

How to Increase Our Effectiveness in Prayer

I. GOD DESIRES PARTNERSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE: REVELATION OF INTERCESSION

- A. God governs the universe in intimate partnership with His people.

21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My Throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His Throne. (Rev. 3:21)

- B. God has sovereignly determined the primary events in His eternal plan. He will surely accomplish what He has determined regardless of what people or demons do. However, He has chosen to give us a dynamic role in determining some of the measure of the “quality of life” that we experience in the natural and Spirit (in time and eternity). We determine this based on our response to the grace of God in our partnership with Him (particularity in prayer and meekness).

- C. God opens doors of blessing and closes doors of oppression in response to our prayers. There are blessings that God has chosen to give, but only if His people rise up in the intimate partnership of prayer to ask for them. Do not stumble over the time delay factor with incremental increases.

2 You do not have because you do not ask. (Jas 4:2)

21 This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting. (Mt. 17:21)

18 The LORD longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on High to have compassion on you....19 He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you. (Isa 30:18-19; NAS)

30 I sought for a man among them who would...stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. (Ezek. 22:30)

1 Gather yourselves together...2 before the decree is issued...before the LORD's fierce anger comes upon you...3 Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth...it may be that you will be hidden (protected from judgment) in the day of the LORD's anger. (Zeph. 2:1-3)

13 Return to the LORD...for He is gracious...and He relents from doing harm. 14 Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him...? (Joel 2:12-14)

- D. Some “trust” the sovereignty of God in a non-biblical way by “trusting” God to do the role that He has assigned to us. This is not truly trusting God, but rather it is presumption before Him. ***We cannot do God’s part and He will not do our part.***

- E. Three steps in our partnership with God. First, ***God initiates*** what He wants by declaring it in His Word and stirring our hearts. Second, ***we respond*** in obedience and prayer to God’s initiative. Third, ***God answers*** our responses by releasing more blessing that He would have withheld until He heard our cry. Our prayers matter greatly, even when we do not feel their power.

II. WALKING IN THE FULL MEASURE OF WHAT GOD HAS FOR US

24 Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. (Mk. 4:24)

8 I gave you...the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! 9 Why have you despised the...the LORD to do evil? (2 Sam. 12:8-9)

- A. If we do more (prayer with fasting) then God gives us more. When is it enough? We cannot easily measure if we are getting all that God has for us. Many would rather not believe that what they do or do not do makes any real difference because it makes them feel uncomfortable. The usual tension remains unresolved.
- B. The fact that God delights in us is not the same as walking in the fullness of what God has for us.

III. WHY DID GOD CHOOSE TO USE PRAYER?

- A. Prayer and intercession causes us to internalize God's Word as we speak God's ideas back to Him many times (throughout our life in time and eternity). Each time we say back to God what He has declared to us, it marks our spirit and thus, illuminates our mind and tenderizes our heart.
- B. Why? God's words are spirit and life. In other words, they are the means that imparts God's life.
63 The Spirit gives life...the words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. (Jn. 6:63)
- C. As the Spirit hovered over the earth awaiting Jesus' spoken word before acting, so also, the Spirit acts in us much more when we speak Jesus' words back to the Father.
2 The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (Gen. 1:2)
- D. One way that we are filled with the Spirit's Presence is by singing God's word back to Him.
18 Be filled with the Spirit 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord... (Eph. 5:18-19)
16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ...admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Col. 3:16)
- E. God's mind progressively dominates, saturates and renews our mind and heart as we simply declare it back to God in prayer as we pursue 100-fold obedience. As a computer program is changed by rewriting many lines of code, so also, our inner man is changed by many prayers that also function to rewrite the "lines of code" in our minds and hearts.
- F. Intercession is a brilliant strategy to rule the universe because it draws us into intimacy with God's heart and unifies us with God's people as it humbles and transforms us. The result of the Father ruling the universe through intercession is that His people are established in intimacy, community and humility while engaged in governmental partnership with Jesus.

