

Why Pray

by John Musser

Prayer is essential for spiritual growth and renewal, and it is a means of communing with God and seeking His guidance.

Duration: 36:52

Scripture: Psalm 81:10, Isaiah 66:8, Matthew 17:20, Mark 9:23, Mark 11:23, Philippians 4:4, Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of spending time with God through prayer and Bible study. He warns that neglecting this time will lead to frustration, discouragement, and insensitivity to spiritual realities. The preacher also highlights the connection between prayer and revival, stating that when God's people engage in extraordinary prayer, revival occurs and souls are saved. He urges the congregation to return to the basics of faith, repent of prayerlessness, and prioritize their relationship with God. The sermon references various biblical passages, including Matthew 26:40, Colossians 3:1, Isaiah 66:8, and Hebrews 4:16, to support the message.

Transcript

It's good to be here with you, and I slept almost all day Saturday. I'll tell you, I was just so tired. We had two crusades back-to-back, and we just got back from Canada, and then I came home for a few days, and I was just literally tired out.

But I thank the Lord. I know many of you are praying for us because I've experienced God's strength and His power, and I feel ready to go. And so we're just praising God for what He does.

It's true, those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. I praise God for that promise. Father, we thank you for your people this morning.

We love them with all of our hearts. We thank you for them, Lord. We know that many of them are at different stages in their life, some of them, Lord, going through some troublesome times, discouragement, mental oppression, financial tensions, physical adversity, many other things, Lord God.

Maybe some have been ensnared by the devil, and some self has become Lord instead of Christ. Some of them, Lord God, on their satanic assailment, Lord, and we pray that in these days that you'll bring a refreshing to our hearts, O Lord Jesus, and that you'd quicken us. Lord God, we know that revival is

intensely personal, and Father, we should pray, Lord, revive me.

And Lord, before we can pray, Lord, revive us, we've got to pray, Lord, revive me. And Father, so we just pray that we would not look at one another, but Lord, that we would pray for your personal movement in our own hearts. Now, Father, open our eyes and our ears as we study the subject of prayer this morning.

In Jesus' precious name, Amen. You may be seated. I have found through much experience that most of our spiritual conflicts come by neglecting the basics, and that is neglecting the Word of God, because the Word of God teaches us that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word, and prayer, and seeking God, that daily meeting with God.

And we read in Philippians chapter 4, 4 through 9, I believe that this is Paul's formula for the peace of God that passes all understanding, and for victory. And he's not only relating his personal experience, but under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, he's commanding us to obey these same principles. And it says in verse 4, Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.

Let your moderation or your reasonable sweetness be known to all men, the Lord is at hand. Now here it is, Be careful, or anxious, or worried, for not one thing, but the strong contrast, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God. Our requests are to be made under the omniscient, all-knowing God.

He knows all things, but he says everything by prayer. Now the simplest definition for prayer is simply coming to God and asking. James says you receive not because you ask not.

He says this is one of the reasons why you're not entering into the promises of God, because you're simply not asking. Jesus said, Ask it shall be given you, seeking you shall find, knocking it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth, and him that seeketh findeth, and him that knocketh it shall be opened.

And so Christ encouraging his disciples to pray, and supplication. Now that's a stronger word. You've seen it again and again.

You've seen this combination, prayer and supplication, throughout the New Testament and in the Old Testament. Prayer is simply asking, but supplication is a stronger word. It means to earnestly beseech God.

You remember when Isaiah cried out, Oh that thou wouldest win the heavens. Beloved in Christ, if there's times when you're praying for your prodigal daughter, or your prodigal son, or that unsaved mother, that unsaved aunt or uncle, that frustration in your heart, and you come under the burden, and you say, Oh God, I need to see you meet this need. That's earnestly beseeching God.

It's when the Spirit of God has borne a heavy burden upon your soul, and you've got to lift that weight up to God. There's no human element that's going to help you to escape that pressure. Only Christ can release you, because you see, all of us are like human pressure cookers, and we build up this tension and pressure, and we unbend those anxieties and pressures to God Almighty.

