



THE PRAYER CLOSET

*Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting*

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ISSUE 3

THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

When Jesus Christ lived on earth He really did pray. Now that may be an obvious fact to you. Yet, it is a truth that is taken for granted by most believers. Believers do not take seriously the fact that Christ prayed while He was on earth. As you read the gospels, it is clear that Jesus taught about prayer. In the gospels, the teaching of Christ concerning prayer is recorded for our benefit and instruction. Yet, at the same time, the truth that Jesus prayed is also recorded for our benefit and instruction.

Jesus teaches the believer how to pray not only by what He said but what He did. He shows the believer how to pray by praying. After all, the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray after they heard Jesus praying. The Word of God

says in **Luke 11:1**, "And it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught His disciples.'" It was not His teaching on prayer that brought about this request. This request came when the disciples heard Jesus praying. With hushed and awed hearts, they heard and watched the Son of God pray. Hearing Jesus Christ pray moved them to ask Him to teach them how to pray.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on the prayer life of Jesus Christ. There is much that we need to learn from His example of praying. His prayer life is an almost infinite subject. Much could be written about it. This issue will cover some basic issues concerning His prayer life. It is our hope and prayer that these truths will encourage and motivate you in your own personal prayer life. Our study of the prayer life of Jesus Christ will focus on two areas: *why Jesus needed to pray and the lessons that we can learn from His prayer life.*

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THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

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Why Did Jesus Need to Pray?

You may be thinking, "How can I learn anything from Jesus' prayer life? After all, He is God." You need to understand that Jesus Christ needed to pray. Why did Jesus need to pray? There are several reasons why Jesus needed to pray. *The first reason that Jesus needed to pray is because He is human.* The Word of God teaches that Jesus

Dr. Kevin Meador, 595 Stratton Road, Decatur, MS 39327 (601) 635-2180

EMAIL: prayercloset_1998@yahoo.com WEB PAGE - www.prayerclosetministries.org

Christ is both fully God and fully man. This is at the heart, the core, of Christianity. Most believers have no problem with the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God in human flesh. This fact is so evident in His life.

It is important though to balance the truth that Jesus is fully God **and** fully human. We cannot and must not forget that Jesus is fully human. To do this would undermine the truth of **John 1:14**, "The Word became *flesh*" (emphasis added). The Word of God reveals that Jesus truly shared our humanity (**Hebrews 2:14, 5:7-10**).

Many believers accept the humanity of Jesus on an intellectual level. Yet, we tend to forget what that really means. Too many times we view Jesus Christ as a superhuman. However, Jesus was human like you and me. He needed to pray like you and me. Through prayer, He had fellowship and communicated with the Father. His empowering from the Holy Spirit came through prayer. He depended on the Father through prayer. As a human, He needed to pray.

Jesus needed to pray because He needed time alone with the Father. This is evident from the fact that Jesus would withdraw from the crowds in order to pray. He needed and desired to spend time alone with the Father. The first time that we see Jesus withdrawing from the crowds was at Capernaum. Jesus' popularity had exploded. People were coming to Him from everywhere. The Word of God states in **Mark 1:35**, "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed." This shows that Jesus made a deliberate attempt to get away from the crowds and the demands on Him in order to spend time with the Father.

After this, Jesus healed a man of leprosy. The news spread about the healing and people were coming from everywhere to hear Him and to be healed by Him. The Word of God states in **Luke 5:15**, "Then the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed by Him of their infirmities." What was Jesus' response to this? The Word of God says in **Luke 5:16**, "So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed." Jesus would separate Himself from the crowds and the demands of His ministry in order to spend time with the Father. This action characterized His entire

ministry. As a human, He wanted and needed that time alone with His Father. He was dependent on the Father. He showed this dependence by separating Himself and praying to the Father.

Jesus needed to pray because He needed to hear from God. Prayer is not a one-way conversation. Through prayer, we speak to God and God speaks to us. The same was true for Jesus. He prayed in order to hear from God. In other words, He prayed in order to receive guidance from the Father. Jesus began (**Luke 3:21**) and ended (**Luke 23:46**) His ministry on earth with prayer. In between there are more than 45 Scripture references to Jesus praying. This indicates a continual dependence on the Father for guidance and strength. Through prayer, Jesus received the guidance of the Father.

