

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of May 24, 2009

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- Ephesians 6:17-18 (NKJV)*

## *The Life of Prayer*

### **Maturity in Prayer**

David Williamson

One of the benefits of working in a high school is going to the graduation ceremony. I like the pomp and circumstance, but even more, it is great to see boys and girls who have matured and become young men and women. You will know many of the students and be able to remember back to their first day at high school. They are nervous, struggling to look cool, and so immature. Four years later they are at graduation and nervous, struggling to look cool, but much more mature.

High school students can be mature beyond their years. They do things that surprise people; at times they are caring, helpful, generous, and kind. At other times, students can be very immature. They do things and you shake your head and wonder if they will ever grow up. So when you see them at graduation, dressed in gowns and receiving their diplomas, you notice the vast difference in maturity.

Maturity is important throughout all segments of society. It is a nebulous thing; people can and often do demonstrate maturity and then act the opposite. We have all had dealings with people who were mature in years, but immature in their actions. There are even TV shows dedicated to showing home movies of people acting immature. We see them doing things and then wonder what were they thinking as they nearly killed themselves.

In dealing with people, we want to deal with mature people. We ask young people to be more mature. We hesitate to deal with immature people, concerned if they can be trusted or if they will do what they say they will do. We may not get what we expect from a mature person either, but there is a better chance. The more important the event, the request, the need, or the action, we are dealing with, the more we seek mature interaction.

Prayer is interaction with God. He loves us passionately and His love for us began long before we were born. Most people when they first come to the Lord are not very mature at least in spiritual things. It takes time to learn; slowly, the Holy Spirit trains them up in the ways of Christian life. If we are willing to work with the Holy Spirit we will mature more quickly. Other people may take longer, but the lessons continue day-by-day and year-by-year.

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God loves us even as children, but He longs for us to mature. This is especially true in prayer. What does it mean to be mature in prayer? People who are mature in prayer, men and women who have been nurtured by the lessons of the Holy Spirit, have a depth of faith and a consistent, effective prayer life. This deep faith opens doors of opportunities, even those that seem to be sealed shut, by prayer and action. Consistency and effectiveness in prayer, means the Holy Spirit can delegate tough assignments in prayer and knowing this man or woman of prayer will stand faithful in that assignment through to completion.

Students, like those seniors I wrote about at the beginning of this article, were more mature than they were when they first arrived at high school, in many ways. They are older and physically more mature. They have learned information and skills concerning many subjects. They have had opportunities to interact socially with other students, teachers, parents, and society becoming more mature. Many of them have matured in their work habits, at school and on jobs. These students have grown and matured in many areas, but it is also very important that they and all people mature spiritually as well.

Spiritual maturity is very important, but it is often neglected, by the world and unfortunately by many Christians. If we are going to be effective in prayer, maturing spiritually is a must. In the books of Timothy and Titus of the Bible, Paul presents the qualities we should look for in a Christian leader. These traits are a good guide to the maturity of a leader and **give a fair summary of what the Christian lifestyle should be.** This should be a goal for all Christians; those who have these traits in ever increasing measure are growing in maturity. These lists also describe the mature person of prayer. If we walk increasingly faithfully in these areas, we can pray effective, fervent prayers that avail much.

Here is a list of some of these traits from the book of Titus. How do you stack up on this list? Is this a description of your life? Are there areas where you need to work and grow? I have included a short reference so you can read more about these.

Godliness (Titus 1:1)	Faith (Titus 1:2; Titus 2:2)
Temperance (Titus 2:2)	Love (Titus 2:2, 4)
Self-control (Titus 2:2, 5-6)	Endurance (Titus 2:2)
Personal integrity (Titus 2:7, 10)	Seriousness (Titus 2:7)
Trustworthiness (Titus 2:10)	Subjection to authority (Titus 2:9; Titus 3:1)
Rejection of sin (Titus 2:12)	Humility (Titus 3:2)
Considerateness (Titus 3:2)	Peaceableness (Titus 3:2)
Harmony (Titus 3:10)	Dedication to doing good (Titus 2:7; Titus 3:1, 8, 14)

If you are like me, there are some areas that need work. In some of these traits there is room to improve, grow, and mature. With some of these traits I am okay as long as I am not challenged. For example, I always have great self-control, as long as there is nothing I want that I cannot have or do. Seriously, we all need to grow and mature at least in some areas. We can make changes, we can learn,

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and we can be more mature. There are steps that yield consistent good results, if applied, well... constantly. Guided and directed by the Holy Spirit, obediently following His direction, we can mature in any of these areas and any others we need.

