

You plus God Equals A Majority

by Shane Idleman

This sermon emphasizes the power of prayer and the importance of persevering in prayer, highlighting the need to call on the name of Jesus, the significance of intercession, and the spiritual warfare aspect of prayer. It encourages believers to prioritize prayer, seek the power of the Holy Spirit, maintain purity, and persevere despite challenges and delays, reminding them that God plus them is always a majority.

Scripture: 1 John 5:14, Ephesians 6:18, Matthew 6:6, James 5:16, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Romans 12:12, Luke 18:1, Philippians 4:6, 2 Corinthians 10:4, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Power of Prayer", "Perseverance in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

One of the greatest truths that you ever will know as a Christian is the title of this message. This has helped me more than anything else looking back on my life, getting through challenges and it's this, you plus God equals a majority. You plus God equals a majority.

And this is a time where the enemy is beating us up. We look in the news, we look at politics, we look at the culture, we look at Hollywood. And maybe it's just me, but it's pretty depressing when you start to become in the minority and silenced, pulpits are silenced, churches are silenced, laws are being passed that are so ungodly I can't even speak much about them from here.

And you become discouraged and a truth that we have to remember is you plus God is always a majority. However, we have to position ourselves correctly. We can't just say that and hope it all fits in place.

There's a positioning that is involved, just like setting your GPS to get somewhere. You have to position yourself. So God, how can I put myself into the majority by aligning with your word? I'm going to read something from David Wilkerson.

The title is From the Prayer Closet to the Lion's Den. Do not be deterred by adverse and confusing circumstances in your life. One does not go down from the prayer closet directly to some mountaintop victory.

Amen. Have I learned that the hard way? You may go down to the lion's den or the fiery furnace or the valley of confusion, but do not despair. God is sovereign and the shepherd is still leading.

Your suffering and confusion will give way to faith that will never fail, a faith that has been tried as gold in the fire of adversity. And in that shall persevere. So I'm going to talk about the four items here, four bullet points where we can align with God and be in that majority because really what I mean by that is God plus you as a majority means God's working through you.

God can take a small Gideon's army. God can take a shepherd boy named David. God can take one prophet and turn a nation around.

You plus God is a majority. So the first thing we have to talk about this evening is the place. You have to find the place.

Okay, what do you mean by that? Well, I'm going to read Matthew 6, Matthew 6, verse 6. But you, talking to the believers, talking to Christians, when you pray, when you pray, go into your closet and when you have shut the door, pray to your father who is in secret and your father who sees in secret will reward you openly. So what we see from here, first and foremost, is God must again become a priority. We've hit on this many times before, but it's a good reminder.

God must be the priority. There's privacy, there's intimacy. When you first started dating your spouse, was there not privacy and intimacy? You wanted to get to know them.

It was the priority. How much more God? Finding that place of solitude, getting to that place, whether it's, I remember, I don't remember, one of the old saints in one of the books I was reading, I think it might have been A.W. Tozer, he talked about a mom that said, Tozer, I can't get in a silent place. He said, just put your apron over your head and go sit in the closet and let the little kids run around.

That can be your silent place. It has to be a place where we meet God. Jesus said, when you pray, go into your closet.

In other words, go somewhere where you shut out the world, you shut out your distractions. Let me just give you a tidbit of information here. Leave the phone outside the closet and just make God the priority again.

See, because when God's the priority, he's the all-consuming fire. I've had so many things in my life compete for that relationship. Everything's competing for that relationship.

Friends, media, things to do, priority list, and God says, go somewhere and shut your place and shut yourself into a closet. It doesn't have to be a literal closet. I've got a picture at home of John Wesley's prayer room, and it wasn't big.

It just had a desk and a little sitting area. There it needs to be somewhere, I believe, where you can meet God. There should be a place of solitude and remembrance to draw strength.

Do you know how a battery is recharged? Is it put out in the sun? No, it's hooked to a recharger, and that's what the silent place does. It recharges that spiritual battery. It lifts us up, and there's a remembering that takes place.

