

Call Down Heaven

by Shane Idleman

Having a powerful prayer life requires positioning yourself to receive from God and denying the self, while checking your motives and praying with the right heart.

Duration: 58:10

Scripture: Matthew 6:5

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the critical role of prayer in a believer's life, arguing that true prayer is a heartfelt engagement with God that calls down heaven's power. He highlights that many Christians struggle with prayer due to distractions and lack of motivation, yet insists that a powerful prayer life requires sacrifice and intentionality. Idleman encourages the congregation to prioritize prayer over other activities, asserting that it is the battleground for spiritual power and growth. He also warns against the dangers of hypocritical prayer and emphasizes the importance of approaching God with a humble and contrite heart. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper commitment to prayer as a means of experiencing God's presence and power in their lives.

Transcript

The message this morning, the title is, When You Call Down Heaven. When You Call Down Heaven. And we are in a series entitled, When You.

When You Pray. When You Give. And I'm not going to tell you about the other one yet, because nobody will show up for the service.

But we're in a series, it's When You Fast, by the way. When you do these things, God rewards obedience in this area. So this whole series is about motives.

And it's about a deeper walk with Christ. Last week we talked about Jesus when he said, When you give. Whether you give of your time, of your money, of your resources, how blessed you will be.

And so check out that message if you weren't here. This one is obviously on prayer. But it's interesting, throughout the Bible you'll see Jesus would put a priority on prayer, above worship and above preaching.

He actually said, My house will be called the house of prayer. And many times we like the worship part. Okay, we're good with the preaching, but it's that prayer thing.

That prayer thing is the hardest of them all. Agreed? I think most of us agree on that. I can worship for an hour, but pray for an hour? You know, that's when it gets a little tougher.

The reason is it's so important. That's where the battleground really is. And I've noticed, you'll notice throughout the Bible, even in our own lives, those who lack prayer, lack spiritual power.

So if you lack prayer, and I'm not talking about a quick, Okay, Lord, I'm on my work, get me there safely, and bring in a lot of money this month. You know, that's really not prayer. That's, you know, saying a few things to God.

But I'm talking about heart-wrenching, soul-searching prayer when you contend and you pull down heaven. Those types of people are powerful spiritually. And without power, we are useless spiritually.

Right? We can go through the motions. Have you ever went through the motions? And without the power source, we don't witness to anybody. I mean, we'll walk into Costco.

We'll go to Trader Joe's. We'll go through the whole week. We won't even mention Jesus.

Have you noticed that? A whole week, Jesus has never come out of our lips. We've ran into people that need Him, but we're not going to be bothered by that. We're lacking spiritual power.

And it was funny. I was just in my garage a while back, and I can have an extension cord, and I can have the light that's supposed to plug into that extension cord. But without the power, all I have is a light and an extension cord.

It's pointless. To get that power, and spiritually speaking, you have to engage heaven. When you call down heaven, that's what prayer is.

You're calling down heaven. Oh God, would you rend the heavens? Would you rip open the heavens and hear my prayers? But to call down heaven, you have to engage heaven. You know what engage means, correct? To capture.

To grip. To attract something. Are you engaging heaven? That's how we get our prayers heard.

To engage heaven. Really, motivation is the key. Motivation is the key.

I want you to think about that for a minute. Is that not true? If we're motivated, for example, this isn't going to happen, it's just an example. We've been having a prayer and worship at 6 a.m. Sunday mornings.

I'm going to try it one more Sunday for you who keep sleeping in. If I said, next Sunday, get a ticket when you come in, I'm going to raffle off \$1,000 cash. At the end of the service, how many would be here? Hands are going, okay, well at least we're honest.

And if I up that a little bit, hey elders, I'm going to talk to the elders, I'm going to go to the bank, let's just withdraw \$10,000. And I want to give \$10,000 to one lucky member. At the end of that prayer service, this house will be packed.

We're talking about talking to God. Fellowshiping with our Savior. Getting built up spiritually.

How much more? You can keep the \$10,000. I'll take one hour experiencing God and you can keep \$100,000. It's priceless.

See, so this is all about motivation. A powerful prayer life, there's something that motivates us. Now yes, it's challenging.

And it's funny because people say, it's easy for you, you're an early riser. You think I want to get up at 3.30 this morning when it's 34 degrees out here and the bed's nice and warm and my truck's very cold and turning on heaters and putting on lights and getting things ready and getting my clothes ready. You think my flesh wants to do that? Now, there's an advantage there when you're an early riser.

I got it. But it's still not easy. I mean, this morning I could sleep in another hour later than I should have.

Oh, come on flesh. And see, so I can understand, but the motivation has to be there. To have a powerful prayer life, you need to be motivated.

And to need to be motivated, you have to pray something like this. Lord, give me a passion to pray. Lord, give me a passion to pray.

And then you begin to remove the distractions that begin to take away from the prayer life. I had this for later, but I think it's important now. To call down heaven, it will cost you something.

It will cost you something. It will cost you something to be here early to pray, won't it? I'll make it very simple for you. Turn off all media by 7 o'clock.

Make some chamomile tea. Maybe valerian root. It will make you sleepy.

Read a good book. Put on a fire, and you'll go to bed like a baby. And see, then you're ready.

But see, we're so enthralled into the things of the world in the evening that we have no hunger for God in the morning. That's why it's difficult. See, there's a cost.

