

The First Lesson to Learn

by A.W. Tozer

The first lesson a minister must learn is to pray successfully, which requires a willingness to wrestle with God and conquer their own flesh.

Scripture: Matthew 26:41, Philippians 4:6, James 5:16

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Overcoming Flesh"

Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes that the first lesson a preacher must learn is the importance of prayer, which is often the most challenging task due to human weakness. He notes that while many aspects of ministry can be learned easily, true prayer requires deep personal struggle and cannot be imitated or learned from others. Tozer highlights the necessity of conquering one's own flesh to engage in effective prayer, as it is the primary hindrance to spiritual communication. He encourages a heartfelt commitment to prayer, seeking transformation through the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. --Matthew 26:41

To pray successfully is the first lesson the preacher must learn if he is to preach fruitfully; yet prayer is the hardest thing he will ever be called upon to do and, being human, it is the one act he will be tempted to do less frequently than any other. He must set his heart to conquer by prayer, and that will mean that he must first conquer his own flesh, for it is the flesh that hinders prayer always.

Almost anything associated with the ministry may be learned with an average amount of intelligent application. It is not hard to preach or manage church affairs or pay a social call; weddings and funerals may be conducted smoothly with a little help from Emily Post and the Minister's Manual. Sermon making can be learned as easily as shoemaking--introduction, conclusion and all. And so with the whole work of the ministry as it is carried on in the average church today.

But prayer--that is another matter. There Mrs. Post is helpless and the Minister's Manual can offer no assistance. There the lonely man of God must wrestle it out alone, sometimes in fasting and tears and weariness untold. There every man must be an original, for true prayer cannot be imitated nor can it be learned from someone else. *God Tells the Man Who Cares*, 69.

"Lord, I pray that this month might really be a time that would change my life. I don't want to just learn more about the importance of prayer. I pray that Your Spirit might change me, that I might become more and more genuinely a man of prayer. Amen."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/the-first-lesson-to-learn/>

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