

A Crash Course on Prayer

by Shane Idleman

Prayer is a privilege to be enjoyed, not a duty to be performed, and it is essential for a strong relationship with God and for seeking guidance and wisdom in difficult times.

Duration: 58:14

Scripture: Matthew 6:5

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Accessing God's Presence"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the critical importance of prayer in today's chaotic world, urging believers to deepen their connection with God rather than treating prayer as a mere duty. He reflects on the Old Testament's Holies of Holies, illustrating how believers now have direct access to God through prayer, which should be approached with reverence and expectation. Idleman warns against the dangers of familiarity leading to neglect and encourages a passionate pursuit of God through prayer, highlighting that true prayer requires effort and a heart aligned with God's will. He shares insights from historical figures on the significance of prayer and calls for a revival of fervent prayer in the church, reminding listeners that their prayer life shapes their identity and influence.

Transcript

Well, guys, what I want to do tonight is just give you a crash course on prayer. I want to share with you a few things because during these dire times, this is the most important time for us to pray. This is when prayer is going to mean the most.

As families disintegrate, as our lives seem to be getting more confusing and what's confusing out there in the world, this is a time where believers need to press in. And I was actually listening. Tim sent me a podcast by Francis Chan, and he made a great point on how in the Old Testament, they would go into the holies of holies.

This special place. This place to meet God. And how now we can actually do that.

And what happens is we can become so familiar with something that we begin to neglect it. But this is when we can actually meet with God. The presence of God.

During times of prayer. And that's why I try to do things like this tonight more often than not, is that we've gotten into a habit where we're in a hurry. Our prayers are quick.

Our Bible study. They've got the five-minute devotional out now. And that's good.

I encourage you to do it. But in these dire times, we're going to have to press in. And that means subduing the flesh.

That means the old saints used to call it prevailing. Travelling until you prevail. And pressing in and getting your heart right.

And I've found that the more I seek Him, the more I find Him. And it takes time. It's part of that buffeting of the flesh.

Fighting the flesh and silencing the voice of the flesh. And wanting to stop and wanting to crowd your mind with thoughts that are not of God. And so, during prayer, you have the opportunity, and that's why I wanted to create an environment like this.

I know not everyone's a fan of it. Especially if we're in a hurry and we like things, you know, we're entertained. But these are times where we have to just press in and pray like never before.

The sacred assemblies. The times of solemn assembly and seeking the heart of God. And he just made a great point that they used to go into the holies of holies and there was trepidation.

There was expectation. There was excitement. There was, I'm going to speak with the living God.

Could you imagine that? I thought about that. If you're one of the priests, Levitical priesthood, and it couldn't just be any priest, it had to be the high priest. And the presence of God there with the cherubim and the ark.

And man, I don't know if I could sleep that night. And also, some of those priests wouldn't make it out of there. You know, that's where they come up with the little bells on the tassels.

I don't know how much of it is true, how much of it is, you know, it's not talking directly about that in the Bible, but they would listen for those bells to be moving in the holies of holies. And when they no longer heard those bells for a while, that could mean the presence of God consumed this man. He died because the holiness of God was there and he wasn't taking this thing seriously.

And just the parallels now to where the Bible even says that Jesus' death on the cross, as soon as it happened, the veil in the temple that the priest would go through into the holies of holies, no one else was allowed in there, that temple was ripped from the top to the bottom. And now the believer has access to the Father. I mean, if you just kind of think about that for a while, that's pretty impressive.

So why are we so flippant about prayer? Why is it not a passion of our hearts? And I'm preaching to myself. And I think many times familiarity, being familiar with something. What is that phrase? Familiarity breeds contempt.

You know, the more you're around someone, you know, you're familiar, you see kind of the pit, you see the flaws. And I love when new people come to the church and they love the church and, oh, pastor, I appreciate your messages and we listen. I'm like, just get to know me a little bit.

You might have a little bit different view. I'm just a person like you. I have the same struggles, the same things that, you know, negativity and not perfect and making mistakes.

And once we become familiar with someone, we begin to see those flaws. But with God, the more familiar with Him, you begin to see His glory. And the flaws in you begin to diminish because you see who God, who He really is.

And it's that time of seeking God in prayer, in prayer where we just completely tune out everything else. And we begin to hear the heartbeat of God. Now, it's not literal, of course, but there's a, you know, and some of you, you can relate.

Yeah, I see you're shaking your head sometimes that with those times when you press in, you press in, you don't want to leave. You don't want to stop. Can this service go longer? Can my prayer time at home go longer? Lord, and I've got to get to work, but God, I really love this time with You.

And You come out of there a different person. But when you initially go into the prayer closet, it doesn't feel like that. Grumbling and complaining.

