

ENTER THE PRAYER FIGHT

BREAKING STRONGHOLDS AND MOVING MOUNTAINS



PAUL JOSEPH

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Before the Battle: A Word to the Reader

I want to be honest with you right from the first page. This is not a gentle book about saying nice words before you fall asleep. It is not a collection of pretty prayers to recite when you feel spiritual. This is a book about war.

Now, before you put it down and reach for something softer, let me tell you what kind of war I mean. I do not mean a war against God, as if we had to wrestle Him to the ground before He would bless us. And I do not mean a war against people, as if the person who irritates you at work were the real enemy. The Bible is very plain about who we are fighting.

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12)

There is an enemy. He is real. He has a strategy. And one of his favorite strategies, maybe his very favorite, is to keep the people of God from praying the way God intended them to pray.

Notice I did not say he keeps them from praying at all. He does not need to. Plenty of believers pray every single day and still live defeated. They pray, but they pray like beggars outside a locked door. They pray, but their prayers are really their worries said out loud with a "Dear Lord" at the front and an "Amen" at the back. They pray, but they cry and plead and bargain for things that Jesus already paid for in full at the cross. And the

enemy is perfectly comfortable with that kind of praying, because it does not cost him a single inch of ground.

What terrifies the devil is something else entirely. It is a believer who knows who he is in Christ. It is a son or daughter of God who walks into the prayer closet not as a nervous visitor, but as a soldier walking into a command center. It is a man or woman who opens the Word of God, finds out what has already been settled in heaven, and then opens their mouth and enforces it on earth.

That is what this book is about. I want to take you out of the begging line and put you on the front line.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THESE PAGES

We are going to start with the battlefield itself. Where is this war fought? Why does the enemy fight prayer harder than almost anything else? Then we will walk into the secret place, the closet Jesus told us to enter, and we will see why closing that door is the beginning of every victory.

From there we are going to dig into something many Christians have never been taught: why God has chosen to work on earth through the prayers of His people. Once you see this, you will never again think your prayers are a small thing. Then we will climb up to the place where God has already seated you, at the right hand of the Father, in Christ, far above every principality and power. You cannot pray from the throne if you do not know you are sitting on it.

We will deal honestly with the things that weaken our praying: begging, fear, the phrase "I'm trying," the habit of asking God for more faith when He has already given us the measure we need. We will learn how to speak to mountains instead of about them. We will see how thanksgiving turns prayer from a heavy chore into a joyful act of faith, and how keeping our eyes on Jesus keeps us walking on the water instead of sinking under it.

Then we will pick up the weapons. We will pray the very prayers the apostle Paul prayed for the churches. We will learn how the Holy Spirit helps us when we do not know what to pray. We will learn how to bind the strong man, pull down strongholds, and cast down every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. We will see how every curse was broken at the cross, and how to walk out from under one. We will tackle the wandering mind, that frustrating habit of starting to pray and ending up thinking about the grocery list. We will talk about persistence, about the kind of prayer that stays until heaven answers. We will learn how to stand in the gap for others, and how to begin every morning from victory instead of panic. And finally, we will see why God always builds order before He sends the miracle.

A FEW THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE WE START

First, I write the way I talk. I want the cookies on the bottom shelf where everybody can reach them. If you want deep theology dressed up in long words, you will be disappointed. If you want the truth of God made plain enough to use tomorrow morning, you are in the right place.

Second, I quote Scripture a lot. That is on purpose. My opinion will not move one mountain. God's Word will move every one of them. So when you see a verse in bold, slow down. Read it twice. Say it out loud if you can. Those are the parts of this book that carry the real power.

Third, this book is meant to be lived, not just read. At the end of most chapters you will find a short prayer or declaration. Do not skip over them. Pray them. Speak them. Make them your own. A soldier does not become a soldier by reading the training manual. He becomes a soldier by going through the training.

And fourth, do not read this alone if you can help it. Take what you learn and pass it on. Pray with your spouse. Teach your

children. Gather two or three friends around the kitchen table. Jesus promised that where two or three agree in His name, He is right there in the middle of them. A praying church is not built by one person reading a book. It is built by one person reading a book and then teaching somebody else.

So pick up your armor. Tighten your belt. Let us walk into the fight together.

The enemy is real. But he has already been defeated. And you are about to find out just how much power God has placed in your mouth.

CHAPTER 1

Enter the Prayer Fight

Picture this. You are a soldier stepping onto a battlefield. The air is thick. The stakes could not be higher, because what is being decided here is not just the outcome of one afternoon, but the destiny of souls. The enemy across the field is relentless. He does not take days off. He does not get tired of trying.

But here is the good news. You are not unarmed. And you are not alone. And the outcome of this war was decided two thousand years ago on a hill outside Jerusalem.

That is the picture the apostle Paul paints for us at the end of his letter to the Ephesians. Most of us have heard the passage so many times that we have stopped hearing it. So let me give it to you in plain, modern words, the way a commanding officer might shout it to his troops before they go over the wall:

Hold your ground. Tighten the belt of truth around your waist. Wear righteousness like a breastplate. Lace up your boots with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. Above everything else, raise the shield of faith, because it puts out every flaming arrow the evil one fires at you. Put on salvation like a helmet. Grab the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And then pray. Pray in the Spirit on every occasion, with every kind of prayer and request. Stay alert. Keep on praying for all of God's people.

Here is how Paul actually wrote it:

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—" (Ephesians 6:18)

Did you notice where the armor passage ends? It does not end with the sword. It ends with prayer. Paul dresses the soldier from head to toe, puts a weapon in his hand, and then tells him where to go and fight. And the place he sends him is the place of prayer.

That armor is not ceremonial clothing. It is not a costume for the church Christmas play. It is battle-tested gear for real warfare. And the most important battlefield in the whole Christian life is not out in the streets, and it is not in the pulpit. It is on your knees.

PRAYER IS NOT PREPARATION FOR THE BATTLE

Many believers think of prayer as the warm-up before the real work begins. You pray a little, and then you go out and do the important stuff: you preach, you serve, you teach, you witness, you work. Prayer is the stretching exercise before the race.

That is not how heaven sees it. Prayer is not the preparation for the battle. Prayer is the battle. It is where the fight is actually won. By the time the answer shows up in the natural, by the time the sick body recovers, the prodigal comes home, the door opens, or the stronghold breaks, the victory has already been secured in the place of prayer. What you see afterward is simply the visible evidence of something that was settled in the invisible.

So much can be accomplished through prayer. And that is exactly why the enemy fights it so hard. Think about it. Why would the devil care whether you spend twenty minutes a day talking to God? If prayer were just a religious habit, a nice little ritual like lighting a candle, he would not bother with it at all. But he does bother. He bothers a great deal. He will throw every distraction he has at you the moment you decide to pray. Your phone will ring. Your mind will wander. You will suddenly remember six things you should be doing. You will feel tired, or bored, or unworthy.

Why? Because when a believer prays in faith, he calls on the power and authority of heaven to accomplish the will of God on earth. The enemy knows that a praying Christian is a dangerous Christian. A man or woman on their knees in faith can undo in an hour what the devil spent years building.

THREE THINGS EVERY DISCIPLE DOES

If you were to boil discipleship down to its essence, I believe it comes down to three main things.

The first is soaking in His Word. Jesus said that if we abide in Him and His words abide in us, we will bear much fruit. A disciple is someone who lives in the Word the way a fish lives in water.

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you"

(John 15:7)

The second is witnessing. Jesus called us the light of the world. A disciple tells others about Jesus and wins souls. He does not hide his light under a basket.

The third is praying with fire and force in order to enforce the kingdom of God on earth and destroy the works of the devil. That is what this book is about.

Notice how these three fit together. The Word fills you. Prayer releases what the Word has put in you against the enemy. And witnessing carries the fruit of that victory to a world that desperately needs it. Take away any one of the three and the other two start to wobble. A believer who reads but never prays becomes a walking library with no power. A believer who prays but never reads the Word has no ammunition. And a believer who reads and prays but never witnesses has turned the gospel into a private hobby.

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8)

Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. He did it at the cross. And now He has handed that same commission to His body, the church. We enforce His victory. We carry it out into every place the enemy is still pretending to be in charge. And one of the primary ways we do that is through prayer.

THE FOUNDATION UNDER EVERYTHING

Preaching is vital. Service is essential. Giving matters. Teaching matters. But without prayer, all of these efforts are like building castles on the sand. They may be beautiful for a season, but they are destined to collapse when the storm comes.

