

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of November 2, 2008

Paul had a spiritual trait which was very marked and especially promised, and it was that of prayer. He had a profound conviction that prayer was a great as well as a solemn duty; that prayer was a royal privilege; that prayer was a mighty force; that prayer gauges piety, makes faith mighty and mightier; that much prayer was necessary to Christian success; that prayer was a great factor in the ongoing of God's kingdom on earth; and that God and heaven expected to pray.

E.M. Bounds from *Prayer and Praying Men*

The Life of Prayer

Practice

David Williamson

The Berlin Wall was a symbol of the battle between East and West during the Cold War. Most people of the world believed that the Berlin wall was permanent. They believed that just as the castles that dot the countryside of Germany has been there for centuries, so the Wall would stand. There were ministries going into the East to reach people with the Gospel, but these efforts were restricted, difficult, and limited. What was needed was a radical change, the Wall needed to come down. However, there were people who believed more in the power of God to answer even the seemingly impossible prayers. They believed that God could and would bring down the wall, so they prayed. People prayed through the decades of the '60s, '70s, and '80s and the Wall came down. That is long term prayer.

Last week we began to explore long term prayer. Long term prayer is a practice of praying beyond the immediate need of today and beyond the usual practices. In Isaiah 62 we read that God has set watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem. Their assignment is to never be quiet. These watchmen are to pray to God until He makes Jerusalem "a praise" in the earth. Now this has not come to pass yet. There are many places where Jerusalem is anything but well received and well thought of. Some people hate Jerusalem, at least when it is under the control of the Jews. So the watchmen set on the walls have been praying for centuries, one generation after another. So these prayers will be answered, but until then the prayers continue. This is long term prayer.

I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Isaiah 62:6-7 (NKJV)

Last week the question was asked, will you avail yourself to Him for long term prayer? And hopefully many of you were stirred and interested. Some of you are a part of long term prayer and have been for years (I know we have readers who prayed for the Berlin Wall to come down). Many

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of you have begun to look beyond today with your prayers, looking beyond the needs of just your family. Some of you are just looking for help with your praying. Some of you are looking for ways to bring more power and efficacy to your prayers. So perhaps it would be good to look at developing and improving our long term prayers. Many of the things that are helpful for long term prayer are good for prayer in general so this is good for all of us.

One of the keys to long term prayer and success in all prayer is our practices. Long term and effective prayer is unnatural for most people. Of the people who pray few who are willing to change their normal way of living to become effective in prayer. They will pray, but only in their chosen ways and at their chosen times. They get poor, if any, results. Long term prayer and effective prayer demand things that are not natural for most people.

Because the demands of prayer are not natural, we must make changes to our life, beliefs, and practices if we are going to be successful. Change is not easy; this is why most people do not make the changes. This is why few people have great success in prayer; they will not make the changes needed for success. Making changes takes great decisions and effort. When Jesus was talking to the people about the life and ministry of John the Baptist, makes a very interesting comment.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. Matthew 11:12 (NKJV)

“The violent take it by force”. The word translated violent in this statement means “a forcer”. We could say, “The forcer takes it by force”. If we are going to pray long term and if we are going to have effective prayer, we must force some of the issues. This is a powerful challenge, but one we must respond to. If we take the normal route through life we will not be effective nor will we continue on to long term prayer.

When I first began to coach, I met a very good coach; he knew many keys for success. One of the keys was details at practice. He would drill the boys and make them do everything over and over perfectly. He explained they had to drill until they would do things correctly even in the heat of battle of the game. Some things in football seem very strange, and the players often had to force themselves to do it perfectly time after time.

In much of what we do when we pray, physical and spiritual, we face going against what seems natural. If we are going to be effective we must force change in our practices. This could be physical things we need to do so we can pray. We need faith, which comes by the Word of God. This might take changes and we may have to force ourselves to change. We may have to believe God, even when the evidence is against us. Like Abraham we can force belief in God and His abilities even in the face of strong evidence against us.

And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the

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promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

ROMANS 4:19-21 (NKJV)

We must force the good practices to happen. For years we have looked at good practices for effective prayer in the articles of *Voice of Thanksgiving*. Those practices are good, but they are not effective if they are not practiced. Often it takes force for us to make changes to our normal practices. Most people will not force the changes. And even if we are willing to make these changes, we must practice them over and over until they become ingrained in our thinking and life so we practice them even in the heat of battle.

What has the Holy Spirit been speaking to you? What changes does He want you to make so you can and will pray long term prayers, so you can and will pray effective prayers? We must force ourselves to make these changes. It may be a physical change in lifestyle. It may be a spiritual change in what you say or do. It may be a change in what you believe. What ever changes we must make will take force of effort and force of mind, and force of spirit to make the changes. The life of men and women who have prayed long term and those who are effective in prayer has many episodes of forcing change.

Just like those football players we must practice doing things God's way. We must practice doing things His way so we will do them His way even in the heat of battle. We must do what He says to do. We must live how He says we should live. We must believe how He says we should believe. We must say what He says we should say. We must pray how He says to pray.

What are you practicing today? What do you need to do to be successful in prayer? What do you need to force in your practices and believes so you can be effective? Will you force the issues that keep you from receiving answers? Will you be as bold and forceful and Jacob?

Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

Genesis 32:24-26 (NKJV)

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray for the elections in the United States. This is a key time for America. Your prayers make a difference and America needs answers from God.

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Pray for David and Marianne Dean who are ministering in East Asia. Pray for the training of new interns. Pray for safety and security of the campus fellowship and ministry. Pray for wisdom and protection for David, Marianne, their team, and native converts to the faith. Pray for health and a continued smooth pregnancy for Marianne. Pray also for guidance for balance of ministry need and concerns with preparing for raising this child.

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 Cedar Ridge, Colorado

Charles and Janice Wilson – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

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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 and is available in book form, ***Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – A Call to Prayer***.

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