

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of June 7, 2009

Prayer is based on character. What we are with God gauges our influence with Him. It was the inner character, not the outward seeming, of such men as Abraham, Job, David, Moses and all others, who had such great influence with God in the days of old. And, today, it is not so much our words, as what we really are, which weighs with God. Conduct affects character, of course, and counts for much in our praying. At the same time, character affects conduct to a far greater extent, and has a superior influence over prayer. Our inner life not only gives colour to our praying, but body, as well. Bad living means bad praying and, in the end, no praying at all. We pray feebly because we live feebly. The stream of prayer cannot rise higher than the fountain of living. The force of the inner chamber is made up of the energy which flows from the confluent streams of living. And the weakness of living grows out of the shallowness and shoddiness of character.

E. M. Bounds, from *The Necessity of Prayer*

## *The Life of Prayer*

### **Character and Prayer**

David Williamson

When I was growing up I loved baseball. I loved to playing and watching the game. Colorado did not have a major league team then, so I was free to pick any team to support and I liked winners so I became a fan of the New York Yankees. This team had some wonderful players. One of the best was Mickey Mantle. Mantle could do it all, he was an outstanding fielder, very fast, and he could hit. He was so good that he was voted into the Hall of Fame.

Mantle died a few years ago and shortly before his death in an interview, Mantle reminisced about the great teams and great times he enjoyed. A sad part of the interview was when they talked about all the injuries he had suffered in his career. One of the speculations then and one that continues today is what kind of records and how great Mantle could have been if he had been healthy. This man was a great player, yet several seasons he only played part of the year and his overall career was cut short by injuries. Mantle speculated as to what he could have done if he had trained well and taken care of his body. Some people believe he could have been the best baseball player of all time.

And how about you, let us speculate for a moment. In what areas are you great? And more importantly, what has God prepared for you that you might be great. He has sent His Son to bring you into His Family as a member of the family and a joint heir. He has given you the Holy Spirit to walk with you, training you and guiding you. He loves you with an unfading, unfailing love. He has made provision for you in His economy and plans. God has made great preparation for you!

However, there is always a question that must be asked and must be dealt with, one way or another. What will you do with God's preparation? This is the question that faces every man, woman, and

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

child. God has given Jesus so you can have life, what will you do with God's preparation? For those who receive Jesus as Lord, there is salvation. For those who refuse, there is damnation. Once you have received Jesus as Lord, then there follows a series of opportunities to deal with this same question. What will you do with God's preparation? Will you walk as a son or daughter, walking as a joint heir with Jesus? Will you receive the Holy Spirit and walk in His training and guidance? Will you enjoy the warmth of the love of God and allow it to flow into your life by causing it to flow out to others?

These are just a few of the areas covered by the question, what will you do with God's preparation for your life? As we walk day-by-day with the Lord, we explore more of the scope of this question and more of how we will respond. Hopefully, you are growing and maturing in this walk. However, with this question and its exploration there comes a point of speculation. Just as the pundits of sports speculate on how great Mickey Mantle could have been, so we can speculate on how great you can be in Christ.

God's expectation is that we would be like Jesus. His preparations are made so we can be like Him. Paul longed to know Christ and His power, so He could be like Jesus. God's preparations made a way for Paul and for us to be like Jesus. The question is will we walk in God's preparation and if so, how fully. Here is where the speculation comes in. What has God called you to do? And with that what are you doing to accomplish what God has planned. At the end of your life will you be the best you could be, having done all, or will there be speculation on what you could have done?

***For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*** Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)

This line of thought is very important for effective prayer. It is easy to take a road of prayer that is less than our best, like Mantle and the way he played ball. He was good, but did not do the things he could to be as good as he could have been. Many people who pray today take that same road. They pray, but they do not do all they could do to be as good at prayer as they could be.

Are there areas in your life that keep you from being your best? Are there areas that hinder your prayers? Are there areas that limit your effectiveness in prayer? To be effective in prayer, we must develop our life in a way that allows us to do things God's way. In prayer there is no other way. It is His way or no way. People try to leverage God and move Him by many means and activities, but He is not impressed and does not respond.