Prayer is the foundation. Every aspect of ministry has to be built on the bedrock of prayer, or it will not stand. Without it, even the most eloquent words and skillful deeds will crumble. A prayerless ministry is a failing ministry, no matter how busy it looks on the outside. The success of every Christian endeavor hinges on prayer. It is the lifeblood of the work of the Spirit. It is the pipe through which divine power flows.

I have seen churches with wonderful buildings, wonderful programs, and wonderful music that were spiritually dry as a bone. And I have seen tiny groups of believers meeting in a living room, with no budget and no sound system, who shook their whole neighborhood because they knew how to pray. The difference was never the building. The difference was the prayer.

No man is greater than his prayer life. You can be gifted. You can be eloquent. You can know your Bible inside and out. But the measure of your spiritual impact will never rise above the measure of your time alone with God.

STOP CALLING IT A CHORE

We have to stop viewing prayer as drudgery. We have to stop treating it like a box to check on the Christian to-do list, somewhere between "read my chapter" and "take out the trash."

Imagine a soldier who treated his weapon that way. "Well, I suppose I ought to clean my rifle again. What a bore." No soldier who has ever been in a real firefight thinks that way. He knows his weapon is the difference between life and death. He takes care of it because he knows what it can do.

When you understand what prayer really is, you will never again call it boring. Prayer is where we enforce Christ's victory over darkness. It is where we use the authority He gave us to line up earth with heaven. It is where we sit down with our Father and receive our orders for the day.

Think about this. Meek believers, people nobody has ever heard of, kneel down in secret. Grandmothers in small apartments. Young mothers in the middle of the night while the baby sleeps. Factory workers on their lunch break. And their quiet, whispered prayers shake spiritual strongholds and command the will of God against demonic forces. Heaven hears them. Hell feels them. Mountains move. Chains break. Destinies shift. That is what prayer does.

THE MANY FRONTS OF THE FIGHT

The prayer fight has many fronts, and each one matters. Let me give you a quick overview of some of them now. We will go deeper into each of these throughout this book.

Prayer overcomes anxiety. When worry threatens to overwhelm you, prayer becomes your refuge.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which

surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7)

Through prayer we trade our burdens for His peace, and that peace stands guard over our hearts and minds like a soldier at the gate of a fortress.

Prayer resets the compass of our priorities. Jesus told us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all the other things would be added to us. In prayer, our desires get lined up with His purposes. We stop chasing things and start seeking Him, and the things come looking for us.

Persistent prayer wins battles. Jesus taught His disciples to keep praying and never give up.

"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1)

There is a kind of prayer that is deep and agonizing, and it is powerful. The Bible tells us that Jesus Himself offered up prayers with strong crying and tears. That kind of prayer, born of a deep burden, is where many miracles are birthed.

And there is also the quiet, unassuming, whispered prayer of faith that moves mountains. Jesus said that faith the size of a tiny mustard seed is enough to tell a mountain to move, and it will obey. Some of the mightiest prayers ever prayed were barely above a whisper.

Unceasing prayer sustains us. Paul told the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing. That does not mean you walk around with your eyes closed all day. It means you live in a constant attitude of dependence on God, in an ongoing conversation that invites Him into every moment, knowing He is always ready to help you and strengthen you.

And best of all, we never fight alone. Jesus Himself, our great example of a prayer warrior, is right now at the right hand of the

Father, praying for us.

"Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34)

And the Holy Spirit lives inside of us to help us pray when we do not know how.

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26)

THE WHOLE GODHEAD IS LOOKING FOR INTERCESSORS

Stop and think about that for a moment. The Father is looking for vessels through whom His compassion can flow. The Son is interceding at the right hand of God. The Holy Spirit is groaning within us with prayers too deep for words. The whole of the Godhead is involved in prayer. Together they yearn over lost souls, over hurting families, over nations in darkness. And they are looking for people on earth through whom to pour out that passion.

Too often we neglect this sacred calling. We fill our hours with trivial things while heaven waits for willing hearts. We scroll through our phones for an hour and then say we did not have time to pray.

Here is the truth, and I want you to write it down somewhere you will see it: your secret life with God determines your public power. If your prayer closet stays empty, your ministry will stay empty too. It may be loud. It may be busy. But it will be empty of the one thing that matters, which is the power of God.

On the other hand, time spent in God's presence leaves a heavenly fragrance on your life. Quiet confidence replaces fear.

Unshakable faith replaces doubt. Divine peace steadies you in the middle of life's storms. And spiritual energy turns you into a living demonstration of His power. People will notice, even if they cannot put their finger on what it is. They will sense that you have been with Jesus.

WHAT KIND OF PRAYING ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Before we go any further, I need to clear something up. When I say "prayer fight," some people picture a red-faced Christian screaming at the ceiling until he is hoarse. That is not what I mean.

The prayer fight is not about whining and crying and begging God to please, please do something. It is not about working up enough emotion to finally get His attention. God is not hard of hearing, and He is not reluctant. The prayer fight is about coming to God with the power of His Word, standing in the authority Jesus purchased for us, and commanding the works of the devil to be destroyed.

Some days that will be loud. Some days it will be a whisper. Some days it will be tears. Some days it will be laughter. But it will always be rooted in what God has said, and it will always be prayed from victory, not toward it.

That is the difference between a beggar and a soldier. The beggar stands outside the gate and hopes someone notices him. The soldier walks through the gate with the King's orders in his hand and carries them out.

In the chapters that follow, I am going to show you from the Word of God exactly why you can pray like that. I am going to show you where you are seated, what you have been given, and how to use it. But for now I simply want you to settle one thing in your heart. You were not saved to sit on the sidelines. You were saved to enter the fight.

A PRAYER TO BEGIN

Father, I thank You that I am not unarmed and I am not alone. Thank You for the armor You have given me: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is Your Word. Today I stop treating prayer as a chore. I see it as the battlefield where the victory of the cross is enforced. Teach me to pray. Fill me with Your Word. Lead me by Your Spirit. Make my secret life with You strong, so that my public life will carry Your power. I enter the prayer fight today, in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Close That Door

Imagine a door. Not just any door. This is the door to a hidden room, a place untouched by the noise of the world. No television blaring. No notifications buzzing. No one asking you for anything. Behind this door is the place where heaven bends low to meet you.

Jesus pointed to that door when He taught His disciples how to pray.

"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (Matthew 6:6)

That one verse holds a whole school of prayer inside it. Go in. Shut the door. Pray to your Father. He sees. He rewards. Let us walk through it slowly, because I believe every victory in the prayer fight begins right here, behind a closed door.

FIRST, WHAT PRAYER IS NOT

Before Jesus told us what to do, He told us what not to do. He looked at the religious leaders of His day and held them up as an example of how not to pray.

"And 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" (Matthew 6:5)

Those men prayed long, loud, beautiful prayers. They prayed on street corners where the crowds were thickest. They used

impressive words. And Jesus said they already had their reward. What was it? The applause of people. That was all they wanted, and that was all they got. Heaven was not impressed.

The motive of prayer can never be to be seen by others. The moment we pray to impress people, we have stopped talking to God. We are giving a performance, and the only audience that matters has left the room.

Then Jesus added something else.

"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. 'Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him'" (Matthew 6:7-8)

Vain repetition is reciting words without a relationship behind them. It is the idea that if I just say enough words, or say the same words enough times, God will finally give in. That is how pagans prayed to their idols. They thought their gods had to be worn down. Our Father is not like that. He knows what you need before you open your mouth.

This is why I am careful about some of the ways prayer gets organized in some contemporary churches. I love it when believers pray together. The book of Acts is full of it. The early church gathered in one accord and prayed, and the building shook. But they prayed in faith, with one heart and one mind. Today, some prayer chains seem built on the idea that if we can get enough names on the list, we will finally pressure God into acting. That is not what the Word teaches. The Bible says it is the prayer of faith that saves the sick. It is not the number of people praying, it is the faith in the praying, that moves heaven.

PRAYER IS NOT A PERFORMANCE

Prayer is not a performance. It is a private audience with the King of kings. When you close the door, you are not walking onto a stage. You are walking into a sanctuary.

Behind that closed door there is no need for eloquence or theatrics. Nobody is grading your grammar. Nobody is counting your minutes. You do not have to use old-fashioned words or put on your special prayer voice. You are not trying to impress anybody. You are just a child talking to his Father.

And here is what is so beautiful. Behind that door, God sees not only your words but your heart. He sees the fears you have never spoken out loud. He sees the hopes you are almost afraid to admit. He sees the raw truth of who you are and where you are. And He does not turn away. He listens. He leans in.

Jesus said the Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. What are those rewards? They are far greater than human applause. Peace that passes understanding. Strength for battles nobody else knows you are fighting. Victories over your fears. Joy that no circumstance can steal. Wisdom for the decision you have been agonizing over. Those are the rewards of the closed door.