And there is a throne of grace flowing, that we can come, a mercy seat, that we can come always, and bring in our tribulations. And he says there, he's, they're always in our time of need. With thanksgiving, now, it's to be balanced out with thanksgiving, you also see this.

With prayer, and earnestly beseeching God, and balancing it out with thanksgiving, he said, let your request be known unto God. Now in verse 7, there's a beautiful picture. And the peace of God, now this is not peace with God, peace with God comes when you come to Jesus Christ for eternal life.

And then you have peace with God. This is the peace of God. It's the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, 22 and 23.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. The peace of God, we see the same thing in Colossians, let the peace of God rule in your heart. Be the umpire of every decider, every decision that you make.

The peace of God which passes, or transcends all human understanding. It is a tranquility of mind. It's the greatest tranquilizer, I know.

You know, I love that song that we sing, oh what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. My friends, I know that just as well as you.

There are all times of anxiety, every one of us experience that. But if we would just get on our knees and get alone with God, and take all those pressures and frustrations to Jesus Christ. I've never had a time in all my Christian experience when it hasn't met my needs, when I came to him.

And said, oh Lord God, I can't handle it anymore. I need your help. And he says, this tranquility of mind shall keep your hearts and your minds through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul says that I can do all things through Jesus Christ. It's synonymous. You compare that with Philippians chapter 4 and verse 13, through Jesus Christ, through his enabling power that we receive in prayer, and searching the Word of God, and a proper relationship with Jesus Christ.

And so God says, I'll put a garrison of tranquility around your heart and your minds. Like a force builder, like peace. It's like the inner man being clothed with might.

Remember so many times Paul says, be clothed with might in the inner man. And he says in Ephesians chapter 6, to put on the whole armor of God. I believe that this much has much to do with it.

God is clothing us with supernatural power. And he says that this peace will compass, or it will envelop your innermost being. It will guard your innermost being like a garrison around a city.

Now, isn't it interesting that Paul the Apostle exhorting these Philippians to come to God and to bring everything to the Lord in prayer. He'd experienced God's peace that passes all understanding. Because, my friends, Paul was not writing from the Holiday Inn.

He wasn't writing from luxurious inn somewhere, where he had all the food and clothing, but in cold and nakedness and probably lashes upon his back. He was writing to these Philippians, and he says, rejoice in the Lord. Don't be worried and frustrated, but bring all these things to Christ, to God.

And as we go on in the week, we're going to see why. Because all of these things are unbelief. And when we begin to allow pressures and tensions and anxieties to cause our eyes to slip from Jesus Christ, looking under Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we fall into unbelief.

And then there's confusion and discouragement and heartache. Why should we pray? Because of the extreme importance of prayer in the Word of God. Anyone who read the Bible on a regular basis will find

that prayer is one of the keynotes of the entire Word of God.

And the Spirit of the Lord lays heavy emphasis on prayer. And we see exciting stories in the Bible of prayer from Genesis to Revelation. Get your Strong's Concordance out one of these days.

You know what they say, you take the Strong's Concordance for the strong, the crude for the crude, and the young for the young. It doesn't matter what kind of concordance you have, take one of those concordances and look up prayer. And you'll find that it is indeed the keynote of the Word of God.

In fact, one man has calculated, and I don't know the pains that he took to calculate, 30,000 promises in the Word of God. And he said all those promises are received through prayer. We are saved by calling upon the Lord, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

And we are kept by the power of God as we continue to ask because it's the law of the kingdom. Ask Him. God commands us to ask.

He says call unto me and I'll answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not. He says open your mouth wide and I'll fill it. And Moses is exciting the stories that we have of this giant of prayer.

And one day Israel had sinned so grievously against God that God was going to cut off the apple of his eye. And the fear of the Lord broke loose on the children of Israel. And Moses fell down in the space and traveled in prayer until the wrath of God was turned away from the children of Israel.