Sometimes I feel like Eeyore. Remember him? Oh, we need to poo. Oh, I don't know.

It's going to rain today. I don't know, just this gloom. Doom and gloom.

And the prayer closet, though, can revive that. It can change that. And I do have some quotes here from E.M. Bounds that I want to share with you.

I love reading his book on prayer. I go through it probably every year. He's written a couple books on prayer.

Actually, I think when he passed away, his family and friends put together these books. And they were mainly just journal notes. But he said, if we are weak in prayer, we are weak everywhere.

How true, how true, how true. Did you know, I think it was Robert Murray McShaney, he preached in Scotland, 1700s or so. He said, a man is who he is on his knees and nothing more.

And I've never forgot that. Read it 22 years ago. And I still remember, I put down my book and I just cried out to God and said, God, I want to be that man.

I want to be measured by my prayer life. My flesh hates it. I don't desire it.

But Lord, I want it. And I believe that's why he continues to wake me up early, early in the morning, where normally I just want to go back to sleep. But there's a hunger, there's a desire there.

And I always remember that quote often. Who you are on your knees, that's who you are and nothing more. But we start to rate it even by success, don't we? I remember every time, I don't even talk to them anymore, but some of the big publishing companies, they'll contact me and publish a book or something.

And then on their checklist, how many followers on Instagram? How many followers on Facebook? How much interaction? How much social media? How many downloads from your blog? See, numbers, numbers, numbers. And we've created this Christian community that's like an American Idol. Celebrityism.

Oh, look at all the million followers. Man! And I've found that the people that bless me the most in their preaching, some of you have never heard of. Some of you remember Brian Long.

I'm trying to get him to come back. Paul Washer. You think I'm hard, try listening to him.

Oh, David Wilkerson. A.W. Tozer. Carter Collin from Times Square Church.

Many of these guys that they're not concerned with. When I go to conferences and these breakout sessions, sometimes these people who know names, those are usually who bless me the most. The know names.

Or those who have names, but they don't want the names. And that's who we are on our knees and nothing more as believers because from that position of prayer is going to flow everything else. Who you are as a father.

Who you are as a mother. Who you are at work. Who you are around your kids.

What they see. When they think of you, do they think of you as a person of prayer? Not perfectly. Not, oh boy, they pray all the time.

But just that life of prayer. Look at the example we are leaving. Do you know you leave your kids and your grandkids an example? If they don't see us doing anything but watching YouTube and on our phones all the time, that will be mimicked.

He said, prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed. Oh, if I could remember that more often. How many of us think of it as a duty? Oh, we got to pray.

Why is the most important thing in a church often the hardest to get people to come to and be a part of? We never have problems with potlucks. We often don't have enough room. We have to go outside, put tables outside and food, but when, hey, you guys, we're going to call a Saturday night prayer meeting.

It's a duty instead of a delight. And it's where our hearts are at, correct? It's what do we desire? And you've heard me mention this before, but if you're new, it'll really bring this point home. The next time we do this on a Saturday night, one lucky person is going to win \$5,000.

We're going to give you raffle tickets at the front. Who would be here and more and bringing family and friends and your spouse? And I'll take the presence of God over \$500 million any day of the week. Because finances can destroy you.

The wrong focus can destroy you. It's our prayer life that's going to proceed, even us. Did you know your prayer life, though you die, it still speaks? The things we pray for will outlive us.

Your prayers outlive you. That was a profound thought when I first read that a couple years ago. I don't remember who said it, but our prayers outlive us.

Man, that would make me want to pray more and pray specifically for certain things. Unless you don't believe God hears the prayers of His people, then okay, it's a duty, it's drudgery, there's really no effect, but we know, biblically speaking, entire nations have been saved because God changed His plans because of prayer. Kingdoms and kings.

He said it should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather a privilege to be enjoyed. And it's the mindset. It's getting the mind remembering, I'm going to speak to God.

This is an incredible opportunity that we have here. And I often share this with pastors. Preaching is not the performance of an hour.

It's the outflow of the preacher's life. So when pastoring, people think, oh yeah, they prepared the sermon well. And no, it's really the outflow of who we are all week or who we are all month.

It flows out from the prayer life. Strong prayer life, strong sermons. Weak prayer life, weak sermons.

And I can tell by listening often to a sermon or where a person's heart is at, where their priorities are at. And so a few Scriptures, Matthew 6. Jesus said, and when you pray, don't be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets that they may be seen by men assuredly. I say to you, they have their reward.

So again, this is just a crash course on prayer. We're going to go through these Scriptures. But the bottom line is motives matter.

The reward is the opinions of men rather than the answers from God. And this is a good reminder when we do corporate prayer or we're in the prayer room, that God is not looking at many words. He's looking at our heart.