What I like about different areas or places I go or in my own home and finding that place where you meet God, that's precious. I know people don't even want to sell their house because of that place, that prayer closet. I was reminded of the Old Testament where when Joshua took the people of Israel across one of the rivers there, and they put up these stones.

The Bible says, what meaneth these stones? What does that mean? So children, next generations would ask, why are these stones here, and Joshua and the old generation would say, let me tell you about what God did. That's why it should be hard sometimes to sell your parents' house if they pass away if you remember that prayer room, that place. That's where dad used to meet God.

That's where mom used to pray for us year in and year out. There's a place of remembrance where God moved, and God would dwell among his people. I love corporate prayer.

Don't get me wrong, but there's something special about private prayer. I cherish private prayer. God tells us to pray corporately, to agree together, but private prayer, do you know why I like private prayer? Because it's honest prayer.

We don't pray very honest in corporate prayer. We pray eloquently, and we pray spiritually, and we pray for important things. But in the private prayer area, you can cry out to God and say, oh God, take away this whatever it is, anger, pride, or jealousy.

God, I have no love in my heart. Try praying that in corporate prayer. And actually, ironically, as I read more on revivals, it's often when corporate prayer turns into private prayer, people start to be honest that revival hits a place, and people cry out, oh God, save me.

Me and Brian, as I was driving here this evening, we talked about one of the revivals. The Welsh revivals, we have a passion for revivals, and it wasn't, it was in a little prayer chapel, and this girl stood up in a youth meeting, and she said, well, if nobody's gonna say it, I'm gonna say it. I love Jesus Christ, and the spirit of God came upon that place.

Honest, soul-searching, heart-wrenching prayer. It's okay to stand up and say, God, we need you. We need you.

Our nation is crumbling. Our state is deteriorating. Our families are lost.

Oh God, we need you. Would you visit your people apart from a mighty move of God's spirit? We are lost. The number one email we receive here, you know, is where can I find a good, solid church in, and you name the state.

But the second, or third, or up there is, is they're asking, Shane, is there any hope for America? Is there any hope? Look at the, is there any hope? And I tell them, I will tell you that there is no hope apart from a mighty move of God's spirit. That's why we contend. That's why we pray.

And we know God hears the prayers of his people. I know that. The Father sees in secret.

In the private time of prayer, this is when we communicate. Can you see a team succeeding, a baseball team, a football team that doesn't communicate? Is there a business that's going to communicate? I mean, they're going to survive, and let's not talk to each other. Nothing survives without communication.

That's why I often say, before I answer someone, I say, well, I need to wait for, for, for, for orders from headquarters. Communication has to take place. And the enemy's robbing us of that time of prayer.

With what? Busyness. You know, the average family now is on the television media outlets over seven hours a day. A day, not a week.

Seven hours? You know how many books you could read in a month? You could get through the Bible in a short amount of time. And this thing's contending, because the enemy knows, if you, if you get in that prayer closet, if you get broken and humbled by God, and you're sitting there, and you're pulling down heaven, and you're humble, and you're empty, and you've got a spirit of love and gentleness, and you're praying according to God's word, and you're praying for the souls of men, and you're praying for the glory of God, those prayers must be answered. Because God is a covenant-keeping God, and when God says, if you seek me, you will find me.

If you pray or praise the prayers according to my will, I will hear you. I desire to answer the prayers of my people. Who gave you that desire in the first place? God.

And that's where the power's missing. The power of the prayer closet. Make that time somehow, somewhere, take it to God.

That's why I like that part of that movie, The War Room, where she took out the majority of her clothes. You don't need 14 pairs of shoes. Remove those things, those distractions.

Now I'll give you a disclaimer up front. Me and Brian talked about this too. It's funny.

Anywhere you go, and you start to talk about holy, extreme Christianity, they think you're out there. That's really normal Christianity, though. What they call extreme is normal Bible-believing Christianity.

There's extreme snowboarding, extreme mountain bike racing, extreme rock climbing, where that guy just climbed Mount El Capitan with no ropes, nothing. Just climbed this 3,000-foot rock. I think that's a little extreme.

