

Jesse Rich Ministries

September '05 Newsletter

“Called to reach the World with the Word of Faith”

First of All

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and *for* all that are in authority;
that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 1 Timothy 2:1,2

FIRST OF ALL, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be offered for all men; for sovereigns and all in high office, that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in full observance of religion and high standards of morality. 1 Timothy 2:1,2 NEB

Developing Your Prayer Life

Dear Friend and Partner,

I have a real urgency to share something with you in this in this month's newsletter. It concerns a couple of aspects of your prayer life. The first thing I want to share is that if you haven't developed a prayer life, I want to encourage you to do so.

Then, if you do have a prayer life, I want to admonish you to become more fervent in prayer in order to keep yourself built up spiritually and in constant fellowship with the Father God so you can be used by God in intercessory prayer.

Not only do we benefit personally in our own life when we maintain a fervent prayer life, but also God needs us to pray and intercede, for He said in 1 Timothy 2:1-8,

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

Praying for our Leaders First

In these scriptures, God admonishes us not only to pray and intercede, but He also tells us to do this first. This means praying for the leaders of our nation first. What does *first* mean? It means, before you do anything else. For example, when you play baseball, and hit the ball, you run to first base before you go to second. So, when God tells us to do something first, it should be of the utmost importance to us that we do it first.

Satan is always up to no good. He always has been, and he always will be. **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.** 1 Peter 5:8,9

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. 2 Corinthians 2:11

As we pray and intercede, his tactics are exposed by the Holy Spirit (Mark 4:22, Acts 5:3, Acts 13:9), whether it may be in a small area concerning one's life, or in something huge, concerning the whole nation. Satan is out to destroy our nation, and he is doing everything he can to destroy Israel, as well.

In April of 1980, the Lord woke me up early one morning and told me to pray for the protection of the people of the United States of America. I had gotten in late the night before from ministering, and I thought I'd get up and pray later that morning. That evening, a neighbor man told me what had transpired that day. Eight American servicemen died in a failed attempt to rescue 53 hostages held in Iran. I immediately realized how important it was to obey God immediately when He tells you to do something.

Obedience in Intercession

God needs us to intercede and pray for the known and unknown, as we read in Romans 8:26-28, **Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.**

... for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Isaiah 66:8

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, Galatians 4:19

What normally precedes my meetings is a prayer session. You know that's true if you've ever attended any of my meetings. Not only did God call me to teach the Word of faith, but He also led me to teach prayer by precept and example. So therefore, before almost every church service and every seminar, before every campmeeting and Bible school class, I would have at least an hour of prayer where people could come and pray – *and I still do.*

A few years went by after the 1980 incident, and I was doing a Bible study in some peoples' home one night. I opened the meeting in prayer and encouraged the people to pray in the spirit. The Holy Spirit seemed to be dealing with me to keep praying and not stop. But then I started thinking, *"These people present have been putting a lot of time in prayer in the meetings, and they came tonight for a Bible study, and not a prayer meeting."*

So, after about 20 minutes or so of praying, I decided I'd start teaching. Hopefully, I thought, we had prayed enough for whatever we were praying about (*I didn't know what we were praying about*).

I then proceeded to teach the Word. In my heart was, *"Just keep praying"*, and in my head was, *"Just keep teaching."* But I kept reasoning it out. We had been praying, and these people needed to hear the Word.

What I was doing was just disobeying God. I was not yielding to the leading of the Holy Spirit. I was giving in to my intellect and human reasoning.

The house where I was doing the Bible study was in the country. It was summertime, and the windows were open. Suddenly, we heard an out of control car hit a tree in front of the house at high speed. We heard the driver and passenger scream just before they hit the tree.

Apparently, the car windows were down. The Lifestar helicopter was called to come help save their lives. If I remember correctly, one of the people was killed and the other was critically injured. That's why God was having us intercede. He was trying to prevent something from happening. *God can do so much more as we pray and intercede!*

And then, 2001 came. The Lord spoke to me about moving to New York City, and I did. Then, He began to deal with me after I moved there to pray and intercede for New York City, and I did. I prayed all of May, June, July, and August, until September 11th, 2001.