WHAT CLOSING THE DOOR MEANS

Closing the door is a physical act, but it is also a spiritual one. It means shutting out distractions. It means shutting out the clamor of approval-seeking. It means shutting out, for a little while, the weight of all the daily demands that are pressing on you.

In that solitude, you stand alone with God. Not in shame, but in intimacy. It is as if you were stepping into the Holy of Holies, the inner room of the tabernacle where only the high priest could go once a year. Except now, because of the blood of Jesus, you can go in every day. The veil has been torn from top to bottom. The way is open.

"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Hebrews 10:19-20)

Notice the word boldness. You do not sneak into the secret place. You do not tiptoe in hoping you will not get thrown out. You walk in with confidence, because the blood of Jesus has already paid your entrance fee.

THE COMMAND CENTER

I want you to see the secret place in two ways at the same time.

The first way is as a garden. It is a quiet place of fellowship where seeds of faith are sown in silence and watered with trust. It is a place of rest and renewal, not defeat. You do not retreat into prayer because you are losing. You retreat into prayer the way a soldier goes back to camp to be fed, rested, re-armed, and briefed. And when you come out of that garden, the fruit of the time you spent there becomes evident to everybody around you: wisdom, courage, clarity, peace.

The second way to see the secret place is as a command center. In every war, there is a room somewhere far from the front line where the real decisions are made. Maps are spread out on the table. Orders are given. Strategy is set. The soldiers on the front line may never see that room, but everything they do flows from what was decided there.

Your prayer closet is that room. When you step into it, you are not running away from the battle. You are stepping into the place where the battle is directed. You receive your orders from the King. You speak His Word over the situations in your life. You bind what needs to be bound and loose what needs to be loosed. And then you walk out to carry out what was settled in the secret place.

So step into your prayer closet like a warrior entering his command center. Take up your armor, not for display, but for battle. And use your prayers like weapons forged in heaven itself.

FIND YOUR CLOSET

Now someone is going to say, "That sounds wonderful, but I do not have a prayer closet. I live in a small apartment with three kids and a dog. There is no quiet room in my house."

I understand. And here is the good news: your closet does not have to be a literal closet. It might be a real room. It might be the bathroom with the door locked for ten minutes. It might be your car in the parking lot before you go in to work. It might be a walk around the block early in the morning. It might be the kitchen table at five in the morning before anyone else wakes up.

My wife and I go on what we call a praise walk almost every day. We walk, and we talk to the Lord, and we thank Him for everything He has done. That walk has become one of our closets. The door is not made of wood, but it is shut just the same, because for that time we shut out everything else and turn our attention to Him.

The point is not the location. The point is the decision. You decide that for this period of time, the world will wait and God will have your full attention. You close the door on the distractions, you close the door on your phone, you close the door on the to-do list, and you step into the presence of your Father.

THE SECRET OF PRAYING IS PRAYING IN SECRET

There is a reason Jesus put so much weight on the secret place. Anybody can pray in public. It is easy to pray well when people are listening. The pulpit can become a shop window where we

display our talents. But the prayer closet allows no showing off. There is nobody there to impress.

And that is exactly why the secret place reveals who we really are. A man may preach because he loves to be heard. But he prays in secret because his soul is hungry for God.

Look at the life of Jesus. The crowds pressed around Him. Everybody wanted something from Him. And yet over and over, the Gospels tell us He slipped away.

"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed" (Mark 1:35)

"So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" (Luke 5:16)

If the Son of God needed the secret place, how much more do we? Jesus did not perform miracles in public because He was naturally impressive. He performed them because He had been alone with the Father. What happened on the hillside flowed out of what happened in the solitary place.

A man who is intimate with God will never be intimidated by men. When you have stood in the presence of the King, the opinions of people lose their grip on you. The bully at work, the critical relative, the frightening diagnosis, the threatening letter, none of them look quite so big when you have just come out of the throne room.

WHAT HAPPENS BEHIND THE DOOR

So what do you actually do once the door is closed? We will spend the rest of this book answering that question in detail. But let me give you a simple pattern to start with.

Begin with thanksgiving. Do not start by unloading your problems. Start by thanking your Father for who He is and for what He has already done for you in Christ. The psalmist said we

enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Gratitude is the doorway into His presence.

Then open the Word. Find what God has said about the situation you are facing. His promises are your legal documents in the courtroom of heaven. Read them. Think about them. Let them sink in.

Then speak. Pray the Word back to the Father. Thank Him that His Word is true. Agree with Him. And where the enemy is trying to steal, kill, or destroy, speak to the situation in the name of Jesus with the authority He has given you.

Then listen. Prayer is a conversation, not a speech. Stay a little while. Let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart. Many of the most important instructions you will ever receive will come in those quiet moments after you have finished talking.

And finally, walk out with confidence. Do not leave the closet wondering whether God heard you. He did. Walk out knowing that what was settled in secret will be rewarded openly.

THE WORLD MAY NEVER SEE IT

Here is something I want you to hold onto. The world may never see what happens behind your closed door. No one may ever know about the hours you spent on your knees for your son, your daughter, your marriage, your neighbor, your nation. There may be no applause, no recognition, no thank-you card.

But heaven sees. And heaven will shake the world because of it.

Some of the greatest moves of God in history began with a handful of unknown people praying behind closed doors. Their names were never written in the newspapers, but they are written in heaven. And I believe your name can be written there too.

So today, find your closet. Close the door. And step into the presence of your Father. That is where the transformation begins.

A PRAYER FOR THE SECRET PLACE

Father, thank You that because of the blood of Jesus, the veil is torn and the way into Your presence is open to me. I do not have to perform for You. I do not have to impress You. I come to You as Your child. Today I choose to close the door on distraction, on the opinions of people, and on the noise of this world. Meet me in the secret place. Let my time with You become my command center and my garden. Let what is settled here in secret be rewarded openly in my life, my family, and my world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Why Heaven Waits for You

Have you ever wondered why you need to pray at all?

It is a fair question. If God is all-powerful, and He is, and if He loves us, and He does, and if He already knows what we need before we ask, and Jesus said He does, then why does He not simply do it? Why does He wait for us to pray? Why do so many things in the Bible seem to hang on whether a man or woman opened their mouth and asked?

Many believers have quietly decided that prayer is mostly for our own benefit. It makes us feel closer to God. It calms us down. It changes our attitude. And it does all of those things. But if that were all prayer did, it would be a nice spiritual exercise, and nothing more. You would not need a book about the prayer fight. You would need a book about relaxation.

The Bible tells a different story. It tells us that God, in His wisdom, has chosen to do His work on earth through the prayers and the cooperation of His people. And once you understand why, you will never again think your prayers are a small thing.

THE EARTH HE GAVE TO MAN

Let us go all the way back to the beginning.

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth'" (Genesis 1:26)

Notice the words "let them have dominion." God did not say, "Let Me keep dominion and let them help Me." He said, "Let

them have it." He gave the management of this planet to human beings. He made a man and a woman, spirit beings living in bodies made from the dust of the ground, and He handed them the keys.

The psalmist said it this way:

"The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's; But the earth He has given to the children of men" (Psalm 115:16)

Now, this does not mean God stopped being sovereign. He is the Lord of all. He owns everything. But a landlord who owns a house and rents it to a tenant does not walk in whenever he likes and rearrange the furniture. He has given his word. He has signed the lease. And a faithful landlord keeps his word.

That is the key to everything I am about to say. God never breaks His word. Never. Not once. Not even when breaking it would seem to save Him a great deal of trouble.

"My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips" (Psalm 89:34)

When God said, "Let them have dominion," He meant it. He placed earthly authority in human hands. And from that day forward, He has chosen to work on earth through men and women who will cooperate with Him.

WHY DID HE NOT STOP IT?

Here is a question many people have asked. When the serpent came to Eve in the garden, God saw it all. He heard the whole conversation. Why did He not step in? Why did He not stop her hand before she picked the fruit? He could have saved the whole human race from so much sorrow.

Was He weak? Of course not. Was He unaware? Not at all. Did He not care? He cared more than we can imagine. So why?

Because He had given His word. He had given the authority over the earth to Adam and Eve. If He had overruled their choice, He

would have broken His own word, and then nobody in the universe could ever trust Him again. You could say that God's faithfulness to His word is one of the reasons the fall was allowed to happen. He would rather suffer the pain of watching His children fall than become a God who goes back on what He said.

And the devil knew it. He had lived in heaven. He knew God's character. He knew God would never break His word. So he went to work through the one channel open to him: the cooperation of a human being. He used a creature of the earth, the serpent, and he talked a woman and then her husband into handing over what God had given them.