But when it comes to extreme Christianity, and saying, I've given up everything for God, yes, I'm going to remove idolatry from my life so I can seek God. Yes, I'm going to remove the things that distract me, the things that are pulling down my family. Yes, I'm getting extreme, because there's extreme warfare.

We live in extremely critical times. And as the old saying goes, if not now, when? If not you, who? If not here, where? That's always God's call, is to his people. So find that place, find that place.

I even took an area of my garage and had it converted into a room where I can pray and read and seek God. And I love when my kids find me there, just broken by the power of God. I wish they'd find me there more.

I'm usually done by the time they're up, but it's that place, and they know that's where Dad's at, that's where Mom's at. We have our areas where we meet God. And I believe what Jesus said, when you pray, go into your closet.

And when you have shut the door, there's intimacy, there's privacy. God, you're the priority, I'm shutting the door. We make an appointment with everyone else.

How many people have doctor's appointments? Dentist appointments? All kinds of appointments. There's nothing wrong. God is on my calendar.

He is on my calendar every single morning that I take breath out of these lungs, I'm meeting with God, Lord willing, barring an emergency. He's on the calendar, that's my priority. That means I go to bed a little earlier than some.

That means I'm not gonna watch garbage at night that gives me garbage thoughts and then no passion for God in the morning. We're selected because God is the priority. So find that place to be in the majority of God.

Find that place to seek him. How much more, if not now, when do we need this direction from God? The discernment from God in these dire times? And then Brian touched on this, so I won't touch on it too much. But you have to have the power.

The power, so you have the place. When the place you meet with God meets the power of the Holy Spirit, watch out. That's where lives are changed.

There's a lot of dead praying. There's a lot of dead praying, but when you ignite that prayer with the power of the Holy Spirit, we read this earlier in Acts, you shall receive what? Theology when the Holy Spirit comes upon you? You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Prayer flows from a spirit-filled believer.

It flows from a spirit-filled believer. So if you have a difficult time praying, willpower is not going to cut it. It could be a spiritual problem.

Because a person filled with God's spirit wants to pray. They love prayer. Prayer is your heartbeat.

Prayer is your food. Prayer is your power. You tap into the power source.

See praying meets the power of the Holy Spirit. Without the power of the Spirit, you might as well schedule a root canal for me. It's just dead.

I'll fall asleep. There's nothing there because you have to have that power. It connects the power.

Just like what happens when you plug a light switch in or plug a light in, turn on a switch. You have to connect to that power. I remember, I've shared this before, but a little differently.

When I was operating heavy equipment, I loved digging trenches and just tearing up the road and tearing up the dirt and just big trenches and excavators and backhoes. We'd bring in long conduit for Edison, Southern California Edison, big four-inch ductile and run big, large electrical lines through those. I wouldn't do it, but Edison would.

Every time I got close to the vault, it's okay by the house where there's no connection. When you get to where they're making the connection and you hit one of those 12,000 volts of electricity with a steel tooth, unless you're grounded in the rubber in your tires, you will be electrocuted. It's common knowledge.

There is nothing to it until they connect it to the power source. A dead conduit, empty, a trench, empty, but once it was connected to the power source, that's where that life came. That's where the electricity came.

There's no difference with the Christian. We have to be connected to that. This is why prayer is not a priority in the hearts of many people.

It's hard and it's boring. Have you been there or maybe you're here tonight? Prayer actually shouldn't be boring. It's exciting.

We look forward to it, but it's like telling somebody not filled with the Spirit of God is like telling an adult to watch baby Einstein. I'm being revisited by those videos now with the baby. Or having your young child watch the news.

How long does that last? Dad, mom, I'm bored. Why? Because they're not engaged. It's not relevant.

So a spirit-filled believer, you might say, well, Shane, what does that mean to me? Well, you cry out to God. And you say, God, I want what we've been talking about all weekend. I want that infilling of the Spirit.

