

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of October 12, 2008

In prayer, understanding of this concept of near and far is very important. It is easy to allow separation in our prayer life; prayer becomes praying from afar. We speak the words, but they fall to the ground unheard, unanswered, because they are said far from God. God is not hard of hearing, but prayer is for near not far. In the realm of sin, separation from God is preparation for sin; in the realm of prayer, separation from God is preparation for empty ritual, not prayer. Prayer from afar is merely shouting into the wind. Effective prayer is whispered from near in the ear of our Father.

Just as mentioned before, doubt, fear, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, and unbelief are but a few of the tools keeping people far from God. They are also the tools keeping people from prayer. Some people may still spew out words, but effective prayer demands a nearness to our Father. This is not possible when we are separated from Him by sin. The first battle in prayer, if we are longing for effective prayer, is to be near our Father. ***let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*** Hebrews 10:22 (NKJV)

From the book *Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – A Call to Prayer*

The Life of Prayer

Do Not Doubt

David Williamson

For many years I coached football (American football). It is interesting to look back on the teams that I coached. Each year you would look at the talent of the team and estimate how you would do. Some of the teams I coached, a realistic appraisal was that we would struggle to win very many games. Other years expectations were much higher. Sports teams are interesting to compare. There are teams who know in their heart that they will struggle throughout the year; they may win some games but the season will be a struggle. Other teams believe they will do well and win their games, but when things get difficult there is a nagging doubt if they will win. There are other teams who know they will win. There was a local team that won three state titles in a row. They knew they would win. Even in games where they fell way behind, this team knew they would win and week after week they did (sometimes right at the end of the game).

The application of faith is much like this. There is a key component to success in faith; it is doubt. We know that without faith we cannot accomplish great things in prayer. We also know that with faith we can expect and see our prayers to avail much. Faith is the key to success in prayer. There is no option, with faith we can have an effective prayer life. The problem is that there are things that can hinder or even destroy our faith and thus make us ineffective in prayer. One of the most important faith destroyers is doubt.

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So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. Mark 11:22-24 (NKJV)

Like those football teams I described before, there is an attitude in our heart that makes all the difference. Sure a football team with no talent would have a hard time beating a team that had great talent, but it is the attitude of the heart that often will make the difference between winning and losing. In prayer it is the doubt in your heart that makes the difference between effective prayers that avail much and prayers that fall to the ground spoken but unanswered.

Jesus said that if we do not doubt in our heart we would have what ever we ask. The problem is that most people are like the teams that think they can win, but there is a nagging doubt that hides in their heart until an opportune moment. We pray and expect to have an answer (I hope you expect answers when you pray!). Then there come the hindrances and weights that beset our faith. The answer does not come immediately. Worries and fears may come. Questions arise. Like little foxes nipping at you, things come to fight your faith. We are commanded to fight the good fight of faith. At some point in this battle your heart will be tested. If doubt is found in your heart it will destroy your faith and there will be no answer to your prayer.

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Tim. 6:11-12 (NKJV)

One the other hand, if no doubt is found in your heart, then if you will stand firm to the end, your answer must come. You have God's word that the answer will come! The key is your heart.

Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)

Please note that surrounding this verse are keys to protecting your heart. This is a list of step we should take to guard our heart and keep doubt out of it. How many specific instructions can you see in these words of advice from a father to his son? Or more specifically, how many instructions can you find in this advice from our Heavenly Father to His sons and daughters?

My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead, And your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of

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your feet, And let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil. Proverbs 4:20-27 (NKJV)

When I go through this list, I see a few important instructions. First, pay attention to God's Word, the Bible. To pay attention to it, I must read it, study it, memorize it, speak it, and I must meditate on what He has said. Second, listen to what God is saying. Too often people read the Bible and they are like the man looking at himself in the mirror and then turning away and he forgets what he looks like. We are to listen carefully and with intent to do what He has said to do. Third, we must review what He has said regularly. Every day is not too soon for review. Better yet is a moment-by-moment review. Fourth, the heart pumps necessary things to the entire body. However, it only pumps what is has, if we do not fill our heart with God's Word, we are allowing other things to enter in to our heart. It will faithfully pump to your body what it has to pump. Fill it with His Word.

This is a great list, but there is more. Fifth, watch your mouth! Do not say things that are not what God says. Regardless of the situation or the difficulties you face, say what God says. Sixth, do not be lured away by looking at the world or the situation. Regardless of what happens the true reality is what God says. Seventh, think about and practice walking in what God says to think and do. Do not chase after evil in any form.

Prayer is so simple, have faith in God and keep doubt out of your heart. Unfortunately, it takes effort to have faith and effort to keep doubt out of our heart. For those who will make the effort and do things God's way there is a wonderful world of prayer that awaits much, waiting for them. Will you have faith and keep your heart from doubt? If so, you can pray effective, faith filled prayers that avail much. You can say to the mountain, be removed, and it will be cast into the sea. The question is will you have faith and keep your heart?

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray for our leadership. Often when there is a call for prayer for leaders we pray about our government leaders and they do need prayer. However, today I ask for prayer for our Christian leadership. On our Continuing Faithful in Prayer list are several people who have responsibilities over many churches, there are those who have responsibilities over ministries and outreaches, and those who are leading churches. Please pray for these leaders and others that are near to you. These men and women carry a weight of responsibility for those they serve and to the Lord. Their burdens are great and they have many needs that must be supplied by prayer.

David Williamson – Editor of *Voice of Thanksgiving*, I am home from the hospital. Open heart surgery went well. 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.

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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 Kolobrzeg, 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

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

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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*.

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- ✓ You may write to me at: dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com
- ✓ If you would be interested in hosting a *Prayer Initiative Seminar* contact me, Dave Williamson, at dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com