David, you read through the Psalms and you find many of you read through the Psalms every day. And you'll find that prayer is one of the key words in the five books of the Psalms. Again and again David said evening, morning, and at noon will I make my prayer unto thee.

Again and again we see David faced with dilemmas. He's outnumbered maybe 100 to 1. He's going against the enemies of the Lord. What is he going to do? He prays and he seeks God and God supernaturally intervenes.

Isn't it a wonderful testimony to David that he never died by the ill that flyeth by thee? And by the chariot. But he died in a ripe old age. And we see him agonizing in prayer in the Psalms.

We see him sometimes consumed in pressure and discouragement and depression. And he just is literally like Paul he says just pressed out of measure. But then you see him at the end of that Psalm experiencing God's victory and joy and that peace and power.

Because he had poured out his complaint to God and his supplication to the Lord God of Israel. And all how we see David crying out to God a man of prayer and then Daniel. You see my friends prayer was so important to Daniel that he was willing to give his life for it.

And Samuel he shows us that prayerlessness is sinning against the Lord. And did you know that every time in the Old Testament that you have prayerlessness it is always without exception linked with idolatry. Something is taking the place of Jesus Christ in our lives.

And one woman just recently in Pennsylvania said God so convicted me about my daily prayer time. I'm going to exchange that one hour of that soap opera that I'm addicted to every day. And I'm going to give that to Christ.

Amen. Isn't that wonderful. She says God has convicted me and I'm going to exchange it for one hour alone with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then we see in Nehemiah the importance of prayer and work. But so many times we get it reversed. We work and then we get discouraged and we fall on our face and then we pray and ask God to put the whole mess together.

Spirituality today is buried in activity and that's the great need of the hour. I want to tell you something. Every crusade my friends is a fight to get alone with God to have prayer to get alone with God.

And I believe that this is the urgent desperate need of the hour. You're going to be men and women of God. We must take time to be holy to be offered our Lord in holy consecration in the word and prayer.

And without it you're going to fail. You're going to get discouraged especially in these end times when the devil is just so feverishly working against all of us. I don't know if you've sensed this in the last six years especially I've seen the rise of demonic activity in the church and I've seen people literally bombarded their minds.

There's no stability. There's a double mindedness. They're going after the world.

There's no depth and there's no power and the devil is literally afraid today because we've given place to him. My friends I'm going to be sharing later on this week the Lord willing of just how far he can go on a Christian's life and literally open your eyes to see how far he can go and get in the position in our lives. And we need to learn today to pray.

If Elijah is going to stop the heavens he must pray and if he's going to open them up again he must pray and we'll see if the bedroom is going to bring forth a child. Then Hannah is praying and you're looking in the New Testament times and you read about the life of Jesus Christ especially in the book of Luke. What a beautiful study there is on the life of Jesus in prayer.

We see him at his baptism that he's engaged in prayer and the spirit of God falls upon him and then we see all night he's alone with his father in before he chooses the disciples. You know something scripture teaches us that he chose all of those disciples all 12 of them and he knew that Judas was demon possessed. He spent the whole night alone with his father even though my friends he was the omniscient God the God man God in the flesh and yet he prayed and you know something my friends this helps me as an evangelist so many times.

I know why again and again the Bible says looking at Jesus looking under Jesus was the author he's the beginner and he's the finisher of our faith and I look under Jesus and I say why did he have to spend so much time alone with his heavenly father. Why did he spend I've read the biographies of hundreds of saints of the missionaries of the great men and women of God have been used one characteristic characterized their life and it was extraordinary prayer. But I look under Jesus and see him praying in the night hours praying watching on the prayer and yet he was the sinless lamb of God the undefiled lamb of God and my friends in Christ he is our example.

And you know something many of us say we don't have time to pray and we've missed out because we need to see it's paradoxical given it shall be given on to you. I found that the more that I pray the more that I want to pray and I find myself praying without ceasing wherever I am whether I'm on my feet or sitting down but if I don't have that daily meeting with God I won't be praying without ceasing but the less I pray

the less I want to pray because you see that old flesh just it's like lifting weights and you know if you lift those weights the first time it's hard to push that weight over your head and you struggle with it but you try day after day and prayer is a mental and spiritual exercise. And the nature of the flesh hates prayer there's one thing that will battle you have a battle with until the day you meet Christ and that's what the area of prayer but I found that the more that we do pray it's highly contagious amen.