The Word of God says in **Luke 6:12**, "Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." It is interesting that Luke uses a medical term in this verse. The medical term is "all night". This term was used to describe the all-night vigil of a doctor as he waited by the bedside of a patient. Jesus prayed intensely through the night. Why did Jesus spend all night praying with such intensity? The Word of God states in **Luke 6:13**, "And when it was day, He called His disciples to Him; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles." Jesus spent the night praying in order to receive guidance from the Father concerning His apostles. Jesus chose His apostles after receiving the Father's guidance through prayer.

On another occasion, Jesus needed to hear from the Father. Jesus spent an entire week trying to teach His disciples who He really was and what lay ahead for Him (**Matthew 16:13-28; Luke 9:18-27**). The disciples were shocked by this and even voiced their denial of what Jesus was trying to teach them. Satan even attempted to use Peter to discourage Jesus (**Matthew 16:22-23**). This was a sobering and difficult week for Jesus. In response to this difficult week, He withdrew to a mountain to pray, "And it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray (**Luke 9:28**)." While He was there, Jesus was transfigured (**Luke 9:29-36**). Jesus was shown the glory that lay ahead of Him after His crucifixion and resurrection. God also spoke to Him, affirming His role as the Savior

and Lord, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him! (**Luke 9:35**)." After this difficult week, Jesus received encouragement from the Father. He received this affirmation and guidance from the Father through prayer.

Another reason that Jesus needed to pray is because He needed God's strength in temptation. Satan attempted at various points to sidetrack Jesus from the mission that the Father sent Him to do. He wanted to destroy Jesus and His mission. Satan attempted to do this in a variety of ways. While He was in the wilderness praying and fasting, Satan tempted Christ. He tempted Him to worship Him, to depend on Himself, and to forsake the mission given to Him by the Father (**Matthew 4:1-11**). Yet, Jesus had been fasting and praying. He had spent time alone with the Father in prayer. Jesus was able to resist decisively and completely each temptation of Satan. This period of fasting and prayer prepared Him to overcome an onslaught of temptation from Satan himself.

Satan also tempted Jesus in some subtle ways. One occasion is found in **John 6**. Jesus has just fed a crowd of more than 5,000 people. Because of this, the people were ready to make Him their king, "Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force and make Him king, He departed again to a mountain by Himself alone (**John 6:15**)." This must have been a powerful temptation for Christ. Here was an opportunity to help and "save" needy people apart from His death on the cross. This was an opportunity to "save" people without facing the agony of death. What enabled Jesus to overcome this temptation? The Word of God states in **Matthew 14:22-23**, "Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on a mountain by Himself to pray. And when evening had come, He was alone there." Jesus overcame this temptation to forsake His mission through prayer. Through prayer, He received strength to deal with this temptation. Jesus needed to pray in order to overcome temptation.

Jesus needed to pray in order to bring His will into submission to the Father's will. Jesus had to pray in order to yield Himself to the Father's will. It was the Father's will that He die on the Cross as a substitute for sinners. Since Jesus was

fully God, He desired perfect obedience to God's will. Yet, being fully human, He resisted death as any mentally stable person would. As His death grew nearer, the tension was very much on His mind. The Word of God says in **John 12:27-28**, "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name. Then a voice came from heaven, saying, 'I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.'"

Jesus prayed this on Monday of Passion Week, the week that Jesus died on the cross. By Thursday evening, the struggle was back. In **Matthew 26:39**, Jesus prayed, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me." Jesus did not desire to go to the cross. He knew the suffering that He would endure. As a human, He did not desire to face this. Yet, Jesus continued to pray until His desires were in complete submission to God's will. As He continued to pray, Jesus declared, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will (**Matthew 26:39**).

By wrestling in prayer, Jesus submitted His will to the Father's will. His praying in the garden of Gethsemane enabled Him to do what God had called Him to do, no matter what the cost. By praying, Jesus received courage and strength. After His intense praying in the garden at Gethsemane, He said to His disciples, "Rise, let us be going. See, he who betrays Me is at hand (**Matthew 26:46**).

Jesus needed to pray in order to carry out the Father's will. It was the Father's will for Jesus to die on the cross. He would be arrested, unfairly tried, ridiculed, taunted, flogged, and nailed to a cross. Even after He prayed His will into submission to the Father's, He still needed to pray in order to endure all these things. How did Jesus react to all this treatment? He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do (**Luke 23:34**).