Adam did not just lose his innocence that day. He handed his God-given authority to the enemy. That is why Jesus later called Satan "the ruler of this world." That is why the devil could show Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and say, **"All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me"** (Luke 4:6). Delivered by whom? By Adam, in the garden.

GOD COULD STILL SPEAK

But here is what the devil forgot. God could not overrule man's choice, but He could still speak. And in the very same chapter where everything falls apart, God makes a promise.

"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15)

God was speaking to the serpent, to the devil. And in effect He was saying, "You used a woman to bring this disaster into the world. I am going to use a woman too. Through her seed, through a child she will bear, I am coming into this world the right way, as a man, with every legal right a man has. And I am going to crush your head."

The rest of the Old Testament is that promise being repeated over and over: I am coming. I am coming. I am coming. The details got clearer with every prophet. And then Isaiah saw it plainly.

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14)

Immanuel. God with us. God in a human body.

And a little later Isaiah wrote something even more precise:

"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given" (Isaiah 9:6)

Look carefully at those words. The child is born. The Son is given. The Son of God was never born; He has always existed. But He was given, placed into a child who was born of a woman. The child, the human body, made it possible for the eternal Son to walk on this earth as a man, with every right a man has.

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4)

That is why God had to become a man. Jesus was fully man and fully God, and the devil had no answer for that. God came into the human race through the front door. He walked the earth as the last Adam, and as a man He took back everything the first Adam gave away.

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore..." (Matthew 28:18-19)

And then, astonishingly, He handed that authority right back to the men and women who believe in Him. "Go therefore." Go and use it.

WHY GOD NEEDS A MAN

Once you see this, you will start to notice it all through the Bible. Again and again, when God wants to do something on earth, He finds a man or a woman to cooperate with Him.

When God wanted to save the world from the flood, He found Noah. When He wanted to build a nation, He called Abraham. When He wanted to deliver Israel from Egypt, He did not just send plagues from the sky. He came to Moses at the burning bush and said, "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh." When He wanted to bring His Son into the world, He sent an angel to a young woman named Mary, and He waited for her answer. "Let it be to me according to your word."

And look at this remarkable story.

ABRAHAM BARGAINS WITH GOD

In Genesis 18, God tells Abraham that He is about to judge the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because their wickedness has become very great. Now think about that. Why would God tell Abraham? He is God. He does not need Abraham's permission.

"And the LORD said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing...'" (Genesis 18:17)

God brought His covenant friend into the matter. And Abraham immediately understood what was happening. He stepped up and started to intercede. "Will You destroy the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city?"

God said, "If I find fifty, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

Abraham kept going. "What about forty-five? What about forty? Thirty? Twenty?" And every time, God said yes. Finally Abraham said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there." And God said, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

Do you see what is happening? God is letting a man stand in the gap. Abraham did not have the power to destroy a city or to save it. But he had a covenant relationship with the One who did, and God honored his intercession. When ten righteous people could not be found, God still remembered Abraham and sent angels to pull his nephew Lot out of the city before judgment fell.

God had the power. Abraham had the covenant and the voice. And heaven moved according to what was spoken on earth.

I SOUGHT FOR A MAN

There is a heartbreaking verse in the book of Ezekiel.

"So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one"
(Ezekiel 22:30)

God was looking for one person. One intercessor. One man or woman to stand in the gap. And He found none. Think about the weight of that sentence. All the power of heaven was available, and God was willing, but He was looking for someone on earth to agree with Him, and nobody showed up.

I do not want that to be said of my generation. I do not want it to be said of your family. God is still looking for people who will stand in the gap.

COMMAND YE ME

Here is one of the most surprising verses in the whole Bible.

"Thus says the LORD, The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: 'Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me'" (Isaiah 45:11)

Command ye Me? How can a man command God? It sounds almost disrespectful. But what God is saying is this: "Concerning

the work of My hands, concerning what I have promised and purposed, you call for it. You speak it. You hold Me to My word. I am waiting for you to do it."

That is not arrogance. That is partnership. God has made Himself our covenant partner, and He invites us to call into being what He has already promised.

And Jesus confirmed it.

"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18)

Notice the order. Earth first, then heaven. What you bind on earth is bound in heaven. What you loose on earth is loosed in heaven. Heaven backs up what the believer does on earth in the name of Jesus.

YOU ARE THAT IMPORTANT

Some of you have been praying for a long time and wondering why nothing seems to change. You confess Scripture and nothing seems to happen. And you have been quietly waiting for God to do something.

Can I tell you lovingly that God may be waiting for you to do something? Not to earn it. Not to twist His arm. But to take your place. To use the authority He gave you. To stop asking Him to do what He has told you to do.

When the disciples came to Jesus saying the crowds were hungry and needed to be sent away, Jesus looked at them and said, "You give them something to eat." When they could not cast a demon out of a boy, He did not say, "Well, I suppose only I can do that." He said, "Because of your unbelief." He expected them to do it.

God has the power. You have the authority. And heaven is waiting for a man or a woman on earth to agree with God and speak.

That is why prayer matters so much. It is not a religious exercise. It is the means God has chosen to release His will into this world. It is the door through which heaven's power legally enters earth's circumstances. And He has put the key to that door in your hand.

So the next time the enemy whispers that your prayers do not make any difference, remember Abraham standing before the Lord over Sodom. Remember Moses with the rod in his hand. Remember Mary saying, "Let it be to me." Remember the empty place in Ezekiel where God looked for a man and found none. And then decide that you will be the one He finds.

A DECLARATION OF AUTHORITY

Father, I thank You that You are faithful to Your word. Thank You that You gave dominion on earth to man, and that what Adam lost, Jesus took back as a man and gave to me. I take my place. I will not sit back and wait for You to do what You have told me to do. I will stand in the gap for my family, my church, my city, and my nation. What I bind on earth is bound in heaven. What I loose on earth is loosed in heaven. I am that important to Your plan, not because of who I am, but because of who You made me in Christ. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Seated With Christ

There is a truth so powerful, so staggering, that if the church truly grasped it, the devil's influence over believers would collapse overnight. It is not hidden in some obscure corner of the Bible. It is written in plain words in the second chapter of Ephesians.

"And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6)

That is not poetry. That is position. It is not a promise about someday in heaven. It is a present reality for every believer right now. You are not trying to reach heaven. In Christ, you are already seated there.

And I am convinced that this is the one truth the devil fears more than almost any other. Because once you know where you are seated, you will never pray the same way again.

NOT FIXED, BUT SEATED

The whole plan of redemption reaches its high point in our identification with Christ. We died with Him. We were buried with Him. We were raised with Him. And we were seated with Him.

Christianity is not God patching up sinners. It is God seating sons. Redemption did not stop at forgiveness. It went all the way to the throne. The cross dealt with sin. The resurrection dealt with death. And the seating, our position in Christ, dealt with the devil's authority. When Christ sat down, so did we. When He triumphed, so did we.

The problem is that many Christians still live as if they were standing on the ground begging for victory, instead of seated with Christ and reigning from it. They see themselves at the bottom of the mountain looking up, when God says they are at the top looking down.

The devil has no problem with you reading your Bible, going to church, and praying, as long as you keep seeing yourself as a defeated struggler reaching up to a distant God. What terrifies him is when you wake up to your position. When you realize that the throne Jesus sits on is the seat of your shared authority. Because the moment you understand that, you stop pleading and start ruling. You stop crying for God to move, and you start enforcing what He has already done.

THE SOLDIER WHO DID NOT KNOW HE WAS ARMED

Imagine a soldier on a battlefield holding a loaded weapon in his hands without knowing it. He is crouched behind a wall, shaking with fear while the enemy advances. "Somebody help me! God help me!" And the whole time, the power to resist is right there in his grasp.

That is how many believers live. They cry for deliverance while the Deliverer lives inside them. They beg for victory while victory is sitting in their lap. The devil's strategy is very simple: keep them ignorant of who they are, and they will surrender what they already have.

Look at what Paul says just before he tells us we are seated with Christ.

"Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not

only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet" (Ephesians 1:20-22)

Jesus is seated far above every principality and power. And then Paul says we are seated together with Him. That means your authority as a believer is not beneath the devil. It is far above him. You are not wrestling to get into position. You are standing from a position you already have. The battle is not to gain ground, but to hold what is already yours.

YOUR LOCATION SHAPES YOUR PERSPECTIVE

When you live from the earth, problems look huge and God looks far away. When you live from the throne, everything looks small compared to His dominion.

Think of the difference between standing at the foot of a skyscraper and looking at the city from an airplane window. On the ground, the buildings tower over you. The traffic is loud and overwhelming. You cannot see where the road leads. But from thirty thousand feet, the whole city looks like a toy model. The same buildings, the same streets, but your position has changed everything about how they look.