That morning, I was going to go to the radio station and do my program. At 8:30 a.m., the Lord told me not to go to the radio station. He said to go to the post office first. I didn't want to, because I wanted to beat the traffic before it got too congested, if it hadn't already. I thought about those times that I'd missed God before in different situations, so I obeyed that prompting. I didn't go downtown. I reversed my direction, and in 15 minutes, I would find out why. I also found out why the Lord kept moving on me to pray and intercede for New York City.

We are to pray and intercede for our nation, whether or not we have a burden, an inward witness, or a prompting, because the Word tells us to do so. In fact, the Word tells us to do this **first**.

Many times, the Holy Spirit will move on your heart to pray and intercede about something. This includes praying in your known language about things you are aware of, and you can pray the Word, because Jesus said in John 15:7, **If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.**

And, if you've been baptized in the Holy Spirit, you can pray in the Holy Ghost. **For if I pray in an [unknown] tongue, my spirit [by the Holy Spirit within me] prays, but my mind is unproductive [it bears no fruit and helps nobody]. Then what am I to do? I will pray with my spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me], but I will also pray [intelligently] with my mind and understanding; I will sing with my spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me], but I will sing [intelligently] with my mind and understanding also.** 1 Corinthians 14:14,15 AMP

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Jude 20

So too the [Holy] Spirit comes to our aid and bears us up in our weakness; for we do not know what prayer to offer nor how to offer it worthily as we ought, but the Spirit Himself goes to meet our supplication and pleads in our behalf with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance.

And He Who searches the hearts of men knows what is in the mind of the [Holy] Spirit [what His intent is], because the Spirit intercedes and pleads [before God] in behalf of the saints according to and in harmony with God's will.

We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose. Romans 8:26-28 AMP

The Holy Spirit will help you pray for the unknown. He'll give you the utterance, but you have to do the speaking. There are many things we don't quite understand, and may never understand in this life. But, whether or not we ever understand God or His ways, or His promptings and leadings, we must step out in childlike faith and obey Him. We must trust God enough that He knows what He's doing. The best thing we can do is to obey Him and believe He'll take care of everything if we'll do our part.

The problem is that too many Christians are not putting any quality time in prayer. One reason for this is they haven't been taught to do so. They don't know the Word of God well enough, nor do they know how to yield to the Holy Spirit.

Others have been taught the Word and were taught to yield to the Holy Spirit's promptings and leadings, but were like I was – they allowed their head to override their heart.

Someone may ask, *“Do you think you can pray and stop everything?”* That's not the question you want ask. You want ask the question, *“Is my prayer life pleasing God? Am I giving it my best effort?”*

You want to say, *“God, I want to know more about prayer. Use me, God. When You need someone to pray and intercede, You can count on me.”*

Look. Your flesh is never going to want you to put any time in prayer. **And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with**

me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Matthew 26:40,41

I believe if you will sacrifice the time and put an hour or two in prayer every day, someday down the road, your flesh may be very grateful that you put the time in prayer because your flesh got protected from something the devil had planned to happen to you.

It's time that the church stopped whining and complaining and blaming God for what happens or doesn't happen and begins to submit to God instead of fighting against Him. It's amazing that the more time you put in prayer, the more effective you will become spiritually. You'll have more spiritual discernment and you'll have more peace in your heart, and you want to please God more than you will anyone else.

We need more spiritual soldiers of God's Army to enlist in prayer and go to battle and enforce the defeat that Jesus won for us. Why should we sit back and allow Satan to take over our nation, our churches, or our government? Let's stand up and volunteer in this elite army of prayer people. By doing so, God will protect our nation and more people will come into the kingdom of God.

The amazing thing about so many Christians today is about all that they're doing is standing around the church after service is over, talking before the service starts, sitting around home, watching television and talking on the phone. And you tell me there's any prayer going on?

The Wake-up Call

We don't want anything to happen to our nation. We don't want any shortages, or wars, or disasters, but we don't want to put any quality time in prayer, either! God did not raise up prayer requests in church to take the place of united prayer meetings.

Let's volunteer now! Let's stir ourselves up and begin to stand in the gap. Make up the hedge that Satan cannot penetrate and get through to our prayer lives.

Praying and interceding for our nation is a way that we can humble ourselves before God, as we read in 2 Chronicles 7:14: **If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.**

Examples of Intercession

Abraham interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18:23-33: **And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?**

Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am but* dust and ashes:

Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack of five*? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do *it* for forty's sake.