It is highly contagious because it brings the serenity and peace of God that passes all understanding and this joy unspeakable and full of glory. And the power of God returns into your life and the spiritual discernment and the sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and the sensitivity to the word of God. You know something I find that I can't even really read the Bible unless I've had a good prayer time.

You know first of all it's kind of reciprocal you've got to get the word of God into your heart opening God open your eyes and then prayer and then so many times having a Bible study again and I'll tell you something. It'll be amazing to see how your spiritual eyes are opened and then Christ in a solitary place a great while before the dawn he got along with his heavenly father. You see because the throngs had come and the people wanted to be healed and they came in the cities and it came to the point where Christ had to go into a ship and preach the word of God.

And so he had to get up earlier and earlier to meet with his heavenly father. And then we see him at the garden of Gethsemane and sweats mingled with blood there pouring out his heart and soul travail in agony to the heavenly father in prayer. And in the book of Hebrews we see that with strong tears and crying that he was heard of his heavenly father.

And then the disciples came to Jesus one day and said Lord teach us to pray. Now you need to underscore that in your minds because you see the disciple did not ask Jesus how to pray to teach them. But they said Lord we want to know how to pray.

Or to pray, teach us to pray. They'd already had the formula. They wanted to see the results.

And so Jesus taught them to pray. The early church born in the prayer meeting you remember? That they continued in prayer with Peter and Mary and Martha and all the disciples gathered together in extraordinary prayer. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come God met with them.

Have you ever thought about the prayer list of Paul? I was reading last night as I was reading through the New Testament. I saw that Paul says I make mention of you always. He's praying for Titus.

He's praying for Timothy. He's praying for the Colossians. And he's praying for the Ephesians.

He says I bow my knees to the father. And he's praying for all of these people and praying for all the churches. And for the work of Jesus Christ to go on.

He had some prayer list. He was praying for the Romans. Have you ever read about the man who made this ministry to labor in prayer? Paul spoke of a man who labored fervently in prayer.

As we read church history we see that church history emphasizes the extreme importance of prayer. As I mentioned previously I love to read biographies. And I want to encourage every one of you.

I believe it's important to read biographies of great men and women of God. Let this be the monarch of all books. I'll tell you.

You know if you've read a good biography it always leads you back into the word of God in prayer. Anything that takes away and will drive you away from the word of God in prayer. I believe it's not a God anointed book.

What I mean by that I don't mean anything out of the ordinary. I mean that God's hand is upon that book and that literature. And I've read biographies like this.

But we need to know and learn how God has used people in times past. It does something to every one of us. It inspires us.

It encourages us to have faith that God will do the same thing through me and you. I don't believe today personally I would be serving the Lord in the capacity that I am if I did not read many of the biographies of the past. Because I had such an inferiority complex.

And then I read that God used D.L. Moody with a sixth grade education. I said if he could use him with a sixth grade education he can use someone like me. And I began to see that D.L. Moody, he made a covenant with God.

As the man said, it's yet to see what God will do through a man that is totally yielded to the Holy Spirit. And D.L. Moody said I'll be that man. Although he slaughtered the English, he never preached a homiletical sermon.

He was empowered by God. And D.L. Moody was a man of prayer. And he learned these things.

And you'll learn these things too. You see we're ignorant of history. I want to tell you something.

The communists aren't. And he calls us, they're not ignorant of history. And the communists are learned in the area of history.

And I believe that we need to learn about these men and women of God. I found today that we're consuming too much time with sensual novels and light novels that will never do anything for your spirituality. And all they do is waste your time.

Christ says, his word says, redeeming the time for the days are evil. And it is a wicked day and hour. And we've got to wake up to the commission of the church.