The cry of our heart. And I don't know how many of you can relate, but people do pray to impress others. And they, wow, look at that.

They're so eloquent and bold. And man, they really know how to pray. That's a prayer warrior.

But why are they doing it? The opinions of men rather than answers from God. And it's ironic here, Jesus said, when you pray, which means we're to pray. It's part of the Christian life.

When you pray, not if you pray. When you pray. And He also, the same context of this chapter, when you pray, when you give, and when you fast, these are marks of the Christian faith.

Giving, of course. And for me, it's who really has control of my finances. Me or God.

Fear or faith. When you give, when you pray, when you fast, it's all an internal reward. And to do things that only God can see when you pray.

Don't be like the hypocrites. Giving gets my heart right. That's what giving does.

It gets my heart right. Fasting silences the flesh to better discern the voice of God. And prayer communicates with God and He with me.

That's why all three of these are so important. Can a stingy person pray well? No. When you give, when you pray, when you fast, so giving gets the heart right.

And fasting silences that voice of the flesh because we have competing appetites. And neither are wrong, nor wrong, they're God-given, correct? But as I've said before, try praying after Thanksgiving dinner. Try praying after any big meal.

Or try praying, you know, you've got to have your this and this. And fasting sets aside this appetite for a greater appetite, and that's for God. And that's part of the reason the flesh gets subdued.

The flesh gets cast aside and say, Lord, I want You and You alone. In desperation. And what we give often shows the value to us or to the other person.

What we give, and if we fast and we eliminate food for a season during a time of prayer, it shows God, hey, I'm serious. I'm serious. I want answers, Lord.

I need to hear from You. And then He goes on to say, but you, when you pray, go into your room. And when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place.

And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Is there a place where God waits for us? I mean, if you think about that, how amazing is that? The living God, the God of the universe, when you go to a place, you shut the door, turn off your phone. And you say, God, I'm just going to seek You.

I'm going to wait on You. I'm getting distracted. This is hard to do.

Who's texting me? I've got this to do. Anybody, you forget all you have to do until you go in to pray. Or is that just me? Piece of paper.

Okay, I got to do this today. Got to do this today. Wonder what's going on in the news.

That's right, somebody got indicted. Let me follow up on that and read. And all these things come in to try, all these fiery darts to try to keep you away from the prayer closet.

But Jesus said when you go in there, shut the door, which means in that day, removing all distractions. He didn't say get rid of your iPhone for an hour. What happens when you shut the door? Hey, family, friends, I'm seeking God right now.

I'm shutting the door. And He said when you shut the door, you begin to pray. And don't worry, it's not what you say, it's what your heart says.

I've even prayed, Lord, I don't even know how to pray today. You know my requests. You know my petitions.

You know what's going on. You know the things I've been praying for for a while. Lord, just help me today.

Encourage me today. Strengthen me today. And it's that dialogue with God where you begin to feel the presence of God.

And it's not just some heavy presence in clouds. There's a weightiness to what you're doing. There's a peace that surpasses all understanding.

There's clarity. I mean, I went into prayer many times like confused, upset. What's going on, Lord? This is not happening like I thought.

And then I come out of there, oh, it's all good. I'm fine. I'm good now.

Oh, thank You, Lord. Because that renewing of your mind. There is a place where God will meet you.

Could it be that many of us miss that place often because we're so busy? And we don't take that time? So keys to persevering in prayer, it's waiting, it's seeking, and it's meditating. And that's what I'm trying to foster here this evening. We're not in a hurry.

There's a waiting that happens. There's a seeking. There's a pursuing.

And there's a meditating on the things of God. I mean, think about it. Where did David prepare for Goliath? In the busyness of the day or on the backside of the desert? How did Moses prepare? How did Paul prepare for the ministry? Many people don't catch this, but when you're reading about Paul when he first became converted, he says, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, but I went into the desert and spent time with God.

My version there of what he was doing, but that's what he was doing. I didn't immediately go talk to people. I needed to hear from God.

And that prepares him. Moses prepared him. John the Baptist prepared him.

Jesus took the 40 days. I mean, you think about it. All of these guys who are mightily used of God, and I can go way back into church history, and you can look at even the reformers and look at their journals.

Martin Luther and Urig Zwingli and John Knox and then, of course, John Huss and Whitecliffe and William Tyndale, John Bunyan, all these great men and women of the faith. Amy Carmichael, Adonijah Judson, Hudson Taylor. You read and they spent time with God.

And I know we've got all these things that have really made life easy and there's tons of benefits with phones and computers, but they really can distract us from pursuing God. You know, there's a button called silent or off, even better. And we can take that time and instead seek God.

But you have to be vigilant about it. And like I said, there is a place where God waits for you. And here's the key.

