



Conquering Prayerlessness

FULLNESS

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*"As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord
by failing to pray for you." 1 Samuel 12:23 (NIV '84)*

*"Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation."
Matthew 26:40-41*

*"Take care brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the
living God." Hebrews 3:12*

*"Oh faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?"
Matthew 17:17*

"Oh you of little faith." 6 X Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20; Luke 12:28

**30 years ago I began my prayer journey.
30 days ago, God rebuked me for the first time of prayerlessness.
He gave me one of the clearest rebukes I have ever heard, "Fred, you are not
praying enough—you are not praying enough to sustain the kingdom-advancing
ministry I have entrusted to you." That single rebuke cut me to the core, lead me
in repentance, and infused in me the hope that Christ would not only expose the
sin of prayerlessness, but deliver me and impart to me the fullness of prayer He
has for me.**

Illustration: Andrew Murray addressed a conference of ministers in South Africa, April 11-14, 1912 on the searching topic of "The State of the Church," calling for repentance from a lack of power and a lack of prayer. Murray led them to repent from the sin of prayerlessness, as one of the deepest roots of evil. They began to see that the work of Christ through the church depends entirely on prayer. Andrew Murray published these messages given in South Africa in a book entitled *The Prayer Life* (Whitaker House 1981). The titles of the first three chapters are 1) "The Sin of Prayerlessness," 2) "The Fight Against Prayerlessness," and 3) "How to be Delivered from Prayerlessness." Memorable quotes from *The Prayer Life* include:

"The sin of prayerlessness is one of the deepest roots of evil." p.6

"It is only the prayerless that are too proud to own up to prayerlessness." p.9

"In a meeting of ministers there is probably no single sin which each one of us ought to acknowledge with deeper shame—guilty, verily guilty, than the sin of prayerlessness." p.13

"The great stumbling block in the way of victory over prayerlessness is the secret feeling that we shall never be in the blessing of being delivered from it." p.33

A. Exposing the Sin of Prayerlessness

*"Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation."
Matthew 26:40-41*

The sin of prayerlessness is among the sins of omission mentioned by the Apostle Paul.

"For I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I ought."

Romans 7:15.

The reason we do not gain victory over prayerlessness is because we look at it nearly as a weakness, rather than a sin. We disguise the hideousness of the sin with excuses like lack of time, distractions, laziness, and business.

1. Prayerlessness is linked to the big sins of pride, unbelief and idolatry (lust and greed.)

"Take care brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God."

Hebrews 3:12

Pride - I don't need to pray; I need to do it myself.

Unbelief - I'm not sure prayer will make any difference any way.

Idolatry (lust, greed) - I put my hope in what I can see, not in what I do not see.

2. Prayerlessness is linked to specific demonic strongholds—bitterness, religious spirits, hypocrisy.

Bitterness - It's not fair; I deserve better.

Religious spirits - I put my hope in my religious routine, not in the manifest presence of Christ.

Hypocrisy - I will keep the religious machinery moving, even though I don't encounter the living God.

3. Prayerlessness has the ill-effect on our spiritual lives—powerlessness, ineffectiveness, barrenness.

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

James 5:16b (NIV '84)

Powerlessness - Much prayer, much power; little prayer, little power; no prayer, no power.

Ineffectiveness - One of the greatest tragedies of prayerlessness is the inability to hear from God, which makes the prayerless person utterly ineffective.

Barrenness - Jesus linked fruitfulness with prayer.

"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given to you. This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples."

John 15:7-8 (NIV '84)

4. Prayerlessness is a rut. It's a lifestyle issue and it requires far more than self effort to conquer.

Essentially prayerlessness is a result of the flesh or our sin nature that wars against the work of the Holy Spirit. In order to conquer prayerlessness, therefore we don't need to try, we need to die!

"For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for they are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do."

Galatians 5:17 (NIV '84)

*"For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live."
Romans 8:13*

B. Repenting of the Sin of Prayerlessness

The effectiveness of our prayer lives is contingent on the effectiveness of our repentance from our prayerlessness.

1. Don't beat around the bush; expose and renounce the sin of prayerlessness. Don't call it a weakness; call it a sin—a sin that is stealing from you the fullness of Christ's blessings. You should loathe this sin like a spiritual cancer that is growing among your organs and zapping you of power, effective ministry, and fruitfulness. Write out your statement of repentance in the space provided below.

Father God, I expose my ugly sin of prayerlessness

2. Identify in yourself the other sins to which prayerlessness is connected—pride, unbelief, idolatry and the like.

Father God, I recognize

3. Pause in prayer and rebuke the devil, the enemy of your soul.

Satan, I bind you and rebuke you. I command you to be gone from me, for it is written, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." I recognize your efforts to hinder my prayer life and I specifically bind the spirits you have set against me, the spirits of

I command these spirits to be gone from me right now, to go to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, never to return to me again. I am free from you now and forever, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Now ask the Holy Spirit to impart to you the prayer life He has for you.

Father God, take control of my prayer life, mobilize the full prayer life of Christ in me. Your Holy Spirit is a praying spirit. Take control of my mind, will, and emotions, that I might pray like Jesus.

C. Conquering the Sin of Prayerlessness

Prayer~~lessness~~ is the work of the flesh, the sin nature, and our old man.

Prayer~~fulness~~ is the work of the Holy Spirit in our new man.

We will never be able to boast in our prayer lives, because a robust prayer life full of dramatic answers to specific prayers is always the work of God in and through us.

1. The Holy Spirit is a praying Spirit. *"... praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints "* Ephesians 6:18
2. The Holy Spirit helps strive with us to teach us to pray. *"Likewise, the Spirit helps (GK. Synantilanbanomai) us in our weakness, for we do not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us, with groanings too deep for words."* Romans 8:26
"Help" is the Greek word Synantilanbanomai, which is to strive, to help in collaboration with.
3. When the disciples asked Christ to teach them to pray, He pointed them to the Holy Spirit. *"Lord, teach us to pray How much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask?"* Luke 11:1,13
4. Because the Holy Spirit is a praying Spirit, He makes it possible for us to pray continually. *"Pray without ceasing."* 1 Thessalonians 5:17
5. When Christ told His disciples to pray for one hour, He obviously made it **possible** for them to pray for one hour. *"Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation."* Matthew 26:40-4

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