in impure deeds. He who would lead others to the throne of God must be morally qualified to do so.

p. 57

Barclay says:

He who prays must stretch forth and hold up holy hands. He must hold up to God hands which do not touch or handle the forbidden things. This does not mean for one moment that the sinner is debarred from God; but it does mean that there is no reality in the prayers of the man who prays and then goes out to soil his hands with forbidden things, as if he had never prayed. It is not thinking of the man who is helplessly in the grip of some sin or some passion or some habit and who is desperately fighting against it, and who is bitterly conscious of his failure. It is thinking of the man whose prayers are a sheer formality, who prays and then goes out to live as if he had never prayed.
pp. 74-75

Demarest says:

The picture of lifting holy hands not only harks back to the ancient Jewish traditions; it is also a picture of coming before God with clean hands and a pure heart. How can we lift holy hands to God if we are not actively seeking to relate to all men and women, whom He loves without distinction? How can we lift holy hands to God if we are not speaking and working for the reduction and elimination of the forces and weapons poised to destroy the very people God loves and for whom Christ died? To raise holy hands, without wrath and doubting, is clearly of first importance in our worship agenda.
p. 174

Barnes says:

"Holy hands" here, mean hands that are not defiled by sin, and that have not been employed for any purpose of iniquity. The idea is, that when men approach God they should do it in a pure and holy manner.
p. 133

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

It is this which would lead to widespread spiritual awakening; lifting up holy hands, that is, hands that are devout and undefiled, signifying internal cleanness on the part of spiritual leaders, men of sound relationships.

"I AM DESIRING THEREFORE THAT THE MEN BE PRAYING IN EVERY PLACE, LIFTING UP HOLY HANDS, WITHOUT ANGER OR DISPUTING (SKEPTICAL CRITICISM)."

Barnes says:

Without wrath. This is, without the intermingling of any evil passion; with a calm, peaceful, benevolent mind. There should be nothing of the spirit of contention; there should be no anger towards others; the suppliant should be at peace with all men. It is impossible for a man to pray with comfort, or to suppose that his prayers will be heard, if he cherishes anger.
p. 133

Hiebert says:

The concluding phrase "without wrath and disputing" sets forth two conditions for effectual public prayer. "Wrath" relates to the personal attitude toward others, the inner disposition of ill-will and resentment. We cannot truly pray for those with whom we are angry, nor can we be angry with those for whom we truly pray.
p. 57

He says further:

"To introduce disputes into prayer is to pray at one another instead of to God." Unless repented of and removed, both the inner attitude and its outward manifestation disqualify one to lead in public prayer.
p. 58

Wiersbe summarizes by saying:

Paul stated three essentials for effective prayer, and the first was "holy hands." Obviously this means a holy life. "Clean hands" was symbolic of a blameless life (2 Sam. 22:21; Ps. 24:4). If we have sin in our lives, we cannot pray and expect God to answer (Ps. 66:18).

"Without wrath" is the second essential, and requires that we be on good terms with one another. "Without anger" might be a better translation. A person who is constantly having trouble with other believers, who is a troublemaker rather than a peacemaker, cannot pray and get answers from God.

"Doubting" suggests that we must pray in faith, but the word really means "disputing." When we have anger in the heart, we often have open disagreements with others. Christians should learn to disagree without being disagreeable. We should "do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Phil. 2:14).

Effective praying, then, demands that I be in a right relationship with God ("holy hands") and with my fellow believers ("without murmurings and disputings"). Jesus taught the same truth (Mark 11:24-26). If we spent more time preparing to pray and getting our hearts right before God, our prayers would be more effective.

p. 29

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Broken human relationships affect one's ability to pray.

Matthew 5:22-24

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

Matthew 6:12

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

1 Peter 3:7

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

This would also include leading others in prayer.

Hendriksen says:

The sum and substance, therefore, of the present admonition is that in public worship the men, not the women, should stand with uplifted hands and offer prayer aloud. The elders naturally would take the lead (I Tim. 5:17). These hands, however, must be holy, and the prayer must be offered in the proper spirit. If the heart of a person is filled with wrath or malice against his brother, so that he is planning evil against him, prayer will not be acceptable.
p. 105

(What Makes a Man? by Bill McCartney)

The Holy Spirit does not come around to play around. He comes around to get down. He does not come around just so people who are already saved can get their needs met. He also comes to save the lost and to restore the desolations of former generations (Isaiah 61:4).
p. 191

(Rediscovering Holiness by J. I. Packer)

In the same way, the historic Christian teaching on holiness has been largely forgotten, and that also is a pity, for it is central to the glory of God and the good of souls.

It is nearly sixty years since I learned at school the opening verse of a poem by Rudyard Kipling, titled "The Way through the Woods." It goes like this:

They shut the road through the woods
 Seventy years ago.
 Weather and rain have undone it again
 And now you would never know
 There was once a road through the woods.

