



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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ISSUE 1

PRAYING FOR BIBLICAL CHANGE

God has saved you in order to change you. He desires to transform you. Coming to Christ starts a lifelong process of God working in your life. He wants to deal with the sinful corruption in your life. At the same time, He labors to produce godly character in your life. He loves you too much to leave you as you are. His will for your life is to change you – to grow you into a mature, equipped believer in Jesus Christ.

Biblical change takes place in your life through God's grace and power. It is His work in your life. You are not sufficient in and of yourself to bring about change in your life. You did not save yourself by your own power and strength. You cannot change by your own resolve and willpower. Your resolve and willpower are no match for the corruption in your life, the temptations of Satan, and the allure of the world. You must have God's grace and power if you are to change and grow in Christ.

At the same time, you must seek biblical change in your life. The Bible reveals that only God can change you; yet, you must cry out to Him and depend on Him for this change. You must pursue this change with all of your being. Biblical change occurs when you maintain the balance between depending on God's grace and power and seeking change with all of your being.

The Word of God defines this balance in **Philippians 2:12-13**, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." In **Philippians 2:12**, Paul calls on believers to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. He pleads with believers to move beyond conversion to spiritual growth. This text requires that believers labor for true change in their lives. This verse challenges every believer to strive for growth in Christ.

Yet, **Philippians 2:13** demands that we depend on God for this change. Paul declares that God works in us to will and to do His good pleasure. By His Spirit, God gives us both the desire and power to grow and change. This is the work of God. In and of ourselves, we cannot produce this. God and God alone grants this to each believer. Yet, the Word says that He will do this for His people. Therefore, we have the responsibility to pursue God for biblical change and growth in our lives.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on how to seek God for biblical change in your life. It will offer suggestions to help you deal with sin and grow in godly character. At the same time, it will provide pointers on how to pray for biblical change in your life and the

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Why Do I Need To Pursue Biblical Change In My Life?

Before we deal with how to change, we have to examine why we must change. We must always build our lives on a biblical foundation. At the same time, you may think that it is impossible for you to change. You may believe that you will never be any different than you are now. The following truths will show you that you can change. It is possible for you to grow and move beyond where you now stand.

The following reasons show why you need to seek God for biblical change in your life:

- (1) *The purpose of the Father.* The Word of God says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (**Romans 8:29**). The Father's eternal purpose is to change you. From all eternity, your heavenly Father has determined to deal with your sin and seek to transform you. God has predestined you to be conformed to the image of Jesus. Your Father has purposed to do this from all eternity. This is the heart's desire and plan for you.
- (2) *The sacrifice of the Son.* The Lord Jesus Christ died to change you. His death purchased a new life of change and growth for you. The Bible says, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (**Titus 2:14**). The Word states that Christ gave Himself for us for two reasons. First, He died to redeem us from all iniquity. He gave His life to deal with our sin. Second, He gave Himself for us to purify to Himself a peculiar people that diligently pursue good works. The Cross of Christ stands as a powerful reason and motivation for seeking true change in our lives. Christ died to make you different.

- (3) *The work of the Holy Spirit.* The Holy Spirit has entered our lives to bring about the Father's purpose for us. He applies what Christ has done on the Cross to the believer personally. He is the One who does the work of transforming our lives. The Holy Spirit leads you to deal with the sinful corruption in your life, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if we live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (**Romans 8:13-14**). At the same time, He leads you in the path of godly character, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

- (4) *The nature of salvation.* When the Word speaks of salvation, it refers to a new life. The Bible says this about salvation, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). Paul calls on believers to "walk in newness of life" (**Romans 6:4**). The nature of salvation demands genuine change in our lives. It calls for the transformation of the entirety of our lives.

- (5) *The directions of the Scripture.* The Word of God is filled with commands. It is replete with examples of how to live. It prescribes for us what pleases God and how He desires that we think, speak, and act. These truths emphasize the necessity of change in our lives. Conforming our lives to the truth of God's Word has to be our great goal and pursuit. This is why the Bible says, "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently" (**Psalms 119:4**).

Hindrances To Biblical Change

Biblical change can take place in your life. The biblical basis for this ought to encourage you and motivate you to seek God for this change.

Yet, you will face some common hindrances to change. It is crucial that you deal with anything that might hinder you from experiencing God's work of transforming your life. The following are some hindrances that you might encounter.

