

THE PRAYER CLOSET

*Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting*

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ISSUE 1

WAITING ON GOD

We live in an age when people are constantly on the go. Our lives are filled with a variety of activities. There seems to be more to do than we have hours in a day. We are continually rushing from one appointment to another. There is seemingly an unceasing pressure to be somewhere at a particular time.

If you want a vivid illustration of this, go to an office supply store and look at the variety of planners and organizers that are available. You can schedule your life daily, weekly, or monthly. The variety of planners and organizers is staggering. Yet, this points to the fact that we live hectic and stressful lives. We often schedule more for our lives than we have the time or energy.

Even if you do not use a planner or organizer, your life can still be fast-paced and filled with activities. From the president of a corporation

to a housewife, our lifestyles can be summed up in one word: **busy**. Unfortunately, this attitude of busyness finds its way into our prayer lives. Our "quiet times" are not quiet at all. Our prayers are often rushed and filled with all kinds of requests. We want God to speak to us. Yet, our attitude is, "You've got four minutes, God. Tell me everything You want me to know."

Believers need to cultivate the discipline of silence before God. Waiting on the Lord in silence is an art that believers need to make a part of their prayer lives. O. Hallesby writes on the need for times of silence in your prayer life, "There is activity in prayer, of course, and it includes speaking with God. But that should not be all. In the quiet and holy hour of prayer we should also be still and permit ourselves to be examined by the Physician of our souls." Charles Spurgeon adds this word about silence before God, "We too often rush into the presence of God without fore-thought or humility. Let not our prayers and praises be the flashes of a hot and hasty brain, but the steady burning of a well-kindled fire."

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on the discipline of silence. In order to develop a strong and effective prayer life, a believer needs to develop the ability to be silent before the Lord. There needs to be times in your prayer life when the believer is silent before the Lord and waits on Him. This silence may last only for a few minutes or for days.

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Prayer and Your Personal Evangelism**

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I realize that being silent before God is a radical concept for modern believers. We are conditioned to be comfortable with noise and crowds. We are uncomfortable with silence. We do not feel that we have the time to be silent before God. In *Finding Focus in a Whirlwind World*, Jean Fleming wrote, "We live in a noisy, busy world. Silence and solitude are not twentieth-century words. They fit the era of Victorian lace, high-button shoes, and kerosene lamps better than our age of television, video arcades, and joggers wired with earphones. We have become a people with an aversion to quiet and an uneasiness with being alone (p.73)."

In spite of the busyness of our age, we need to develop the ability to wait silently on the Lord. There needs to be times when the believer gets alone with God and silently waits on Him. It is my hope and prayer that this issue of *The Prayer Closet* will create within you a hunger to silently wait on the Lord.

The Biblical Basis Of Waiting On God

Waiting on the Lord in silence is a biblical concept. **It can be described as the silent surrendering of the soul to God.** The Word of God states in **Psalm 130:5-6**, "I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His Word I do hope. My soul waits for the LORD more than those who watch for the morning--yes, more than those who watch for the morning." The psalmist declares that his "soul" waits on the Lord. This waiting is an act of the soul or of the innermost being. The psalmist is still and silent before the Lord. His focus is on the Lord. He is focusing on the Lord in silence. This can be described as "wordless worship."

Waiting on the Lord in silence is a part of prayer when the believer is still and silent before the Lord. During this time of silence, the believer's focus is God. All other distractions are driven away. The silence can be outward. The believer does not speak but carries on an internal dialogue with God or with self. This silence can also be

inward. The believer does not speak and does not carry on any internal dialogue with God or self, but silently waits and listens to God.

Waiting on the Lord in silence has a close relationship to praise for God. In fact, these two aspects of prayer often overlap. Praise can be described as a vocal focus on the character and actions of God. Waiting in silence can be described as a silent focus on the character and actions of God.