Yeah, I have to live my life different. To do what I do, I have to live my life differently. To seek God early in the morning or to seek Him later or to seek Him throughout the day, there's a cost.

Is there not a cost? We all want nice homes. Is there a cost to nice homes? Yes, it starts in the county office, and it's called permits. Very expensive.

And then the foundation. There's a cost to everything. There's a cost.

I just experienced this. I've been having my... I went to a foot doctor. They recommend surgery on my bone, and my toe was falling asleep, and it hurts.

I can't even go a few miles, and I'm always looking for the good deals on shoes, right? You know, it's like, if I can get two for one, \$40 shoes, and finally, I said, okay, enough of this. Went in and looked and got some good shoes. They explained the difference, how it keeps your foot support and your sole, and it cushions, and how it... And, you know, it's a lot more money, but now I don't have any foot problems.

I can run five miles and my feet aren't throbbing. See, there's a cost. I'm not going to pay \$100 for shoes.

Are you kidding me? Because I like go to Walmart and get the \$150 bike, right? As these guys speed by me on the road with \$3,000 bikes and \$4,000 outfits and spandex. They have \$10,000. They've got \$10,000 going down the road, and I'm keeping up with them on a \$150 Walmart bike.

I mean, that's kind of my mentality sometimes, so there's no way I'm, you know... But the cost, the cost fixed it. It had a cost. Okay, enough of this funny business.

I need to take some serious measures here. Same thing with prayer. If you want to call down heaven, if you want a powerful prayer life, it will have a cost.

How bad do you want it to rend the heavens? Really what it's going to be about, I'm going to talk about three areas of position. It's all about positioning. Positioning to receive from God.

Positioning is to prayer what location is to real estate. Have you ever heard in real estate, they say location, location, location. I can take an \$80,000 house in East Lancaster and go put it in Malibu, and it's now worth \$800,000.

What's the difference? Location, right? When you go invest something, we go into purchase. I have a background in real estate. The first question, if somebody wants to sell something, where is it located? Where is it located? Location, same thing.

Location and positioning ourselves. Let's see what Jesus had to say about this topic. This is so insightful that you can actually leave here, leave here much different than when you got here.

You can have a deep prayer life. I'm assuming most of you want a better prayer life, right? Or am I preaching to the choir? Nobody's interested in this topic. Okay, good.

Matthew 6, 5. If you don't have a Bible, it's right here in front of you. In the pew, unless you're in the first row. Page 620 in this Bible.

Matthew 6. Jesus just talked about, and when you give. Now he's going into Matthew 6, 5. He said, and when you pray. When you pray.

Now, I'm just throwing this out there. When Jesus said, when you give, and when you pray, I'm assuming that we're supposed to do those things, right? Now, just planting the seed for next week. When he says, when you give, when you pray, and when you fast, I'm assuming, contextually, that still is applicable to us today.

Call me naive, but Jesus is outlining how we can, and there are such blessings. Sometimes I pray, Lord, for direction on what to share, what not to share, because you don't want to share too much. But I've had recently fasted.

My wife, and I told you, I think, a while back, I took a few days, three days, and just had water only. It was a battle. Broke through, and just started to really fast and seek God.

And he opened more doors in one week than all year. I won't share exactly what it is. A lot of it has to do with different things.

But just the heavens were broken up, and things were done that were incredible. Hopefully, maybe I can share some of these things in the future as they come to fruition. But there is a reward after the obedience.

Understand that. When Jesus said to do something, it's not, oh, here he goes again, that slave master. When you give, releases you from idolatry tied to money.

Or when you serve, when you give time. When you pray, edifies you beyond anything you'll ever do in your spiritual walk, bar none. I've been doing it about six times now.

At 6 a.m. this morning, we do prayer and worship, mainly worship for an hour and 15 minutes. Nobody has ever said, why did I come to this? All I've been hearing or getting emails, when are we gonna do it again? When are we gonna do it again? That was so uplifting. That was so beneficial.

See, when you starve the flesh and feed the spirit, there is a benefit. There's always a benefit when Jesus says to do something. So that was a long introduction.

Let's get to the message. And when you pray, when you pray, you shall not 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 it's interesting. He said this when it came to giving. Right? Don't be like the hypocrites.

He's also saying when it comes to praying. So apparently these people, here's what he says here. Like the hypocrites.

Now, I should encourage that, because I run into people every month that say, I'm not going to church. There's a whole bunch of hypocrites there. What they mean is there's a whole bunch of people struggling in their faith.

Amen? There are hypocrites, of course, but a hypocrite, it comes from a Greek word. I can't pronounce it right now. I didn't look it up.

I should have. But it's like they hold a mask. Right? I'm Brad Pitt with my mask.

Now I'm Shane. Right? I'm going to go act. I'm going to go act in these movies.

But here's who I really am. See, it's intentionally deceiving and hypocrite. Most people in the church are not hypocrites.

They're struggling with everything from oxy to alcohol to anger to lust to fear to depression to anxiety. You name it. They're struggling through that.

And you might see a believer fall. Do you kick them while they're down or do you pick them back up? See, I run across a lot of people. I know more people outside the church growing up here all of my life than I do inside the church.

I have people texting me. Did wonderful for a year. Fell again in alcohol.