Moody, Finney, Brainerd, Hudson, Taylor. The sun never rose but when Hudson Taylor was on his knees in prayer. D.L. Moody said the first essential means of grace are the word of God in prayer.

Right back to the basis. And I like this. One man said this, labor at prayer, then watch God work.

And how true it is. John Wesley said that great man of God, God does nothing but by prayer and everything with it. R.A. Toy, he was a successor to D.L. Moody.

He said if you won't stay long with him, you won't be much like him. Because Christ was a man of prayer. Andrew Murray, he has so many books on prayer.

He said God's child can conquer everything by prayer. Mountains removed, obstacles. And it's true.

How true it is. Hudson Taylor said Satan, the hinder, may build a barrier about us. But he can never weave us in so that we cannot look up.

Have you ever had times like this? When the pressures were all around about you. You didn't know what you're going to do. And then you found yourself alone with God.

With the word of God open. Claiming some promises. Turning those promises into petitions.

And the anxieties begin to leave. And the pressures begin to vent out. And you begin to experience that tranquility of mind.

That peace of God. And you begin to experience the joy of getting alone with God. David Brainerd, the missionary to the Indians exclaimed, Oh, the pure delight of a single hour that before thy throne I spend.

When I kneel in prayer with thee, O God, I commune as friend with friend. God used this young man in a most unusual way. Died before the age of 30.

He's effective missionaries. More missionaries been called to the field to read in his journal than any other man. I'll tell you, a dynamic young man that was empowered by the Spirit of God.

But he lived a life of prayer. Says A.T. Pearson, the word of God represents all the possibilities of God at the disposal of prayer. In fact, my friends, I cannot find one scripture in all the word of God that does not come in answer to prayer.

Either the prayer of appropriation or the prayer of asking. Everything that you have. Appropriating your position in Christ.

Crucified with Christ. Alive under God. Resurrected with Him.

All of these things come through prayer. And just for a few moments, as we see our personal experience prove the extreme importance of prayer. You look at the times when you lived in the atmosphere of prayer.

Were they not times of peace and power? So many people say, John, I know that I'm not experiencing the joy and peace that I used to have when I met with God on a daily basis. Today my life is discouraged. I let little things get me down.

I'm so frustrated. I'm so full of anxiety. I remember the days when I used to take everything to Christ.

What can prayer do? What are the possibilities? We've already mentioned that God used Moses to spare a nation. In fact, we see that prayer and repentance will spare any land according to 2 Chronicles 7.14. If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face. That's an extraordinary prayer.

Seeking God's face and turn from their wicked ways. And by the way, you can't turn from your wicked ways, my friends. Unless, first of all, you humble yourselves and pray and then seek God.

And then and only then can the strong roots of sin be broken away. And then God says, I'll forgive your sin and heal your land. God says that that type of prayer will spare any nation or family or home or country or church.

The son stood still in answer to Joshua's petition. The barren received strength, illumination in the word of God. David says, Oh, God, open my eyes.

Let me build wondrous things that are by law. Mountains removed. Jesus said, say to this mountain, be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea.

And shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he say shall come to pass. He shall have, we'll sort of say, a soul saved. You know why we're not seeing souls saved? Because, my friends, we can use the Old Testament example.

It says, when Zion travails, she'll bring forth her children. And how true that is. We see it again and again.

When God's people meet him in revival and begin to pray, we begin to see that when revival becomes the experience of the church, that evangelism becomes the expression of the church of Jesus Christ. And souls are born into the kingdom. The promises of God received doors opened.

Paul said, pray that the door will be opened unto me. Pray for me. And all my friends, the list goes on and on and on.

But also we see, I want you to turn with me very quickly to Hebrews chapter 4. Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 16. I want you to see today, what am I trying to prove to you? What am I trying to say? I want to tell you this, that a daily meeting with God is absolutely mandatory for a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. You'll have no spirituality.

You'll have no power with God. You'll have no peace. And you're going to be full of frustration unless you learn to meet with God daily.

