

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of August 24, 2008

“Edward Bounds did not merely pray well that he might write well about prayer. He prayed for long years upon subjects to which easy-going Christians rarely give a thought. He prayed for objects which men of less faith are ready to call impossible. Yet from these continental, solitary prayer-vigils, year by year there arose a gift of prayer-teaching equaled by few men. He wrote transcendently about prayer because he was transcendent in its practice.”—C. L. Chilton, Jr.

The Life of Prayer

Persistence

David Williamson

For many years I coached football (American Football) and in coaching there are many phrases used by nearly every coach. One of the most popular when I first started was, “Practice makes perfect.” The idea being if you practice enough you will do well in the game. Later someone decided to amend this and make it better. The new line was “Perfect practice makes perfect.” The point here was it was not just practice, but the practice had to be done correctly to make you ready for the game. If you practice doing the wrong thing all week you will do the wrong thing in the game, but if you practice doing the right thing you have a better chance of doing things correctly in the game.

One desire of men and women of prayer is to develop a powerful, effective prayer life. This is what Jesus had. When He prayed, The Father listened and answered His prayers. We have many examples of the wonderful answers Jesus received. His prayer life was the perfect example; to be like Him in prayer is what we should pursue. The last few weeks we have been looking at a list of essentials of a meaningful prayer life. This list was suggested by E. M. Bounds. One essential on his list is persistence.

Success in prayer at times comes very quickly. People ask for something from God and the answer comes quickly. The record shows many of these, people sometimes call these events a “suddenly of God.” The story in the Bible records what was happening and then we read that God suddenly did something. Often the “suddenly of God” is a radical change from the way things appeared to be headed. It looked as though there was going to be certain conclusion, often a bad conclusion, to a situation, when suddenly God acts and turns everything around. A great example of this was a sudden change in the price of wheat.

Then Elisha said, “Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord: ‘Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.’” So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God

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and said, "Look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?" And he said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it."

2 Kings 7:1-2 (NKJV)

And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there. For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses--the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!" 2 Kings 7:5-6 (NKJV)

So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, "Two seahs of barley for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, shall be sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria." 2 Kings 7:18 (NKJV)

Suddenly God moved for the people and changed the situation. Unfortunately often in prayer the so called, suddenly move of God, takes a long time to come to pass. Prayer can be a long term process. One of the keys to success in prayer is persistence. An effective prayer life often takes a life time. Too often people who do pray stop their prayers before the day the answer comes. They are like the man who was convinced that the price of wheat could not change suddenly. If he had waited one more day he would have seen the change come.

If you pray a prayer with quick answers, great, but when you are called upon by God to pray and the answer does not come quickly, you must persevere to see the answer. Quick prayers are great, but the need today is for men and women who will persevere, for a life time if needed. With perseverance, as with other essentials on our list, there are keys to correct and successful practicing perseverance.

The expression I mentioned in the first paragraph of this article fits with the correct practice of perseverance. We must practice persevering; sometimes it takes dedication followed by rededication and even another rededication to continue our prayers. There are forces, arguments, and situations that try to get us to stop praying. The expression, "It is darker before the dawn" fits well with prayer. The forces working against us will strive to throw us off of our pursuit, and they push the hardest as we draw near to the answer. Sometimes it takes a daily commitment to not give up today. Then tomorrow you must make that commitment again, "I will not give up today".

Beyond the determination not to give up, correct perseverance requires proper practice. There is a difference between perseverance and stubbornness. Stubbornness digs in its heels and refuses to change. Perseverance continues on day-by-day, but proper perseverance is not because of staying power, but because of continually seeking God and His will. The seeking is for God's will and His answers and for His work in the man or woman of prayer. Persistence is an every day seeking to be more like Jesus. Persistence is burning away everything that is not of God, everything that hinders

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God, everything that hinders us, or anything that would stop the flow of the Holy Spirit in and through our prayers.

A large part of persistence is constant perfecting. I am a new creation in Christ Jesus, made like unto Him. This is a gift of God. However, I am also growing more like Him. This is true in many areas of the Christian life, but especially true in prayer. God always heard Jesus' prayers; I am not quit to that place yet. Jesus and the Father were one, I am by the blood of Jesus, but I am still working this out in life practice, and persistence is part of this. I begin to pray for an answer, daily the Holy Spirit will work with me to bring both an answer and personal growth. The answer comes with the persistence coupled with the growth. If I do not persist, I stop the arrival of the answer, and I cut short the growth plan for me. Persistence is continuing on with the Holy Spirit, learning His lessons, being faithful and obedient. Proper practice of persistence provides the way to a powerful prayer life.

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray this week for ministry of the Gospel. Pray for the ways and means of presenting the Gospel to the people around us. Pray for opportunities, for hearts prepared and open to the message, and willing labors to share. Pray for labors to help discipline the new converts as they come to churches.

Basic Prayer Focus

Praying for Israel and the Peace of Jerusalem

Praying for the reaching of Souls from Every Nation

Praying for the government of your country (so the Gospel can be preached)

Praying for your home Church

Continuing Faithful in Prayer

Pray for these ministers and ministries. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your prayers.

Joyce Abrahamson – Head of school in Brazil

John Coon – Ministry in Europe and the USA

Churches in Belarus – Growing number of churches in Belarus

Churches in Lithuania – Growing number of churches in Lithuania

DK Limbu Daniel – Pastor of a church in Nepal and church planting among Nepalese people

Marianne and David Dean – Missionaries on college campuses in East Asia

Jacek Gromadzki – Pastor of a church in Kolobrzeg, Poland

Marek Kaminski – Pastor of church in Kaszalin, Poland, leader in Polish churches, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference

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Bernd and Heike Pastor – Ministry in Germany

Mark Spencer – Pastor of church in Longmont, Colorado, worldwide ministry, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference

Patty Spencer – Pastor in Longmont, Colorado, worship leader, and artist with a great new CD

William Williamson – Pastor of church in Holly, Colorado

Charles and Janice Wilson – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

David Williamson

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Voice of Thanksgiving is published in a weekly version in English. *Voice of Thanksgiving* is also published monthly in German, Polish, and coming soon in Russian. You may want to read the new book on prayer, based on articles from *Voice of Thanksgiving, Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – A Call to Prayer*. To order go to <http://voiceofthanksgiving.com/Book/Book.htm>.

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- ✓ You may write to me at: dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com
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