



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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lives of others.

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

love You first, best, and most of all (**Matthew 22:36-38**).

Father, deliver me from the snares and attacks of the enemy, Satan. He wants to lead me back to the old path of sin and rebellion. I ask You to guide me in the path of righteousness for Your great name's sake (**2 Corinthians 2:11**).

Father, teach me how to pray. Show me how to communicate with You. Fill me with the grace and discipline to spend time alone with You each day (**Matthew 6:6; Luke 11:1**).

Father, teach me how to worship. Show me how to worship You in the way that will delight Your heart and minister to You. I want my whole life to be a worship service to Your glory and honor (**Psalms 147:1**).

Father, deliver me from all the traps and snares of the enemy. I don't want to yield myself to his bondage in my life. Set me free from anything that he wants to establish in my life (**Ephesians 4:27**).

Father, I pray that I will have deep and genuine fellowship with other believers. Surround me with believers who will pray for me and encourage me in my walk with You (**Hebrews 10:25**).

Father, supply me with the grace and power to repent and forsake everything that characterizes life outside of Jesus; renew my mind with Your Word (**Ephesians 4:22-23**).

Father, help me to seek those things which are above, where Christ reigns on Your right hand. Grant me the grace to set my affections on things above and not on things on the earth (**Colossians 3:1**).

Father, I ask that my love for You and for others will grow and abound more than ever in my walk before You (**1 Thessalonians 1:3**).

Seeking A Word-Shaped Life

Pursuing biblical change means striving to conform your life to the Word. One of the best means for this is praying the Word for your life. It is praying your life into conformity to the truth of His Word.

The following is a simple way to pray the Ten Commandments for your life. For many years, I have daily prayed for God to mold and shape my life according to His moral will as revealed in the Ten Commandments. Through the years, it has brought conviction, confession, repentance, brokenness, and thankfully, change.

I encourage you to plead with God to shape your life according to His Word. The following is a suggested way to pray the Ten Commandments daily for yourself and your own spiritual growth. You may want to use these or develop your own. The key is persistence. Faithfully seek God for change; plead these truths over your life day in and day out. Biblical change is not coincidental or magical. It requires fervent prayer and dogged pursuit.

Father, I ask that I will not place anything above You; I want You to be my greatest love and my highest priority (**Exodus 20:3**).

Father, I plead that I will not make You into my own image; I want to know You as You are (**Exodus 20:4-6**).

Father, deliver me from taking Your name in vain; enable me to glorify You in every aspect of my life (**Exodus 20:7**).

Father, I pray that I will make the most of Sunday; empower me to set that day apart for worship and ministry (**Exodus 20:8**).

Father, I ask that I will honor my father and mother; deliver me from doing anything to disgrace or wound them (**Exodus 20:12**).

Father, I pray that I will not murder others; empower me to preserve and enhance the lives of others (**Exodus 20:13**).

Father, I plead that I will walk in sexual purity; keep me from indulging into sexual sin through my mind, my words, or my actions (**Exodus 20:14**).

Father, I ask that I will not steal; enable me to respect and enhance the possessions and property of others (**Exodus 20:15**).

Father, I plead that all my words will be true and just; set me free from a lying, deceitful tongue (**Exodus 20:16**).

Father, save me from allowing any form of covetousness to take root in my life; help me to rejoice in what You give me and what You give others (**Exodus 20:17**).

Father, teach me to love You with all my being; teach me to love my neighbor as myself (**Matthew 22:36-39**).

Practical Suggestions For Pursuing Biblical Change

In this section, I'd like to give you some suggestions on how to pursue biblical change in your life. You might consider these or develop your own from them. The key issue is to have a "game plan" – definite steps that you will take to help you grow spiritually.