Hanging on the cross, Jesus suffered intense physical pain. His soul was crushed due to bearing the sin of sinners. Through this, He experienced an awful loneliness. How could Jesus endure this? He prayed, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me (**Mark 15:34**)?" In response to this prayer, the Father enabled the Jesus to finish His task and to die with a cry of victory, "It is finished (**John 19:30**)." The final words of Jesus before He died were even a prayer, "Father, into Your hands I commend my

spirit (Luke 23:46).” In order to carry out His Father’s will, Jesus prayed.

Jesus prayed in order to carry out His ministry. Jesus’ ministry consisted of preaching, teaching, and healing. He carried this ministry out through prayer. Through prayer, He received empowerment to do ministry. Jesus prepared Himself to preach through prayer (Mark 1:35, 38). Through prayer, He received the power to cast demons out (Mark 9:29). The Word of God declares in Luke 5:17, “And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.” Why did Jesus have the power to heal on this day? The preceding verse answers this by stating, “So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed (Luke 5:16). By praying, Jesus asked for and received a fresh touch of power, mental poise, strength, and guidance from the Father. Our Lord required all these for His ministry and He found these through His communion with the Father. In order to carry out His ministry, Jesus needed to pray.

Jesus prayed in order to prepare for His present ministry. While on earth, Jesus prayed for others. He prayed for His disciples. He prayed for those who would believe on His name throughout time. He prayed for those who crucified Him. Jesus did pray for Himself, yet, He also interceded for others. This was in preparation for His current ministry. He is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father, interceding for His people (Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 3:22). He is the Great Intercessor for those who have surrendered to Him. It is His continuing purpose to pray for believers. He continually prays for His own people. Jesus prayed on earth in preparation for His heavenly ministry.

Jesus prayed in order to be an example to the believer. The believer is to be conformed to the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29). This means that our lives are to be molded according to His life and example. Jesus says to each of us, “Follow me (Matthew 9:9).” We are to follow His example. This is true even in the matter of prayer. We are to follow His example in prayer. Someone might say, “How can I follow the example of Jesus in prayer? He’s the Son of God.” Yes, He is the Son of God. Yet, He was also fully human. He needed to pray. He depended on the Father through prayer. His example is true and relevant for every believer. We are to follow the example that He has given us.

The Lessons We Can Learn From the Prayer Life of Jesus

The prayer life of Jesus presents some powerful lessons on prayer. The believer can apply these lessons to his or her prayer life. By applying these truths, one can enhance his or her relationship to God. The believer can deepen his or her effectiveness in prayer by following the example of Jesus in prayer. What lessons can we learn from the prayer life of Jesus Christ?

- (1) **No matter how busy you are, you need to find time to pray.** When I teach in prayer seminars or conferences, there will be believers who will tell me that they are too busy to pray. The fact of the matter is you are too busy **not** to pray. The example of Jesus should reveal this to you. The crowds constantly surrounded Jesus. He had many demands placed on Him. He preached, taught, and healed. He had to train the disciples. Jesus’ schedule was as hectic then as ours are now. An example of this is found in Mark 2. The Word of God states in Mark 2:32-33, “Now at evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered at the door.” The text states that people brought the sick and demon-possessed at sundown. The crowd must have been large since the text says “the whole city was gathered at the door (Mark 2:33).” It is obvious that Jesus healed and set people free from demons well into the night. Jesus spent the majority of this night ministering to people. Did Jesus sleep in and say that He didn’t have time to pray? The Word says in Mark 2:35, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” Jesus made the time to pray and fellowship with His Father. His schedule was filled with demands. He experienced pressure from all sides. Yet, at the same time, He made time to pray. Regardless of His schedule and demands, He deliberately pulled away from His schedule and spent time with His Father. If the Son of God needed to make time to pray, how much more do we need to make the time to pray. If you are

having trouble finding the time to pray, cry out to Jesus. He is a sympathetic High Priest. He knows about pressing schedules and numerous demands. He will grant you strength and grace to find the time to pray. Confess your need to Him and depend on Him to help you in this matter.