I want more of you. And to shoot you straight, you all know this, but I love repeating it, the only reason I'm here today is because of this point. This point, this is the only reason.

A man broken by God, filled with his Spirit, wanting to share his truth and his love and a passion for what God has done in my life and the lives of many, many more people. It's ironic, there's many books out there. I can point you to some one is They Found the Secret.

I've referenced that before. It's not an Oprah spirituality book. It's a powerful book.

But many pastors you would read about where they would be preaching and just kind of dead. The sermon's dying. And then they were mindly filled with the Spirit.

And the sermon comes alive. Isn't that interesting? The same words. The same exact words.

The same sermon. The same thing. What's the difference? I'm saying the same words, the audience is dead.

I'm filled with the Spirit of God and the audience is being convicted and lives are being changed. We come in with the spirit of expectation. We expect God to move.

I don't know about you, but I expect God to move. Samuel Chadwick was bold enough to throw all of his sermons into the fire. He said, these are the works of my own hands, my own thoughts.

He threw all his sermons into the fire one night and the book he wrote said, and then the fire of God fell upon him. Because he emptied himself of himself. And you might say, well, that's great, but I'm a mom, I'm a dad, I'm single.

What does this have to do with me? Well, you're in ministry. You are in ministry. When I quoted here the scripture from Acts, you shall receive power.

Not everyone filled on Pentecost became pastors. Did you know that? I would even argue that most of the people filled with the Spirit of God on Pentecost did not necessarily become pastors. They became ministers.

They all ministered, they brought the word of God. And people think, well, that's what pastors need. No, I actually need, I'm gonna make a bold statement here.

I need the filling of the Spirit as much as pastoring as I do parenting. Let that sink in. And I'm honest with you, I'm completely honest.

We need the Spirit of God in our marriages. That's how you unite marriages. That's how you come against the enemy.

That's how you stay in the workforce and hold on to your integrity. We need God's Spirit. And I was gonna ask the security, I've given you this analogy before, but it's so timely and got put on my heart again for some reason.

But I wanted to bring a shotgun in here this evening. And security never lets me do this. I don't know why.

No, Paul, I can't do that? Okay. I was speaking one time at an event in Hume Lake, actually, and they had a nice new shotgun they were giving away. So I had a wonderful illustration right here on the stage.

12-gauge, three-inch mag, mm. I was ready to win that thing. I don't know how they gave it away.

So I picked up this shotgun. You could do it up there. And I explained that I'm holding this gun, but it's nothing.

You wouldn't, oh, okay, big deal. Look, it's empty. But if I were to pull out a slug, three-inch magnum slug, put it in there, close the chamber, and just move it a little, you'd hit the exit doors.

What's the difference? What's the difference? Because it's an empty gun, but you bring power to it. And that's the difference. Straight as a gun barrel, theologically, but you can be just as empty.

But you put that round in the chamber, you put the Holy Spirit of God into a broken, empty vessel, and God will plow through the works of darkness. I've seen God plow through the works of darkness by one Spirit-filled believer who's contending for their family, who's contending for our state. We just talked about Hal, what was his name? Hal Rees, Brian and myself, who prayed.

It was an intercessor, great book. The book is so convicting, you'll weep as you read it. He would fast, he would pray, and he changed the course, they record, of World War II by his prayers, fasting and praying.

He believed God. Coal miners, hard men, would be brought to their knees and repentant because of one man-filled, the Spirit of God. What about Amy Carmichael? Did nothing for God, was a good Christian, nobody even knew about her until she was filled with the Spirit of God.

And then her missions, outreach, everything exploded. You, the same thing, that's why the enemy is keeping us away from this mighty, many people away from this mighty work of God's Spirit. So you have to find the place, and you have to have the power of the Holy Spirit.

If you don't have either, find them. Say, God, I need both of them. I have to have that.

And then, of course, Brian touched on this as well, the purity, the purity. What's happening in Christianity today is they're leaving this very important element of true discipleship, purity and holiness. Because they say, well, it's outdated.