Faith grows when your perspective changes. You were never meant to pray from the valley. You were meant to speak from the mountain.

WHY HE SAT DOWN

So what does it mean to be seated with Christ?

First, it means the work is finished. Jesus sat down because redemption was complete. Under the Old Covenant, the priests never sat down while they were serving. There were no chairs in the tabernacle. There was always another sacrifice to offer, another sin to cover. But when Jesus offered Himself once for all, He sat down.

"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool"
(Hebrews 10:12-13)

The seat is a picture of two things. It is a picture of rest, because nothing more needs to be done. And it is a picture of authority, because all things have been put under His feet, and under yours in Him.

Look at what happened to the devil at the cross.

"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it"
(Colossians 2:15)

Satan has already been stripped. He still has the power to deceive, but he has no legal right to rule over you. When you walk in ignorance, he thrives on illusion. When you walk in revelation, you expose his defeat.

A KING DOES NOT FIGHT FOR HIS THRONE

Picture a king. He does not run around the palace fighting off people who want his crown. He sits on his throne and he speaks, and his word is carried out. That is how God designed you to live: by decree, not by despair.

"For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)" (Romans 5:17)

Reign. Not survive. Not barely hang on. Reign. That means governing. It means ruling over fear, over sickness, over sin, over circumstances, by recognizing your union with Christ. And notice, it is not "someday in heaven." It says reign in life. Right here. Right now.

But you cannot reign from the ground. You reign from the seat.

"JUST A SINNER SAVED BY GRACE"

This is why the devil works so hard to keep you focused on your failures. Every time you say, "Well, I'm just a sinner saved by grace," you reinforce an identity that keeps you on the ground.

The truth is, you were a sinner. And grace saved you. But grace did not leave you a sinner. Grace made you righteous. God did not just patch you up. He raised you up. The cross was not only substitution, where Jesus took your place. It was identification, where you were placed in Him.

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"

(2 Corinthians 5:21)

He became what you were so that you could become what He is. When you accept that, the whole Christian life is transformed. You stop trying to climb up to God, and you realize He already seated you in Himself. You stop begging for victory and start enforcing what Jesus already won.

That is not arrogance. That is alignment. It is not pride. It is perspective. The believer's authority does not come from self-confidence. It comes from Christ-consciousness. And the devil hates that consciousness, because a believer who knows his place cannot be manipulated by fear, shame, or guilt. He can no longer be accused, because he knows his accuser has been defeated. He can no longer be oppressed, because he recognizes his dominion.

THE REST OF FAITH

Being seated with Christ also means sharing His rest. That is the forgotten side of faith: resting in what is already done.

"For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His" (Hebrews 4:10)

That does not mean doing nothing. It means confidence. You no longer strain to make things happen by your own effort. You

speak and act from a position of completion. When you pray from the throne, there is no panic, because you already know how the story ends.

This is why Jesus could sleep through a storm. He was not ignoring reality. He was living from a higher one. His peace was not the absence of waves. It was the presence of authority. When He stood up in that boat and said, "Peace, be still," He was not negotiating with the wind. He was commanding from the seat of dominion. The storm did not shrink His identity. His identity silenced the storm.

FROM PLEADING TO PARTNERSHIP

When you stop seeing yourself as stuck on the earth and start seeing yourself as enthroned with Christ, prayer stops being an act of pleading and becomes an act of partnership. You stop saying, "God, please do something about this," and you start saying, "In the name of Jesus, this changes now."

That is not presumption. It is partnership. God designed you to co-labor with Him, not co-beg. You are His voice in the earth. You are His authority in action.

Think of a police officer standing in the middle of a busy intersection. A truck weighing many tons comes rumbling toward him, and he simply raises his hand. The truck stops. Is it his strength that stops the truck? Of course not. It is his badge. That badge represents a higher authority, the authority of the government that stands behind him. He does not have to shout, strain, or plead. He just stands in the confidence of delegated authority.

That is exactly how authority in Christ works. When you know you have been seated with Him, you stop screaming at the devil and start standing in quiet command. The power is not in your volume. It is in your position.

"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7)

The word resist there means to stand against, to hold your ground. You do not have to chase the devil all over your house. You simply have to recognize that he has no legal claim there. Authority is not emotional. It is positional. The enemy flees, not because you make noise, but because he recognizes where you are seated.

FORGIVEN BUT POWERLESS

Why does this revelation stay hidden from so many? Because in some contemporary churches, forgiveness has been preached without identification. We have preached the cross, but not the throne. We have told believers their sins are forgiven, but we have rarely told them their nature was changed. We celebrate that Jesus died for us, but we forget that we were raised with Him.

As a result, many believers live forgiven but powerless, pardoned but paralyzed. They do not know the full scope of what redemption purchased.

The early church understood this. They did not beg for power. They operated in it. Peter's shadow fell on the sick and they were healed. Handkerchiefs from Paul's body were carried to the sick and the evil spirits went out of them. These were not extraordinary men. They were ordinary men who knew where they were seated.

If modern Christianity feels powerless, it may be because it has become positionless.

WATCH YOUR MOUTH

The devil knows he cannot remove you from your seat in Christ. So he works to remove your awareness of it. He cannot dethrone you, but he can distract you until you live as if you were not on the throne at all.

One of his main tools is your own mouth. Every time you confess defeat, fear, or unworthiness, you are speaking as if you were still on the ground. Every time you speak from your emotions instead of your position, you are agreeing with the wrong kingdom.

When sickness strikes, many believers cry, "Lord, please heal me," instead of declaring, "By His stripes I am healed." When fear attacks, they plead for peace instead of saying, "I have the mind of Christ." We will spend a whole chapter on this later, but for now, understand this: your words will always reveal where you think you are sitting.

LIVING FROM THE SEAT

So what would happen if you started living every day from that seat of authority?

Imagine waking up every morning knowing you are not beneath your circumstances, you are above them. Imagine looking at a problem and saying, "You are under my feet, because you are under His feet." Imagine praying, not like a servant hoping to be noticed, but like a son who knows his Father is listening.

When a believer starts walking in that awareness, the atmosphere around him changes. Fear loses its grip. Doubt loses its voice. Sickness loses its claim. The seated believer does not react to life. He governs it through faith. He does not see storms as threats. He sees them as opportunities to exercise the authority he has been given.

And here is the beautiful thing: your seat is not earned. It is inherited. Christ put you there, and nothing in this world can unseat you. The challenge is not to get there. The challenge is to stay aware of where you already are.

So let me ask you. Are you praying from your seat, or striving for it? Are you praying from victory, or toward it?

A DECLARATION FROM THE THRONE

Father, I thank You that You raised me up together with Christ and made me sit together with Him in heavenly places. I am not beneath my circumstances; I am seated far above all principality and power, in Christ. The work is finished. Jesus sat down, and I sit down with Him in His rest and in His authority. I am not just a sinner saved by grace; I am the righteousness of God in Christ. Today I choose to pray from the throne and not from the ground. Every work of the enemy that comes against me is under His feet, and therefore under mine. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

From Beggar to Son

Imagine walking into a coffee shop to meet your best friend. Would you bow five times at the door? Would you start talking to him in Shakespearean English? Would you spend the first hour listing everything that has gone wrong in your life since you last saw him, and then get up and leave without letting him say a word?

Of course not. And yet somehow many of us have been convinced that this is how we are supposed to talk to God.

We have all known that deflating feeling when our prayers seem to hit an invisible ceiling. We have all done the spiritual beggar routine. You know the one. "Please, please, please, God. If You could just, if it be Thy will, if You would only..." And we walk away more discouraged than when we started.

Here is the game-changing truth. Many of us have been going about prayer in the wrong way. Not because our hearts were wrong, but because nobody ever told us who we really are.

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"

(1 John 3:1)

Sons. Daughters. Not beggars at His door. Children at His table.

ANXIETY IN SUNDAY CLOTHES

Have you ever noticed that there is a kind of prayer that sounds very spiritual on the outside, but underneath it is fueled by raw panic? It uses all the right words. It starts with a holy-sounding "Father." It ends with a frantic "in Jesus' name." And yet it comes from the heart of an orphan, not a son.

For many of us, morning prayer has become nothing more than yesterday's anxiety dressed up in Sunday clothes.

You wake up. You drag yourself to the couch. You open your Bible, bow your head, and the same old playlist of worry starts playing in your mind. "Lord, help my finances. Lord, please fix this nightmare at work. Lord, touch my body. Lord, do something about this person who is driving me crazy."