The place and the pursuit must become a priority in your life. If you're thinking, well, yeah, that sounds good. It'll just happen.

No, it won't. I found the opposite. If I don't pursue that place, pursue that time with God, it's actually on my calendar.

It's on my calendar every single morning. Of course, there are exceptions. You know, many of you have had little ones.

They try to throw a monkey wrench in there sometimes. Or if I've got a leave for LAX, 4.30 in the morning or something happens. But majority of the time, that is my time with God.

And that also means things late in the evening are going to have to take a back seat if it's going to affect my time with the Lord. And that's why sometimes, if you're really following God, let me tell you, this will help somebody, hopefully. If you're really pursuing God, and He's your all-consuming passion, He's on the calendar as the main thing, people will not understand you.

They will not understand you. Even Christians. Well, you know such and such.

I don't know. They're a holy roller. They got to go seek God again, whatever that means.

Yeah, you don't know what that means because you don't seek Him. The Bible actually uses the word peculiar. You are a peculiar people.

And we know it, right? I know it. It's hard to have that image. He's a little peculiar there.

He doesn't do what everyone else does. Right, to pursue God, you can't look like those who are not pursuing God. There's a distinction.

There's a difference in your life. And so you might not fit in with the boys. Or in some of your cases, the girls.

There's a difference about you. And even I see it in pastors. If you want to just be a normal, mill-of-the-run pastor, versus those who seriously pursue God, you're going to look a lot different than those who pursue God.

I've got some friends, hopefully I can mention some things in the future, at different events, maybe I'll be speaking at. But some of my friends that we go to these events, and we want to have like prayer meetings in a side room at the hotel. But not everyone's like, you know, how about just food and speakers? Okay, but business as usual is not going to cut it anymore.

And so, well, that's a little odd. Well, we're pastors. How is that odd? There was a big convention in Nashville recently, and a lot of my friends were there.

They were asking if I was going to go, and I didn't, of course, make it. And that's where the business as usual came from. He told me, he said, man, business as usual is not going to cut it anymore.

Thousands of Christians all about passing out business cards, jockeying for position, getting name recognition, more of this, connections, connections, connections. And some of those things are good. Connections, God connects people.

But there's no time for worship. There's no time to seek Him. There's no time for deep repentance at a leadership level.

And so when you start to mention, and I filled out a survey and I mentioned all that stuff, well, that's a little peculiar. Well, you know, we might not get as many people attending. Of course you won't.

But are we serving God or man? And so see, we have to remember, you're going to look a little bit different when you pursue God. If we're trying to fit in, you've got the wrong image here. You're actually not going to fit in.

It's a square peg going into a round hole. It's like this isn't working. Right, there's a difference.

Actually, the word holiness means to come out from among them and be separate. Set apart. Different.

There's a difference about you. And you might hear words like I do, extreme. Oh, he's extreme.

He's intense. He's hardcore. And as you know, I've said many times, well, we have extreme everything else.

Extreme makeovers. Extreme snowboarding. Extreme mountain biking.

Extreme house buying. Everything's extreme. So shouldn't we have an extreme and intense love for God? Let me give you some more quotes from his book on prayer, Ian Bounds.

Every mighty move of the Spirit of God, and that's what we've been praying for, has had its source in the prayer chamber. Remember, every mighty, moving, powerful move of God has had its source in the prayer

chamber. We saw what happened at Asbury University, but you don't know all the prayer that went behind that recently.

You know the same thing happened in 1970? I'm reading a book right now. They stayed open for two weeks. Jim Garlow, he'll be speaking here in August.

He was there. 1950, same thing happened. And many different, I've got lots of books on, especially in Scotland and Wales, and it would often say, after months and months of pleading for revival, the refreshing rain came.

Or they would say, you know, a couple sisters, and I got together from midnight till three in the morning. I'm like, whoa, that's extreme. And we didn't give up.

And after six months of barrenness, God began to rain and bless our work. It's consistent throughout all of revival history. But what happens, I'm convinced, because it happens to me, we don't see the rain, we go in the house and hide.

Or go back to business as usual. This isn't working. And we have to get to a point where you might not see the fruit, but there will be fruit.

Because God's Word doesn't return void. Our prayers are not falling on deaf ears. But all, any great move of God has been started in the prayer closet.

If you want to see God move in your life in a miraculous way, and I believe God still does miracles today, things that just don't make sense, get into the prayer closet like never before. Begin to pursue Him like never before. I think Christians fail so often to get answers to their prayers because they do not wait long enough on God.

Isn't that so true? I think Christians fail so often to get answers to their prayers because they do not wait long enough on God. If God is not the first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, He will be last place the remainder of the day. And David spoke about this early on in the day will I seek You? Jesus, early in the day, before the sun was even coming up.