(2) You need to develop a prayerful dependence on the Father. As you read the Gospel of John, the truth that Jesus depended completely on the Father is evident. In everything that He said and did, He depended on guidance from His Father. Jesus declared that He could do nothing of Himself (**John 5:19, 8:28**). What He taught was not His own (**John 7:16**). Jesus simply did what He saw the Father doing (**John 5:19-20, 8:38**). He stated that what He heard and learned from His Father, He taught to His disciples (**John 15:15, 17:7**). Jesus even stated that the Father commanded Him what to say and how to say it (**John 12:49**). These verses reveal that Jesus depended on His Father. The Father guided Him constantly through His constant and powerful praying. Can the same be said of you? Do you depend on your Father? Jesus lived a life of prayerful dependence on the Father. He prayed and received guidance from the Father concerning His life and His ministry. If the Son of God needed to pray, how much more should we pray. God is our Father. You are to depend on His leading throughout our lives. You develop this dependence on the Father by prayer. This dependence becomes a reality in your life when you spend time with Him, bringing your questions and your concerns to Him. A person with an independent spirit will not spend much time talking to the Father. The more that you depend on God, the more time you will spend in His presence. If you struggle in this area, ask Jesus to teach you how to depend on the Father through prayer. He depended on the Father through prayer and He can teach you to do the same thing.

(3) You can be strengthened against and overcome temptation through prayer. Jesus decisively defeated the devil's temptations through prayer. His example should show you that temptation can only be dealt with through prayer. Willpower is not enough when it comes

to temptation. You must have the power of God that is released through prayer to overcome temptation. When tempted, Jesus prayed. When He knew that temptation was coming, He prepared by praying and fasting. The believer should follow this same example. When you are tempted, you should pray, seeking God's strength and help (**1 Corinthians 10:13**). If you are particularly weak in an area, fast and pray, asking God to help you deal with your weakness to this particular sin. Jesus reveals that prayer is your key weapon in dealing with temptation. The Son of God used prayer when tempted; so must you. Prayer will enable you to face and conquer the temptations that are thrown at you by the forces of evil.

(4) Through prayer, you can learn and submit to Your Father's will. When Jesus had decisions to make, He would pray. He prayed to discern what the Father's will was concerning the decision. When making decisions, He sought the will of God through times of prayer. He prayed before deciding to leave Capernaum and travel through Galilee (**Mark 1:35-39**). He also prayed before choosing the twelve apostles (**Luke 6:12-13**). He spent an extended time of prayer with the Father when the crowds wanted to make Him king (**John 6:15**). He even prayed before questioning His disciples about their belief in Him (**Luke 9:18**). Jesus discerned the will of His Father by praying to Him. He also prayed His will into submission to the Father's will through prayer. This is evident in His praying in the garden of Gethsemane. He yielded Himself to the Father's will through prayer. The same can be true of the believer. The believer needs to seek the will of God through prayer. You need to ask God about His will concerning the decisions and circumstances of your life. You can also pray your will into submission to the Father's will. There are times when the Father's will for our lives will not be pleasant. It may require sacrifice and suffering. It may require the denial of some desire or goal. At times like this, rather than giving into bitterness, the believer must pray. The believer must pray until his or her will has melted into the will of God. Through prayer, the Father's voice, love, and assurance are powerfully

manifested into your life, giving you the confidence and the strength to do what He wills. Prayer can teach you what your Father wills. It can also mold your will to do what your Father desires.

(5) Ministry can only be carried out through prayer. The example of Jesus should reveal the foundation of ministry. The foundation of all true ministry is prayer. You can do a lot of things before you pray, but you can do nothing before you pray. We must pray before we minister. We must pray during our ministry to others. And we must pray after our ministry to others. The reason that our labors lack powerful results and genuine change is due to the fact that they have not been saturated with prayer. Jesus prayed in order to preach, teach, heal, and cast out demons. Praying prepared Him to do ministry. If the Son of God had to pray in order to minister, how much more should we pray in order to fulfill the ministries to which God has called us. There is so much emphasis today on right techniques and methods. Yet, right techniques and methods will never substitute for the free power of God that is released through prayer. Preachers may have sound outlines and brilliant illustrations, but it will mean nothing if they have not saturated their sermons in prayer. Preachers must prepare their sermons, but they also have to prepare themselves. This can take place only through prayer. Any type of ministry, if it is going to glorify God and bring change to peoples' lives, must be saturated with prayer. The example of Jesus should convict us of the necessity of prayer for our ministry efforts. Jesus' power and effectiveness in ministry relied on His praying to the Father and spending time with Him.