And he said *unto him*, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.

And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake. And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Just think if Abraham would have said, "*Lord, if there is just one righteous person in Sodom and Gomorrah, would You spare it?*"

There's tremendous power availed when a believer begins to stand in the gap and intercede:

And the prayer [that is] of faith will save him who is sick, and the Lord will restore him; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

Elijah was a human being with a nature such as we have [with feelings, affections, and a constitution like ours]; and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and no rain fell on the earth for three years and six months. [I Kings 17:1.] And [then] he prayed again and the heavens supplied rain and the land produced its crops [as usual]. [I Kings 18:42-45.] James 5:16-18 AMP

God's Directive to Intercede for Others and Do the Works of Jesus

Jesus said in Matthew 9:35-38, **And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.**

Did you notice here that Jesus said, **The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.**

From this scripture, you can see that it is erroneous to think that God is running everything in this earth, because if he was, you wouldn't need to pray that God would send forth laborers into the harvest. Doesn't God know the harvest is plenteous and the laborers are few? The answer is yes. If God was running everything, why didn't He just sent forth the laborers?

God delegated the authority of this world to us, the body of Christ, in and through the Name of Jesus. What you see Jesus doing in the Gospels is what we're to do here, in His Name, as the body of Christ today.

On that same day [when] evening had come, He said to them, Let us go over to the other side [of the lake]. And leaving the throng, they took Him with them, [just] as He was, in the boat [in which He was sitting]. And other boats were with Him.

And a furious storm of wind [of hurricane proportions] arose, and the waves kept beating into the boat, so that it was already becoming filled.

But He [Himself] was in the stern [of the boat], asleep on the [leather] cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him, Master, do You not care that we are perishing?

And He arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Hush now! Be still (muzzled)! And the wind ceased (sank to rest as if exhausted by its beating) and there was [immediately] a great calm (a perfect peacefulness). He said to them, Why are you so timid and fearful? How is it that you have no faith (no firmly relying trust)? Mark 4:35-40 AMP

In this situation, Jesus said, **Let us pass over unto the other side.** Then the storm came like a hurricane, or a typhoon. Jesus did something about it – He rebuked it.

Then later, Jesus would tell us in John 14:12-14, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.**

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11

The works that Jesus did, we are to do in His Name. So not only are we, as believers, to intercede and pray, but we are also to exercise our dominion over this world that we live in by taking authority over circumstances and situations, such as plagues, famines, shortages, storms, and anything that comes to steal, kill, or destroy (John 10:10). We are to rebuke these things, stand against them and resist them.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 1 Peter 5:6-9

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. James 4:6-8

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; Ephesians 6:10-18

In this life, we are always going to be confronted and challenged by Satan and his evil forces. He's always going to be testing us out and coming against us. Therefore, he will always have to be resisted and rebuked. It's another reason that we cannot afford to let our prayer life slack. We don't want to become one of Satan's statistics or casualties.

Seeking God's Will for Our Life

But we cannot effectively resist the devil if we haven't been drawing nigh unto God. As we seek God in prayer, we can also find out from God what is His will for our life, as we read in Matthew 26:36-45:

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

God has a plan and a purpose for each one of us. It's our individual responsibility that we seek God in prayer to find out what He wants us to do in life. We want to be faithful and obedient to our Father God's will. Jesus said in Matthew 10:24, **The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.** Jesus found out what His Father wanted Him to do, and then Jesus did what His Father wanted Him to do.

In God's Word, you find out who you are in Christ Jesus, your New Covenant benefits, how to conduct yourself as a believer, and how to grow and become strong spiritually. But in prayer, you find out the specifics of what God wants you to do.

Acts 10:9-15,19 says, **On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.**

And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

The answer came to Peter concerning what God wanted him to do after Peter had been in prayer. And the Holy Spirit revealed His will to some disciples in Antioch as they prayed and fasted in Acts 13:2: **As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.**

As you seek God in prayer, and wait on Him in prayer, God's will for your life will begin to unfold to you. When you have questions, "Do I do this?" or, "Do I do that?" You need to seek God for those answers to find out what He would have you do. When you begin to find out what God wants you to do, you have to pray that through. ***Your prayer life will give birth to the will of God in your life.***

Praying, interceding, and seeking God is beneficial to us in so many ways. Two things are that it helps us stay in close fellowship with God and it helps us stay in tune with the leadings and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Pleasing God by Being Led by His Spirit

We don't make our decisions the way the world makes their decisions. We don't do things based on how they may appear, or feel, or look, or if it is in our best interest. We are believers. Therefore, we are led by the Holy Ghost. We wait on God in prayer before we step out and do anything. We follow peace in our hearts. We don't seek other peoples' opinions or what they think we should do. Our number-one priority in life is to please the Lord.