These aspects of prayer can be illustrated through the relationship of a husband and wife. A husband can say to his wife, "I love you," "I need you," "I care for you," and "I appreciate you." Through his words, he is adoring her. Yet, that same husband can take his wife into his arms and simply hold her. He does not have to say anything. He can hold her and look into her eyes. This is a silent adoration.

Our prayer lives need to contain both praise and waiting on God in silence. We do need to adore God with our words. The Word of God says in **Hebrews 13:15**, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." The believer should offer the sacrifice of praise through lips--his words. Yet, there should be times when the believer silently waits on the Lord. Through the eyes of faith, we should gaze on the character and actions of God. Through the silence, we should allow God to embrace us in His love, feeling the depth and the power of that love for us.

There are other passages that speak of the believer waiting on God in silence:

Psalm 25:5: "Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day."

Psalm 27:14: "Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD."

Psalm 37:7: "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the wicked man who brings his wicked schemes to pass."

Psalm 40:1: "I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me and heard my cry."

Psalm 62:5: "My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him."

Psalm 69:3: "I am weary with my crying; my throat is dry; my eyes fail while I wait for God."

Isaiah 40:31: "But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

When the Bible speaks of "waiting" on God, this does include patient endurance, faithful service, and clinging to the promises of God. Yet, at its core, waiting on God is the silent surrender of oneself to God. It is spending time with God in silence, beholding His greatness and listening to His voice. It is taking time to be still before our God and our Father. In **Psalm 46:10**, we are challenged not only to be still but also to know that He is God, "Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Why Should A Believer Develop The Discipline of Waiting on God In Silence?

Being still and silent before the Lord needs to be an important part of your prayer life. We do need to praise God, confess our sins to Him, give thanks to Him, and make requests of Him. We also need to make intercession to God in behalf of others. Yet, there needs to be times of waiting on God in silence. In order to have a healthy, growing prayer life, you need balance between intensely seeking the Lord and silently waiting before Him. This silent waiting on God has many benefits for your relationship with God.

By silently waiting on God, you will be following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. The

Bible teaches that Jesus Christ practiced the discipline of silence in prayer. The following are some verses that reveal this:

(1) **Matthew 4:1:** "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." The Holy Spirit led Jesus into a period of silence and prayer before the Father.

(2) **Matthew 14:23:** "And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone." Jesus sent His disciples and the crowd away so that He could be alone with the Father.

(3) **Mark 1:35:** "Now in the morning, haven risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed." The previous verse reveals that the entire town had gathered to hear Jesus and to have Him heal their sick. Jesus knew that the only place that He could have time alone with God was to rise early and find a quiet place where He could be alone with God.

(4) **Luke 4:42:** "Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them." This verse reveals that Jesus was surrounded by overwhelming needs. Yet, in the midst of all this, He disciplined Himself to pull away from the crowd and spend time alone with the Father.

In order to become like Jesus Christ, we must discipline ourselves to get alone and spend time with our Father. The Lord Jesus Christ has set the example of spending time in silence with the Father.

By silently waiting on the Lord, it will enable you to hear His voice more clearly. Prayer is not a one-way conversation. It is a living and

loving relationship between God and the believer. We speak to God and He speaks to us. If we are going to hear from Him, we must be willing to silently wait before Him in prayer. There are biblical examples for this:

- ◆ Elijah going to Mount Carmel where he heard the gentle whisper of God's voice (**1 Kings 19:11-13**);
- ◆ Habakkuk standing on the guard post and keeping watch to see what God would say to him (**Habakkuk 2:1**);
- ◆ The apostle Paul going away to Arabia after his conversion so he could be alone with God (**Galatians 1:17**).

It isn't absolutely necessary for a believer to get alone with God and silently wait for Him in order to hear His voice. If this were true, we could never hear His promptings in the every day course of life and in worship services when we are surrounded by people. Yet, there does come a time when we need to eliminate the voices of the world in order to listen more closely for God's voice.