I'm not against late night prayer warriors. We need them. Thank God for them.

But you've got to wake up with your mind on God. Whether it's 3.30 a.m. or 8.00 a.m. He's got to be the pursuit, the priority of that day. And I've shared a little booklet with you by McIntyre.

He said it's so important to find a quiet place, a quiet hour, and a quiet heart. I think it's David McIntyre. A quiet place, a quiet hour, and a quiet heart.

So you see, that's what we're trying to do here tonight when we do these things. It's fighting against the flesh. You think Satan likes all of us to sit and be worshiping and praying? That's why you have all these thoughts going through your mind.

I don't know about this. I don't know about this. I've got to be here.

I don't know. I prefer this. I prefer that.

What Satan prefers, we wouldn't do anything. One of Satan's tricks is to stop the best with the good. I want to do a whole sermon on this topic.

I can look back at my life and the life of this church. He will stop the best, what God wants to do, with something good. But it's the wrong focus.

You get off track. For example, hey, let's pursue God in a night of prayer. That's what he wants.

But, a friend of mine is having a get-together. That's a good thing. But we choose the good thing and forget about the great thing.

But if you add up all these good things, now do the good things, please. But if we add up all the good things taking us away from the pursuit of God, you'll see that it really adds up. He distracts us with certain things.

I'm trying, so keep praying for me. My wife prays for me, but I try not to look at my email or text first thing. Because sometimes you don't see things you want to see.

Right? Like, oh, now I've got to do that. Now I'm in a bad mood. Now I don't want to pray.

Boy, if I've got to do that today, I better get started now. Good things, good things, good things, good things. But if they're distracting you from what is the best thing, be careful there.

Ian Bounds also said, to have God near in this prayer closet is to enter into the holies of holies. It's to breathe the fragrance of heavenly air. Nothing but prayer can bring God and man into this happy communion.

Now I know where many of you are. I've been there before. Sometimes I'm still there.

You might be saying, that sounds great, but I'm not experiencing it. My prayer life is dead. God is boring.

And I don't read the Bible. I don't know what to do. Well, you can't work it up, but what you can pray is, God, give me the passion.

God, give me the desire. God, wake up this spiritually barren heart of mine. God, I'm going to pursue you.

Oh God, please hear my cries. I don't feel that way. I need to feel that way.

God, would you revive me? Would you awaken me? I want that. I want that so much. And as you pursue Him, He will answer those prayers.

And Jesus said though, when you pray, do not use vain repetition as the heathen do. Vain repetition. You'll see that in a lot of cults.

They just go through the motions. And I'm all for prayer books. Those are powerful sometimes.

But if they're just going through, you know, hey, we pray for ten minutes. Going through the motions. God says it doesn't even enter my ear.

Because that's just vain repetition. Thinking we're reaching the heart of God by many words. But He doesn't listen to many words.

He listens to the heart. And even as a young man not really following God, I remember all those times I would just sit there and hear, right? Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of the womb, Jesus.

We're going to do that 15 more times? Moving the little beads? And I thought, isn't this true? Number one, you can't pray to Mary. Number two, that is vain repetition. And that might upset people listening, but I'm just telling you the truth.

I'm just telling you the Gospel truth. Biblically speaking, that is not a biblical prayer. Going through the motions, saying all these words.

Vain repetition. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. And that's why sometimes we try to tell people in the prayer room, listen, I love long prayers.

And when God is in a long prayer, it's beautiful. But when the flesh is in a long prayer, it's painful. Just going on and on.

Does that really capture the heart of God? And again, I don't know the person's heart. God only knows the person's heart. And I've heard, Matt, some of you remember Eva Marie.

I mean, she could pray for like 15 minutes. It's incredible. It would seem like two.

And there are times when long prayers are definitely needed. And people have prayed with me. Long prayers are powerful because God's speaking, God's healing, God's restoring.

But if we're just doing it because we want to look spiritual, we want to cover everything, we just have to be careful in that area because Jesus said they're not going to be heard for their many words. God wants to see your heart. Therefore, do not be like them.

Don't be like them. For your Father who knows the things you have need of before you even ask. Now, this brings a theological dilemma.

And I have to answer this often. If God already knows, why do I ask? For your Father knows the things you need before you even ask. And that's kind of a good point.

However, two things. It's a command of Scripture. And often, you don't receive if you don't ask.

You have not because you ask not. I can get up in the morning, and I know my four-year-old in a matter of 20 minutes, Dad, I want cereal with cow's milk. She doesn't like almond milk.

And I tried to trick her. I poured some almond milk and made her think it, and she knows the taste. But clockwork.

My clockwork. I want cereal with cow's milk. I've been hearing that for a year and a half.

So I know. But if she doesn't ask, I just delay. Or I make her eat an apple first.

