

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of October 5, 2008

Paul in his remarkable prayer in Ephesians, chapter three, honours the illimitable possibilities of prayer and glorifies the ability of God to answer prayer. Closing that memorable prayer, so far-reaching in its petitions, and setting forth the very deepest religious experience, he declares that "God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." He makes prayer all-inclusive, comprehending all things, great and small. Where is no time nor place which prayer does not cover and sanctify. All things in earth and in heaven, everything for time and for eternity, all are embraced in prayer. Nothing is too great and nothing is too small to be subject of prayer. Prayer reaches down to the least things of life and includes the greatest things which concern us.

*"If pain afflict or wrongs oppress,  
If cares distract, or fears dismay;  
If guilt deject, or sin distress,  
In every case still watch and pray."*

E. M. Bounds

## *The Life of Prayer*

### Style and Substance

David Williamson

The kings of the Bible make for a very interesting study. There is a little bit of everything represented in their lives and reigns. Two of the kings, Saul and David, are the best known and are the poster children for style and substance. Saul was all style; taller than others, he did everything in style. When Samuel warned the people about what having a king would entail; his list is all style.

***So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who asked him for a king. And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants.*** 1 Samuel 8:10-17 (NKJV)

Saul came to every event with the flash and fuss. His big troubles began with a style point problem. When Samuel was late coming to the sacrifice, Saul decided to do it himself. Why was Saul in a hurry? He was king, what caused him to rush things and get in trouble? The answer is style; Samuel

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being late was cramping his style. He did not want to look bad in front of the people. Style was more important to Saul than substance.

King David had his faults, but his focus was substance. He did not have the great credentials of looking like a king or making a show of everything. David was a man after God's heart. Notice that the man who God describes as "after My own heart" is the man who does all of God's will. Even when King David was accused of doing a showy thing, David explained that he was only dancing before the Lord with all of his might.

***And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'*** Acts 13:22 (NKJV)

***And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him.*** 1 Samuel 18:14 (NKJV)

***Then David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.*** 2 Samuel 6:14-15 (NKJV)

Style is just the outer shell of things. It lacks the reality and power of whatever it portrays. It can be beautiful, but upon examination there is nothing of the fundamental nature there; it is just the appearance of the matter. Substance is the reality of the thing or action; it is the essential nature. Style and substance is a struggle that everyone faces in one way or another. The world we live in is strong on style and weak on substance. Too often people have gone for style over substance; just as ancient Israel did when they followed King Saul. This leads to many problems in life, the Christian life, and our prayer life. If all we have, or even if most of what we have, is just style, then we have no power for living, working, or prayer. The worst part of style is that its illusion can be so strong in the world and we can think we have something when we do not. If I have only a style of faith, I do not have faith.

The last few weeks we have been looking at the essentials of a successful prayer life. At this time it would be good for us to take a "Style and Substance" test. We need to examine these essentials and our development of true substance of each, not being satisfied with just style. In my classroom when I gave a test to history students, they would receive a "0" for the test if a friend whispered answers to the test to them (or passed notes, or showed them their answers, etc.). However, on this test it is okay, actually it is best, if the Holy Spirit whispers answers to you. I encourage you to take the test, it is simple to do, and let the Holy Spirit help you to do the assessment of your status.

The test is simple there is a range of answers and you pick where you fall in that range. On the one side is style and moving along the line to the right is more and more substance. So you could be all style, a little style, half style and substance, mostly substance, or substance. This is not an exact test, but can be valuable. If we are open to His work, the Holy Spirit will bring to mind areas that need

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work; these are areas that are more style than substance. Please remember there is no condemnation from the results of this test. We are learning and tests are part of the learning process.

Are you ready, here is the test? For each of the following rank yourself on a line from style to substance for each of these essentials from E. M. Bounds' list: faith, trust, desire, fervency, persistence, good character and conduct, obedience, and vigilance.

How did you do? Are there some areas where you need to make changes and improvements? I am going to suggest a way to move from style to more substance. I have often made suggestions in these articles, but this suggestion is dangerous. It is very easy to follow this suggestion, but then to stop before you reach the end. This would lead to more style and less substance. However, if completed, this suggestion will yield great results.

Let me explain; when you build a house there are very specific steps you must take to complete the building process correctly. One of the most important steps was laying the foundation. To do this a hole was dug in the lot where the building would go and a set of forms were put in place. The form is just a sheet of wood held in place with braces, where the cement that will make the foundation can be held until it is cured (hardened). Without the forms the cement would just flow all over the hole and be a mess. With the forms the cement cures and becomes a strong foundation for the house which will last a life time and more.

We can use the same type of approach for building substance in our life. For the areas you want to work on, find out what God's standard is. Practice doing what is correct; say the correct things (what God says), do the right things, (what God demands), and walk as though you have this essence in full measure in your life (He has given it to you through Jesus Christ). With time and practice this essence will become real in your life and you will walk in the substance. The danger is that it is too easy to put up the forms and then never fill them with the substance. Too often people will put up the forms, but not walk through the schooling of the Holy Spirit. They do not move on to substance. They walk around with just the forms, thinking they have substance. They may make the forms look good, but it is still just style without substance. If we long to make a real change in our life, we can. The Holy Spirit will work with us. We can put up the forms of change and walk in it until we are new and established in this area. It is work, but it yields great results. We can move from style to substance.

*Let us Pray!*

## **A Call for Prayer**

Pray for outreaches and ministries of the Gospel. Pray for open doors of opportunities. Pray for willing, able labors, pray for the resources for the project. Pray for open hearts to hear and respond

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to the Gospel message. Pray for the planting of new converts into good churches where they can be planted and grow.

*but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--*  
Ephes. 4:15 (NKJV)

**DK Limbu Daniel** – Pastor of a church in Nepal and church planting among Nepalese people asks for special prayer. He asks, would you put these prayer matters in VoT please?

1. We have big problem of flood in east Nepal displaced over 25000 families and relief needed.
2. Our students left today for 1 month mission work; pray for safety, guidance and needs to be met.
3. God's grace for our ministry.
4. We are going to help our churches to build worship buildings; there are 9 churches in need, pray for God's provision.
5. We have upcoming programs in Oct 2-4, 8-9, Nov. 25-27th, Dec. 16-20th. Pray for the meeting of all needs and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Thanks, May God bless you! Deu K. Limbu

**David Williamson** – Editor of *Voice of Thanksgiving*, I am home from the hospital. I had several challenges while in the hospital, but God was more than enough (listening to and answering your prayers) to take me through to triumph in Christ Jesus.

## Basic Prayer Focus

**Pray for Israel and the Peace of Jerusalem**

**Pray for the reaching of Souls from Every Nation**

**Pray for the government of your country** (so we can live peaceably and the Gospel can be preached)

**Pray 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 Kołobrzeg, Poland

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

**Bernd and Heike Pastor** – Ministry in Germany

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**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** – Editor of *Voice of Thanksgiving* and author of books on prayers

## *Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer*

*Voice of Thanksgiving* is published in a weekly version in English. *Voice of Thanksgiving* is also published monthly in German and Polish. 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>.

- ✓ For an archive of past articles, short notes and studies on prayer, and other information go to [www.voiceofthanksgiving.com](http://www.voiceofthanksgiving.com)
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- ✓ You may write to me at: [dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com](mailto:dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com)
- ✓ If you would be interested in hosting a *Prayer Initiative Seminar* contact me, Dave Williamson, at [dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com](mailto:dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com)