We need to develop this ability to silently wait on the Lord because of our addiction to noise. It is one thing to listen to the television, the tape player, or the radio while carrying out our household responsibilities or while we are doing some other task. Yet, it is quiet another to habitually turn one of these things on just to have noise. Very few of us go anywhere without the presence of noise. This is the most noise-polluted generation ever. As a result, we are less frequently alone with our own thoughts and God's voice. Because of this, it is important to get alone and wait silently before the Lord. If we are going to hear God's voice, we must learn to silently wait before Him.

Silently waiting on the Lord enables us to express faith in God. The believer can demonstrate faith in God by coming to Him in silent trust as opposed to coming to Him with a lot of words and worry. David displays this kind of faith in **Psalm 62**. David is facing a crisis. Rather than coming to God with a long petition and worry, he comes with silence and trust. In **verses 1-2**, "Truly my soul waits silently for God; from Him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved." He reaffirms this in **verses 5-6**, "My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him. He

only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved." David's silence before the Lord was an expression of His faith in the power of God to deliver him. When the believer is quiet before the Lord, without words and without anxiety, it is a powerful expression of his or her trust in the sovereign control of God.

Silently waiting before the Lord is a way to express worship to God. The worship of God does not always require words, sounds, or actions. Worship can take place in a God-focused stillness and silence. The Word of God states in **Habakkuk 2:20**, "But the Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him." The Word of God also says in **Zephaniah 1:7**, "Be silent in the presence of the Lord". In these verses, it is not simply silence which is required. It is silence "before the Lord." There are times to speak to God and offer the praise of our lips. At the same time, there are times when one should be silent before the Lord and adore Him for who He is. There is always a place for wordless worship before the Lord.

Regaining a spiritual perspective is another benefit on waiting before the Lord in silence. Sometimes this can enable you to step back and get God's perspective of circumstances. An example of this is found in **Luke 1**. In this chapter, we read that the angel Gabriel tells Zechariah the priest and his elderly wife that they are miraculously going to have a son. Zechariah's response is to doubt. In response to his doubt, the angel Gabriel declares, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time (**Luke 1:19-20**)." Because of his unbelief, Zechariah would not be able to speak until the son was born. What did this time of silent waiting before the Lord do for Zechariah? When the baby was born, the Bible describes his response this way, "And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, 'His name is John.' So they all marveled. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God." His time of silent waiting had moved him from doubting God to trusting God. Silent waiting before the Lord

can enable you to forsake a worldly perspective and see God's perspective in a fresh and new way.

A believer can be restored physically or spiritually through silent waiting before the Lord. Each person has a need for restoring the resources of both the outward and inward person. This was true of even those who lived the most closely to Jesus Christ. After spending themselves on physical and spiritual work, Jesus prescribes the following for His disciples, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while (**Mark 6:31**). Believers need to pull away from the stresses of routine and silently wait on the Lord. Even if it is only for a few minutes, this can be powerfully used of God to restore the believer physically and spiritually.

Silent waiting on the Lord can enable a believer to seek the will of God. This is one of the most common reasons that believers have times of silent waiting before the Lord. This is the method that Jesus used when He chose His twelve disciples, "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. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself (**Luke 6:12-13**). God often makes His will known to us in public. An example of this is during a worship service. Yet, there are times when He is going to reveal His will only when we are silently waiting before Him.

A final benefit of silent waiting before the Lord is that it can enable us to learn how to control our tongue. In order to please God with our words, we must learn to control our tongue. If we are going to be like Christ we must learn to control our tongue. **James 1:26** declares that the religion of the person with no tongue control is useless. **Proverbs 17:27-28** reveal a connection between wisdom and the ability to control one's tongue, "He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive." In **Ecclesiastes**, we are told that there is "a time to keep silence and a time to speak (**Ecclesiastes 3:7**)."