In fact, unless you're willing to discipline yourself to meet with God on a daily basis, you might as well turn in your badge as far as discipleship is concerned. You're going to be a defeated Christian. I know that and I can say that with all authority, my friends, because I know it's true in my own life.

I can't go a day without real prayer and Bible study. And if I attempt to do so, I have no control of my thought life. I'm frustrated.

I'm discouraged. Little things get to me, little boxes, and they spoil the vines, little anxieties. I need to be clothed with that armor every day.

And if I find myself tempted in an unusual way or discouraged or letting pressures get a hold of me, I always think in my mind, I don't have the armor on. And I don't when I come under the pressure. But I know when I keep in that quiet time and that daily meeting with God, I can, through Christ, overcome so many trials and tribulations.

And we see in Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 16, let us therefore, on the basis of what's just been said previously, because Christ sits on the right hand of the Father, interceding for us, he ever liveth to make intercession for us. He prayed all the days of his life and he's been in the prayer meeting for 2000 years in the heavenlies. Even now, Christ is engaged in prayer.

He's our high priest in the heavens. Let us therefore come boldly through the blood of Jesus Christ to this throne of grace that we may obtain mercy. All of us need mercy today and grace to help in the time of need, in the time of trouble.

And he says this throne of grace is readily available always. And coming to God to find help, mercy and grace. Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing.

You know something? God wants to be God in our life. That means if you can exist one day without God's help, that you're not where God wants you to be. We fall into some form of idolatry.

Because you see, my friends, Christianity, some people say it's a crutch. No, it's not. It's a total life support system.

Amen. Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing. You can do nothing.

And that echoes in my mind. That without him, I can do nothing that will be pleasing to him. I'm going to fall on my face if I try to do the work of Christ and the energy of the flesh.

And so I desperately need him every hour. I need him every day. I dare not go to pulpit without prayer and seeking God.

As Paul says, I don't want to preach in word only, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power. Clothed with spiritual power. And so we need him.

And I want to tell you something. This is where revival starts. When we get back to the basics and when we repent of the sin of prayerlessness and we realize, my friends, that there's an awful sin in the sight of God, that there's someone taking the place of Christ.

It's time, it's television, it's people or friends. Please turn this tape over for the continuation of this message. Thank you.

Could you not at least spend one hour with me, as he said to the disciples? One hour in Bible study and alone with God. And you know something, if you neglect that time, you're going to be the loser because you're going to get frustrated and you're going to get discouraged. You will be insensitive.

There's a numbness that comes through prayerlessness, a callousness that when we cease to pray, we're insensitive to spiritual realities. Because you see, when you begin to engage in prayer, the things of earth grow strangely dim and eternal realities begin to brighten. And that's why the Word of God says, such affection on those things which are above or Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

And I've noticed this again and again, that extraordinary prayer in Bible study subdues the flesh. It's one of the ways of mortifying the old man and bringing him into subjection. And we need to understand these things.

You see, my friends, if you want wisdom, what does the Bible says? If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. It's the only way you're going to get wisdom, you must come to God. Nearness to God, you say, I'd like to be near to God.

The Bible says, draw near to God and He will draw nigh to you. He never left you in the first place. It's a repentance, drawing near to God in prayer, and He'll draw nigh to you.

Power of the devil, Ephesians 6, 18, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. There's no other way to have power of the devil. But through prayer, it's the only way, my friends, to maintain fellowship with God if we walk in the light as He is in the light.

If we confess our sins, He's just and righteous to forgive us. And so we know that that comes through that daily quiet time. Of course, you can confess your sins any place, any time, anywhere.

But you see, that quiet time is so mandatory. Obtaining the peace of God that passes all understanding, Philippians chapter 4, 4-9. Obtaining the promises of God, utter dependency upon Him.

Are you totally dependent on Christ this morning? You say, why don't we pray? If it's so important. First of all, we believe because of spiritual blindness, blindedness. The children of Israel walked through the Red Sea.

They saw the exploits of God. They saw the miracles of the Lord. Ten gods were judged in Egypt and blindedness.