It's too rigid. It's moralism. But the Bible says, come out from among them, be separate, be pure.

And I will submit this to you. I hope you remember this. What affects your prayer life more than anything? Remember this.

What affects your prayer life more than anything is how you live. It does. That's just the gospel truth.

No purity, no power. When we're pure and holy and set apart for God's shame, you're talking about sinless perfection? Oh, heavens, no. But I'm talking about a person who confesses their sin, who gives it to God, who doesn't walk in besetting sin, who comes to the altar, God, clean me.

God, create me a clean heart. Renew a right spirit within me. And from that, often from that purity comes the power.

God uses clean vessels, humble vessels, broken vessels. And many people are so, they're holding onto their sin and there's no purity. And you only pray as well as you live.

And you're seeing a big push in the church as well, but many of these popular speakers don't even talk about sin anymore. Can you believe that? The guys with 200, 300,000 downloads on YouTube, I don't even hear the word mentioned, sin. Let alone repentance, let alone judgment.

No wonder there's no power in modern Christianity. Modern Christianity, let's hear as many good, feel-good sermons as we can. Let's just live in sin, not be convicted, and don't challenge me in any way, shape, or form.

There's no power, nobody's healed, nobody's set free. That's not the church of the living God. Church of the living God is when people are being transformed and saved and set free.

And part of the problem is this, we don't abhor sin. The Bible says that. Shane, that kind of word? Yeah, abhorred, abhorred sin.

View it as something terrible. We kind of minimize it, don't we? Well, I've got to hang up. I love this one, it's my one little vice.

And Craig was sharing a story with me that I think his wife Jennifer told and heard from someone, it's so true. But it would be like this, here's how you have to view sin. This has helped me so much in the past.

I haven't used this example, but I've thought of other things. If someone you loved was killed by a knife in your home, say somebody broke in, they killed somebody, and when the police investigation was done, they gave you back that knife. Would you clean it and put it back with the other knives and use it? Of course not, it would go in the trash.

Get this thing away from me. Get this out of my house. Why? Because it killed a family member.

It destroyed something I love. See, if you approach sin that way, oh, there's power in that. No, this is going to destroy my family.

This click, this computer, this watching this, this doing this, this addiction, it's going to take me down. It's going to take my family down. I abhor it and I remove it.

God, this sin is an abomination. This sin put Christ on the cross as he stood there dying for the sins of the world, and my sin, I'm not going to mock that. I'm going to embrace God's wonderful gift of salvation and

turn from the sin.

That's old time preaching. That right, what you just heard right there, you would hear everywhere 100 years ago. But then the universities get liberal.

The churches get soft. And we start to do service. Do you know, I've been, people sent me, marketing companies have sent me information to send out to all the people in the valley and find out what's on their heart.

What do they want to hear at church? What are the seven steps to financial freedom and how can we relate to them? That's wonderful. I'd love to relate to the community. But if you begin to gauge church and your sermons by the felt needs of the world and not discuss what they really need, you'll miss helping them.

They need the gospel truth of the Bible. God's word says, I honor the prayers of a person who honors my word. Remember, he told the prophet Isaiah, my ear's not short, I'm sorry, my ear's not heavy.

Meaning, I can hear you. My hand's not short that I cannot save. But what? Your one little vice has separated me? Your bad habit? He said, your sins, your iniquities have separated me from you so I won't even hear you.

Is it possible that God does this? He doesn't want to. But is it possible? Listen, I hear your prayers. I want to answer.

He's calling up, but your sins, your iniquities have turned my face from you. I can't hear until you repent of those sins and do business with God. He says, I honor the prayers of the person who prays according to my will, but who also lives according to my will.

Woe be to the church that peddles cheap grace that softens the gospel to pastors who are cowards. Woe be to the church, I know that's hard, but it's true, it's true. When did we get away from saying the hard things that need to be said? So we look at the place, we have the power, and obviously purity is so important.

But if you're discouraged this evening, remember the encouragement from God's word as well. God just says, cry out to me. Like David did, oh God, have mercy on my soul.