Do I beat them up? Or do I encourage them? We've got people praying, I can't get off of these opiates. You know the opiate abuse in this country? Have you reading statistics? It is skyrocketing. Overdoses.

They don't even know what to do. Doctors are now getting in trouble. What do we do with this? Everybody's stressed out and they want to fix it with the pill.

So Shane, I've been taking this. I feel so guilty. Yes, I can.

Am I going to beat them up or I'm going to encourage them? See, so when people, Aha, you fell. I knew you couldn't go a year without it. No, that's a struggler.

My goodness gracious. That's not a hypocrite. That's somebody struggling in their walk.

And we need to help them, not hurt them. So this is a different person that Jesus is talking about. Not just somebody who struggles.

These religious leaders will go in the synagogues on the corner of the streets. Oh God, Mighty Father, Benevolent Creator, thank You for the whales and the oysters and the sea fish. Thank You for the giraffe and the elephant.

You've created. And they just go on just to be heard of men. Eloquent.

So He's saying don't do that. Don't be like the hypocrite. So I want to talk about the first area of positioning yourself.

Position yourself toward God, not man. Okay, when we pray, it's not for the advantage of men. It's not to show off to others.

Because this can happen in the church. You know that, right? Those who pray to be noticed. Does anybody do that? Is anybody guilty of that? Now I need to say this too.

Long prayers that are not Spirit-led may fall into this camp. You know the long prayers, right? They think... And I just prayed with... He was an atheist. Now he's an agnostic.

Now he's not sure. He's kind of, you know, and I prayed with him, spent some time with him, and I was there with another person. We said, can we pray with you? You know what he said? Yes.

But not a long prayer. Now he could be convicted. I'm not sure.

But the reason, sometimes, is because often God is saying, just hit the nail on the head with the hammer. I don't need to hear about how the truss was made. I don't need to hear about the 2x4 and the saw you used, and the blade needs sharpening, and the contractor didn't show up.

Just hit the nail on the head. Oh, did you know this prayer? This prayer carries more weight than 10 minute prayers. Oh, God, would you help me? God, would you help me? God, please help me open up heaven.

Father, I need you. I don't even know how to pray. And then the Holy Spirit comes and helps us in our weakness.

We know not what to pray for, but the Spirit helps us in our weakness. It's like this. It's like saying, hey, could you come up and grab the other side? That's what the Holy Spirit does.

Comes up and grabs the other side and helps us carry that weight. So be careful on the long prayers. Often I think God's just saying, hit the nail on the hammer.

Come to me. You don't have to paint this picture, oh, beloved Father, right? I was kind of joking, but I kind of wasn't. We want to lay out who God is for a while.

God, you created the heavens and the earth, and you've got billions of galaxies at your disposal, and then five minutes later, we finally get to, would you heal this person of this disease? How about just get right to the point? Sometimes, again, if it's not Spirit-led. Now, God has had me just praying. It's just flooding.

It's just nonstop. It's just the Holy Spirit's moving in our hearts. But he hears the prayer of a broken and contrite heart.

And if you look, I did this. Look at all the prayers in the Bible. They're not filling up a lot of space.

I mean, what about the prayer, a powerful prayer of Jabez? Oh, God, that you would bless me and lengthen my territory. Keep evil away from me. Amen.

I mean, that's the gist of it. Solomon's prayer, dedicated a temple. You think if you're dedicated a temple, it's going to be a whole book of the Bible.

Just dedicate the temple. So, be careful in this area because sometimes we're showing off or we don't know what to pray for, or we're doing things for the wrong motive. That's what Jesus is saying.

Look at your motives. Here's another thing that's very important. God doesn't hear you more the louder you get.

Okay, I didn't pray that loud. Let me just pray. Lord, I know you're up there.

Oh, goodness. And you just called. Now, there is something with volume when it's necessary.

I've been in prayer meetings where, ooh, you let loose on that one. And they just, they're calling down heaven. They're transformed by the Spirit of God.

Often they've been fasting. They've been in prayer. They've been in travailing.

And it's just a passionate plea. And the vocal cords are increased. And we're excited.

It's okay to get excited. But just make sure it's driven by the right motives. That it's Spirit-inspired.

Let me turn up the volume so this person is impressed by my prayers. So He's saying check your heart. Check yourself.

And when you say, brother, let's pray, make sure that you're prompted by passion, not pride. Because a lot of people, well, let's pray. Let's pray.

Now, please understand, I'm not minimizing this, right? Because it's good to go, let's pray. Let's get together. Let's pray.

Let's pray next door. If it's loud prayers, people hear us, great. But it's all an issue of the heart.

As long as we're not being noticed. In other words, if we're in a group and somebody says, oh, let's pray, are they wanting the applause of men? Well, boy. He sure is spiritual.

He wants to pray right now. Yes, thank You, I am. Or is it really prompted by the Holy Spirit? So that's what Jesus is saying here.

Check your motives. And then He goes into verse 6. But you, don't be like the hypocrites, but you, when you pray, this is interesting, go into your room and when you have shut the door, this tells me this is more than just a quick little walk out to the car praying. This is time set aside for God.

Pray to your Father who is in secret, in the secret place. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do.

For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Back to short prayers again. Right? It's not, you know, if I go five minutes praying for this person, if I go five minutes, now their back's going to be healed.

Or if you say, Lord, I don't know what's going on in their back. You do. You created this person.