Now, let us be fair. None of those requests are wrong. God cares about every detail of your life, from your career down to your lost car keys. But if your prayer life is just a carbon copy of your worry life, something deep inside needs to be realigned.

Prayer was never designed to be a cosmic complaints department where fear empties its pockets, dumps its garbage on God, and then walks back home unchanged. True prayer is the place where revelation opens the eyes of your heart until you begin to stand boldly in what redemption has already provided.

THE DOOR IS ALREADY OPEN

Many sincere believers are not praying because they know what belongs to them in Christ. They are praying because they feel locked out, frightened, unsure, and unqualified.

But the door is already wide open. The Father is not standing behind a locked security gate checking identification. The blood of Jesus has already spoken your acceptance. The throne of grace has been thrown wide open.

"To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6)

Accepted. Already. Not on probation. Not waiting for final approval. And yet we keep praying like outsiders standing in the rain, trying to convince God to let us into the house.

Do you remember the story Jesus told about the prodigal son? The young man came home rehearsing his little speech: "Father,

I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." He had it all planned out. He was going to come back as an employee.

But the father would not even let him finish. He ran to him, threw his arms around his neck, kissed him, and called for the best robe, a ring for his finger, and shoes for his feet. Servants did not wear rings and shoes. Sons did. The father would not accept a servant. He insisted on a son.

That is your Father. He will not accept you on your knees in the servants' quarters. He wants you at His table.

YOUR STARTING POSITION CHANGES EVERYTHING

When you pray from the wrong starting position, it ruins everything. It ruins your tone. It deflates your confession. It lowers your expectations. It even twists what you believe God is willing to do for you.

When you pray from a posture of lack, every request feels like trying to squeeze juice out of a stone. But when you pray from the reality of sonship, every request is carried by covenant confidence.

"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15)

Abba is the word a little child in Israel would use for his daddy. It is warm, it is close, it is trusting. The Holy Spirit inside you does not cry out, "O most distant and terrifying Deity." He cries, "Abba, Daddy."

THE FIRST WORD OF THE PATTERN

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, what was the very first word He gave them? "Our Father."

Not "Our Boss." Not "Our Dictator." Not even "Our King," although He is the King of kings. He started with "Father." That one word sets the tone for everything that follows. You are not filling out a request form for a government office. You are talking to your Dad.

Now, it is important to understand that what we call the Lord's Prayer was given as a pattern, not as a magic formula to repeat. All the values of the kingdom are in it: honoring the Father's name, seeking His kingdom and His will, trusting Him for our daily needs, walking in forgiveness, being delivered from evil, and acknowledging His power and glory. Those are the building blocks of every good prayer.

But notice that Jesus later told His disciples something new.

"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full"

(John 16:24)

Up until that point, they had never prayed in His name. After the cross and resurrection, everything changed. Now we come to the Father in the name of Jesus, on the basis of everything He accomplished for us.

PRAYING ON THIS SIDE OF THE CROSS

This is very important. We are to pray as New Testament believers. We can learn a great deal from the prayers of the Old Testament. The Psalms are full of honesty and praise. But some of those prayers were prayed before Jesus came, and they do not fit our new position.

For example, David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." That was the right prayer for David, who lived under the old covenant. But if you are born again, God has already given you a new heart. You have already been made righteous. You do not need to beg Him for what He has already done.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

In the same way, I often hear people pray at the end of a church service, "Dear God, please go with us as we leave today." It sounds sweet. But Jesus promised He would never leave us nor forsake us. He lives inside of us by His Spirit. We do not need to ask Him to come along. We need to thank Him that He is already there.

WHAT "IN JESUS' NAME" REALLY MEANS

"In Jesus' name" can become a cliché, a little phrase we tack onto the end of a prayer like a stamp on an envelope. But it means so much more than that.

When you pray in the name of Jesus, you are saying, "Father, I stand before You on the basis of everything Jesus did for me. I am not coming in my own name, with my own record. I am coming in His name, with His record. I am using the authority He gave me, and I am joining my prayer to His intercession."

"If you ask anything in My name, I will do it"
(John 14:14)

When my wife and I were serving in Africa, we received an award from a government minister. The ceremony was shown on national television. And after that, it seemed every door opened for us. All we had to do was mention his name, and people treated us differently. They associated us with him, and his name carried weight.

In the spirit world, we know the highest authority there is. We carry the name that is above every name. When we pray in that name, all of heaven recognizes it, and all of hell has to bow to it.

DROP THE PRAYER VOICE

Think about how we communicate today. We text our friends casually. We send messages without overthinking them. We call people on the spur of the moment. But when it comes to God, many of us suddenly turn into seventeenth-century poets. I once watched a man go from a normal conversation to "O Thou most gracious and heavenly Father, we beseech Thee" faster than you could blink. I imagine the Lord looking at him and thinking, "Who are you, and what happened to the person I created?"

Let me tell you about a woman I will call Karen. She was a successful executive, and she approached prayer the way she approached her quarterly business reviews: formal, structured, and absolutely exhausting. She had a beautiful prayer room with soft lighting. She had a prayer journal that looked like a project management chart. She even scheduled her prayer appointments in her calendar. And one day she broke down in tears and said, "I am doing everything right, and I feel nothing."

What Karen needed was not a better system. She needed to understand that God desires truth in the inward parts, not religious performance. She needed to stop presenting to the CEO of the universe and start talking to her Father.

Here are a few contrasts to think about. Religious prayer says, "O God, if it be Thy will..." about something He has clearly promised in His Word. A son says, "Father, thank You that Your Word says this, and I receive it." Religious prayer spends forty-five minutes describing the problem. A son says, "Father, You know what is happening. What would You have me do?" Religious prayer says, "I am so unworthy to come before Thee." A son says, "Thank You for making me Your child."

THE KEY WAS IN HIS POCKET

I once heard about a little boy who stood outside his front door crying because he was locked out. He banged on the door. He

begged. He wailed. And after a long while, he reached into his pocket and found the house key that had been there the whole time.

That is us when we pray, "O God, please, please defeat the devil," when Jesus has already said:

"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19)

Think of it another way. Suppose you gave your teenager a credit card for emergencies. And then one day you found him standing outside a store, begging strangers for money. Would you not say, "Son, use what I already gave you"? That is exactly what God is saying to many of us about our authority in prayer.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16)

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

Peter tells us who we are in very strong words.

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9)

A royal priesthood. Royalty does not beg for access. Royalty walks in knowing they belong. A priest does not wait outside the temple. He goes in and ministers before the Lord.

Prayer is a visit with your Father. It is not a duty to perform. It is a privilege to enjoy. You do not wake up in the morning thinking, "I suppose I have to pray." You wake up thinking, "I get to talk to my Father."

Something happens during your day, good or bad, and your first instinct is not to post it online or text somebody about it. Your first instinct is to tell your Father. You face a decision, and instead of agonizing over it alone, you sit down with Him and talk it over. You have a need, and instead of panicking, you bring it to Him, not as a beggar hoping for a handout, but as a member of the royal family presenting a family matter that needs attention.

When you start praying from that reality, your prayer life fills with joy. You stop begging and start conversing. You stop pleading and start fellowshipping. You stop hoping He will hear you and start knowing He always does.

THE BEST COFFEE IN THE UNIVERSE

Let us go back to that coffee shop. Imagine God owns the most welcoming coffee shop in the universe. He is not timing your visits. He is not judging your vocabulary. He is not expecting you to dress up.

You can drop in any time, day or night. You can speak normally. You can be real, with no religious mask. You can stay as long as you want. You can come back as often as you like. There is no appointment needed and no minimum time required.

Talk to Him while you drive. Share your thoughts with Him throughout the day. Include Him in your decisions the way you would include your best friend.

"In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:6)

Now, do not misunderstand me. There is a time and a place for the warrior side of prayer, and this whole book is about it. But a soldier who does not know he is a son will fight from fear. A son who knows he is loved will fight from confidence. The prayer

fight is won by sons and daughters who know their Father's heart.

Your Father is waiting at the coffee shop. And I promise you, He makes the best brew in the universe.

A PRAYER OF SONSHIP

Abba, Father, thank You that I am not an orphan and I am not a beggar. I am Your child, accepted in the Beloved. Thank You that the door is open and the throne of grace is welcoming me.

Forgive me for every time I came to You like a stranger. Today I drop the religious act. I come to You as a son, as a daughter, as a member of Your royal priesthood. I come in the name of Jesus, on the basis of everything He has done. Thank You that You hear me, You love me, and You delight in my company. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

The Limits of Your Redemption

Many believers are measuring God's redemption with their tiny minds, and missing almost everything.