God, have mercy, wash me. Wash me and I'll be as white as snow. God, cleanse me, create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me.

See, it's a humble, broken sinner crying out to God. God, I've been distant, God, I've drifted from you. Fill me again with your spirit.

That was probably one of the most requested prayers we had this morning, was people saying, I want that fire back. I want to be filled with the spirit of God again. I want the love I used to have.

Have you ever had true love for people and then you lose it? You're miserable. You're miserable. And you say, Lord, where have I become so hard and callous and cold? Well, how did that slip in? Jesus is like, come back, come back to your first love.

And the point I really want to get to that the message is tied with is this, the perseverance, the need for perseverance, amen? This is where the rubber really meets the road. This is what separates true prayer warriors from those who grow faint. It's this element of perseverance from 1 John.

And this is the confidence. Did you know you have confidence as a believer that we have toward God that if we ask anything according to his will, what? He might hear you. He'll think about it.

He'll consider it. It says if you pray anything according to his will, he hears us. Now, it doesn't necessarily mean he answers right away, but as long as I know God's hearing me, that's good enough for me.

I can hold on to that for a little bit. If I know he's hearing, he's listening, he's sovereign, it's in his time, I can hold on to that. So what is perseverance? It's this, persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.

And I would say this is one of the great tactics of the enemy. He fights against perseverance all the time. He wants to discourage.

He wants to bring in delays. He wants to get you off your knees. He wants you to stop praying.

And that discouragement comes in. Have you ever been there? Of course. That's what stops real fervent praying, discouragement.

That's why people don't come to prayer meetings. They don't see prayers being answered. They're discouraged.

They're in a rut. But think about this. According to the Bible, perseverance is a fruit of the Spirit.

Godly people filled with God's Spirit persevere. Love, joy, peace, goodness, long suffering. They suffer long.

They continue to persevere even in the midst of challenges. It's also a mark of genuine faith. Somebody who has genuine faith has perseverance.

Those who persevere to the end shall be saved. There's a perseverance. There's a fighting.

I don't like it any more than you do. I would love that the Bible said sit at home and eat ice cream and watch Netflix all day, and that is how you succeed in the Christian life. I would be fine with that.

The flesh would love it. But we know that's not true. There's a perseverance, and it's essential for spiritual warfare.

We read a lot about spiritual warfare, but one of the greatest weapons you'll ever have, of course, is the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of self, all these things. But to persevere, to keep fighting, to keep moving forward, to not give ground. It's interesting, when God would call people to fight such as Moses, he said, Moses, having done all, having done all, continue moving around and fighting and running.

He said, no, having done all, just stand. Stand there with your loins girded about with truth. Guard your family.

Fight, raise up the banner. Fight for victory and persevere. And the enemy can't knock you back.

He can't take you out. He's a defeated foe. He is the enemy of God, but he is not equal with God.

All you have to say is the name of Jesus, and you hold your ground. Greater is he that it's within me than he that's in the world. And you persevere, and you hold that ground.

It's perseverance. Something, I'll admit to you, it's pretty interesting. That's why I didn't disconnect Netflix.

I probably watch it too much. But there's something called, you can Google it, the fittest man on earth. These guys are crazy right now.

It's a guy named Froning versus Matt Frazier. And they're closing in on this. You would get sick how they train.

I mean, it's amazing. Swimming miles, jogging miles, lifting boulders, 50 pull-ups, and they're running for this contest of being the fittest person on earth. And I looked at some of their routines.

The sleep, the daily routine, the clean diet, core stabilization training, cellular adaption, oxygen increase training, and lots and lots and lots of different things. Proprioception, neuromuscular facilitation. Mike, you know what that is, don't you? It's flexibility as you're training a muscle, you're also flex, and these guys, and it's a crown that perishes.

Why shouldn't we be training for this warfare, training for this battle, and being fit in the spiritual realm? They're lifting tires, big, huge tires. Are we lifting our families up? They're swimming and jogging and not giving in. Are we persevering and not giving in for a crown that never perishes? For something that is far more, far more valuable.