How can silent waiting before the Lord enable you to control your tongue? It will teach you that many of the things that you do say are

unnecessary. When a person observes a fast for a long period of time, the person realizes that much of the food that he or she normally eats is really unnecessary. When you discipline yourself to be silent before the Lord, the same thing happens. You begin to realize that you don't need to say many things that you think you need to say. In silence before Him, you learn to trust God's sovereign control in the situations in which you think that you need to say something. You come to understand that God can handle situations where you feel that you need to say something.

Practical Suggestions For Waiting on God In Silence

The following are some practical suggestions on how to practice silent waiting before the Lord. I cannot provide suggestions for every person's circumstances. We all have different circumstances and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to suggest how you should practice this. Yet, these are some suggestions that may help you in developing a strategy for doing this.

(1) *Make a conscious commitment to the Lord to develop this discipline.* You may feel that it is impossible for you to spend time alone with God, silently waiting before Him. But, it is possible. You may have to find creative ways to do this, but, it is possible through the power of Jesus Christ (**Philippians 4:13**). Ask the Holy Spirit to help you find the time and the place to do this. Confess your addiction to noise and plead with Him to break this from your life. And, keep in mind the benefits of silent waiting before the Lord. In *The Still Hour*, Austin Phelps sums up the benefits of silence before the Lord by writing, "It has been said that no great work in literature or in science was ever wrought by a man who did not love solitude. We may lay it down as an elemental principle of religion, that no large growth in holiness was ever gained by one who did not take time to be often long alone with God (p.64)."

(2) *Practice minute retreats.* Throughout your day, use opportunities to silently focus on Him. Turn your routine moments into holy ground. A moment at a traffic light, on hold on the phone, or in line at the drive-in window are a couple of the opportunities that you can use the silence to focus on God. Seize these moments and exclusively focus on the Lord. It may not be long, ten seconds to a couple of minutes. Yet, you can use these moments to silently wait on the Lord. You will be surprised at the power of these moments.

(3) *Make silent waiting an integral part of your daily times of prayer.* You might want to consider making this a part of your daily quiet time. When you pray, you might want to consider devoting some of your prayer time to being silent before the Lord and waiting on Him. This devotional habit is difficult to develop because we lead busy lives. At the same time, our enemy, the devil, knows the importance of silence. Jim Elliot emphasizes the devil's knowledge of the importance of silence by writing, "I think that the devil has made it his business to monopolize on three elements: noise, hurry, crowds . . . Satan is quite aware of the power of silence (John Blanchard, *More Gathered Gold*, p.295)." Our days are filled with plenty of demands, noises, and hurrying. You have to plan to have times of silent waiting before the Lord. You might want to consider making this a part of your prayer life.

(4) *Have an extended period of silent waiting before the Lord.* This extended period of time may be nothing more than finding a quiet space in which to spend an afternoon, an evening, or a Saturday. Yet, your extended period of silence could be spending a night or a weekend at a lodge, a cabin, or a retreat center. During this time of silence, you can have your Bible and a notebook. As you read and listen to God, you can record the insights that God gives you. You could take a book that you think will dramatically impact your life. Or you could spend the time silently meditating on God and worshipping Him. You might plan and evaluate your goals. Before having an extended time of silence, you need to prepare a schedule of how you are going to spend your time. Do not feel that you

have to go exactly according to your schedule. It would be good to have a basic idea of how you are going to spend the time so that you do not misspend it.

(5) *Have a special place where you can be alone with God.* In order to help you develop this discipline, you need to locate a special place where you can be alone with God. This special place may be within your home or church. It could be a place within walking distance, a few minutes' drive, or a place where you can spend the night or have a longer retreat. Your place may not be ideal and it may have to change from time to time. Yet, it is possible to locate a singular spot for you to be silent before God. An example of this is Susanna Wesley. Susanna Wesley, the mother of John and Charles, had a very large family. For many years, it was impossible to physically isolate herself from her family. When she needed time alone with the Lord, she would bring her apron up over her head and read her Bible and pray underneath it. Obviously this did not block out all the noise. Yet, it was a sign to her children that she was not to be bothered for those minutes and that the older children were to care for the younger ones.