- ✓ **A lack of faith** - The foundation for experiencing His transformation in your life is faith. You must trust God to shape and mold your life. You must believe that this is His desire and will. You personally must claim His transforming power for your life. It's not enough to believe that God changes lives. You must believe that He can and will change you. You are saved by faith; you will experience change in your walk by faith also, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (**Galatians 2:20**).
- ✓ **Compromise with personal sin** - If a believer harbors or cherishes personal sin, it will hinder him from experiencing change. Part of biblical change is a willingness to give up sinful habits - even those that are hidden to men's eyes and deeply rooted in our hearts. Godly character takes root in the heart of a believer who confesses and repents of personal sin. A failure to do this displeases God, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (**Psalms 66:18**). It will also affect the work of transformation in the life of a believer.
- ✓ **A lack of faithfulness in the spiritual disciplines** - Biblical change takes place over time. It doesn't happen by chance or coincidence. It is a matter of faithfully pursuing the spiritual disciplines of the faith. There are no shortcuts to true and lasting change. The believer must faithfully seek God and practice the disciplines of the faith. The Bible teaches that we must pursue true change with all of our strength, "Follow peace with all men, and *follow* holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (**Hebrews 12:14**, emphasis mine).
- ✓ **Failure to understand God's purpose for salvation** - God saves sinners in order to

glorify Himself. He wants to make them trophies of His grace. He longs to change believers that they might reflect His great grace and power. God desires to manifest His grace and power through the change and growth in our lives. God's blessing, heaven, and eternal joy result from salvation. However, the purpose of our salvation is to draw us into a relationship with God where He changes us and we delight in Him and His work in our lives. This has always been and will always be His motive in saving sinful people, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved (**Ephesians 1:5-6**, emphasis mine). He saves us for Himself and for the praise of His glorious grace.

Praying For Biblical Change

The following are Scripture prayers that you can use to seek God for biblical change in your life. You can also adapt them to use in your personal intercession for others. These prayers have their foundation in the Scripture - the revealed will of God. Because of this, you can plead them with faith and expectation both for yourself and for others.

Father, create within me a clean heart. O God of my salvation, renew a right spirit within me (**Psalms 51:10**).

Gracious Father, unleash Your transforming power into my life. Change me by Your grace. Enable me to work out my salvation with fear and trembling (**Philippians 2:12-13**).

O God, create within me a greater hunger for Your Word and for You. Father, I plead that my hunger for Your Word and You will root out and replace my lust for sin and the world (**Psalms 42:1-2**).

Father, I ask in Jesus' name that I will walk in dependence on the Holy Spirit. Deliver me

from fulfilling the lusts of my flesh (**Galatians 5:16**).

Father fill me with the power of Your Holy Spirit. Cause His power to overflow in my life. Empower me to walk in understanding and obedience to Your holy Word (**Ephesians 5:18**).

Righteous Father, I confess my inability to change myself. I find myself doing the evil that I don't want to do while not doing the good that I want to practice. This crushes me and I plead for Your help, O God. Change me, O God. Transform me by Your power and grace (**Romans 7:18-19**).

Open my eyes to my sin, holy Father. Make me sensitive to the conviction of Your Holy Spirit. I plead that I will exercise diligence in confessing my sins (**1 John 1:9**).

O God, create a humble spirit in me; don't let my pride keep me from growing spiritually and experiencing Your transformation (**James 4:6**).

Father, grant me a deeper and greater spirit of repentance in my life. I pray that I will hate sin and will confront it in every area of my life (**Acts 5:31**).

Father, cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in my life. I ask that You will manifest this fruit more and more in my life (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

Father, I plead that I will pursue holiness with all of my being. Deliver me from compromise with evil in my private life (**Hebrews 12:14**).

Father, search me and show me what changes I need to make in my life. Open my eyes to what You want to do in my life (**Psalms 139:23-24**).

I ask that I will not let sin reign in my life. Through Jesus Christ, You have broken its power in my life. Grant me the grace and strength to live in the freedom that Christ has purchased for me (**Romans 6:12**).

O God, teach me how to handle temptation. I ask that I will find the way of escape when I'm tempted. Deliver me from the pride that leads me to think I can handle temptation on my own. Help me to run from sin and to run to You (**1 Corinthians 10:13**).

Father, deepen my understanding of Your Word. Grant me great insight for Your will for every area of my life. Teach me how to live and grant me the grace to obey Your will (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**).

I pray that I will walk in obedience to Your Word. I long for obedience to characterize my life that I might lead a blameless life (**Psalms 119:1**).

I plead that Your Word will govern every area of my life – what I think, how I feel, and how I act. O God, conform my life to the truth of Your Word (**Psalms 119:5**).

Your Word says that I am dead to sin. Empower me to say "No!" to sin and "Yes" to what is right in Your sight (**Romans 6:11**).

Father, I pray for Your grace and power to root out the sinful habits in my life. I ask that I will tear down every stronghold, demolish every work of the enemy in my life, and take captive every thought for Jesus' sake (**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**).

Father, I'm forgetting the things that are behind me. I releasing all the guilt, the shame, and the brokenness that sin has caused in my life. Now I'm pressing on to genuine transformation. I'm pursuing the change that You want to unleash in my life. I want to be a trophy of Your grace and love. Provide me with the grace and power to seek You and experience this transformation (**Philippians 3:14-15**).

Father, help me to take up my cross, deny myself, and follow Your will each day (**Mark 8:34**).

Father, lessen my love for the world and all that it offers. Weaken and destroy its hold on my life. Increase my love for You. I want to