(6) Jesus can help you grow in your intercession. On this earth, Jesus prayed for others. He prayed for His disciples and those who would believe on Him throughout time. He even prayed for those who crucified Him. At this time, Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, interceding for believers. Jesus is the master Intercessor. If you desire to learn how to intercede, ask the master Intercessor to teach you how to prayer. The request "Lord, teach me

to pray" will always be honored and answered by the Lord Jesus Christ. He can teach you how to intercede. He can give you the strength and encouragement to intercede. The master Intercessor will not fail you. You can cry out to Him and depend on Him to teach you and strengthen you in your prayer life. The Word of God states in **Hebrews 5:7**, "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." Jesus knew how to pray to His Father. He powerfully interceded for Himself and for others. He can teach you. Cry out to Him to teach you. He can even teach you how to pray for your enemies. Christ did this as He hung on the cross. He will teach you how to intercede for those that wound you and hurt you.

(7) Prayer will enable you to gain the Father's perspective. Through prayer, Jesus was able to keep the Father's perspective in the midst of His life and ministry. The circumstances that He faced required that He keep the Father's perspective. There are two specific examples of this. One example is found in **Matthew 14**. In this chapter, Jesus hears the painful news that John had been murdered. On hearing this news, Jesus withdrew by boat to a solitary place, "When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself (**Matthew 14:13**)." This must have been a painful time for Jesus. This was also a reminder of what was going to happen to Him. Jesus needed this time alone with the Father. By spending this time alone with Him, He was strengthened to continue His mission to the cross and His ministry to the crowds. **Matthew 14:14** says, "And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them and healed their sick." Jesus left His time alone with the Father with new strength and fresh resolve to minister and to carry out His Father's will. Jesus felt pain and agony over the death of John the Baptist. Yet, through prayer, He was able to continue His ministry and His obedience to the Father's will. Another example of this is found in **Matthew 26:39**. The Word of God says, "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.'" In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was overwhelmed with sorrow. Yet, He turns to His Father at this time. He cries out to the Father and finds the strength and the help that He needs. During this time when He was overwhelmed with emotion, Jesus prayed and found His Father's perspective. He was able to do what the Father wanted by praying to Him during this time when He felt overwhelmed. Believers need to follow the example of Jesus in this matter. When overwhelmed with emotion, the believer must turn to the Father. When suffering, the believer needs to spend time with the Father. By doing this, he or she can gain the Father's perspective. This does not mean that the believer will have all or any answers to what is going on in his or her life. Yet, the believer can receive strength and guidance in the midst of his or her adversity. The believer can gain renewed commitment to do the Father's will in spite of his or her circumstances.

- (8) **A believer must be real and honest in his or her praying.** This is one of the most valuable lessons that we can learn from Jesus' example of prayer. The most intensely emotional prayer of Jesus is recorded in **Matthew 26:36-44**. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was deeply distressed. He knew that His time to die as a substitute for sinners had come. **Luke 22:41-44** gives an even more vivid glimpse of His praying in the garden. He prayed so intensely that sweat from His head was like drops of blood falling to the ground (**Luke 22:44**). Only an angel from heaven could minister to Jesus at a time like this (**Luke 22:43**). The Son poured Himself out to His Father. He shared with Him His desire to escape the agony and the suffering of the cross. He also declared His willingness to do whatever the Father willed. The Father heard the agony of Jesus in the garden. He answered with a ministering angel. He answered by giving Jesus the strength to get up and walk out and meet Judas and those who had come to take Him away. He answered by helping Him accept the cup of suffering, shame, and sorrow that He would drink by dying on the cross. Jesus'

prayer in the garden reveals the necessity of being honest and real in our prayer to the Father. Jesus poured out His heart to the Father. He held nothing back from Him. If you will share your deepest feelings with God, His grace and mercy will sustain you in the midst of suffering or adversity. You need to be real and honest with Your Father. You can tell Him all about your troubles, fears, pain, and doubts. In the honesty of your prayers, God will hear and He will cause His grace and peace to abound in your life. He may not remove the suffering or the adversity that you must face. Yet, He will give you grace and strength to deal with it. Believers will vary in the ways that they pray. Some believers pray quietly and reverently. Other believers pray with great emotion. Yet, the lesson that we learn from Jesus is that our praying must be real and honest. In prayer, we are not to hold anything back from our Father. Whatever we are feeling or going through, we should bring this to the Father who loves us and calls us to cast all our cares on Him (**1 Peter 5:7**). The believer can and should lay everything he or she experiences before God. Do not try to pretend everything is okay when you go into the presence of God. Do not withhold any feelings from Him. Not only will you receive strength and grace from the Father, but you will also increase the intimacy of your relationship to Him.