(6) *You might want to consider trading off responsibilities when necessary.* It might be helpful to trade off responsibilities with your spouse or a friend. Your spouse or friend can temporarily take care of your responsibility. You can return the favor later by doing the same for your friend or spouse. By doing this, you can spend time alone with God. It may not be for an extended period of time. Yet, it will give you the opportunity to spend time alone with God, silently waiting on Him.

(7) *When you have times of silent waiting on the Lord, focus on the Lord.* You might consider focusing on an attribute or characteristic of God. An example would be the mercy of God. Think about what God's mercy means to you, how His mercy affects you on a daily basis, and what your life would be without His mercy. You could then begin an inward dialogue with the Lord about His mercy. You could simply pray "Lord, I love you very much" and then silently worship Him and

allow Him to love you. However you choose to spend your time of silence before the Lord, the key is to focus on Him. **This is your time before Him!**

Practicing The Presence of God

God has created you and saved you in order to be in a relationship with you. Being a Christian is not a performance but a relationship with God. Jesus Christ defines eternal life in **John 17:3**, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." The word "know" means more than a factual knowledge. It refers to an intimate knowledge that flows out of truth and experience. Our lifestyle is to be characterized by an intimate relationship with God. We are to keep constant company with God--walking with Him, talking to Him, listening to Him. As Brother Lawrence has written, "Our only business was to love and delight ourselves in God."

In order to establish an intimate relationship with God, we are to develop an awareness of His presence in every part of our lives. This is not something that we do, but something that God does in us. It is not a matter of achieving God's presence, but surrendering to God's presence. We need to become more aware of His presence with us. This means an ongoing conversation with God and the surrendering of the ordinary moments of life to Him. This is what is meant by the term "practicing the presence of God."

Some wonder if it is possible to practice the presence of God--have an ongoing conversation with God. It must be possible in some sense because of the teaching of the Word of God. Notice what these verses of Scripture say:

"Praying *always* with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (**Ephesians 6:18**, emphasis mine)."

"Be anxious for nothing, but in *everything* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God (**Philippians 4:6**, emphasis mine)."

"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**, emphasis mine)."

"We give thanks to God *always* for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (**1 Thessalonians 1:2**, emphasis mine)."

"*Night and day praying exceedingly* that we may see your face and perfect that which is lacking in your faith (**1 Thessalonians 3:10**, emphasis mine)?"

"Pray *without ceasing* (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**, emphasis mine)."

These verses are not teaching that we must be on our knees praying twenty-four hours a day. Yet, these verses are teaching us that we are to be continually in touch with God and aware of His presence. This means that we are to surrender the most common of moments and events to God. We are to have an ongoing conversation with Him. We are not to confine our relationship to God to a church service or a quiet time. We should have a continual awareness of His presence in our lives. We must continually be in touch with Him. As Jean Nicholas Grou wrote, "We are not incessantly making vocal prayers, but our heart is always turned toward God, always listening for the voice of God, always ready to do His will."

Practicing the presence of God is basically sharing your entire life with God. It is involving God even in the insignificant moments of life. It is having an ongoing conversation with God in which you talk to Him throughout your days and nights. How can you "practice the presence of God"? How can you have this ongoing conversation with and surrender to God? The following are some practical suggestions on how to do this:

(1) *Ask God to give you a special sense of His presence in your life (Psalm 139)*. Call on Him to make you aware of the fact that He is continually

with you. You do not have to pray, "Lord, be with me." This is an unscriptural request. God is with you (**Matthew 28:20; Isaiah 43:2; Psalm 34:15**). You need to understand that God is constantly with you. You can never escape His presence. He is with you at all times and in all places. Our prayer should be, "Lord, cause me to know that You are with me. Grant me a special sensitivity to Your continual presence in my life."