- *Plead with God for the grace to change.* We are saved by grace through faith. We are transformed by grace through faith. This principle continues to operate from the moment of our salvation until we enter into heaven. Just as you were saved by grace, you are sanctified by His grace. Plead for His grace; depend on His almighty power!
- *Faithfully practice the spiritual disciplines of the faith.* The spiritual disciplines are means of grace. In other words, they are the channels through which God sends His power into our lives to transform us. As we faithfully practice these disciplines, we experience His grace and His transformation. Some of the basic disciplines are Bible reading and study, prayer, silence, meditation, fellowship, worship, giving, and witnessing. The primary spiritual disciplines are Bible reading and prayer. Give yourself to seeking God through these things. Faithfully practice these things, asking God to transform you.
- *Have an accountability partner.* Have someone in your life that will hold you accountable. This is crucial to true growth and change. You need someone who will encourage you and help you stay focused in your walk with God. You need someone who will ask you the tough questions about your relationship with God. Seek out another believer that will pray for you, hold you accountable, and speak the truth to you.
- *Keep a spiritual journal.* A spiritual journal is the record of your unique walk with God. A journal can aid you in growing spiritually because it helps you keep up with **your walk** with God. You can record what God speaks to you. You can write down and focus on your sins and specific areas that God wants you to work on. You can see how your life has changed over time.
- *Be faithful to corporate and personal worship.* I can't stress enough the importance of worship in growing and changing spiritually. Encountering God whether corporately or privately will change your life. You can experience change and growth through personal and corporate worship.
- *Read the biographies of other Christians.* God has used the example of other believers to help me in my walk. Their struggles and victories can encourage you and convict you.
- *Deal harshly with your personal sin.* Personal sin can provide a major obstacle to your spiritual growth and transformation. Be quick to confess your sins. Take radical steps to deal with any compromised places in your life. Don't be complacent with your personal sin.
- *Do periodic exams of your life.* An unexamined Christian life results spiritual immaturity. One way to aid your spiritual growth is to examine where you are in your faith. Ask the Spirit to help you examine

yourself. Some of the questions that you can use to do this exam are:

- What areas of my walk do I need to strengthen?
- What sins/strongholds do I need to attack?
- What do You want me to pursue right now in my walk with You?
- What are You not pleased with in my life?
- What goals do You want me to set right now?
- Have I met the goals that You have led me to set?

The preceding are some suggested questions that you might use to examine yourself. The key issue is to plead with the Spirit to help you do a spiritual check-up.

Dealing With Discouragement

Have you grown discouraged about your ~~own growth and transformation?~~ Do you struggle in your own walk with God? You're in full agreement with the need for and the possibility of biblical change in believer's lives – that is except for yours. Maybe you've given up hope that you can change. Maybe you've labored to grow and you just don't see anything happening in your life. Maybe you feel worthless and useless to God and His kingdom. What do you do when you get discouraged about your own growth and change?

I've walked through this valley many times. I've struggled with dry and difficult times in my relationship to God. I offer the following suggestions to encourage you and to help you when you go through these times.

- **Cling to God's promises.** God's promises will strengthen your faith when you feel hopeless. These promises are unchanging, certain, and you can depend on them. One verse that has helped me during these times is **1 Thessalonians 5:23**, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and

body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." God promises to sanctify me wholly – to change my whole life. I can cling to this when I doubt this or when it appears that this is not possible. It is especially helpful when I have failed.

- **Confess your struggle to God.** Your heavenly Father loves you. He desires to work in your life. When you go through times of discouragement and doubt concerning your growth, confess this to Him. Make known your discouragement and your frustration to your faithful Father. He will hear and He will help you.
- **Ask the Spirit of God to show you what is hindering your growth.** Plead with the Holy Spirit reveal to you anything that hinders your growth. Pray that He will show you anything that needs to be dealt with in this area.
- **Ask another believer to pray for you.** Confess your need of prayer to a brother or sister in Christ. Ask this believer to pray specifically about your growth and transformation. This will help you shoulder the burden and unleash God's power in your life.
- **Memorize Scripture.** Memorizing Scripture is helpful to your spiritual growth. It is especially helpful when you are struggling. It can give you strength in times of temptation and weakness. The psalmists makes this clear in **Psalms 119:11**, "Thy word I have hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
- **Don't give up.** Keep on seeking God. Stay faithful to the spiritual disciplines. Don't let the discouragement and frustration hinder you from these things. Biblical change is a process; it takes time. It will happen over the long haul of a faithful walk with God.

Global Point Men

The Prayer Closet Ministries is launching a new ministry called *Global Point Men*. Global Point Men is a call for men to fulfill their God-ordained destiny. God is the global God. It is His heart and mission to send the good news of His Son into every nation and among every people group of the world. God has ordained that ordinary men take the lead in carrying out this mission. He calls on ordinary men to accept the mission of penetrating and conquering the world with the gospel. He desires that men lead their families and churches in carrying out this mission. The time has come for men to step up and live out the exciting and supernatural destiny God has planned for them. Global Point Men seeks to help men fulfill this destiny for their lives.

Global Point Men is designed to assist men in this destiny and challenge. This ministry strives to develop small groups of men who pray together for the world and for their world. For more information about becoming a Global Point Man or starting a Global Point Man group in your church, visit our web site at www.kingdompraying.com. You can also write us at P.O. Box 278, Hickory, MS 39332 or call us at 601-646-2295.



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