Effective prayer must be built on a life of faith. Faith only comes by the Word of God. As we spend time with the word, Jesus is the Word, making Him primary to our life, plans, actions, and beliefs then we can have a depth of faith that brings great answers to prayer.

Prayers that avail much are built on a life of love. Without love we have nothing and our prayers are just so many words, they accomplish nothing. We must love like God loves. His love is pure. His

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

love is overwhelming. His love is limitless. His love is boundless. His love is deep. His love overcomes. His love reaches out. His love is powerful. His love is perfect. His love is for the sinner. His love is for the saint. He is love and there is no shadow or turning of Him from His love. If we are going to have effective prayers then we must come to the place where we love unconditionally, fully, and purely, reaching out to all those around us, just as He does.

Faith and love, keys to great prayers, however, if we are going to be effective in prayer there is another area important for our success; character. Our prayers are limited by our character. If we pray with faith and pray in love, but have no character, one can question if we have prayed in faith and love. Our character is like the boat that carries our faith and love to our prayers.

Using my example of the ball player Mickey Mantle, he had the things necessary to be a great ball player. He could run and catch, he was a wonderful batter; he had it all. However, he had not been trained and had not learned that there was more to baseball than running, catching, and hitting. His regret spoken at an interview late in his life was that he had wasted his opportunities, by not doing the things off the field that he should have. This failure cost him parts of seasons, games he was not his best, and even shortened his career.

For the man or woman who espouses to be great in prayer character issues are what will make or break their success. We cannot pretend to be a man or woman of prayer and walk like the world and act like the world. If our character is not strong, we will stumble and fail in prayer. Paul addressed this concerning the Gifts of the Spirit. He said, if we do not have love, the gifts are of no value. This is true in prayer as well; without love our prayers are of no value. And we must go on to include all aspects of character. Look at Paul's list of some aspects of character; how do you measure up.

***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.***

Galatians 5:22-26 (NKJV)

High expectation for prayer must be met with high attainment of character. A broken character, where aspects of good character are not present, will limit our prayers, our usefulness in prayer, and our greatness in prayer. We are fooling ourselves if we think we can pray like a saint and live like a devil. We are sorely mistaken if we think we can have great faith to move mountains, but live with character of darkness. God is calling for men and women who will pray, He is working to make us men and women of character, so we can pray.

***For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them***

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

*in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.* Ephesians 5:8-21 (NKJV)

If we are going to be effective in prayer we must build our character. We must be more and more like Jesus. We must know Jesus, His power, His fellowship, and His death. This is the high calling of God for us in Christ Jesus. The man or woman, who seeks after Jesus and to be like Him in all things and at all times, will pray like Him.

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

Titus 2:11-14 (NKJV)

*Let us Pray!*

## **A Call for Prayer**

**Pray for the BBB Conference** Pray for the arrangements and plans. Pray for provision for meeting the costs of the conference. Pray for the men and women who will be attending this year's conference, pray that they will be able to attend. Pray for safety and protection as they travel and for their families as they are away from home. Pray for anointed words well and wisely spoken at the conference, to help prepare men and women for the work that is to come.

**Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem** Pray for the Jewish people and their homeland. Pray for peace that comes through knowing the Messiah. Pray for hearts to be softened so when He is revealed, they will receive Him. Pray for understanding and wisdom so they will respond to His gift of salvation and life.

**Pray for Rebecca Williamson** Rebecca is one of the daughters of Bill Williamson. Rebecca is ministering in Italy as part of a church planting team in northern Italy for about six weeks.

## **Basic Prayer Focus**

# Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

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**

## 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 (Bill) Williamson** – Pastor of a church in Cedaredge, Colorado

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

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

## 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.

- ❖ For an archive of past articles, copies of the German and Polish editions, short notes and studies on prayer, and other information, or to order copies of my books please go to [www.voiceofthanksgiving.com](http://www.voiceofthanksgiving.com)
- ❖ If you have questions you may email me at: [david@voiceofthanksgiving.com](mailto:david@voiceofthanksgiving.com)

***Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – Volume 1 – A Call to Prayer***

***Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – Volume 2 – A Life of Prayer***

To order copies of these books, email me at [david@voiceofthanksgiving.com](mailto:david@voiceofthanksgiving.com)