You created every cell, every fiber in them. Lord, we're asking for healing in Jesus' name. Right? To the point.

You don't, so that's, it doesn't have to be long-winded like the heathens do. So the first point was position yourself toward God, not man. Right? Check the motives.

Okay, Lord, I'm doing this because of you. I'm seeking your approval, your glory, not my own. Now this point is position yourself to receive.

Okay? It's all about positioning again. You have to position yourself to receive from God. I was going to talk about motivation, but I already gave that away in the introduction.

Right? This is the position yourself to receive. If you come here, I'm going to throw this out. If next Sunday we're talking about fasting, the title of the message is probably going to be about crucifying the self, denying the self.

Jesus said, when you fast, I'm double-dog, triple-dogging dare you again, like I did a couple Sundays ago. 6 a.m. Come without eating breakfast. Let's attest, God, if you're hypoglycemia, different things, I understand that.

I thought I was for 22 years until I got off sugar, caffeine, and found out I was just addicted to things that made me hypoglycemic. I'm really not hypoglycemic. Isn't that interesting? But, that's just a side note.

But Sunday morning, Sunday morning at 6 a.m., try, just get up, not going to eat, fight the flesh, and get here and worship God. You will see a breakthrough. Again, motivation.

How many of you would be here, honestly, let's not go 10,000, let's go 5,000. We're giving away raffle tickets. Now, God would not be in that prayer service for one second, I'll tell you that much, but we would have a full house.

See, I'd rather have 30 people on their knees seeking God than 3,000 who are here with the wrong motives. It's all about motives. Actually, God told Gideon to get his army down from tens of thousands to 300 men.

And he said, so when you defeat them, I get all the glory. No flesh, but glory in my presence. That's a whole other sermon.

No flesh, but glory in His presence. Look at what God has done. So position yourself to receive the secret place.

It's not secret. No, it's secret. The secret place, I believe, the reason he said God who is in the secret place, because God is in a secret place compared to most of the world, isn't He? Most of the world doesn't have a relationship with God.

Most of the world doesn't acknowledge God. They don't know there's a God. So it's not secret like some secret out there and those weird books that Oprah endorses.

It's not talking about that kind of secret place. This is a place that not many people know. When you pray, when you pull down heaven, when you put time aside, when you go into a room, shut the door, and you pray, you will find that secret place.

God will begin to minister to you at a very deep level. If Jesus had to go spend all night in prayer, how much more ought we make prayer a priority? So you have to position yourself to receive. David McIntyre mentioned this book.

It's a very good book. It's called The Hidden Life of Prayer. He made three good points that are all biblical.

You need a quiet place, you need a quiet hour, and you need a quiet heart. That's how you receive from God. A quiet place.

See, what happens is you get out of the commotion of the day and you get into a quiet place where you can just be still and hear God. You're not bored. You're not looking for your phone.

There's a quietness of the heart. Have you ever been curious where these sermons come from? They come from that quiet place. I have a topic and I post it.

No, it's all over. Things just come to me. God's speaking.

Showing me His Word. Showing me Scripture. And I've got post-it notes.

Try putting that together in a sermon. It's a difficulty. Make sure it flows well.

It has the points. But He's speaking in that quiet place. Can I prepare a sermon driving on the 405 freeway? Walking down New York? Let me have a seat here on the bench and try to put the sermon together.

It's impossible. So in our busy lives, the same thing with you. You might say, well, Shane, that's great.

You have to prepare a sermon. Well, that's great. You have to live a life and lead a family.

It's just as important. So find that quiet place. And remember, we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

See, you have to find the quiet place because you're wrestling against the demonic realm. And I said this a few weeks ago and I have to remind you again. This wrestling with the enemy, there are no rules.

The devil is not gentle. He'll not only kick you when you're down, he'll hit you. He'll throw acid in your face.

There's no rules. Remember the gladiators? You ever watch those, heard of those sports where they would fight to the death? That's what his job is. So when you find the quiet place, the wonderful thing about the quiet place, it slows down the pace of the enemy and it also slows down your pace.

So the enemy is assaulting, right? He's coming against. Whatever it is, fear, anxiety, court battles, legal battles, financial battles, relational battles. The enemy's coming in and you're just a mess.

He brings in confusion and chaos and you lash out. Right? Amen, right? You lash out, you're out of the flesh. But when you come out of that and you go into a quiet place and you rest and you get your bearing back and the devil's put at bay and you begin to calm your spirit and you slow down, you know you're engaging God.

You're engaging heaven. You're calling down heaven. And I truly believe, I mean I've read this in books hundreds of years ago and I see it today.

And there's an acronym for busyness. I can't remember what it is. Something about under Satan's grip or under Satan's yoke or something.

But that's how the enemy often works to keep us so busy because you get frustrated, right? Or just me. Gosh, please say yeah. Right, you're so busy, you're frustrated.

There's chaos. It's confusion. There's irritability.

He works in that stuff. When a couple is chaotic and we're going here, we're going here, we're irritable, you think that marriage is going to get healthy or decay? When a person's in that state, you think they're going to seek God fervently or the enemy has them right where he wants them. A house that is chaotic means their spiritual life is chaotic.

Show me your home life for a week and I'll show you your spiritual life. Now there's seasons, isn't there? There's difficult seasons. I just took the kids for Disneyland.

All six of us were in one room. I slept on the floor the first night. It was chaotic.