(2) *Reflect before the beginning of your daily tasks.* Nothing we do is too ordinary or too boring for God. He does not delight in us because we are entertaining but because we belong to Him. Before starting any task, you can simply pray, "Lord, work with me in this task; receive the work of my hands."

(3) *Repeat a short prayer as you work.* As you carry out your daily tasks, you might repeat short prayers like, "This task is for You, Lord", "I am doing this for Your glory, Lord", "I love You, Lord", or "I delight in You, Lord". A Filipino farmer once told the missionary Frank Laubach, "I used to farm with my hand on the plow, my eyes on the furrow, but my mind on God." By praying these short prayers, you can work while at the same time keeping your mind on God.

(4) *Reflect as you finish your tasks.* Take a moment after finishing your tasks. Thank God for the opportunity to do this for Him. Thank Him for enabling you to do what you have done. Offer this finished task to God.

(5) *As you look at others, ask God, "Do I need to change?"* Disturbing people or situations may signal us to look within for character flaws (**1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5**). As you work and spend time with others, you notice their behavior. When you see character flaws in others, this should drive you to pray, "Lord, am I guilty of this? Do I need to change my behavior in this area?" Rather than dwelling on the inadequacies of the people we find offensive, this short prayer should help us refocus on the fact that God wants to change us. As you notice the godly characteristics of others, this should drive you to pray, "Lord,

produce this in me. Lord, I am lacking in this quality; please create this in me."

(6) *When you encounter others, pray short prayers for them.* Each of us encounter numerous people on a daily basis. As you go through your day, you can breathe a short prayer for those you encounter--in the store, at the office, on the road, those you are standing in line with, those you talk to on the phone, those that come to your mind. You can pray short prayers like: "Lord, turn this person's heart toward You," "Lord, meet this person's spiritual needs," "Lord, touch this person's life in special way today."

(7) *Pray as you watch television or read newspapers or magazines.* This is an excellent way of practicing the presence of God and having an impact on the world around you. As you read about government officials, pray for them. As you read or hear about situations in the news, pray for God's powerful intervention in these situations.

By doing these types of things, your daily life can become holy ground. The most common tasks can be opportunities to worship God. As you pray short prayers for others throughout your day, you can crowd out negative self-talk, critical thoughts, and petty criticism. By using these types of short prayers, encountering or thinking about someone can be a holy event.

Prayer and Your Personal Evangelism

In the last issue of *The Prayer Closet*, we dealt with the subject of praying for the lost. The foundational principle of reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ is that we must pray for them. If we want to see lost people enter into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, we must pray for their salvation. This is absolutely crucial.

Yet, our responsibility does not end there. We must also share the gospel with those who are lost. We should not stop at praying for the lost. We

should be committed to intercede for them. Yet, this should not feel that this is the end of our responsibility. We need to labor to share the message of Christ with them. Evangelism without prayer will be ineffective and prayer that does not lead a person to deeper compassion for and actions to reach the lost is flawed. We must be willing to be the answer to our praying for the lost. We need to be obedient and boldly share the gospel.

It is the responsibility of all believers to share the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. All Christians are not expected to use the same methods of sharing the gospel, but all Christians are expected to share the same gospel. Our methods may be different, but we are to share the message of Jesus' transforming power. Why is this expected of the believer? The Lord Jesus Christ Himself has commanded us to witness. Consider the words of the Lord Jesus Christ:

Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

Mark 16:15: "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'"

Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

John 20:21: "So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

Acts 1:8: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

These commands were not given to the apostles only. For example, the apostles never came to this nation. For the command of Jesus Christ to be fulfilled and for America to hear about Jesus Christ, the gospel had to come here by other Christians. And the apostles will never come to

your home, your neighborhood, or the place where you work. For the Great Commission to be fulfilled there, believers must share the gospel in those areas. This responsibility rests on the shoulders of believers.