I suppose it is because I love walking through woods that these lines move me so deeply. Again and again, when I find myself mourning the loss of a good thing that has perished through stupidity, carelessness, or neglect (and I confess that, both as a conservationist and a Christian, I have that experience often), Kipling's verse jumps into my mind. It haunts me now, as I contemplate the church's current loss of biblical truth about holiness.
 p. 12

Genuine holiness is genuine Christ-likeness, and genuine Christ-likeness is genuine humanness--the only genuine humanness there is. Love in the service of God and others, humility and meekness under the divine hand, integrity of behavior expressing integration of character, wisdom with faithfulness, boldness with prayerfulness, sorrow at people's sins, joy at the Father's goodness, and single-mindedness in seeking to please the Father morning, noon, and night, were all qualities seen in Christ, the perfect man.
 p. 28

More than a century and half ago, the Scottish parish minister and revival preacher Robert Murray McCheyne declared: "My people's greatest need is my personal holiness." It seems clear that neither modern clergy nor their modern flocks would agree with McCheyne's assessment.
 p. 33

(Prayer Summits: Seeking God's Agenda for Your Community
by Joe Aldrich)

Is there a missing link? Absolutely. It's unity. Adam and Eve lost it for us in the paradise of God. Driven from Eden, polarized by sin, crippled by selfishness, the first couple quickly discovered disunity had taken up residence in the very core of their beings. Their kids came down with it and Abel died at the hand of his brother, Cain. A lethal dose of disobedience laced with a pinch of jealousy was all it took to precipitate the first murder.
pp. 10-11

(Silent Pain: Finding God's Comfort for Your Hidden
Heartaches by Kathy Olsen)

I remember how sad I was the day I realized that I had never felt loved enough by anyone to feel safe enough to be angry at them. There was always the fear (probably unfounded) that I would be rejected and abandoned, or that I would irreparably damage the other person or the relationship. Or the fear that if I showed anger, I was automatically sinning and therefore unacceptable.

The day I truly felt my anger and pounded on the bed was the day I fell more deeply in love with Jesus Christ, because I finally believed that His gracious love was stronger than my rage. I believed that He would never forsake me just because I spilled out my angry frustration and pain to Him. When I really believed that He would let me have my anger without reproach, He mercifully opened and filled another room in my heart.

I've discovered I'm not the only one who has spilled out anger to God and experienced His merciful response.
p. 67

In other situations, my anger has acted like a warning light on the dashboard of my car. It tells me I need to let the Lord "look under the hood" for unresolved conflicts, wrong attitudes, or unhealthy patterns. I recommend an excellent book on this subject by Dr. Harriet Goldhor Lerner, The Dance of Anger. Although she writes from outside a Christian perspective, her practical guidance is invaluable.
p. 72

(Gifted Hands by Ben Carson, M.D. with Cecil Murphey)

Proverbs 16:32 impressed me the most: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (RSV).

My lips moved wordlessly as I continued to read. I felt as though the verses had been written just to me, for me. The words of Proverbs condemned me, but they also gave me hope. After a while peace began to fill my mind. My hands stopped shaking. The tears stopped. During those hours alone in the bathroom, something happened to me. God heard my deep cries of anguish. A feeling of lightness flowed over me, and I knew a change of heart had taken place. I felt different. I was different.

At last I stood up, placed the Bible on the edge of the tub, and went to the sink. I washed my face and hands, straightened my clothes. I walked out of the bathroom a changed young man. "My temper will never control me again," I told myself. "Never again. I'm free."

And since that day, since those long hours wrestling with myself and crying to God for help, I have never had a problem with my temper.

That same afternoon I decided I would read the Bible every day. I've kept that practice as a daily habit and especially enjoy the book of Proverbs. Even now, whenever possible, I pick up my Bible and read the first thing every morning.

The miracle that took place was incredible when I stop to think about it. Some of my psychologically oriented friends insist that I still have the potential for anger. Maybe they're right, but I've lived more than twenty years since that experience, and I've never had another flare-up or even had a serious problem of needing to control my temper.

p. 59

PRACTICE HIS PRESENCE!

Dr. Andrew Bonar, a saintly man, wrote in his diary: "Tonight I gave myself to a time of waiting upon the Lord. I had not been much in the spirit of prayer, but now several things have become clear to me. I realize I have not communed enough with the Lord, nor come to Him as often as I should. Little forethought has been given to the requests I've made. There has been much conversing and outward engagement with men, but I have not been occupied enough with God himself. I also realize that a closeness to Him gives abundant strength and is like sunlight shining through the clouds on a gloomy day."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: A commitment to leadership is a commitment to prayer.

LESSON #2: Paul wants our prayers to be worldwide in scope.

LESSON #3: We are to pray for the righteous and the unrighteous leadership of our lands.

LESSON #4: The purpose in praying for our leaders is so that "we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all piety and reverence."