Wonderful. Difficult. Right, there's seasons.

So don't gauge me on one night down there in Anaheim, right? And now these marijuana laws are passed. You smell it everywhere. It's a whole side, this is a rabbit trail.

I'm just thinking out loud here. I prayed for that. I can't believe our culture.

I can't believe they're opening themselves up to demonic, to sorcery, to drugs. And then I get the email, right? Well, it's for medicinal purposes. Yeah, one out of 99, maybe.

But the abuse of everything, of opioids, of this, of busyness, of confusion. We have no time for a quiet place. That's where you fight the battle.

If you don't have that quiet place, you have no bearing, you have no grounding. You can't pull the confusion, the anxiety, and the fear into captivity. Take those thoughts captive.

See, I can't take those thoughts captive if I'm always on the go, if I'm always busy, if I'm always doing things. So Jesus said, find the quiet place. Find the quiet hour.

See, prayer is a priority, is it not? Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you. I want to get back to the point where prayer was the priority.

I want you to get back to the point where prayer was the priority. You know you can do that? You schedule everything around prayer time with God. Of course, there's changes in the schedule, right? Welcome to my world.

But my day is going to be scheduled around God. Well, Shane, how does that work? We're all so busy. Well, someone says, hey, are you free tomorrow at 7 a.m.? No, I have an appointment.

Oh, okay. What's your point with God? We make appointments for everything else. Silly things.

Put on the calendar. It's a priority. It's a priority.

Now, if your friend wants to meet, meet with him, of course. But to get this quiet hour, it has to be a priority. If you're going to try to just squeeze an hour in throughout the day, I'm just going to try.

Good luck. Because the enemy will fight you every step of the way. So you have to have a quiet place, a quiet hour, and a quiet heart.

You know, let me just throw this out there. Until we stop making excuses that we're too busy to pray, we will never see a breakthrough. And I hear it.

It's disheartening. Not here much at all, but I used to speak at conferences before we planted the church. And it's like I just go back to my cabin or my other place, if I'm at Hume Lake or wherever I was, and I just, Lord, I don't understand this.

I mean, people come up, God-fearing Christians, and they will say, Shane, man, I love what you're saying, but I'm just too busy. Really? Yeah. Okay.

You see how that's the... I wish I could pray more, but I'm just too busy. See, that excuse becomes the preventive mechanism from them engaging heaven. You should never be too busy for God.

Ever. Ever. Let's clap on that one.

Amen. Now, are there busy seasons? Of course. I know that.

God brought me through. Sometimes I had to be in construction sites at 5 in the morning. Be there.

I know what it's like. But I fought for that time later in the day. Or I fought for that.

It has to be on the priority list. What is a breakthrough? You're breaking through something. And if all we have is excuses, but I'm too busy.

I've known even parents, you know, they say, well, Shane, I've got three kids at home. I got it. But I think there's a way that you can still seek God if we prioritize it.

I mean, how can we put Oprah on for an hour if it's still on? But we have no time for prayer. Right? I've got two hours for Fixer Upper, but I have no time for prayer because of the kids. You see, it's all about priority and motivation.

And husbands, I would encourage you, I try to do this with Morgan, let me watch the kids. You go and pray. You go and get along with God.

You go read or vice versa. And you work together because it's a priority. God and prayer is a priority.

And we fall short in this area. I wish we could do it more in our home. I've dropped the ball many times.

But it's worth fighting for. So Jesus had a quiet, did He not? He had a quiet hour, if not longer. He had a quiet place on a mountain where nobody knew where He was.

And He had a quiet heart. What's a quiet heart? A quiet heart is a heart that's not confused and irritated and unsettled. I can even tell in sermons many times when people aren't comfortable, it's that squirm in the seat.

You know it's the, well now it's this. It's the, it's unsettling. The heart's not quiet.

There's a, I don't like what He's talking about. Is He going there with this? And there's just, that's what, often a heart that's not quiet is a heart with unconfessed sin. So part of praying and hearing from Heaven is to go before God and say, Lord, if there's anything displeasing in my heart, in my life, would You show me? God, help me work on this area.

And you get the heart quiet. And when the heart is quiet, see, it's funny, we think we can fool people, and we can sometimes, but we can't fool God. But we go to prayer as if we're fooling God.

He doesn't know about that. It's been a long, He doesn't know what I'm thinking. He doesn't know.

And the heart's restless. It's unsettled. So you have to get the heart quiet and ready to receive.

The Scripture came to mind, blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the poor in spirit. You have to go to prayer being poor in spirit.

This, if we had time, this word is interesting. In the Greek language, you know what this word is? You're not going to like it, but we need to hear it. It's a beggar.

Blessed are those who beg for God. Blessed are those, here's the exact wording, they're deeply destitute. They're completely lacking of resources, and they're helpless as a beggar.

That's how you go to God. That's how you better go to God. Because that breath, you're breathing, that heartbeat, that lung, all those things, God is sustaining that.

And for us to think, a beggar? I'm not going to beg to God. That's what poor in spirit is. To come, God, I'm a beggar.

My resources will not be met if it wasn't for you. My health, my vitality, my breath. Lord, I'm a beggar.

I'm in desperate need. God says, blessed are you. I will answer that prayer of the hungry and contrite and broken heart.

But sometimes as Christians, we go to God. I'll full up if I know the word. I'm a proud guy.