But see, knowing something doesn't necessarily mean it's going to happen. It's the asking. And that's why if we had time, we could look at the whole Scripture.

Asking and you'll receive and knocking, the door will be open. And your Father knows how to give you good gifts. Who's going to ask for bread and be given a rock? And it says something very interesting too.

How much more does He give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? Is He talking to Christians? It's interesting because you have all the Holy Spirit, but does He have all of you? And I often wonder, Lord, I want the fullness of Your Spirit. I want to do what You want me to do. God, I need Your Holy Spirit in a powerful and profound way.

Sometimes I'll pray, Lord, move on Sunday. Do something that we haven't seen done before. Bring the power and anointing of the Spirit.

God knows I need it, but if I don't ask... And so He said ask. Ask. Ask.

Again, prayer should be a passion, not a ritual. E.M. Bowne said, the lazy man does not, will not, cannot pray, for prayer demands energy. Paul calls it striving or an agonize.

And we hear these words like, oh, man, but our blessings in America are great, but they've also kind of messed up our prayer life. Listen to someone in the Middle East praying. Or in China praying.

There's a desperation. There's a travail. The more you go through, the deeper your prayers will be.

Correct? The more you go through, the deeper your prayer life's going to be. If you've ever been going through challenging situations, I'm talking about difficult situations, you can go deep in prayer. Deep in prayer.

And it becomes agonizing. It becomes a desperation. It becomes a striving to hear from God because the anguish and the striving comes from God.

There is no other answer. I've got to hear from You, and I need to hear from You soon. Hello? Amen? God, show me what's going on.

Show me the situation. Show me, show me, show me. So again, if you're having a tough time, and I've been there, ask for help.

Ask for help. Plead for passion. God, give me passion.

Give me passion. And I've shared that with you before. In 2008, I was at the LAX Hilton.

I remember I was at this conference, and I first heard about partial birth abortion. I cried myself to sleep. And I said, God, give me that passion to speak the truth about this issue and to give a voice for those who have no voice.

I don't care how many people slander me or say mean things about me or call me all these names. It doesn't matter because I'm going to give a voice to those who have no voice. And Lord, I have no passion right now.

Lord, give me that passion. Give me that passion. Give me that desire.

I don't feel it right now, but I want to feel it. Cry out for conviction. God, give me the conviction that my prayer life is not what it should be.

God, give me the conviction. I don't want to, but Lord, make me do what I don't want to do. See, that becomes a prayer in itself.

That's a prayer in itself. And so many people are saying, I just don't feel like it. Welcome to the club.

You think I felt like coming to church tonight? Well, we don't follow our feelings. And then he closes with this. In this manner, therefore, pray.

Jesus is going to tell you how to pray. Just follow this. Follow this.

There's reverence. Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Our Father, hallowed be Your name.

There's reverence. There's respect. I just thought of a good example of vain repetition.

When I was back at that Catholic high school, we had to learn this prayer in Spanish. Padre Nuestro de Can Cielo, santificado sea tu hombre, venga nos traen, oja que sea tu vontade, hacia el latiterro, como en cielo, pero nuestro de cada día, de nos loe, perdonanos. Deme el Padre de Dios del Espíritu Santo.

I had no idea what I'm saying. I was going through them, and you who speak Spanish, you know I really messed that up. So don't tell anybody.

I've got to practice that. But I didn't know what I was saying. Vain repetition, every day for two years, we would read it.

It never got into my heart. Never got into my heart. But something good did come from the class.

I learned to say, mis padres son las tortugas y nadar muy bueno. My parents are turtles, and they swim very well. So that's got me out of some trouble before.

Okay guys, get serious. This is reverence. Reverence.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Hallowed be Thy name. And just meditate on that for a little while before getting into prayer.

Lord, hallowed be Thy name. How awesome You are. Look at what You created.

I talked about that Sunday, just hanging the earth there in the solar. I'm just going to hang the earth right here. I'm just going to put the sun 93 million miles away.

I'm just going to put, that is awesome, and that is our God. God, who is going to stop You? What situation is going to derail You? What challenge is going to stop You? Oh God, You're awesome. Hallowed be Your name.

Our Father in heaven. In heaven. And then there's an expectation, there's a passion, there's a fervency.

Your kingdom come. Your kingdom come. Something is coming, and it's not evil will prevail.

And we have an answer. If you see on social media, so many people are getting scared. You know, AI could be the Antichrist, and AI and artificial intelligence.

I've got some concerns myself, and GP Chat and all this. It's like, oh, well, oh, what? You know, they're just very, very worried about that. But remember, God's kingdom will come.

God has a final say. Your kingdom come. And so we live with expectation.