But just experiencing God's wonder and grace didn't seem to mean much--most of them were defeated by temptation during the hard times in the desert, and God was not pleased. 1 Corinthians 10:5 AMP

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. 1 John 3:21-24

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2:14

1 Corinthians 2:14 in the Amplified says, **But the natural, nonspiritual man does not accept or welcome or admit into his heart the gifts and teachings and revelations of the Spirit of God, for they are folly (meaningless nonsense) to him; and he is incapable of knowing them [of progressively recognizing, understanding, and becoming better acquainted with them] because they are spiritually discerned and estimated and appreciated.**

As believers, we first do the Word and stay with the Word. Secondly, we're led by the Holy Spirit. For instance, when we get ready to purchase something if we don't have peace about it in our heart, the Holy Spirit is trying to let us know this isn't God's will for our life. It is going to be very difficult for a believer to be led by the Holy Spirit if they're not praying enough every day.

If you do not put enough time in prayer on a daily basis, you'll be too carnally minded to hear from God. You'll judge things logically or intellectually. You will miss out on being led by the Holy Spirit. When you're not led by the Holy Spirit, you miss out on God's will for you life. You will end up following your flesh, and when you do so, you grieve and quench the Holy Spirit.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God [do not offend or vex or sadden Him], by Whom you were sealed (marked, branded as God's own, secured) for the day of redemption (of final deliverance through Christ from evil and the consequences of sin). Ephesians 4:30 AMP

Don't cause the Holy Spirit sorrow by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who marks you to be present on that day when salvation from sin will be complete.

Ephesians 4:30 TLB

Do not quench (suppress or subdue) the [Holy] Spirit;

1 Thessalonians 5:19 AMP

You usually hear carnal Christian say things like, "*The Lord loves me just the way I am.*" Well, God *does* love you, this is true, for He said in John 3:16, **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

But you want to ask yourself the question – or better yet, ask God, "*Am I doing things that are pleasing in Your sight? Am I doing anything, Lord, that is displeasing to You?*"

God loves everyone, but He's not pleased with us when we go off and do our own thing. The hardest thing you're ever going to have to surrender is your will, and it's going to be a constant day and night dedicating and surrendering it to God. You can't be like everyone else, or you're going to miss God. You want to make sure that you're pleasing God. You can't go to church just for the sake of going to church, just so you can say you went to church. You want to wait on God in prayer and find out from Him where you're supposed to go.

Knowing God's Will for Your Life by Seeking Him in Prayer

When I got saved, my job was doing floor covering. I was a carpet installer. As soon as I got saved, I asked God, "*What do You want me to do?*" Every day, every night, I talked to the Lord. I kept seeking Him. At work, at home, or wherever I was, I constantly pursued it: "*God, what You want me to do?*" He led me to go Bible school, and told me He'd called me into the ministry. Then later, God told me to reach New England with the Word of faith. Years after that, He told me to reach New York City and He just kept adding to it.

I pray more now, and talk to God more now about what He wants me to do than I did when I started doing this. Many nights I've stayed up praying and seeking God for direction. I did last night, and I'll do it tonight. I'll do it until Jesus comes, or until I go home to be with the Lord.

Have you ever sought the Lord? Have you ever asked Him, "*What is it, Lord, that You want me to do?*" Can you honestly say you're doing what God told you do, or led you to do?

Seeking Guidance in Difficult Situations

Oftentimes, we have a situation that in the natural, we don't know what to do. But if we'll pray and seek God – *really seek Him* - He'll tell you what to do.

David had a situation where he didn't know what to do, and he sought God, and got a victorious answer in 1 Samuel 30:1-8: **And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.**

Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

David didn't just run off half cocked, following his emotions, even though he became very emotional (*and who wouldn't have?*) David went to God in prayer and sought the Lord *first*. And then, David did what God told him to do about it.

