

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of February 21, 2010

God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the force against evil... The prayers of God's saints are the capital stock of heaven by which God carries on His great work upon earth. God conditions the very life and prosperity of His cause on prayer.
E. M. Bounds

The Life of Prayer

The Will of God

David Williamson

When I taught Advanced Placement US History, one of the most popular activities was the dinner party. No, we did not gather for meals; the activity was to decide who to invite to dinner. Students could invite any character from American history. The key was to deal with the interplay of the characters at the dinner table. Students, had to determine who they would invite and why. Students would put together some surprising combinations sometimes with people from different generations.

So now it is your turn to try this activity, with a few guidelines. Think about who you would like to invite to dine with you. Your choice of characters should be drawn from the characters of the Bible. Who would you like to talk to? Who would you like to place across the table from whom? You can have a table full of people or just invite one person.

Would you invite a hero from the Bible? There are many heroes in the Bible; Peter, Paul, David, Moses, Hannah, and Mary are some who are commonly mentioned. However, on nearly everyone's list is Jesus. Jesus is not just King of kings and Lord of lords, He is hero of heroes.

Jesus is a great hero in many ways. His heroic acts and nature spans the full spectrum of all that humans should be. Jesus walked as a man on earth, but He walked as man should walk, not as man most often walks. This is a huge difference. The fallen nature of man is not just a little worse than what it should be, it is abhorrent to all that is good and right.

One of the scariest problems today is that the devil has made such great inroads into the thinking of most people. With his direction, most people see sin as a little thing. Sin is passed off as just a little problem, a condition, or a sickness. For many people their thinking is, if sin is no big deal, then salvation is no big deal. Minimizing the problem keeps them from seeking the solution. Men and women are condemning themselves to Hell because they are convinced they have no sins or their sins are no big deal. This same improper thinking permeates much of the other aspect of the Christian life. "I am not so bad, so I can do things my way. I am as good as most people, so my

Voice of Thanksgiving

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plans are good, my abilities are good, my dreams are good, and my decisions are good.” In many aspects of life, we see ourselves as able to guide and direct our life.

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

2 Corinthians 4:3-7 (NKJV)

In Christian circles we apply Romans 3:23 to a persons need for salvation, because all have sin, but we often have left the truth of this statement out of the rest of our life and activities. The truth is, in all things we have fallen short of the glory of God. We cannot lean on our own strength, abilities or knowledge. God must be our source and supply in all things. We are unable to do anything as well as God. Until we are clear on this matter, we limit our success and usefulness.

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

This problem is very common in prayer. Too often we have a misguided notion that we know how and what to pray. This leads to many errors and even to the creation of strange doctrine and beliefs, as a means of covering for our failures. In prayer, as in every aspect of the Christian life, we must utterly and completely depend of our Father. Father knows best!

Our Hero, Jesus, depended on the Father. The three temptations listed in Luke's Gospel reveal Jesus' dependence, not on His own wisdom, power, and ability. Remember even as a boy Jesus was confounding experts with His understanding and answers, but He would not rely on Himself. Jesus claimed He needed to live on the Word of God, give service and worship only to God, and not to challenge God as being God. Daily men and women face these challenges in one form or another; unfortunately we often fail the test. We try to live by our strength and abilities. We act as though we know what we want and need. We work at staying on the throne of our life, ruling and reigning as a king or queen of the kingdom of self.

who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Hebrews 5:7-8 (NKJV)

We see this in prayer. For example, look at one aspect of effective prayer; praying the will of God. We know that praying in accord with God's will is a key to being heard by God and if He hears us

Voice of Thanksgiving

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we have what we ask. This seems straight forward, but even here, the problems of self dependence cause troubles.

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. 1 John 5:14-15 (NKJV)

There is a wide range of ways people deal with the will of God. For example some people try to move God. They see prayer as a tool for moving God to see things and do things the way they want. People who pray this way seldom think this is what they are doing and their prayers usually sound good, but in the end, their prayers are a battle of wills, their will, verses God's will. They are convinced that if they pray loud enough, hard enough, pious enough, if they fast enough, use scriptures enough, or something, they will change God's will to match theirs.

For I am the Lord, I do not change; Malachi 3:6 (NKJV)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. James 1:17 (NKJV)

There is another practice concerning the will of God and prayer. In this mode, the man or woman of prayer seeks to align their will with God's will, if only for a moment. The key here is that even if they take time to find God's will, they still seek to use it to get answers to the request of their will. They are willing to be moved to the place where their will matches God's, but they are still praying for their will to be done. This limits their prayers and the answers they receive. Our ways, thoughts, and plans are far below those of God. As long as we pray for our will, even when it aligns with God, we limit Him. God's ways, plans, and answers to prayers are far above all we can think or even imagine.

Jesus, our hero, and the example we long to emulate, did not pray in either of these ways. His prayer was for God's will to be done. Effective prayer goes beyond attempts to change God or align with God. Effective prayer is praying for God's will to be done, God's will, not my will.

He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."
Matthew 26:39 (NKJV)

Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." Matthew 26:42 (NKJV)

This week sit down at the table and talk with Jesus. He loves to listen and if we will listen, He is speaking to us. He guides us in every aspect of life, especially prayer. And if we will seek God's will

Voice of Thanksgiving

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in our prayers, first and foremost, seeking His will, not mine, we will be taking the next steps toward being useful in prayer.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 2 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV)

Let us pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray for Your self – Pray for light to seek and see God’s will and ways. In the prayers He gives you to pray this week, pray that His will be done.

Pray for Jacek Gromadzki – Let God direct your prayers for Jacek who is pastor of a church in Kolobrzeg, Poland. Pray for him and for his fellowship. Pray that he and they will stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Then pray for the other pastors in our *Continue Faithful in Prayer* list.

Then pray for your pastor

Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Colossians 4:12 (NKJV)

Continue Faithful in Prayer

Continue to pray for the ministries listed here and use this as a spring board for praying for nations, churches, pastors, ministries, and people close to your heart and according to the Spirit’s direction. Your faithful prayers make a difference!

Pray for Pastors of Churches

DK Limbu Daniel – Pastor of a church in Nepal

Jacek Gromadzki – Pastor of a church in Kolobrzeg, Poland

Mark and Patty Spencer – Pastors of a church in Longmont, Colorado

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

Charles and Janice Wilson – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

Pray for Nations and the Churches of Nations

Israel and the peace of Jerusalem

Churches in Belarus

Churches in Lithuania

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

Pray for Leadership over multiple Churches

DK Limbu Daniel – Church planter among Nepalese people

Marek Kaminski – Bishop of Poland and co-founder and leader of the BBB Conference

Pray for Christian Ministries

Joyce Abrahamson – Head of a Christian school in Brazil

John Coon – Ministry in Europe and the USA

Marianne and David Dean – Missionaries on college campuses in East Asia

Lori Farquhar – Children’s Ministry Director

Bernd and Heike Pastor – Ministry in Germany

Mark Spencer – Worldwide ministry, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference

Patty Spencer – Worship leader, and musician

William (Bill) Williamson – Leader of a mission outreach to India

David Williamson – Writer and editor of *Voice of Thanksgiving*

Calling Christians to Effective Fervent Prayer

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Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – A Call to Prayer, A Life Of Prayer, and Faithful In Prayer

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