Want To Know More About The Prayer Life of Jesus?

If you would like to do more study on the prayer life of Jesus, Dr. Meador has prepared a study guide on this vital subject. This study guide contains an outline of the Biblical passages concerning His prayer life along with helpful hints and study notes. This guide will enable you to do your own personal study of Jesus' prayer life. Deepen your prayer life by studying His! To receive your copy, please request one through the means listed on the front of this newsletter.

Praying For Revival: Dealing with Unbelief

In previous issues of *The Prayer Closet*, we have focused on praying for revival. Prayer is always a key element in experiencing revival. In order to experience a fresh and powerful work of the Holy Spirit, one must seek God for this through prayer. In previous articles, we have dealt with praying through the hindrances to revival. Revival is a sovereign work of God. It is something that God and God alone can grant to His people. Yet, there are means to seeking Him for revival. And there are hindrances to His people receiving this revival from Him. **Unbelief is a primary hindrance to God's people receiving revival.**

Those who come to God seeking Him for revival must approach Him with faith, "But **without faith** it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (emphasis mine)." In order to pray for revival, one must believe that God can and will grant that revival. God is pleased when His people approach Him in faith. He is pleased to grant His powerful working that will trust Him for this. Revival can be a reality when His people pray with faith.

It is an empty exercise to ask God to grant revival if you do not believe that He has the willingness and the power to do so. Why is unbelief a hindrance to revival? *Unbelief will not prevail with God when pleading for revival.* Those who plead for revival must trust that He can and will work powerfully. God will not bless unbelief. Jesus will not work powerfully in the midst of unbelief. The people of Nazareth refused to believe in Him and His power. What was the result? The Word of God declares, "And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief (**Matthew 13:58**)." Jesus did not perform mighty miracles in their midst. In fact, the Word of God states that Jesus marveled at their unbelief (**Mark 6:6**). The Lord Jesus Christ was shocked at their lack of faith in Him. He withheld His transforming power in the midst of such unbelief.

To see and experience the miraculous power of God, one must have faith that God can and will work powerfully. God is pleased to work when His

people trust Him. This trust is actually a humble dependence on God. He is pleased to reveal His power and His glory to those who humbly depend on Him and His power.

A lack of faith will not bring revival, but a rebuke from the Savior. In **Matthew 17**, the disciples could not cast a demon out of a young man. The disciples were perplexed that they failed in this matter. They asked Jesus why they had failed. He responded, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." Jesus declares that they failed because of their unbelief. He rebukes them for their lack of faith.

Just as the disciples, we are not experiencing the reviving, transforming power of Jesus Christ. It is due to our unbelief, our failure to trust Him. Jesus is not pleased with a lack of faith. He will not grant revival in this situation. He will only rebuke us for our lack of faith.

Unbelief is a hindrance to revival because it robs us of power to plead with God. The Word of God declares in **James 1:6**, "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind." When asking God to send genuine revival, one must believe that He can and will do this. If we doubt God's willingness and power, we cannot receive from Him, "For let not that man suppose that he shall receive anything of the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (**James 1:7-8**)." The power to plead with God is a result of a faith that trusts God's willingness and power. When we lack this faith, it robs us of the power to plead with Him for genuine revival. Unbelief drains our prayers of any effectiveness with God. We must trust that God will hear and answer us from His holy throne. Pleading with God is an exercise of faith that is directed solely toward God.

*Unbelief hinders revival because it grieves the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 4:30**).* Revival is a work of the Holy Spirit. It is His powerful working that grants genuine revival among God's people and transformation to the lost world. Unconfessed sin grieves the Holy Spirit. Unbelief is a sin. If we do not labor to deal with our unbelief, this will grieve the Spirit. When this takes place, we will not experience the Holy Spirit's powerful working.

