

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of April 8, 2007

A desire for God which cannot break the chains of sleep is a weak thing and will do but little good for God after it has indulged itself fully. The desire for God that keeps so far behind the devil and the world at the beginning of the day will never catch up.

E. M. Bounds *Power Through Prayer*

The Life of Prayer

Examine Yourselves

David Williamson

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is this:

***But without faith it is impossible to please Him,
for he who comes to God must believe that He is,
and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

The thought of God, almighty and all powerful, rewarding those who seek Him, has always excited and challenged me. What kind of reward can God offer; is there any limit? When the child of a rich man is kidnapped the rich man will offer a great reward to the person bringing information that leads to the return of the child. That is great reward, but the rich man's ability to reward pales by comparison with the ability of God to reward. And God's rewards are better than man's because God brings no sorrow with His reward.

God is a rewarder! As is true with many verses of the Bible this one comes with a requirement for us; without faith it is impossible. The key to enjoying the benefits of the promise is meeting the demands of the condition. With faith we please the rewarder. This faith demands that we believe that God is. That means many things; among them is the belief that He lives and moves on our behalf, now as He always has; belief that He is willing and able to answer our prayers, belief that He is a good God, bringing life and it more abundant to those who seek Him. Faith is the key that unlocks God and His work in our life and in our prayers.

Faith is the key to answers to prayer. Before you leave your house you should check to see if you have your key. Before you leave your car you should check to see if you have your key (car's even help by signaling you if you try to leave without your key). Before we pray we should check to see if we have our key.

***Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.
Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves,***

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*that Jesus Christ is in you?
--unless indeed you are disqualified.
2 Cor. 13:5 (NKJV)*

The Amplified Bible states this verse this way:

Examine and test and evaluate your own selves, to see whether you are holding to your faith and showing the proper fruits of it. Test and prove yourselves, [not Christ]. Do you not yourselves realize and know (thoroughly by an ever-increasing experience) that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless you are [counterfeits] disapproved on trial and rejected!

The center of this verse is the test. In my school I have teachers test students to find out what the students know. Do they know enough to warrant completion of the course and moving to the next course? In the Greek this word's meaning is a little different and it is important for us to see the full meaning. "Peirazo", to test, in the Greek means, to endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline. This is substantially different from the tests my teachers give.

Paul tells us, through the Corinthians, that we are to endeavor (test) ourselves. The test here is to see if I can do it. Peter was called to endeavor when he stepped out of the boat and walked to Jesus. When his eyes were on Jesus his faith kept him on top of the water. When his eyes were on the waves his faith failed and he sank. Part one of our test is walking out the faith challenges that are presented to us. When the storm comes and waves pound where are our eyes; on Him or on the waves? If we have faith in each of these endeavors we will have our eye on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

Scrutinize our faith seem more in line with what I expected from the word, test. It means to examine closely. Straightforward as this seems it also is very important to our testing. Often we are nonchalant in our faith and casual in our examination of our faith. When nuclear generators are built the work is closely examined? One of the keys to a site that is well build and safe is the examination of the welds of the metal. Just an observation by an examiner was deemed not good enough. Every inch of the welds had to be examined by X-ray. It was only by this careful and complete scrutiny that we could have confidence that the reactor was safe (all the reactors that had problems, there were questions about the thoroughness of these examinations). Is your testing a scrutiny or just casual glance now and then? Are you holding to your faith and showing the proper fruit of it?

I must admit I was stumped when I read the next word in the definition of peirazo; to entice? What could this mean? So I looked at the definition of the work entice in an English dictionary. Among other things, it means to arouse hope. Suddenly there was light on this subject. My examination of my faith should arouse hope.