And they saw God's power. They were fed with manna. And yet they continued to what? Murmur and complain and turn away from God.

And they forgot the glory. And dear friends, in Christ, all of us, we forget the glory. We have with Christ, don't we? We forget the intimate times because our minds alienated by carnality from those times.

Spiritual blindness. We sin against God. The fellowship is broken.

We forget about the times. Ignorance. Unaware of the blessings that come through prayer.

Practical experience. Idolatry. Something taking.

Unbelief in the heart is the root of the matter. And it truly is. Because God says, without faith, it's impossible to please Him.

For he that cometh to God must believe that he is. And he's a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. You see that? Cardian.

Hebrews 11, 6. Without faith, it's impossible to please Him. For he that cometh to God in prayer must believe that he is. And that he's a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Unbelief in the heart. Sin in the heart. We see.

Self-sufficiency. One deacon was convicted during one crusade because he didn't realize that prayerlessness is one of the highest forms of pride that there is. You know why? It's self-sufficiency.

It's saying to God that I can make it through a demon-infested world without God's power. And without the armor on. And it says I can make it.

It's self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency instead of utter dependency on Christ. On his word.

On prayer. And I found that the old nature is so arrogant. He thinks he can make it through a half a day or a day without God's power flowing through us.

And one deacon was smitten by the conviction of God and he said, John, I never realized that I was committing idolatry. And he said, I never realized that I was so full of pride because I've neglected my quiet time. One man came up to me and at one time the church was packed, dear friends in Christ.

At one time the church was overflowing and they had built onto the church. And they were going to build on again. And then something all of a sudden took place in that church.

This man of God was used so mightily in my life. And I was talking to him one day. With silver hair he sat in this chair.

And I began to talk about some of the experience that I saw on the road. And some of the problems and conflicts that we saw in some of the churches. And he looked me straight in the eyes and he said, John, here's the problem.

He said, I remember there was a time when all my men would pray. He said, if I would just suggest prayer. They'd say, Pastor, when can we get together? And they would seek the Lord.

And souls were won and that church was just blooming and flourishing. And this wasn't even less than ten years ago. Not even that long ago.

Nine years ago. And it was jam-packed. You should have seen it.

It was way back in the country area and people came from miles. They just gravitated toward that church because the Spirit of God was there. And the devil came in and started some evil reports and some other things.

And he said, John, today I cannot get my men to pray. I've tried everything and they will not pray. And he says, that's the reason why we're so defeated today.

And I close with the words of the hymn writer again. Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear.

All because we did not carry everything to God in prayer. You know something? Satan will let you work. He'll let you witness.

He doesn't care if it's without prayer. But when you begin to pray and when you begin to commit yourself to pray, you'll find yourself constantly being tempted to do other things. Would you bow your head with me? Every head bowed.

Eyes closed. How many of you say this morning, Brother John, this is exactly what I need. Would you pray for me? That God would remind me daily to meet with him.

Let me see your hands. Yes, God bless you all across this auditorium. Over three-fourths of the folks.

Let's just pray. Lord, we love your people. Oh, God, I pray that they'd understand that we're on their side.

And we want to see them experience your peace and your joy and your power. The devil's out like a roaring lion seeking whom he may consume. Father, you saw the hands raised all across this auditorium.

And Father, I'm asking you that you would right now just implant an overwhelming hunger and thirst and desire in their hearts to read, to get that daily quiet time, no matter what the cost, that they'd get alone with thee, O Lord. And just get alone with God daily. And Father, like Job, that we might say that I've esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Oh, God, I pray that we'd learn that that quiet time is so necessary. As Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing. Remind us, Lord, give us a renewed desire.

Father, you know all the hands that were raised. Some of them have real problems right now. Financial conflicts, adversity of all kinds, heartache, maybe even physical problems because of the lack of prayer and Bible study.

And Lord, I just ask you to break down the strongholds right now and give them a thirst and hunger to get along with thee. And we'll thank you in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

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