You can't go off in your own power, in the flesh, and accomplish anything. We have to go out in the strength of the Lord and in the power of the Holy Spirit, led by the Holy Spirit in the Name of Jesus. **...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.** Zechariah 4:6

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Colossians 3:17

Your Obedience Will Benefit You and Others

The best thing you can do for yourself and everyone else is that you please God. Many benefits are derived from the one who will intercede and seek God:

- ***Your nation needs your prayers.***
- ***Your loved ones need your prayers.***
- ***You need your prayers.***
- ***And God needs your prayers,***
so He can work mightily in this nation,
and in your loved ones.

Don't you have a loved one that needs to be born again, that needs to be saved? Sure you do. And your prayers of intercession for them will cause God to work on their behalf.

Growing up Spiritually

Having people agree with us in prayer and/or taking prayer requests in our services can be very beneficial. But prayer requests should never be abused, or misused. They should never take the place of the individual having their own prayer life.

A minister always wants to make sure that they let the person making the request know: *"We're standing in agreement with you, we've prayed with you, and we're believing with you."*

In addition to that, the minister and fellow believers need to encourage the requestor to stay in the Word and stay in prayer. Ephesians 3:20 says, **Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,**

Prayer requests were never intended to take the place of an individual's prayer life, because sooner or later, that individual is going to have to grow spiritually themselves.

As a pastor, you do a disservice to an individual if you don't teach them the importance of having their own prayer life. Everyone of us must grow spiritually. You do people an injustice by doing all their spiritual work for them. A pastor like a father, and his children are God's sheep. In the natural, just as parents teach their children responsibilities, a pastor must teach the people there spiritual responsibilities.

My mother had four boys and she taught all of us boys to wash and dry the dishes, to do the laundry, and clean the house. In fact, today, when I cleaned my shower and did my laundry, I did it the way my mother showed me. Parents do a disservice to their children by permitting them to stay lazy, and not take on responsibilities. And, using the example of prayer, pastors do a disservice to the sheep if they don't have meetings to teach God's people the importance of prayer by precept and example.

Jesus taught his disciples through precept and example, and we today, as ministers of the gospel, must do the same. Some people (*even ministers*), get too busy to pray. But you can't use that as an excuse not to pray and wait on God. Even if you're on the go, you can pray in the spirit. I'm on a train, bus, plane, or in a cab every week, if not every day. And I will sit there praying in the spirit and no one even knows what is going on, so I know it can be done. (*And I know your schedule is not busier than mine!*)

Trusting God to Work Things Out Through Prayer

Things won't work out in our lives the way God intended for them to if we don't put the adequate time in prayer. You get in some situations that the only way you're going to get through them is by prayer. If you haven't found that out yet, you will someday.

I've had many things in the natural that weren't getting worked out. Then I'd realize, *"This is not going to work out until I put adequate time in prayer so God can work it out for me."*

I will start out reading Romans 8:26-28. I did today. I'll say, *"God You know what's going on with this situation. I don't, but I am going to put this time in prayer, and I'm going to trust the Holy Spirit to give me the utterance."* Then I begin to put this time in, praying in the Spirit (*which is praying in tongues*).

The Holy Spirit will help you pray if you will yield to Him. God always comes through if we will put the time in prayer and draw nigh unto Him. But it's going to take some effort on our part and labor in prayer to get it accomplished.

So have I said enough to get you to pray? Good.

I'm enclosing some scriptures from Ephesians and Ephesians 1 and 3 that you can pray for yourself, as well as others. This will help you get started praying the Word. But also put in the time praying in the spirit. Let's stand together and work as co-laborers together in God's kingdom.

I know this has been very sobering, and to some, very convicting. But to all of us, it's got to be the number-one reason why we live and breathe — and that's to please our heavenly Father, and it is by doing those things that are pleasing in His sight (John 3:21). Amen.

- Brother Rich

Prayers from Ephesians to Pray for Yourself and Other People

If you want to pray scripturally from the Bible, pray the following prayers from Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21:

¹⁵Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, ¹⁶Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; ¹⁷That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

¹⁸The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

²⁰Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

²²And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Ephesians 1:15-23

¹⁴For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

¹⁶That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

¹⁷That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

¹⁹And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. ²⁰Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, ²¹Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. Eph. 3:14-21

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