IV. THE WORD ABIDING IN US

- A. Jesus promised that if God's words (thoughts) abide in us then we would have power in prayer. The Word abides in us as we meditate on the Scripture and pursue obedience.
7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit... (Jn. 15:7-8)
- B. Our effectiveness in prayer is dynamically connected to our depth in the Word. The Word abides in us only as it takes root deeply in our mind and heart. It is not enough to only learn the right concepts to pray. The Word must take hold of our hearts if we are to be strong in prayer. The fuel for the spirit of prayer is the Word of God abiding (living/saturating) in our inner man. We feed on the Word to keep our prayers from being superficial (shallow and hollow). We do not want to just "say our prayers" but we want to be filled with God's heart and a spirit of prayer.
- C. The saints will decree God's decrees with power as we fill our hearts with His word and live a life of abandonment to God.
21 Lay up His words in your heart. 23 If you return to the Almighty...24 then you will lay your gold in the dust...25 Yes, the Almighty will be your gold...26 for then you will have your delight in the Almighty...27 You will make your prayer to Him, He will hear you...28 You will declare a thing, and it will be established for you... (Job 22:21-28)
- D. The Word effectively works in us to build us up and deliver us.
13 You received the Word of God...it effectively works in you who believe. (1 Thes. 2:13)
12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit.... (Heb. 4:12)
32 I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance... (Acts 20:32)
21 Lay aside all filthiness...and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save (deliver) your souls. (Jas 1:21)
- E. The Holy Spirit is raising up people who saturate themselves with the Word.
24 A certain Jew named Apollos...an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord... (Acts 18:20-26)
3 We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. (Acts 6:3-4)
- F. Fellowship is the result of people sharing the overflow of the Word with each other (1 Jn. 1:1-7).

V. VISION AND ACTION PLAN TO BE MIGHTY IN THE WORD AND PRAYER

- A. ***What to do in the prayer room*** when not engaged with what is happening on the platform. Lacking a simple action plan keeps many unfocused. Let me suggest a simple yet effective spiritual development action plan. First, determine that you can have a dynamic life in God.
- B. ***Personal Bible study plan:*** read 10 chapters of the NT per day (6 days a week in order to read through the NT once a month), take FSM classes, go to Encounter God Services, join an E-12 group. Study the notes from all these in the Prayer Room. Read biographies of people who lived in the Spirit, study the individual books of the Bible (use FSM courses and study commentaries), read godly books. a clear and simple plan to aggressively fill your heart with the Word until it becomes alive in you. If the Word is boring, then press through this by staying in it.
- C. ***Pray much in the spirit:*** seek to pray in the spirit for 1 hour a day focusing on the Throne (journal during this). Paul said that in this we edify our spirit and receive mysteries or revelation from God (1 Cor. 14:2, 4). Paul prayed in the spirit more than all others (1 Cor. 14:18).
- D. ***Schedule regular fasting:*** determine to fast at least once a week minimally (it is better to fast two days a week) then occasionally go on longer fasts.
- E. ***Develop a personal prayer list:*** this helps us to focus. Pray the apostolic prayers for your heart.
- F. ***Develop a prayer list for others:*** including praying for specific areas of justice in all areas of life. Include on this list, specific people you regularly pray for (friends, ministries, unsaved, sick, etc.)

VI. PRAYER FOR A BREAKTHROUGH OF POWER ON OUR PERSONAL LIFE (ACTS 1:8)

- A. ***Breakthrough for our heart*** – intimacy (anointing to love) (Eph. 3:16-19), fear of God (Ps. 86:11), learn meekness (Mt. 11:29), purity in our eyes (Job 31:1; Ps. 101:3) and speech (Ps. 141:3). Seek to hear clearly and obey promptly.
- B. ***Breakthrough for our mind*** – understanding of God’s personality and purposes with a spirit of revelation. Revelation of God’s emotions (Ps. 27:4). Revelation of God’s will for our lives (Col. 1:9). Revelation of God’s End-Time purposes (Dan. 11:35; 12:10).
- C. ***Breakthrough for our ministry*** – anointed hands and words. To contend for the breakthrough of God’s purpose (promises in our destiny). Power on our hands (healing and miracles). Authority on our words with conviction on our words (prayer, singing, preaching, conversations). Prophetic insight to perceive the secrets of the heart (God’s and others in need) (1 Cor. 14:25).
- D. ***Use your evenings to strengthen your spirit*** (instead of diminishing it then seeking to recover it during the day). The evenings are the time when most spiritual losses take place and spiritual ground is given up. IHOP is a great place for people to study and pray in the Spirit.