You live with passion. And there's fervency in your prayer. And then we have to make sure that it lines up with His will.

Your will be done on earth. Your will be done. And so at that point in the prayer, I say, Lord, is Shane Idleman's will in the way right now? Is my will in the way of Your will, Lord? And if it is, show me.

When you line up with God's will, how many of you have been there, right? You're going, God's will is to go out that exit, but I'm going out this exit, and life's kind of miserable. I don't have a lot of peace. I mean, I'm doing things I know.

I'm just, you know, I'm making bad decisions. But when I line up with God's will, although it was difficult to pull away, when I line up with God's will, oh, things just start to click. And sometimes it's challenging, of course, but at least I know I'm going in the right direction.

At least now my will, my decision, especially major decisions, I know are in the will of God. Your will be done. God, help me line up with Your will.

And this is an interesting topic because I mean, I believe, the Bible doesn't talk about perfect will, permissive will. It's things theologians have come up with, but you can definitely tell from Scripture that there are some things that are clearly God's will, and it's going to happen, and it doesn't matter what you do. But there are other things where if you do something, it will alter the course of God's will.

Or maybe the will is the right word, but what He possibly was going to do, you can offset that if you line back up with Him and begin to intercede for people. Was it not pronounced that in 40 days, Nineveh would be judged? God said it. In 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed.

God's judgment, His will, it's done. Jonah thought it was going to happen. He's running around, 40 days, Nineveh will be judged.

40 days, Nineveh will be judged. And instead of killing him or putting him in prison, they humbled themselves and fasted and repented. And God didn't judge them.

What in the world? God relented. And you'll read, I believe it's Isaiah, possibly Jeremiah too, where they talk about begin to seek God again. And could it be that God could relent? And instead of doing the harm that He was going to do, could leave a blessing behind? And there's other examples.

When God talked to King Manasseh, what about Hezekiah? Hezekiah, get your house in order, you're going to die. Which he actually should have died because he gave birth to Manasseh, which was the worst king that Israel ever had. God said because of Manasseh, the sins of Manasseh, I'm going to judge the nation of Israel.

But Hezekiah, He said, get your house in order, you're going to die. God said it, it's His will. Done deal, right? Nope.

He repents. He cries out to God. God gives him 15 more years.

See, so that's my thing with prayer. How do you know? How do you know? And I see that. Instagram, Facebook, you're wasting your time.

America's going to be judged by God. There's nothing we can do to turn that tide. Revival? Ha, ha, ha! Good luck! How do you know? I'd rather have my position than your position because your position is what they call fatalism.

Eeyore. That should never be a Christian's position, I don't think. Woe is me.

This nation's toast. We're going to hell in a handbasket. Just hold on and wait for the rapture.

That might be a while. There's nothing we can do. God's Word says otherwise.

How do we know that if my people humble themselves, might not apply to us as well? The Old Testament was given to us as an example. We can pull out principles from the Old Testament. And I do believe, I mean, clearly we are worse than Sodom and Gomorrah.

But it's interesting to me that God said, hey, Abraham, Abraham by then I think, if there's 50, I'll spare the city. He would have spared Sodom and Gomorrah for the righteous. Now, just think that through.

If you've got a couple million Christians fasting and praying and weeping over the sick, sinful, perverted things that are going on. I don't know if you saw the gay pride parade, family friendly that was in Hollywood. My Lord.

It's perverted beyond anything we're prepared to deal with as a nation. But there's a remnant holding back, I believe, holding back the full wrath of God. And so I believe contending, I believe that pleases the heart of God.

You think God is pleased with someone who's a negative Nelly? Debbie the Downer? Judgmental Jerry? I can keep going if I can think of names. Oh, we'll just read Revelation. We're just going to wait for God's wrath.

Or the person saying, Lord, I'm going to intercede on behalf of these people I know You love. Lord, I know You can save some of these sinners. I know You can bring revival at certain points and I'm going to contend for that.

That captures the heart of God. I guarantee it. And number four, the one we really don't like to read, but it's true.

Focus on our needs, not our... You know the difference? Wants are okay. Sometimes some godly wants are good. But it says, give us this day, not this week, not this month, give us today our daily bread.

In other words, God, get me through today. Get me through today what I need today. And then repentance is crucial.

And forgive us our debts. Lord, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And then protection for the day.

And do not lead us. Some translations, some Bible commentators, and I like this, if you look at the word, that's why they say this, that the Greek word that is used, it could mean leave us. Don't leave us in temptation because we know that God doesn't tempt us.

He allows temptation. But let not man say that when he is tempted, God tempted him. For man is drawn away by his own desires.

Desires. I don't need God to tempt me. I've got something inside of me that tempts me.

And when you give birth to that desire, and when it's conceived, it brings forth death. If we don't abort it, abort that sin, it will take you down. And so he goes in protection for the day.