I do good things. I'm pretty happy about myself. Lord, if you could just find it in your wisdom to show me in this area.

And we don't come as beggars. We come as negotiators. We don't come as beggars.

We come thinking that we know more than God. Or we come just not seeking His face, but seeking His hand. Give me.

Give me. Give me. Give me.

Give me. And God says, seek My face. You will find Me.

Seek Me. Who I am. Beggar.

And that's interesting. He said at the end here, do not pray in vain repetition. These are real ritualistic prayers.

You know, as much as I love and encourage praying before a meal, just be careful. It's with the right heart. Right? And say, okay, here we go.

Pray again. Pray. It's ritualistic.

Is it vain repetition? Or is there any heart behind it? Vain repetition. Can you think of just repeating things? Repeating things. Right? That's what the heathens do.

That's what unbelievers do. Just repeating and repeating and repeating. Any thoughts come to mind? Hail Mary.

Full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. Blessed is the fruit of the womb, Jesus.

I heard somebody do that 16 times at a funeral. In a rosary. A little bead.

Hail Mary once. Hail Mary 16 times. That is vain repetition.

There's no power in that. As a matter of fact, you better not go to Mary. You better go to her son.

This subject just... Boy, oh boy. There's bumper stickers around that say, can't find Jesus? Look for His mother. This is heretical.

This is heresy. That's why people get so upset when I say this. Be careful where your prayers are.

That's vain. If that's not vain repetition, then I don't know what is. Or if Mormons just pray, Joseph Smith, I believe in Joseph Smith and the true church, and just give me a burning in my bosom.

Joseph Smith and the true church, just give me a burning in my bosom. And they just do this vain repetition. Nothing.

Powerless. You actually might hear from the wrong spirit. Is it possible the devil could give you a burning in your bosom? Guys, understand my heart.

I'm not trying to be mean. I want these people to be delivered and set free. This is not biblical.

These things are not biblical. There's no power in there. You're not calling down heaven.

You're calling in hell. So the final positioning is what I alluded to earlier. Positioning has a price.

Positioning has a price. And I was dead serious about that. If you want your prayer life to change, for example, you want to make a 6 a.m. morning worship, it starts the day before.

It starts the day... And that's what I do. I just told you what I did. Media's off because it keeps your brain stimulated.

Maybe a good fire going if it's cold. Grab any book that Ian Bounds has ever written about prayer and you will go to bed so hungry for prayer. I wake up, it's 1 o'clock.

Oh, why is it not time to go? And you're so hungry for prayer. Or do we have the vente at Starbucks at 6 o'clock and wonder why we can't go to sleep until 1 o'clock in the morning? You see? It has a price. To put God first, there's a price.

It has to be paid. And it's in a good way, isn't it? When you want to go to bed hungry for more of God. I mean, there are statistics.

We know it ourselves that what you feed your mind in, especially in the evening, affects how you're going to think and thought process things. I've said this before. It was about 10 years ago now, I think.

Somebody recommended a series, 24 with Keither Sutherland, 12 years ago, 10 years ago. My wife remembers this. They gave it to us, a DVD.

I'm like, oh, I'm watching this. I'm like, oh, this is terrorism and all this rape. This is good? And I had dreams about my knee getting stabbed with a sharp knife in terror.

I'm like, what is it? Because it affects, the spiritual has affected the mental. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Finally, brethren, Paul said, he talked to the church in Philippi.

He said, finally, brethren, when it's all said and done, finally, brethren, let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, correct? But also, also, focusing on the mind, focusing on things that are pure and honest and noble and upright, meditate on these things. Why, Paul? Because it affects your spiritual health. So if we're watching all these things, we shouldn't be watching.

Doing things we shouldn't be doing. Do you honestly think you're going to wake up in the morning, spring out of bed, and want to go spend time with God? I think that's why church is a struggle for most people. Because they haven't been feeding on the things of God, they've been feeding on the things of the world.

And I hope this, I hope I'm stepping on toes. I hope I'm ruffling feathers. I hope I'm rubbing you the wrong way so you might turn the right way.

That's what the point is, is to get us out of our spiritual slumber. So positioning has a price. To position yourself, there is a price.

Remember, prayer is a weapon. It's a weapon. Not something you check off on the box.

Okay, I did prayer today, I got my five minutes in. This is a weapon. This is your AR-15.

Everybody wants, oh, we've got to buy an AR-15 before the gun laws are regulated. I've got to have a thousand ammunitions in my gun safe. I've got to have all these things and I've got to have 12 gauge and 20 gauge and 10 gauge in case some geese fly over.

And I've got to have all these things. No, the weapon of our warfare is not carnal. It's mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity.

The world is in crisis. I've never seen a nation so divided in my life. So you're going to stock up in the arsenal? That's going to be your answer? Prayer? Prayer is a weapon.

Have you ever thought about that? In Jesus' time, it was a two-edged sword. In our time, it could be a Blackhawk helicopter. I don't care what you call it.

It's that warfare. It's to go against the demonic realm. Listen, I think about this often.

If I ever encounter somebody and he's got a gun to my head, do I wish I had something back here or do I wish I had prayer? Oh, Jesus. Let me pull out the weapon of prayer. You have to understand because people think, oh, it's Christian's prayer.

No, this is your weapon. This is your sword. This is your AR-15.