The first step is one that begins with us. We need to desire to be mature. It is easy to take life as it comes and do nothing to change situations or self. However, if we desire to mature and are willing to work with the Holy Spirit we can have great success.

The second step is to pray for God's guidance, His training, and His empowerment for maturing. God desires for us to mature and is well able to help us. He understands the maturing process and the difficulties of living in the world, but not of the world. So He has prepared for us all we need to mature. Ask and He will give the training we need.

The third step is study the word. In every area where we want to do things God's way, this is a key step. We know His will and direction for so much of life, if we read and study His word. God's word is the final word on every subject, especially maturity and the maturing process.

The fourth step is to memorize key verses from your study on maturing. This step is very important because we must get God's word into our heart. It is good to read and study, but effective change comes from what is placed in our heart. If we continue to only place the world and its ways, we will not mature. If on the other hand, we place, in ever increasing amounts, God's word in our heart by memorizing key verses, on this or any subject, we will mature.

The fifth step is to declare, out loud, what God says about you and specific maturity traits. In the book of Romans we read of the process for getting things done in the spiritual world. We can follow this guidance and mature, or we can continue to do things other ways and fail to mature. It is a choice we are given. What is this process? Believe in our heart and then confess with our mouth. This is God's way and the only way for real growth in spiritual matters. This is how we got saved and it is how we mature.

***that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*** Romans 10:9 (NKJV)

The sixth step is practice, practice, practice, practice, and then practice some more. We must, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, practice doing the correct things the correct way, over and over until they are ingrained habits of our life. Even then we must practice checking to be sure we have not gotten lazy or careless in our practice. The things of the spirit must become second nature to us, which is good to have, because this is our new nature, now that we are Born Again.

And finally, as in the line from the old children's verse, if we fall we are to, "pick our self up and start all over again". If we fail and act immature, we can go to the Father and repent of our ways, receive His forgiveness and begin again our lessons on maturity. We need not wallow in the mire of

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failure until the pigs come home for their slop, but come to our senses now, repent and amend our way.

Well, there you have it, a road to maturity. I know there is much here you have heard before, but mature people do not mind being reminded of how best to walk and ways to get to their planned destination. The world of today is longing for the Sons and Daughters of God to rise up and be mature. This is especially true in prayer. If we will walk mature in spiritual matters, we will be great in prayer and meet the needs of this generation with answers from God.

*Let us Pray!*

## **A Call for Prayer**

**Pray for protection for Israel and Jerusalem** Pray that salvation would come to those Jews who are longing for the return of the Messiah. Pray for their eyes to be opened and see Jesus their Messiah who has come.

**Pray for Outreach to the lost.** Pray for open doors of opportunity to share the Gospel and willing ready hearts to hear and receive the word of faith and life.

*Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*

Colossians 4:2-6 (NKJV)

**Pray for David, Marianne, and Sarah Dean.** Pray for knowledge and understanding for the new parents. Pray for adjustments to schedules and roles in ministry. Join with the Dean's in asking the Lord to bring 20 younger students to Christ this spring, who will join the campus fellowship group (there have been four already). Pray for the Christian students who are graduating this spring and transitioning to the working world.

## **Basic Prayer Focus**

Remember to be always in prayer for the following:

**For Israel and the Peace of Jerusalem**

**For the reaching of souls from every nation**

**For governments of your country and other countries to be open to the Gospel**

**For your home Church and the people of the church and community**

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## Continuing Faithful in Prayer

Remember to be in prayer for these ministers and ministries. Ask the Holy Spirit to each week guide and direct the specifics of 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

**Lori Farquhar** – Children’s Ministry Director

**Jacek Gromadzki** – Pastor of a church in Kolobrzeg, Poland

**Marek Kaminski** – Pastor of a 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 a 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 a church in Cedaredge, Colorado

**Charles and Janice Wilson** – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

**David Williamson** – Editor of *Voice of Thanksgiving*

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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.

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