

## The Priority of Prayer

### **Main Text: Colossians 4:2**

Colossians 4:2 (NKJV) <sup>2</sup> Continue earnestly (**sincere and intense conviction**) in prayer, being vigilant (**to be watchful and alert**) in it with thanksgiving;

Two things Paul told the church in Colossians about prayer to overcome adversity: 1) continue earnestly, and 2) Be Vigilant. Earnestly means with sincere and intense conviction and Vigilant means to be watchful, stay alert.

Many believers lack power, authority, spiritual activity, and the manifestation of the supernatural because they prefer to be accepted by today's society, which embraces temporal values, rather than seek God and establish a strong, intimate, and eternal relationship with Him through prayer. Apostle Guillermo Maldonado

The more the church is Westernized, the less prayer it engages in. Westernized means to be carried away with schools, or thoughts, which place reason and scientific verification above the supernatural power of God often to the point of denying the Supernatural power of God.

If we are not able to transmit the true spirit of prayer to the church, that spirit will be extinguished. Instead of congregating in a true house of God, it will be as if we are merely attending a social club or a place of entertainment, where the life of the Spirit is visibly lacking.

### **Why is Prayer Being Devalued Today?**

1. The spirit of the world. The Spirit of the World is a force that openly opposes the Holy Spirit. It includes everything that Satan introduces into the culture and the traditions of nations that move people to act against the will and purpose of God, and leads them to cultivate unbelieving and sinful behavior.

a. James 4:4 (NASB95) <sup>4</sup> You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

b. The Spirit of the world is opposed to the idea of a relationship with God since it denies His existence.

1) 1 John 5:19 (NASB95) <sup>19</sup> We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one.

2) 1 Corinthians 2:12 (NASB95) 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

c. the Spirit of the world even seeks to influence the minds of believers, with the intention of keeping them from esteeming what is carnal so they will rush to obtain what is only temporary.

2. Hyper-Grace Teaching. The second reason this generation doesn't value prayer is that many people are following a "hyper-grace" teaching, which is a false doctrine.

a. The Bible says we are saved through grace through faith.

1) Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB95) 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

2) God's grace is not a license to sin; rather, grace empowers us to live a righteous life before God. (Romans 6:1-4 – Paul addresses this issue of continuing in sin so that grace can increase and the answer was no!)

3) Everything has already been paid for at the cross, but as a Christian, everything about us changes or should be changing to conform ourselves to Jesus Christ.

b. The first thing that God gave to the church is the priesthood of believers and one of the chief roles of a priest is to pray.

1) Revelation 1:5-6 (NASB95) 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood— 6 and He has made us *to be* a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

2) Revelation 5:9-10 (NASB95) 9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

c. We must continue our responsibilities as priests in God's kingdom in order to enforce what Christ has won for us on the cross. We have no spiritual life without prayer.

### **What is True Prayer?**

**Prayer is a two-way communication.** It is a dialogue through which we speak to God and listen to Him – generating a relationship in the now, one that is present and continuous. **Our communication with our heavenly Father gives life to our relationship with Him.**

Communication with God is not based so much on what we say, but on what we hear from Him. And we can hear our heavenly Father only when we have a close, intimate, fact-to-face relationship. Like any relationship, it must be cultivated for it to grow.

**The Kingdom of God is built upon the structure of relationship.** This means that our interaction with God can not be mechanical, they can't be based on a formula or a ritual. It is possible to pray from a position that is not a place of relationship. Jesus said:

John 15:7 (NASB95) 7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

The only way you can abide in Christ is if it is relational. Through relationship God's word produces results.

When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, the Veil was torn in two from top to bottom. Up until this point, behind the veil, the place of the Holy of Holies, where the High Priest entered once a year on the Day of Atonement to atone for the sins of the people, there was a separation and prohibited the people from going into the Holy of Holies.

The tearing of the veil by heaven signified that from that moment, the way to the presence of God would remain open forever through relationship and it would be the responsibility of the believer, not a priest for the believers.

More than meeting needs, He (God the Father) wants to have a continuing relationship with us and that comes through fellowship in prayer.

- 1 John 1:3 (NASB95) 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Prayer kept Jesus in close relationship with His Father. Accordingly, all of Jesus' s miracles flowed from his prayer life.

- Mark 1:35 (NASB95) **35** In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left *the house*, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.
- John 11:42 (NASB95) 42“I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.”

The day we finally understand the true value of prayer, we will reach a point where all our prayers will be answered by God.

### **The Purpose of Prayer**

God is restoring the “Prayer Mantle” upon the church for the purpose of preparing us for the challenges we will face in the end times, and to enable us to be ready when Christ returns. **Prayer is surrender, sacrifice, and consecration. Through prayer, God not only wants to bless us, He also wants to transform us.**

1. Prayer is the way we develop our relationship with God.

a. Most believers don't value prayer because they don't have a close relationship with God. Prayer is the way by which we come to establish, maintain, and deepen our intimacy with the Father.

b. Intimacy takes place when we know God, and when He holds a place in our heart.

c. Prayer and intimacy – one depends on the other, producing a circle of blessings. Our relationship with God also affects our human relationships.

1) 1 John 1:6–7 (NASB95) 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

2) The way we treat people is the way we will treat God and the way we love God is the way we love people.

3) If in our hearts, there are resentment, unforgiveness, and offenses against other people, we must forgive them; otherwise, God won't listen to our prayers, because we will be in darkness.

Matthew 6:15 (NASB95) 15 “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

2. Prayer prepares Us for the Second Coming of Christ.

a. Mark 13:33 (NASB95) **33**“Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the *appointed* time will come.

b. When the church doesn’t pray, it is telling Jesus it doesn’t want to be united with Him in His second coming,, it is revealing that it doesn’t believe this will happen and it hat it has chosen to ignore the value of prayer regarding this event.

3. Prayer is the way by which the Supernatural comes into this world.

a. When you look into God’s Word, we see that every one of Jesus’s miracles was directly or indirectly related to His prayer life. To resurrect Lazarus, He only needed to thank the Father, which reveals His level of communion with God.

b. John 11:41–43 (NASB95) 41 So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 “I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.” 43 When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.”

c. Jesus did not pray at the moment of urgency, instead He appealed to his constant prayer life to give the command that would produce the miracle.

### **One number one priority (Conclusion)**

A relationship with God that doesn’t include intimacy and quality time with Him is surfaced level and based on our convenience alone. We must put our fellowship with Him first in or lives. He wants our total, undivided attention. We are so occupied even with ministry activities – praying for people, meeting peoples physical needs and so forth, that we forget that our number one priority is our time with Him. Jesus is calling us to have a closer relationship with the Father.

TO DEVELOP A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, WE MUST INVEST QUALITY TIME IN PRAYER.

## Bibliography

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