This is your 30-millimeter whatever sniper rifle. Right? This is it. This is it.

This is all you got, folks, when it comes to the spiritual realm. You can't say, oh, I'm going to be holy. I'm going to be good.

That's wonderful. Do it. But unless you pray and pull down heaven because see, as I pray, it begins to change my heart.

The things that used to upset me don't upset me anymore. The things, I was on this course but now I'm on this course. Prayer pulls down heaven and it fights the enemy.

There is a price to pay. And that song that people sing, Break Every Chain, that's not just a song. That happens during prayer.

Have you ever heard a chain break? Pop! And the whole thing on the semi-truck is shifts when the chain breaks but there has to be tension pulled on that. I remember I was a little kid and I'd pull on this binder, right? You're trying to tighten this chain. Dad, I can't do it.

Oh, son, here you go. He'd hand this big three foot bar, cheater bar, you put on the end of that and go, bam! You just need to pull the pressure. That's what prayer does.

It breaks the chains as you're pulling the pressure, the stronghold. Oh, enemy, you might have got me last week but I'm pressuring you. I'm pressuring you.

I'm pressuring you every week in the prayer closet. That's how you break the chain. Won't be the person that goes into a five minute prayer to try to kick a 20 year addiction to something.

You're not going to do it. Now, praise God, some people are set free. I never touched it again, praise God, but guess what? That's not the usual story for many of us.

We've got to break every chain through that prayer and through that extra pressure of bringing heaven down. Therefore, he said, do not be like them. Do not be like the hypocrites.

Do not be like everything we talked about. For your father knows the things you have need of before you even ask. That just gave me so much comfort.

I don't know about you but maybe it's part of my DNA but sometimes, I don't know if God knows what I'm going through. You know, of course, you won't say it. I mean, God, do you understand what I'm going through? Do you understand these difficulties, challenges? Do you understand these things, God? He knows before you even ask.

So, he said, do this, pray. If Jesus is going to teach you how to pray, don't you think it would be half of the Bible? No, he just, our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

A very simple prayer. Here's what he said, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation. The Pope tried to change that one in December, by the way.

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Amen.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And I wish I had time to unpack that last sentence.

But it's interesting, the disciples, if you cross-reference this with Luke 11, the disciples said, Jesus, would you teach us how to pray? As a preacher, I was thinking, would you teach me how to preach? But then I thought about, no, because they saw, can you imagine seeing Jesus pray? Think about that. Watching Jesus go to war in the spiritual realm through prayer to a Father teaches how to do that. Teaches how to pull heaven down.

So I'm going to just go through this briefly so you know, my prayer life is focused on these things as well. Our Father, there has to be worship and thankfulness. You have to go into prayer not with an attitude.

Okay? All of our attitudes need to be checked at the foot of the cross. Because we go into prayer with an attitude sometimes, don't we? Alright, I guess, and we go, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. Get the heart right.

Worshipful and thankfulness. Hallowed be your name. Hallowed be your name.

God, thank you for even listening. Thank you. And you get the heart right.

His will. Thy kingdom come. Thy kingdom come.

Lord, what is your will for my life? Would you show me? Show me your will for me today. God, guide me in the right direction. Our daily need.

Lord, give me my daily need. Here's the problem, I think, why many prayers aren't being answered. We don't want our daily need, we want our daily want.

Here's what I want, not what I need. And God knows when we're not ready sometimes for something. Sometimes my little five-year-old, almost five, will say, Daddy, can I drive the truck? No.

Eleven years, yeah, but not now. Oh, that's... You don't love me. Right? But we know when we ask.

God knows. Son, you're not ready yet. Daughter, you're not ready yet.

Just seek me. Just seek me. I'll answer it in my time.

Come up and tell them to come up afterwards. I'll throw this out there. If God has ever been too late, and he's missed it, I'd like to hear from you.

I've thrown that out there. I used to throw that out there to conferences a lot, and nobody would ever come up and tell me that. Now, sometimes we're frustrated because things aren't happening quick enough, but when has God ever let you down? When has God ever been late? Same thing here.

Getting our daily need. Forgive our debts as we forgive others. Get the heart right.

This is a big deal in Christians. We can carry bitterness in our hearts. Can't we? Unforgiveness, bitterness.

Is there anybody, anybody right now that you're upset at and you're bitter about and you're angry about them? Just mention that name. That will affect your prayer at a very deep level. That will actually affect your spiritual growth.

You'll be still sucking the binky and the baby bottle if you keep those attitudes in your heart. That's why you've been a Christian 20 years or 30 years and not growing. It's because you hold on to these destructive things and then lead us not, lead us not in temptation.

Wait a minute. I thought God doesn't tempt us. He doesn't.

Lead us not into temptation means guide us away from sin. Don't let me be tempted. Show me the way of escape.

That's a wonderful prayer. Lord, don't have me go in the wrong direction today. Lord, this week, I need your counsel.

God, don't lead me in the wrong direction. We know what this looks like, parents. Do you ever avoid certain streets when you have your kids with you? Because they'll see Baskin Robbins? And when they have on the corner of the streets those big blow-up things during pumpkin season or Christmas tree season, I go a mile away.

Daddy, stop, stop, stop. We've got to see this. We've got to see this.

I want Baskin Robbins. I want this. I want this.

See, God, don't lead me down the streets that are boring to my flesh. Don't lead me into temptation. Don't bring people into my lives that might be snares.

