

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of October 21, 2007

Our sanctification does not depend upon changing our works, but in doing that for God's sake which we commonly do for our own. The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer. Prayer is nothing else but a sense of the presence of God.—BROTHER LAWRENCE

The Life of Prayer

Passion

David Williamson

Most of the readers of *Voice of Thanksgiving* are Christians (I get emails from some people in response to the website; they write things that indicates they do not care for Christianity). Most of the readers read the Bible, go to church, and pray. There are many readers who are very active in all these areas. As it says on the masthead, *Voice of Thanksgiving* is a calling together of believers for prayer. So it is not surprising that most of us pursue the Christian life and practices, and this is a good thing. However, we must be careful. It is far too easy to become Pharisees of prayer.

Without realizing what is happening, we can fall into the trap of making the practice of prayer become the most important thing in our life. If we are not careful, we let time in prayer, prayer meetings and seeking answers to prayer, have so great an importance they become our passion. C. S. Lewis wrote about this type of error for Christians, "One is sometimes (not often) glad not to be a great theologian: one might so easily mistake it for being a good Christian." It is easy for the theologian to mistake his studies and knowledge as Christianity. It is easy for the man or woman of prayer to mistake prayer, prayer meetings, and seeking answers to prayer, for being a good Christian. Please note study and knowledge of the theologian are good. Prayer, prayer meetings, and answers are good. But, they can be a substitute for what we should be about.

Jack Deere writing about himself said, "It took me too long to learn that knowing the Bible is not the same thing as knowing God, loving the Bible is not the same things as loving God, and reading is not the same thing as hearing God. The Pharisees knew the Bible, loved the Bible, and read the Bible, but they did not know, love, or hear God."

***And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me.
You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.
But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent,
Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures,
for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.
But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.***

John 5:37-40 (NKJV)

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

If we are not careful we can fall into similar traps. We can substitute prayer and our practices, for knowing God. We can substitute prayer meetings for with time with God. We can substitute seeking answers to prayer for walking with God. They can become our passion and we will have become prayer Pharisees. This is an easy error to fall into.

Many people have fallen into the trap. Our fallen nature longs for this; it longs to stand and say things like, "I thank you that I am not like other men." Our flesh longs to be seen as the best at something, so we can brag. The Devil is more than willing for us to be great in prayer, if he can make us into prayer Pharisees. If our focus is on our practices, that is, on us, then we are not focusing on what should be our true and only focus, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Devil uses sin and worldly things to keep men and women from Jesus, but he is willing to use prayer if that will keep us from our Lord. As Jack Deere wrote, "The Devil knows that if he can keep you out of God's presence, he will defeat you."

How can this be, you ask? It is easy, we slowly get caught up in the things of prayer and slip away from the most important thing of all, passion for Jesus. Let me give you an example of passion and lack of passion, from the Bible, look at the story of Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus.

*Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village;
and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.
And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.
But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said,
"Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?
Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her,
"Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.
But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part,
which will not be taken away from her."*

Luke 10:38-42 (NKJV)

The rules of hospitality, especially in the ancient Near East, dictated that Mary should help to serve their guests. However, Mary in her passion for Jesus chose to sit at His feet and listen to everything He said. When Martha told Jesus, He said that Mary had chosen wisely. Mary chose the one thing needed. We face this same type of choice in our prayer life. Are the practices of prayer more important to us than Jesus? What is our passion?

Having our passion focused on Jesus is of great importance if we are to become great men and women of prayer. A focus on prayer will make us proud, will make us Pharisees. We will have great amounts of prayer, and much we can boast about, but true power in prayer will never come. We will keep Jesus and His power at bay, never walking in His ways and never tap into His answers.

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

Look again at Mary at a later time, her dear brother has died. Finally Jesus arrives and Martha goes out to meet Him. She says, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:12). Jesus then gave her one of the great messages of the Bible, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). When Mary comes to Jesus she said the same words, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:32). When Mary said these words, they moved Jesus to action, He wept, He went to the tomb, and He raised Lazarus from the dead. Mary a woman of passion for Jesus moved Him to action, in ways that others could not.