The hearts and souls of men and women, our children. And my heart breaks because these guys, you can be the fittest in the world and still be on the way to hell. Priorities are misaligned.

I like to read this once every year because it's a great reminder on perseverance. It's a couple different prayer warriors. E.M. Bounds was born in 1835.

He began his three-hour prayer routine at 4 a.m. To him, prayer was not a short prelude, it was an overpowering priority. Edward Payson, who ministered during the Second Great Awakening, was said to have wore grooves into his hardwood floors as a result of prayer. It was said of John Hyde, who left for the mission field in 1892, that he would stay on his face before God until the answer came.

It was not uncommon for the great Scottish preacher, John Welsh, who died in 1622 to spend four to six hours in prayer. John Fletcher, one of the leaders of the Methodist movement, stained the walls of his room with the breath of his prayers until his death in 1785. And I can see the emails coming now.

Ah, Shane, nobody has that much time. Nobody can do that. Stop complaining, get on your face and spend 30 minutes.

It's not always the time factor, it's the God factor. Make God a priority, let him open up the day. I don't have seven hours either, but I've got some time.

I've got some time to see God. And according to the media, if you turn off your TV and internet, you do have seven hours a day. How's that for you? See, it has nothing to do with time.

It has everything to do with prioritizing the time we have. That's really the key. And I believe in this day and age where our state is, I've got this burden, Brian's got this burden, many of you have this burden of interceding.

There's something very powerful about interceding. You don't even know the prayers that are being answered when we intercede for our nation, when we intercede for our state, our local officials. God hears the prayers of intercession.

And Isaiah, he said he saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no one to intercede. Ezekiel breaks my heart. God says, I look for a man from among my people.

Can you imagine the heart of God even today saying, I look from among my people? I looked. Was there anyone here that would stand in the gap all night and pray for the land, build up a wall, build up a bulwark, stand in the gap before my people, but I found no one. God's eyes go to and fro to look for those who are interceding.

And perseverance is about pressing in and pressing in. And I've noticed more than anything, it's a heart cry. It's a heart cry.

You don't set a timer and go, okay, there's an hour. All right, let me know when that hour's up. It's pressing in and praying, oh God, will thou not revive us again? Oh God, will you not revive us again? Think about this.

I know in my case, he didn't pull me up out of the cesspool and give me boldness to quit. He didn't save you and call you and redeemed you and put the spirit of the living God in you for you to quit. He equipped us to persevere and to move forward.

I love that song. I think it's Iron Bell. It said, you called me out of darkness.

You silence every lie. And no other voice will define me. I belong to you.

And I already told you some of this last week. I got so excited about this message, I share it a little bit. But prayer is not something to take lightly.

It's actually warfare. Did you know that? Above everything else, it's not, oh God, please open this job opportunity. That's good.

Give me direction on selling my house. It's okay. Praying for, it's all good.

But at the heart of prayer is warfare. Warfare. Taking thoughts captive, doing battle.

This is how I fight my battle. On my face and on my knees, calling down heaven. Heaven listens.

Prayer is warfare. It's also this, it's the trumpet call to battle. It's the battering ram that knocks down strongholds.

It's the hammer that crushes Satan. It's the fire that ignites the infilling of the spirit. It's the sword that strikes down fear.

It's the weapon that decimates demonic activity. Prayer is what covers your family, it saves your children, and it restores marriages. And every time I preach about the power of prayer, I hear just a holy rumbling.

Just heaven waiting at that name. We sing that song, that name. That name of Jesus.

And I think we need to bring back heart-searching, soul-saving, prevailing prayer. We need to crush our pride. We need to kill our boredom.

And pray, God, give us a passionate desire for prayer. Just speak the name. Another song I like, it says that.

Speak the name. Heaven is waiting for the mention of his name. The spirit is moving, burning like a flame, healing the broken by the one we proclaim.

And it goes on to say, raise it up. Raise it up, raise up that name. Speak that name.