Since every believer has the responsibility of witnessing to the lost, the believer needs to combine prayer with his or her witness. Not only should you pray for lost people, you should also pray about your witness to lost people. Through my own personal witnessing and training other believers to witness, I have developed a plan for praying for one's personal witnessing. This plan is not perfect and it is not the only one. Yet, it is a simple plan that covers the basics of personal witnessing. This plan can help you saturate your witnessing with prayer and power. This plan can be used in a variety of ways: a believer praying for his or her own witnessing, praying for those you are training to share the gospel, a pastor and other believers praying for the outreach and witness of a church.

This plan is based on the acrostic **D.O.O.R.S.** Each letter stands for an area of your personal witnessing that you can cover in prayer. The reason that it is based on **D.O.O.R.S.** is because a "door" in the Bible sometimes referred to an opportunity to proclaim the gospel to unbelievers (**1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Colossians 4:3; Revelation 3:8**). An open door is an opportunity to share the gospel with a lost person. This is exactly what believers should want and should be seeking. We do this primarily through prayer.

One of the ways to pray for your personal witnessing is by praying through the acrostic **D.O.O.R.S.:**

Discipline-Sharing the gospel with others should be the natural overflow of the Christian life. Because of who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus has done for us, it should be natural to the believer to share about Him and how to be saved. All believers should be able to talk about what Jesus has done for them and what He means to them. Yet, at the same time, sharing the gospel with others is something that we need to discipline ourselves to do. You must be looking for opportunities to share the

gospel with others. You should plan on witnessing to the people that you encounter throughout your daily life. You need to develop at least one way of intentionally witnessing to an unbeliever. One of the ways that I do this is by asking others what I can pray about for them. This will usually lead to an opportunity to talk with them about their relationship to God. This is just one way of intentionally sharing the gospel with others. We do need to look for opportune times and moments to witness to others. However, too many believers fail to witness because they do not plan on sharing the gospel. You are a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ; discipline yourself to talk with others about Him (**2 Corinthians 5:20**).

Pray that God will give you the discipline to witness intentionally with those people that you encounter throughout your life.

Opportunities-You should ask God to give you opportunities to share the gospel with others (**Matthew 7:7-8**). We need to combine praying for opportunities and looking for them. It is not enough to pray for an opportunity to witness. You are to pray for an opportunity and then look for that opportunity. Pray that God will prepare the hearts of people so that you can witness to them. When you pray for the right circumstances to witness, you pray in one of two ways. You can pray that God will grant you the opportunity to witness to those that you encounter on a daily basis. Pray that God will create the right circumstances and that He will prepare the heart of the person. Another way that you can pray for opportunities to witness is to make a list of the people that you want to see God save. I can call this an "Impact List". These are people that you have a burden for and that need to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Your list can be as large as you want it to be. I usually suggest that you have at least three to five persons on this list. Once you establish this list, begin praying fervently for opportunities to witness to these people. Plead with God to prepare them to receive the gospel. As you pray for these opportunities, start looking for them with eyes of faith.

Pray that God will give you numerous opportunities to witness to those that you encounter or to those who are on your "Impact List".

Obstacles-Each believer has reasons why he or she does not witness. There are hindrances that make witnessing difficult for each believer. For some believers, the obstacle to their witnessing is fear. They are afraid of rejection and ridicule from the persons to whom they witness. For others, the obstacle is a lack of knowledge. They do not feel that they know enough to share the gospel with others. These are only some of the obstacles that hinder believers from witnessing. You may have these or others that hinder you from sharing your faith in Jesus Christ. In order to pray about these obstacles, make a list of the hindrances or reason that keep you from sharing the gospel. If you are praying for others, you can make a list of the obstacles that are hindering them. Once you identify these obstacles, begin praying that God would help you overcome these obstacles. Plead with Him to give you ideas of how to share your faith with others in a fresh and creative way. Ask Him to remove any hindrances to your personal witnessing.