Do not lead us, do not leave us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Oh, you should cover your family in the morning. You should cover your marriages in the morning.

When you get up, oh Lord, we come against the types of attack that the enemy has planned for us today. Guard the thoughts of my children. Let them make the right choice.

Let them not go that direction. God, keep them safe. And you begin to plead these things over your family and yourself.

Lord, protect us. Keep me from the evil one. And then there's an acknowledgement of God's awesomeness.

For yours is the kingdom, it is the power, and it is the glory forever. It's like where it started, it ended. Hallowed be your name.

That word awesome actually comes from describing God. Awesome. Undescribable.

And it says yours is the kingdom, yours is the power, and the glory forever. Amen. And I want to close with some of the names of God.

I'm going to have Richard come up. We're going to go back into some worship, and we're going to practice what we heard. If you need to leave, you can leave quietly out the exit, but we're not going to be in a hurry.

We want to contend for our families. There are situations many of you are in that it seems hopeless, and you need to call on God like never before. Maybe come to the altar.

Some of you have been praying for things for years. Some of you maybe have been playing games with God. Maybe you haven't been praying.

That much. God's an afterthought, not a priority. Or we view Him as a cosmic ball of love, and not the creator of the heavens and the earth.

But when you go into prayer, remember these names of God. The Old Testament would give Him different names. Isn't that interesting? It's not just God.

God. Elohim. That's all.

No. They would call Him different things based on what? Based on what He did for the people. So they would have these names of God based on how their prayers were answered.

And we can receive that same thing as well. Of course, the famous one, Jehovah Jireh. He is my provider.

So if any of you are in a spot of, really in a spot of lack right now, have you been there? I mean, a lack of poverty in some area. You will know Him as your provider as you begin to seek Him and as He begins to open those doors. These people could not call Him provider unless He provided.

Jehovah Jireh, my provider. Jehovah Rapha, the Lord is our healer. So as these people were healed and set free, they would say, His name is Rapha, our healer.

Then they would know Him as Jehovah Nisi, the Lord is our banner. What does that mean? Well, they would raise up a banner when they would go into war. So when they would defeat their enemy, they would say, that is Jehovah, our banner.

Jehovah Nisi, our banner. And then they would, Jehovah Salome, the Lord is our peace. He gives me peace.

He gives me rest. Jehovah Rapha, the Lord is my shepherd. Jehovah Sitkanu, the Lord is my righteousness.

Jehovah Shema, the Lord is here. The Lord is an ever-present help in time of need. So you know Him as all these things.

And we can pray, the Lord is my sustainer. The Lord is my rock. The Lord is my fortress.

The Lord will go before me and fight my enemies. The Lord is my shelter. The Lord is my strength.

The Lord is my Sabbath rest. And you know Him as these names, Jireh, Rapha, Nisi, Shalom, Raha, Sitkanu, and Shema. He is here.

He is an ever-present help in time of need. That is a God we know. But be encouraged, the deeper the pain we go through, often the deeper the relationship you have with God.

I wish it wasn't that way. But it is. Sometimes you have to go to the end of your means before you know Him as provider.

Sometimes the doctor has to tell you there is no hope before you know Him as your healer. Sometimes you've got to go to hell and back. And when the armies are fighting against you, the armies of hell, and God defeats Him, then you know Him as Jehovah Nisi, my banner, the Lord, the army of the Lord.

And you have to go through difficulties before you know Him as your peace. How do we call Him Jehovah Rapha, our Shepherd, if He doesn't lead us and doesn't guide us? A shepherd guided. He led the sheep.

He was with the sheep. And how do we know Him as our righteousness if we're never in need? This one is so important. Sikkenu is our righteousness, meaning we don't have our own righteousness.

It's the righteousness of Christ. And Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is here. Thank God for that one.

Because I've been in some difficult situations with people over the last couple of months. And the only way they get through is to know that the Lord is here. The Lord is here.

He might not answer the way I want Him to answer. He might not fix the problem right away, but He's here. I don't know about you, but as long as I know the Lord is here, I can sit in the dungeon of destitution.

I can be in the pit of pain. As long as I know the Lord is here, I can deal with the challenges of life and the fear of life and the anxiety. As long as I know God, You are here.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because You are here. Even though the waves come, they will not overcome me because You are here. Even though the fire, I walk through the fire, it will not scorch me because You are here.

God, You take me through these things. Come to the altar. Come to the altar if you need a prayer answered that has been on your heart.

If you're praying for someone, interceding for someone, take that step. Because it's a pursuit saying, Lord, I'm desperate enough to get uncomfortable. I'm desperate enough to hear from You.

One thing I know is God hears the desperate prayers of His people.

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