How can we strive to deal with this hindrance to revival? The following are some suggestions on how to pray concerning this hindrance. You might consider praying this for your church. You might consider using these requests to pray for the believers throughout this country or world.

- (1) *Pray that the Holy Spirit will convict believers concerning their unbelief (Matthew 13:58; Mark 6:6).* It is easy to say that you believe God can and will grant revival. Yet, it is quite another to truly believe this and seek God for revival. There are too many believers who talk about revival and not enough who believe Him for this and who are willing to seek Him. Pray that the Spirit will convict people about the necessity of truly believing God for this necessary work.
- (2) *Pray that the Holy Spirit will create a holy desperation in believers for revival.* People must see a need for a fresh and genuine work of the Spirit among the people of God. Unbelief about revival often results from failing to see the need. Sometimes believers will not seek God for this work because they think that it is not really needed. They are satisfied with the way things are. Plead that God would grant them a "holy desperation". Pray that the believers will long for a fresh work of God. Plead that they will see the need for God to do a new and powerful work among His people.
- (3) *Ask God to cause the believers to focus on Him and not on the circumstances.* Sometimes believers are guilty of unbelief concerning revival because they feel that revival is an impossibility. You've heard it before—the old standard saying, "Things are only going to get worse. We cannot expect them to ever get any better." This is a lie and an excuse for unbelief and laziness in seeking God. Have we forgotten who God is? Have we forgotten how majestic and powerful He is? Our God has created all things that exist by His power and will. Our God parted the Red Sea. Our God caused the Jordan River to stand up until the people could cross over. Our God fed His people with manna and quail in the midst of the wilderness. Our

God has raised up kings and kingdoms. He has also cast them down into the dust of nothingness. Our God has raised His Son from the dead and made Him Lord over all. Our God has built a church in spite of man's wickedness, Satan's opposition, persecution, suffering, and bloodshed. How dare we say that the circumstances are too desperate for God to grant revival? God is often pleased to work when the circumstances are at their darkest and most desperate. Pray that God will cause believers to focus on Him and not on the condition of the church or the society. Plead that believers will look to God and God alone for a true and fresh work of His Spirit.

Praying For Teenagers In Crisis: Alcoholism

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism reports that there are 3.3 million teenage alcoholics in the United States. Former Health and Human Services Secretary Bowen has said that nearly three out of ten adolescents—nearly five million young people—have a drinking problem. Thomas Seessel, the executive director of the National Council on Alcoholism has said, "Alcohol abuse has become . . . [a] devastating epidemic. Nearly 100,000 ten- and eleven-year-olds get drunk at least once a week."

It starts with experimentation. A preteen or teen finds alcohol in his or her home. Perhaps the preteen or teen is challenged by another to drink a beer. Some young people have their curiosity satisfied by this one drink. From then on, they practice abstinence. Yet, for many others, they continue to drink. They move from being casual drinking to becoming problem drinkers. Some even succumb to alcoholism. There are literally thousands of preteens and teens that are halfway down the road to disaster because of alcohol.

How can you tell if your preteen or teen is developing a problem with alcohol? There are some warning signs:

- ◆ *Intense frustration about his or her life*
- ◆ *Confusion and disorientation*

- ◆ *Personality distortion* (The person will become unrecognizable to family and friends. Characteristics common to this person will disappear.)
- ◆ *Loss of control*
- ◆ *Depression* (These will be long and severe bouts of depression.)
- ◆ *Low self-esteem*
- ◆ *Guilt and shame*
- ◆ *Arrested maturity* (Alcohol stunts emotional growth. Preteens and teens that drink heavily do not develop the judgment and coping skills they will need as adults. Sometimes the progress toward emotional and social maturity is not only stunted but also it can actually be reversed.)
- ◆ *Remorse*
- ◆ *Alienation and isolation* (The person will feel alone, unable to get close to anyone and unable to seek help from anyone. The person with a drinking problem will figure out some excuse to push everyone out of his or her life.)
- ◆ *Despair* (This person will feel that life is hopeless, that life is effectively over.)

How can you help a preteen or teen with a drinking problem? What can you do to prevent a preteen or teen from developing a drinking problem? There are many things that need to be done to prevent this. Yet, the primary action that you need to take is to pray for them. The following are some prayer requests that you can use concerning this problem. These requests can be applied to a preteen, teen, or even an adult. You can use these requests or you can develop others from this. You can use these requests for someone who has a problem or for the prevention of this in a preteen or teen's life.