LESSON #5: Praying like this is "good and pleasing in the presence of God our Savior."

LESSON #6: God is desiring that all "be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth."

LESSON #7: There is only one God and one go-between for God and men, and that Man is Christ Jesus.

LESSON #8: Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all men.

LESSON #9: "Holy hands" points to our relationship with God and "without anger" points to our relationship with our fellowman.

LESSON #10: It is Paul's desire that we "be praying in every place."

Barnes says:

For prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest; prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts; it is the daughter of charity and the sister of meekness; . . .
p. 133

King says:

How deeply impressed Timothy must have been by all this tremendous emphasis. We may be sure that when this young leader exercises his Oversight, he will not be slow to seek to build up the prayer-life of the believers committed to his charge. And, for himself, we may feel certain that as youth takes the Helm, he will first take hold of God.
p. 47

(Rut, Rot or Revival: The Condition of the Church
by A. W. Tozer)

He will give fruit if we will but trust Him and dare to believe. Have you got the Christian courage to change your home to suit the will of God? Have you got the Christian courage to bring your business into line with the will of God? Have you got the Christian courage to bring your personal life into line with the will of God, to purge everything that is not of God? We have yet to know how desperately we need God to do something in this terrible day in which we live, a day of worldliness, carnality, competition and vainglory. How we need God; how we need Christ; how we need the Holy Spirit. We need clean living, sanctification and purity of heart. Then the Spirit of the Living God will come upon us.
p. 149

God has His seed of survival. He has His people who are ready to say, "God, we want to have biblical order, and we want to have the power of the Holy Spirit. We want to fulfill Your will in worship, witness and work. We are willing to back up our desires by carrying the cross and by bringing our lives into line with Your desires."
p. 150

The voice of unbelief says, "Yes, I'm a believer. I believe the Bible. I don't like those modernists, liberals and modern scientists who deny the Bible. I would not do that for the world. I believe in God, and I believe that God will bless." That is, He will bless at some other time, in some other place and some other people. Those are three sleepers that bring the work of God to a halt. We are believers and we can quote the creed with approval. We believe it, but we believe that God will bless some other people, some other place, some other time--but not now, not here and not us.

p. 152

Unbelief is entirely logical and true to nature. People of faith, however, have a logic that is higher than natural logic, a logic that cannot be seen by unbelievers. But unbelief is entirely logical. The sun rises, and the sun also sets. It rains and it snows. Seasons follow each other. The ducks fly to the north and then to the south. Babies are born and old men die. Things go on as they go on. "As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be"--that is the only hymn we know. Things will be as they have been, we sing in unbelief.

p. 160

When the spirit of prayer falls on people, God answers their prayer and things are done. When a spirit of prayer is not on us, we just mumble on endlessly. But when the spirit of prayer is on us, the Spirit praying in us to the God above us will get things done around us.

p. 170

FIVE DANGEROUS PRAYERS

"When you prayerfully and courageously move out of your comfort zone, your spiritual life will never be the same."

Every day Christians voice a variety of prayers, most of them self-serving pleas for help or protection, but God loves to hear us pray dangerously--prayers that open us up to Him and cause us to grow spiritually. Bill Hybels challenges us to risk praying the following five prayers.

- o Search me: Almost every Christian has times of feeling indignant toward people who rebel against God. David expressed that emotion in Psalm 139, but immediately he stopped and asked God to examine him. In the same way, we must not forget to ask God to point out rebellion in our own spirits.

- o Break me: You cannot grow as a Christian until you learn to ask for brokenness. Regardless of your level of spiritual maturity, there will always be areas of your life God needs to work in. Perhaps it's a penchant for perfectionism, an inclination to be discouraged, or stubborn insensitivity. Whatever it may be, new Christ-like ways cannot replace the old until we let God smash the former patterns to bits.

- o Stretch me: This is the kind of prayer to pray when you want to grow up spiritually. When the first-century believers prayed for greater boldness instead of asking God to take away persecution, they were praying "stretch me" prayers. If you know someone whose depth of love is humbling, whose perseverance is inspiring, whose spiritual strength is amazing, that person has probably asked God to stretch them through life's challenges.

- o Lead me: Asking God to take your life and do whatever He wants with it is risky. If you are comfortable in your home, have a growing family, and enjoy your job, it is especially scary to let God take control, but that's what faith is all about. We've got to believe that His plans for us are better than our own.

- o Use me: It's exciting to make yourself available to God so that He can touch someone else through you. Such prayer creates adventures.

Praying in these ways lets God know you are serious about living for Him. When He moves you out of your comfort zone, your Christian life is radically changed. [See also 8015 and 7852.]

"Five dangerous prayers and why you should pray them" by Bill Hybels. Today's Christian Woman, Jul/Aug 1992. Pages 41-43.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

STUDY #4 - 1 Timothy 2:1-8

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

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