

A Major Trap

by K.P. Yohannan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and warns against trusting in our flesh and abilities instead of God, highlighting the need for total dependence on Him for effective prayer.

Scripture: Genesis 16:1, Zechariah 4:6, Ephesians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 5:16

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Dependence On God"

Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the critical role of prayer in the life of a believer, recounting a recent challenge faced by a Gospel for Asia Bible college that was saved through earnest prayer. He warns that while many acknowledge the importance of prayer, the enemy seeks to distract and diminish its power by leading us to trust in our own abilities rather than in God. Yohannan illustrates this with the story of Abraham, who learned that true faith and reliance on God are essential for spiritual victories. He urges believers to keep their focus on God and to ensure that their prayers are not tainted by self-reliance. Ultimately, he calls for a return to a heart of dependence on the Lord, reminding us that true power comes from the Spirit, not from our own efforts.

Transcript

Recently, one of Gospel for Asia's Bible colleges faced serious trouble from anti-Christian authorities in a neighboring country. A number of the people in a border region of that country had accepted Jesus through the witness of our students. The school received a letter with an order to close down immediately. In every country where Gospel for Asia works, our native missionaries, staff and friends prayed earnestly for God to intervene. The decision was reversed a week later, and the school was allowed to remain open.

Praise God for His wonderful answer to prayer. If I could pick out one thing that Jesus--as well as Paul and the rest of the apostles--constantly emphasized, it would be prayer. In the Scriptures, we are charged to "watch and pray," to "pray without ceasing," that "intercessions . . . be made for all men" and so on. Most followers of Christ are convinced that prayer is a vital part of our Christian life. Through prayer, we communicate with God. As we petition Him, in His love He meets our needs, heals our sicknesses and delivers us from Satan's attacks.

In fact, we know from Scripture that prayer is our mightiest weapon to defeat the enemy. As we pray, all heaven fights for us. Amazingly, despite our vast knowledge about the importance of prayer, we struggle constantly to find time for it. Prayer usually ends up near the bottom of our priority list. There is a reason for this! You see, the devil hates prayer. He hates it more than choir practice, seminars, conferences and

Christian concerts. He will do everything in his power to stop us from engaging in this dangerous activity.

In fact, prayer is so destructive to him that he is more than happy to see us choose instead to listen to a sermon, read a Christian book or work for charity. However, if the devil can't hinder us from praying, he uses several other effective tactics to zap the power out of our prayers. One of those tactics is this: Without us knowing, he slips in slowly and makes us believe that all these great victories have happened because of us and our prayers. For example, this endangered training center was saved because we knew how to defeat the devil.

The radio broadcast received 10,000 letters this month because we made it happen through our intercession. Unless we are very careful and extremely sensitive, we can end up at a place in which even our prayers can become a major trap. You see, when things are happening, the enemy tempts us to trust in our prayer activity, our expertise on spiritual warfare, our elite group and our dynamite church leadership. Suddenly our confidence is placed in ourselves and what we are able to accomplish instead of in the Lord alone.

Thus, our prayers have turned into a work of the flesh, something God detests and always rejects. On every page of the Bible, we see a battle between the flesh and the Spirit. God clearly demonstrates and proves throughout history that no product of the flesh is accepted or receives any glory. We have a good example of this in the life of Abraham. Abraham's entire struggle was to learn to quit placing his confidence in his own flesh and his ability to father the promised son.

When he trusted in his flesh, he produced Ishmael instead of Isaac. With great hopes he brought Ishmael to God, asking Him to bless his son. The Lord looked at Abraham, and (to paraphrase) He said, "You can pray a thousand years, Abraham, and it will change nothing. I had nothing to do with producing this child. It's your own work. He looks real and is absolutely healthy, vibrant and strong. He talks, walks, moves and jumps. But if you look behind the story of Ishmael's conception, you will not find Me there."

God had to bring Abraham and his wife, Sarah, to a point in their lives where there was no hope left whatsoever. It was then that God commanded Abraham to be circumcised. This was Abraham's testimony that he no longer had any confidence in his flesh. God became his only hope for receiving his promised son. And that's when Isaac was born. Our prayers and intercession are vitally important to reach the lost world. There is no substitute for pulling down the strongholds of the enemy.

Therefore, we must keep our weapon of prayer sharp and effective at all times, which happens only when we examine our hearts daily to see if we are placing our confidence in anything other than Jesus alone. God seeks followers and intercessors who believe with all their hearts that it is " 'not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). A few minutes of prayer with total dependence on the Lord are worth more than days of weeping in our own strength. Don't forget the priorities. We may cry out all day long and see nothing happen, yet Elijah prayed a few words and fire came down from heaven! When will we ever learn?

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