Lord, lead me down the best path for my life. See, many times we don't receive because we don't ask. Because we just say, well, God's not going to lead me into temptation.

No, but the devil is. And you better pray that God gives you the way of escape that you may be able to bear it. See, it's all getting the heart right through our prayer.

Lead us not in temptation. But it can also mean trials. Lord, help me in the midst of the storm.

Lead me away from this trial. Lead me away from this trial. And I've noticed in my own life that God often uses trials to test us.

It's real easy to pray for something for a week. But then after the week's over and things aren't getting better, I tend to get frustrated at God. And now my relationship with God is hindered because I'm upset at Him because He's not doing something.

And now my prayer life is hindered. So it's all connected here. And then obviously, deliver us from evil.

Deliver us from evil. But aren't we already delivered? Aren't we? Well, I don't know. Are you? Some of you? If you don't know Jesus, you're not already delivered.

You need to repent and believe this morning. The Bible says confess with your mouth. Believe that Jesus is who He said He is and that God raised Him from the dead.

Believe in Him and you will be saved. That's the first step in being delivered from evil. Now when this applies to Christians, this is very interesting.

Deliver us from evil means to rescue, to reach out and grab. It's almost like, I picture this boat on the ocean and a little child falls out and the Father rescues, delivers them from the evil. So that will change your prayer.

God, rescue me. You see how it goes back to a beggar? God, rescue me. God, rescue me.

God, would you reach out and grab me? You might not be saying that now in our comfort zones right now, many of us, but some of us are in a spot where we're saying, God, would you reach out and grab me? God, I need to hear from you. God, I'm drowning. I'm drowning in my marriage.

I'm drowning in my finances. I'm drowning in my health. God, I'm drowning.

God, deliver me from this evil. Reach out and hold me, Father. And even if you're holding me, I know I'm sinking, but I'm not going deeper.

I'm holding on to the everlasting grip of a loving Father. Hold me, Lord. Keep me.

See, how do some of you not pray? I don't understand it. How do you get through life? How? Through Facebook? Through the internet? Through the news stations? How do you get through life without prayer and saying, God, hold me. Keep me from that evil.

And Jesus continued all night in prayer in Luke 6. Think about this. If you met your favorite actor or athlete, would you be in a hurry? Well, we can tie it into Sunday. Next Sunday again at 6 a.m. Hey, guess what? I talked to Kirk Cameron.

He's going to be here at 6 a.m. He'd love to meet you. Mike Trout, baseball. Lauren Daigle.

Hillsong. The whole Hill worship team, Hillsong's going to be here. See, we would... Then if you meet them, would you be in a hurry? Would you? When we went to New York, we met Kirk Cameron at the Fox Studios.

I was not in a hurry. We found out we go vacationing in the same spots and a lot of interests and they're common things. I was in a hurry.

And Fox is like, oh, come on. Hold on, we're talking. Right, I'm not in a hurry.

I'm not in a hurry. So when it comes to God, when it comes to God, how much more? How much more should we not be in a hurry to seek God? Yes, it's convicting, but it's time the conviction comes back to the church because as we're being lulled to sleep, nobody's praying and contending for our nation. Do you see the news? Or is it just me, but anarchy is just a step away? Oh, yeah, we better get clapped for that one too.

The anarchy is just... I mean, just the disdain for our nation, the disdain for our biblical principles. It's like everything's getting ready to implode. Not explode, implode from the outside in.

The church should be in prayer. My goodness! If not now, when? If not you, who? You know the old saying, right? If not here, where? My concern is this. If where we're at now is not going to get us to pray, my God, what is? I'm not using it in a blasphemous way.

I'm saying, my God, God, what? What is going to get us to pray? Call down heaven. In the last area here, it's called a doxology for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Some manuscripts don't have it.

Some do. Some say added by the reformers, but there's early church fathers that also quote it to me. The discussion is pointless unless you want to show how smart you are.

But it's biblical truth. For thine is the kingdom. Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

What has power over you today? That is not stronger than the living God. He's saying thine. Your.

You are the kingdom. We think of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, America. No, thy kingdom.

Every kingdom. Every aspect of the universe sits under his control. Thy kingdom.

Everything is your kingdom. Everything is your power. Everything is for your glory.

And you're going to go and talk to that God. You're going to get on your hands and knees and praise God and worship Him and pray. And the Father of Heaven is going to hear your prayers.

He's going to rend the heavens. He's going to begin to minister to you. He's going to see you through.

How in the world have we become so complacent in this area? Guys, this muscle has to be trained. If you don't have kids yet, get ready. If you have kids, you should be praying.

If you have grandkids, you should be praying. Look at what the culture they're growing in. Do you see what's going on? I mean, I read statistics now in youth groups and different things.

It says parents get ready because whoever your daughter marries, 95% chance they'll already be addicted to pornography. Opioid abuse. They don't even know what to do.

The nation doesn't know what to do. What are we doing? Everybody's ODing. The highest OD rate on opiates and things in our history.

Nobody has the answers. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. You have the answer.

You have the answer. God, you do. Let's look to you.

Where's the church? All my prayer meetings or prayer mornings or worship mornings, yeah, we'll come in for worship and a preaching and then I want to go eat. That's not going to come against the darkness. You need to pull down the strongholds with the weapon of prayer.

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