God made Jesus to be your redemption. And yet so many of us set limits on that redemption based on what our natural minds can understand. We shrink infinite power down to the size of human reasoning. And it costs us much of what God intended for us to have.

I want to show you a verse that, once it gets hold of you, will change the way you pray forever.

"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—" (1 Corinthians 1:30)

Read that again slowly. Christ Jesus is made unto us wisdom. He is made unto us righteousness. He is made unto us sanctification. He is made unto us redemption. Not that He gives us a little of these things. He is these things to us.

And Paul says it again to the Ephesians:

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"
(Ephesians 1:7)

THE LIMITS OF JESUS

Here is the truth that turns everything upside down. If Jesus is your redemption, then the limits of your redemption are the limits of Jesus.

If He is made unto you wisdom, then the limits of that wisdom are the limits of the eternal Son of God. If He is your sanctification, then the limits of that sanctification are the limits of Jesus. If He is your life, and Paul says in Colossians that Christ is our life, then the limits of that life are the limits of the life of the Son of God.

Think about what that means. When you try to measure your redemption, you are trying to measure Jesus. When you set limits on what God can do in you, you are setting limits on the Son of God. When you say, "I can only go this far," you are saying, "Jesus can only go this far." And that is absurd.

Would you ever stand up in church and say, "Jesus is limited. He can only do so much"? Of course not. You would never say that with your mouth. And yet many of us say it with our prayers every day. We pray small prayers to a big God because we have measured His redemption with our reasoning instead of with His Word.

WHEN REASON PUSHES FAITH OUT OF THE ARENA

Our feeble reasoning has pushed faith out of the arena. The devil can fight successfully against our reason. He is very good at arguments. He has been arguing since the garden: "Has God indeed said?" But when faith takes the place of reason, the devil is defeated.

Many sincere Bible teachers today are held in bondage to what I call sense knowledge. Sense knowledge is what you learn through your five senses: what you can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. It is useful for daily life. You need it to cross the street safely. But it was never meant to be the final authority in the things of God.

When sense knowledge rules our interpretation of the Bible, our interpretations often become evasions. We know what the Word

says, but we explain it away because it does not fit what we can rationally understand. We water it down. We make it reasonable. And as a result, the Word of God has very little effect.

The Word says, "By whose stripes you were healed." Reason says, "Well, that probably means spiritual healing." The Word says, "My God shall supply all your need." Reason says, "Well, that probably means He will help you get by." The Word says, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Reason says, "That is a nice thought, but look at my circumstances."

And every time we let reason have the last word, we shrink our redemption down to the size of our understanding.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts"

(Isaiah 55:8-9)

OUT OF THE SWADDLING CLOTHES

The church has been in spiritual infancy for a long time. We have been content with milk when we should be eating meat. We have been satisfied with the basics when God has so much more for us. Do you not think it is time we passed out of the swaddling clothes and grew up into the stature of the full-grown man in Christ Jesus?

"Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"

(Ephesians 4:13)

The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That is the goal. Not the measure of my denomination. Not the measure of what my grandmother believed. Not the measure of what seems reasonable to my natural mind. The measure of Christ.

So let us dare to climb the heights of God. Let us say without fear: I am what He says I am. He is in me what He says He is. I can do, with His ability in me, what He says I can do.

That makes life big and rich. That makes us partners with Him. That puts us in the inner circle of His trusted friends. When He has a difficult mission, He will call on us, and He will find it easy to reach us because we visit Him so often.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRAYER

Let me show you what it looks like when you stop limiting God's redemption with your reasoning and start praying from 1 Corinthians 1:30.

WHEN THE SITUATION IS IMPOSSIBLE

You are facing a situation that seems impossible. Every logical analysis says it cannot be done. Your natural mind tells you to give up, be realistic, and accept defeat.

But then you remember that Jesus is your redemption, and the limits of that redemption are the limits of Jesus Himself. If Jesus has no limits, your redemption has no limits. If nothing is impossible with God, then nothing is impossible in your redemption.

"Jesus said to him, 'If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes'" (Mark 9:23)

So instead of listening to your reasoning, you put your faith to work. You do not look at what your mind can understand. You look at what the Word says. Your reasoning says those are just nice verses that do not mean what they say. Your faith says they mean exactly what they say. You choose faith over reason. You speak to that impossible situation. You declare what the Word says. And you watch faith take you where reason could never go.

WHEN YOU NEED WISDOM BEYOND YOURSELF

You are facing a problem that needs wisdom beyond your natural ability. Your education does not cover it. Your experience has not prepared you for it. And your reasoning tells you that you are simply not qualified.

But then you remember that Jesus was made unto you wisdom from God, and the limits of that wisdom are the limits of the eternal Son of God. If God's wisdom is infinite, then the wisdom available to you is infinite.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5)

So instead of panicking because you do not know what to do, you ask, and you expect, and you believe. And wisdom comes. Not as a mystical feeling, but as clear direction, as sudden insight, as understanding you did not have a moment ago. Because Christ is your wisdom.

WHEN YOU NEED VICTORY OVER A WEAKNESS

There is an area of your life that needs to be set apart for God. Your reasoning says it is too hard. You have tried before and failed. You will never be able to walk free in that area. Your past failures prove it.

But then you remember that Jesus is made unto you sanctification. He is your holiness. Not your effort. Not your willpower. Him.

So instead of trying to sanctify yourself in your own strength, you let Him be your sanctification. You stop trying and start trusting. You stop striving and start resting in the fact that He is your holiness. And what was impossible in your own effort becomes reality through His life in you.

WHEN YOU ARE DRAINED

You are facing circumstances that are draining your energy and vitality. You are running on empty. Your reasoning says you just need a vacation.

Rest is a good thing, and God commands it. But then you remember that Jesus is your life, and the limits of that life are the limits of the life of the Son of God. His life is eternal, inexhaustible, and unlimited. He does not give you a little bit of His life to get by on. He is your life.

"When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4)

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11)

So you draw from the well that never runs dry. You tap into the life that raised Jesus from the dead. And you find that in your weakness, His strength is made perfect.

"THAT IS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE"

Here is the problem many Christians run into. They hear these truths, and their reasoning immediately kicks in. "That cannot mean what it sounds like. That is too good to be true. That is extreme."

But the gospel is called good news for a reason. If it does not sound too good to be true, you probably have not heard it yet. The angels did not announce "moderately pleasant tidings." They announced "good tidings of great joy."

When the Word of God sounds too good to be true, that is not a reason to water it down. That is a reason to bow your knee and say, "Lord, I believe it. Let it be unto me according to Your Word."

Remember what Paul prayed for the Ephesians: that they would know **"the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe"** (Ephesians 1:19). Exceeding greatness. That is not a power you can measure with a teaspoon. That is a power that surpasses every measurement.

HOW TO PRAY WITHOUT LIMITS

So how do you pray once you see this?

You stop praying, "Lord, if You could possibly help me a little," and you start praying, "Father, I thank You that Jesus is made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Thank You that the limits of my redemption are the limits of Jesus, and He has no limits."

You stop saying, "I hope He'll help me," and you start saying, "Jesus is my help."

You stop saying, "Maybe God will give me some of these things," and you start saying, "Jesus is these things to me, because that is what the Word says, and God's Word is final."

Let your prayers grow to the size of your Savior. Do not measure your redemption with your reasoning. Measure it with Him.

A DECLARATION OF UNLIMITED REDEMPTION

Father, I thank You that of You I am in Christ Jesus, who is made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. I repent of every time I measured Your redemption with my small mind. Today I declare that the limits of my redemption are the limits of Jesus, and Jesus has no limits. He is my wisdom when I do not know what to do. He is my holiness when I feel weak. He is my life when I am weary. He is my redemption from every work of the enemy. I am what You say I am. You are in me what You say You are. I can do, with Your ability in me, what You say I can do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

Stop Praying for More Faith

There is a cry that echoes in the hearts of countless believers. You have probably prayed it yourself. I know I have.

"Lord, give me more faith."

It sounds humble. It sounds spiritual. It sounds like exactly the kind of thing a good Christian ought to pray. But I want to suggest to you that it is one of the most misunderstood prayers in the entire Christian life.

Because faith is not something God hands out in little pieces from heaven, one portion at a time, to people who beg loudly enough. Faith is not waiting to fall on you from the sky. If you are born again, it has already been born within you.

"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith" (Romans 12:3)

God has dealt to every believer the measure of faith. You already have it. The question is not whether you have faith. The question is whether you are using it.

THE MUSCLE YOU NEVER USE

Most Christians do not struggle because their faith is too small. They struggle because they have never exercised the faith they already have.