***but Christ as a Son over His own house,
whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence
and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.
Hebrews 3:6 (NKJV)***

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Hope is an anchor for our soul; it keeps us moving toward fulfillment of our salvation, our duty in life, and our love of others. Hope keeps us firm to the end. When I examine myself, I should entice hope to spring up big. I hope in my salvation, I hope in my righteousness, I hope in Christ glorious appearing, I hope in the resurrection, I hope in eternal life, and I hope in Glory. The testing of faith will stir up hope; it entices it to new heights and strengthens it for the needs of the day.

Finally, this examination, this testing should include discipline. One definition of discipline is, training that corrects, molds, or perfects mental facilities or moral character. Testing is a training tool. It should be regular and thorough. It should correct error and problems. It should mold my mental processes and character. It should perfect that which is in me.

Have you been testing yourselves? This is what Jesus did with His disciples. Look at this passage from the sixth chapter of the book of John.

*Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.
Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him,
He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"
But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.
Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them,
that every one of them may have a little."*

John 6:4-7 (NKJV)

The word test used here is peirazo. What parts of our four part definition was Philip facing in this testing?

If we are to accomplish that which God has prepared for us to do in prayer and our Christian life, we must examine ourselves regularly and thoroughly.

*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me;
Try my mind and my heart.*

Psalms 26:2 (NKJV)

Let us pray!

A Call for Prayer

*Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.*

Psalms 2:8 (NKJV)

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Pray for Israel and the peace of Jerusalem – Pray for the friends of Israel. Too often true friends are few and far between. They often are fickle and fail to stand with Israel in time of need.

*Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*

Proverbs 27:6 (NKJV)

William Williamson – Bill is a pastor in Eastern Colorado, and a long time member of this company. We have prayed for Bill and the teams he has lead to India for several years. On the night of March 28 the town of Holly, Colorado, where Bill is a pastor, was hit by a tornado. Please pray for Bill, his family, for the members of his church, and for the people of this community. The hard work of clean up and rebuilding can sap strength and destroy faith and hope.

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

1 Cor. 16:13 (NKJV)

*Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ,
so that whether I come and see you or am absent,
I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit,
with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,*

Philip. 1:27 (NKJV)

John Coon – Pray for John's trip to Poland in May. Pray for the message John will share in word and deed; that it will be the Gospel message and life in Christ Jesus.

Bernhard and Lisa Prumbach – Pray for their family and the adjustments to German life and living. Pray for the provision of all they need.

Marianne and David Dean – Pray for deepening spiritually maturity in the older Christian students they work with—pray that Christ would always be their “first love”.

Jacek Gromadzki – Pray for Jack and his church in Kolobrzeg, Poland. Pray for the spiritual climate of Kolobrzeg to warm to the message of Christ and His salvation. Pray of the plans and arrangements for the activities with the American team that is coming in June.

Marek Kaminski – Pray for Marek and for God's plans for him in bringing revival to Poland.

Joyce Abrahamson – Pray for Joyce and her health, strong in the Lord and in the power of His word. Pray for provision and protection for Joyce, workers, teachers, students, and families.

DK Limbu Daniel – Pray for Pastor Daniel and his care and training of new pastors and workers in areas where the Gospel is spreading.

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Pray for the Inntal Prayer Initiative – Pray for new opportunities to share the life of prayer, in our prayer seminars. Pray of our ministry across more of Germany.

The Brotherhood Beyond Boundaries Conference – Pray for the plans and provision for the fifth BBB Conference. God has a word for East and West and plans to speak, as He has many times, at this conference.

Mark Spencer – Pray for open doors of opportunity, for willing obedience, and for God's provision for walking out all of His will.

Pray for your Home Church – Pray for outreaches for your church. Pray that each member will do the work of the ministry as God gives them the means to do so.

*Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.*

Psalm 2:8 (NKJV)

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The *Voice of Thanksgiving Blog* is the newest feature of *VoT*. The blog is available at www.voiceofthanksgiving.com/blog/

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To receive *Voice of Thanksgiving* the newsletter weekly by e-mail, send an email with the word JOIN in the subject line to dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com

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