Do we remember how powerful that name is? Powerful that name, that name of Jesus. What other name can tell the Atlantic and the Pacific to stop? Open blind eyes, open deaf ears, allow the mute to speak, cast out the demonic realm. Tell a little girl, Talitha Kumai, I say get up and arise, little girl.

Go to Lazarus, I speak life into that dead body. Everywhere he went, he was not challenged, he was not cornered, he was not beaten down, he was not put back, he went in the boldness of the power of the Holy Spirit and in the power of who he was. He was the son of the living God.

So when Jesus says, call on me and I will hear, listen and I will hear your prayers, call on the only name that says, if the devil is harassing you, call on my name. If the government, if I harass, whoever is harassing, call on the only name that says that name is Jesus. And he will see you through persevering prayer, heart-wrenching prayer, where you're holding on to the cross and saying, God, no matter what happens, no matter what happens in our nation, no matter what happens to our families, we're holding on to the cross.

No matter when they start to call good evil and evil good, by the way, it's happening. You call on that name of Jesus. I'm amazed at the city council meetings, the places in Washington, D.C., Sacramento.

You can pray all kinds of prayers, but don't pray in Buddha, Allah, Confucius. Those names, there's no power. But when you say Jesus, when you say Jesus, I've surrendered my life, he is Lord of my life.

Even demons have to tremble at that name. How precious the power, the power you hold in your heart and in your mind to persevere and allow Christ to fight your battles. Saying, what does that look like? I'm going through a lot, give it to God.

Call on me, cast your cares upon me. He who is weak and heavy laden, come to me and I will give you rest. Believe on me as the scriptures say, and out of your belly will what? Flow rivers of living water.

And I believe when Jesus walked to that pulpit, I would have loved to see that sermon. It was short but so powerful. Can you imagine, he's just standing there looking in the synagogue and said, the spirit of the living God is upon me.

And he has anointed me, he's called me to set the captives free. He's called me to open blind eyes. He's called me to preach the gospel to the poor.

And he does it through us. The same call, that same anointing, that same unction. We use those words sometimes haphazardly.

That means the power of God resting in your heart. The power of God. Wasn't sure if I wanted to share some of this but sometimes I feel really, I feel defeated in prayer.

Instead of prayers being answered, they look like they're going backward. You ever been there? You're praying for someone, it's not getting better. It's getting worse.

You're praying for situations. They're not getting better. I've spent, at best of my recollection, probably 18 years praying for revival.

Being discouraged. And then God started to just remind me of all the lives that are being changed. All the lives that are being changed across the United States even other countries.

Because he doesn't follow our plans exactly. He's got his own purposes and plans. And I've just been praying for revival, I've been praying for the churches.

God, where's the power, where's the anointing, where's the unction? And it gets hard. It gets hard to continue in that. Because every time you pray, you go on the news, it looks like a new law has been passed.

A new perversion has been okayed. A new something to get rid of Christianity and all these things and parental rights and it's like, you're bombarded. It's like, what do you do? What do you do? And the only hope I have is to hang on to the cross.

The only hope I have is to hold on to Jesus Christ. And the more I get into his word, the more I begin to remember who he is and what he has done, the stronger I become spiritually. 10 foot tall and bulletproof is an understatement.

Because you feel the power and glory of God and the enemy begins to attack us in our minds. You're not doing anything, that doesn't matter. God doesn't see, why are you wasting your time? That's why the Bible says, take every thought, what? Captive.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, the weapons of our warfare. Weapons of our warfare are not carnal. They're mighty through God, for what? For the pulling down of strongholds.

Something that's built in our life, a stronghold. Pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. So you can command of the high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, the decadence in our society.

We can pull those down, how? By taking our thoughts captive and remembering that you plus God is the majority. I just wanted to open up to you about that frustration. It's a frustration I have about revival, about just seeing things in our nation.

But God's been dealing with me this week to keep persevering. Without that word, without perseverance, what would happen? We would fall apart. We would give up.

I think God hears the prayers of his people.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/you-plus-god-equals-a-majority/>

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