- ◆ *Pray that this person will surrender to Jesus Christ as the Lord of his or her life (John 3:15-18; Acts 4:12).*
- ◆ *If this person is saved, plead that he or she will grow and mature in his or her faith (1 Peter 2:1-2; Hebrews 5:11-14).*
- ◆ *Plead that this person will see past the peer pressure to the true dangers involved with*

alcohol (Proverbs 1:10-19). Many preteens and teens begin to drink due to the influence of friends (**Proverbs 23:20**). Pray that this person will not be blinded by the influence of friends. Pray that they will see the great danger involved with alcohol.

- ◆ *Pray that this person will develop a hatred of alcohol (John 16:8).* Ask the Holy Spirit to convict the person so powerfully concerning this that he or she develops a hatred for it. Call on the Holy Spirit to reveal to this person the destructive nature of alcohol (**Proverbs 20:1**). Plead with Him to show this person how it is damaging his or her life. Pray that he or she will see how it is damaging his or her relationships.
- ◆ *Pray that God would heal whatever is causing this person to turn to alcohol for answers or for the ability to cope (Psalm 147:3).* Alcohol abuse or alcoholism is not only a spiritual problem. It is also an emotional problem. People often drink in order to cope. They see it as a solution to pain that is deep inside of them. They have never dealt with the pain. Ask God to heal whatever is driving them to alcohol.
- ◆ *Ask God to use the frustration and depression that this person feels (John 10:10).* Ask God to use these things to drive this person to Jesus Christ. Plead with Him to motivate this person to cry out to Christ for help and deliverance from this. Pray that God would protect this person from these things, but that He would use them to draw them to His Son.
- ◆ *Pray that God would grant wisdom and strength to the friends and family of this person (Proverbs 2:6-7).*
- ◆ *Plead that this person will see that Jesus Christ is sufficient to help and to meet His or her needs (Matthew 11:28).*
- ◆ *Call on God to raise up godly friends who will love and minister to this person (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).*

- ◆ *Pray that this person will realize that there is hope through the transforming power of Jesus (John 14:6).*

NEW PRAYER PRODUCT

Developing A Heart For Praise: Learning To Praise God

We now have available the following studies on cassette tape:

This study consists of an audiotape and a manual. It is a basic study in learning how to praise God on a daily basis.

Standing In The Gap: Developing Intercessory Prayer Power

This is a series of six messages. These messages come in an album along with a study guide. The messages in this series are:

If you would like to receive any or all of these series, please contact us by one of the means listed on the front page of this newsletter.

- The Call To Intercession*
- The Characteristics of An Intercessor*
- The Warfare of An Intercessor*
- The Tools of An Intercessor*
- The Problems of An Intercessor*
- Learning To Plead With God*

Spiritual Warfare

This is a series of four messages on the basics of spiritual warfare. These messages come in an album along with a study guide. The messages in this series are:

- The Characteristics Of Our Warfare*
- How Does Satan Attack A Believer?*
- Praying In Power For Those In Bondage*
- How Does Satan Attack A Church*

<p>Notice the announcement concerning The Beloved Unbeliever Network on the back cover!</p>
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The Beloved Unbeliever Network

The Beloved Unbeliever Network is a ministry of intercession that focuses on praying for believers whose spouse is an unbeliever. In the past months, God has been burdening me to broaden the scope of this ministry. My heart longs for revival in marriages and families. In a recent fast, God has convicted me to provide intercession for troubled marriages and families. He has burdened me to use this ministry to stand in the gap for marriages and families and against the spirit of divorce and broken homes. This ministry will continue to pray for believers with unbelieving spouses. Yet, we will also pray for any marriage or family that is in crisis. If you would like to join this ministry as an intercessor, please contact me through one of the means listed on the front of the newsletter. You can make a difference! If you know of a marriage or family in crisis or if you find yourself in this situation, please let us have the opportunity to intercede for you and your situation.



THE PRAYER CLOSET MINISTRIES, INC.
Dr. Kevin Meador
595 Stratton Road
Decatur, MS 39327

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1111 Pleasant Valley Road
Decatur, MS 39327