Let me give you another example, when the Disciples gather with Jesus for the Last Supper, Jesus revealed that one of them would betray Him. They all wanted to know who this was to be, but they had John ask the direct question. Why John? Note what John said about himself, he constantly called himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." John's passion was Jesus, When John asked the question, Jesus answered. Also note that when Jesus was on the cross Jesus saw His mother and offered her a replacement son, John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. And to whom did Jesus entrust the care of His dear mother, to the disciple whom Jesus loved.

We can pray and work at the many practices of prayer. We can become great men and women of prayer in our own way, or we can have a passion for Jesus and choose to sit at His feet and become real men and women of prayer. We can make our prayer times, time to be with Him. We can pursue Him over all else, even above answers to prayer. If we do we shall be like Mary. We shall be like John. We will be the men and women who seek Jesus first and foremost, but also move Him to action. We can be passionate about Him and answers will come. Isn't that what our prayer life should be about, we should be seeking Him? If we do He will weep, go, and act for us.

If our passion is for Jesus, then the other aspects of prayer will fall into line. To have a passion for Him we must come to know Him. This takes time and effort. We must have regular time for meditation in the Bible and prayer, but never let these times be mechanical or ritualistic. We must deal with the hindrances and barriers that would separate us from Jesus (1 John 1:7-9). We must trust in His leadership for our life and prayers. It is His ability to lead that will make us successful, not the strength of our abilities. If we make Him our passion, prayer and the rest of the Christian life will be successful.

***looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,
who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross,
despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV)

***And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it,
that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.***

John 17:26 (NKJV)

Let us Pray!

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

A Call for Prayer

*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him,
that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*

1 John 5:14 (NKJV)

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem – Pray for the Peace of this ancient and key town.

Marianne and David Dean – Pray for “good soil” that God would prepare the hearts of many students in this freshman class.

DK Limbu Daniel – Pray for Pastor Daniel and work in and around Nepal. Pray for the following:

1. *Word Explosion Conferences* in Kathmandu and east Nepal in November 4-10th. Pray for peace and safety for all traveling pastors. Participants will come from Nepal, India and Bhutan.
2. *Pastors and Leaders Conference and Healing Rallies* from 9-21st December. This will be held in different parts of east Nepal and mid central Nepal. Pray for the peace and security and for a mighty manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. We are in need of lots of gospel literatures, bibles and New Testaments to distribute; we need large number of it. Please pray for the provision for it.
4. We need your partnership to go beyond our capacity, evangelize the world, planting churches among Nepalese world. Now, Malaysia, Myanmar, Hongkong and Thailand in east and Qatar, UAE, Israel and KSA in the Middle East, are becoming a mission field for us to reach expatriate Nepalese working there.
5. One of the big city in east Nepal, where we are praying to send a missionary, we need a partnership to send a missionary there. We need your partnership and prayer support.
6. Pray for my family, Hope, for Children, and me. We are expecting grandson in December.
7. At the last but not least; our goal is plant 100 churches by 2010 and so far we are coming up with 42 churches and fellowships.

Marek Kaminski – Pray for guidance from God and willing partners in Marek’s ministry in Poland and other countries.

Jacek Gromadzki – Pray for opportunities to share the Gospel message for Jack and the members of this church.

Pray for the church in Belarus and Lithuania – Pray for opportunities to share the Gospel message.

Bernhard and Lisa Prumbach – Pray for provision for their family.

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

Mark Spencer – Pray for continued faithful obedience to God’s call and command.

Joyce Abrahamson – Pray for the finances for running the school.

Patty Spencer – Pray for completion of a new worship CD. Pray for the details of mastering the final product and the finances to get it produced.

John Coon – Pray for his health and safety.

Pray for the Inntal Prayer Initiative – Pray a new understanding of God’s plan for the Inntal Prayer Initiative in Germany and throughout Europe.

William Williamson – Pray for continued healing for his ankle and God’s guidance and provision for ministry.

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.

*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you,
that you, always having all sufficiency in all things,
may have an abundance for every good work.*

2 Cor. 9:8 (NKJV)

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

Read voice of *Voice of Thanksgiving* and past articles at the *Voice of Thanksgiving* Website
www.voiceofthanksgiving.com

For additional information and articles on prayer visit the *Voice of Thanksgiving* Blog
www.voiceofthanksgiving.com/blog/

For *Voice of Thanksgiving* in German read *Stimme der Dankbarkeit*
<http://voiceofthanksgiving.com/SdDPage.htm>

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

Write to me at dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com