Pray that God will enable you to deal with every obstacle that is hindering you from sharing the gospel with others.

Requirements-When I use the term "requirements", I am referring to certain qualities. There are some qualities that you need in your life in order to be a powerful and effective witness. One quality that is essential is wisdom. The Bible says in **Colossians 4:5**, "Walk in wisdom toward those who are without, redeeming the time." Paul teaches that believers need to "walk in wisdom toward those who are without." The phrase "those who are without" is referring to lost people. Believers are to be wise in their relationship with lost people. This refers not only to how we live around them, but also how we approach them with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we attempt to reach people with the gospel, we need wisdom to know how to do this.

Another quality that is needed is understanding. The witness does need to understand the gospel and how to answer the questions of lost people. This does not mean that you have to be an expert in theology in order to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, the believers should be growing in their understanding of the Bible and how to answer questions about the faith. Peter declares that this is necessary for every believer by writing, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear (1 Peter 3:15). We should be diligent to pray and study the Word in order to clearly present the Word of God. Pray for a greater understanding of the gospel so that you can clearly present the truth to others. A final quality that is required for being a powerful witness is a godly life. We need to share the gospel. But, we must live out the gospel on a daily basis. Our lifestyles must reveal the transforming power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has taught that our lives need to reveal a difference, "You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it give light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:13-16)." Your lifestyle can attract people to you and cause them to know why you are different from others. Pray that your lifestyle will reveal the transforming power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pray that God will produce in you the wisdom, understanding, and godly lifestyle so that you can become a powerful and effective witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spirit-The Holy Spirit is absolutely essential to leading people to the Lord Jesus Christ. Only the Holy Spirit can convict the lost person (John 16:7). Only the Holy Spirit can draw a lost person to Jesus Christ and enable him or her to trust Jesus Christ (John 6:44; Ephesians 2:8-9). The Holy Spirit has to do a work of grace in the lost person so that he or she can repent of sin and believe in Christ. This is

His work and He alone can do it. No amount of persuasion can ever substitute for the Holy Spirit's work. Pray that the Holy Spirit to bring the person under conviction and to draw him or her to Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit also empowers you to witness (Acts 4:31; Ephesians 5:18). Ask the Holy Spirit to control you so that you can powerfully witness to others.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will powerfully work in those to whom you will witness and that He will empower you to faithfully share the gospel.

WEB PAGE UP AND GOING!

www.prayerclosetministries.org

The Prayer Closet now has a web page site that allows you the opportunity to view all of the ministries that we are offering. The links offered are

"The Walking Wounded Ministry"
 "The Beloved Unbeliever Network"
 "The Prayer Closet Newsletter"
 "Prayer Products"
 "The Ministry"
 "Our Statement of Faith"
 "Intercessors"
 "The Barnabas Group"
 "Dr. Kevin Meador"

You will have the options to request information or products from the each link given. You will also be able to know more about the ministry and Dr. Meador. We would like to request that you check us out and then let us hear from you.

The ministry "The Walking Wounded" is a new ministry that you will soon be hearing more about. The brochure is soon to be at the printer and then to you. This is another area of ministry that Dr. Meador is very much burdened over and feels the need to share with you.

The Beloved Unbeliever Network is a network of intercessors who pray for believers who have spouses that are not Christians. This network of intercessors pray daily for believers who are in this situation. These intercessors have been trained and are committed to praying for believers who find themselves in this type of marriage. If you would like to be added to this prayer list or if you know of someone who is in this situation and would like to place them on this prayer list, please contact Dr. Kevin Meador. Please provide the following information:

Name of the family members
Church affiliation
Any special requests

Any information that is submitted will be kept in strict confidence and the privacy of the individuals will be protected. Name codes will be given to each name submitted. The person sending in the name and myself will be the only ones who know the real name of the person being submitted.



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