Faith grows by acting on the Word of God. The reason faith stays weak is that it has never been put to work. You cannot pray your way into stronger faith any more than you can sit on the couch

and pray your way into stronger muscles. Muscles grow when they are used against resistance. Faith is exactly the same. It is not strengthened by wishing. It is strengthened by working.

The moment you act on what God has said, your faith begins to grow.

WHAT JESUS SAID WHEN THEY ASKED

Look at what happened when the disciples came to Jesus with this very request.

"And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' So the Lord said, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you'"
(Luke 17:5-6)

His answer is not what most people would expect. He did not say, "Certainly. Here is a fresh supply." He did not lay hands on them and pour out an extra measure. He said, in effect, "You do not need more faith. Even a tiny seed of faith is enough. You need to use what you have. Speak to the tree."

Jesus answered their request for more faith with an instruction. Because faith grows through expression, not through expansion.

A mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds there is. But inside that tiny seed is the potential for a tree large enough for birds to nest in its branches. The power of faith is not in its size. It is in its activation. A seed left in the packet on the kitchen shelf will never multiply, no matter how long you pray over it. It has to be planted.

The Spirit of God is not waiting to give you a new kind of faith. He is waiting for you to release the faith He has already put inside you.

FAITH IS NOT A FEELING

So many Christians pray for more faith because they have confused feeling with believing. They think strong faith feels confident. They think if they had real faith, they would feel brave and certain and calm.

But true faith often operates in the complete absence of feeling. You may feel afraid and still act on the Word. You may feel weak and still speak strength. Faith does not need emotion. It needs obedience.

Courage is not the absence of fear. It is the decision to act on truth in spite of the fear. In the same way, faith is not the absence of doubt in your feelings. It is the decision to act on what God said no matter how you feel.

Here is a simple definition that will help you: faith is acting on the Word as though it were true.

That may sound very simple, but it contains the whole secret of spiritual authority. To act on the Word as though it were true means you stop negotiating with your senses and start agreeing with Scripture. When God says you are healed, faith says, "Then I will speak and live as one who is healed." When God says you are forgiven, faith says, "Then I will stop carrying the guilt He already took away." When God says He will supply all your need, faith says, "Then I will stop talking like a pauper."

DEAD FAITH IS SLEEPING FAITH

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17)

Dead faith does not mean missing faith. It means inactive faith. It is possible to go to church for years, study the Scriptures, underline every promise, and still live powerless. Not because faith is missing, but because it has never been put to use.

Faith that is never acted on becomes knowledge that deceives. Knowing the truth without applying it gives you the illusion of growth while producing no fruit. You feel like you are growing because you know more verses. But knowing about swimming does not make you a swimmer. Getting in the water does.

Picture a farmer holding a seed in his hand, praying, "God, make this grow." And God answers, "Plant it." The farmer replies, "Lord, I am waiting for more rain, more sunshine, more confirmation." But the seed will never produce until it is buried in the ground.

Faith works the same way. It does not grow in comfort. It grows in contact. It grows when it is planted in the soil of real-life obedience. When you speak healing over a hurting body. When you give in the middle of lack. When you choose peace in the middle of a storm.

THEY DISCOVERED IT WHILE WALKING

Peter did not have walking-on-water faith before he got out of the boat. He discovered it while he was walking. Faith does not manifest until it is used. The supernatural is not revealed in the waiting. It is revealed in the walking.

Look at the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. You will notice something. That chapter does not describe people who prayed for more faith. It describes people who acted on the faith they already had.

Noah built an ark before there had ever been rain. Abraham left his home before he knew where he was going. Moses stretched out a rod before the sea parted. Faith always acts while the evidence is still invisible. It speaks as though the promise were already finished, because it trusts the One who made the promise.

When you understand this, your prayers begin to change. You stop asking God to increase your faith, and you start asking Him

to show you where to use it. You stop saying, "Lord, give me courage to believe," and you start saying, "Lord, I believe. Show me where to step."

FAITH DOES NOT BEG MOUNTAINS

The measure of faith you have right now is enough for the mountain you are facing. The only difference between a mountain that moves and one that does not is a believer who speaks.

"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says"

(Mark 11:23)

Notice what Jesus did not say. He did not say, "Whosoever shall pray for the mountain to move." He did not say, "Whosoever shall ask Me to move the mountain for him." He said, "Whoever says to this mountain." Faith does not beg mountains. It commands them. And that authority is not reserved for a few super-saints. It belongs to every believer who dares to act on the Word.

The faith in you right now is the same faith that raised the dead, healed the sick, and split the sea. Not a weaker version. Not a smaller sample. The same Spirit who worked in Christ now works in you. The same faith that operated in Peter and Paul operates in you. The difference was never in the measure. It was in the manifestation. They used what they had. They acted while others hesitated.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him"

(Hebrews 11:6)

Notice it does not say without more faith, or without great faith, or without perfect faith. Just faith. Faith in action. The smallest

step of faith will do more than a lifetime of fearful waiting.

FLIP THE SWITCH

Faith is not a fixed amount that sits on a shelf. It is a living law. It responds to action the way electricity responds to a switch. You can sit in the dark room of your circumstances crying for light, or you can stand up and flip the switch. The power was already wired into the house. It does not need to come down from above. It needs to be released from within.

Look at what Jesus did with five loaves and two fish. The disciples said, "We have only this little bit." Jesus did not pray for more food to fall from the sky. He took what they had, looked up to heaven, blessed it, and started handing it out. And as He acted, the miracle multiplied in His hands.

Faith multiplies what it touches. What you bless grows. What you fear shrinks back. What you release increases.

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH SPEAKS

"And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believed and therefore I spoke,' we also believe and therefore speak" (2 Corinthians 4:13)

Faith does not stay silent. Believing alone does not complete the circuit. Speaking does. The spirit of faith must have a voice. Until it speaks, it cannot move. Until it acts, it cannot manifest.

Many believers are full of dormant faith. They have studied the Scriptures for years. They have attended every meeting. But their faith has never been exercised. They are spiritually overfed and underused. The Word has gone in, but it has never come out. And that is why their faith feels stale.

Faith is like breathing. It has to flow in and out. Revelation comes in through the Word, and power goes out through confession. If you stay silent about what God has said, you rob your faith of its oxygen. But when you open your mouth and

declare the Word, you give that faith life. You turn knowledge into experience.

When David faced Goliath, he did not stop to pray for more faith. He spoke.

"This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you"

(1 Samuel 17:46)

That was not arrogance. It was alignment. David was not waiting for a feeling of faith. He was releasing the faith he already had. His confidence was not in his ability with a sling. It was in God's covenant with Israel.

Faith does not deny the mountain's existence. It denies the mountain's permanence. Faith acknowledges the storm but refuses to let the storm have the final word.

LIKE A SWORD IN ITS SHEATH

Faith unused is like a sword rusting in its sheath. It may be beautiful, but it is powerless. When you draw it and swing it in the face of fear and circumstance, everything changes.

Imagine what your life could look like if you stopped waiting for more and started walking in what is already yours. What if, instead of praying, "Lord, increase my faith," you started saying, "Lord, show me where to use it"?

The supply has already been given. The reservoir is already full. Heaven is not waiting to send more. It is waiting for you to open the valve. Your words are that valve. Your actions are that switch.

So start using what you already have. Speak to the sickness, even if your body trembles. Declare provision, even if the numbers do not add up yet. Confess peace, even while the storm rages. Faith does not grow in comfort. It grows in conflict. Every time you use it, heaven moves and hell trembles.

You do not believe because you see. You see because you believe.

A DECLARATION OF ACTIVE FAITH

Father, I thank You that You have dealt to me the measure of faith. I will no longer beg You for what You have already given me. The faith in me is enough for the mountain in front of me. Today I choose to use it. I speak to every mountain in my life in the name of Jesus and I command it to be removed. I act on Your Word as though it were true, because it is true. I believe, and therefore I speak. Show me where to step, and I will step. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

Speak Life, Not Fear

There is a language that opens heaven, and there is a language that shuts it. Both can sound like prayer. Both can quote Scripture. Both can come from sincere hearts. But one flows from faith and the other flows from fear. And while one releases life, the other keeps you bound to the very thing you are trying to escape.

Most Christians do not realize that their prayers can actually work against them. They think the more emotional they become, the more God will listen. They think tears prove faith. But emotion is not faith. Desperation is not faith. Faith begins where fear ends.

FEAR IS FAITH IN THE WRONG THING

Fear is really faith in the enemy. It gives substance to the very thing we dread. When you pray from fear, you are giving a voice to unbelief. You are magnifying the problem instead of exalting the promise. It may sound holy, but it is spiritually hollow.

Think about the first words Adam spoke to God after he sinned.

"So he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself'"

(Genesis 3:10)

Fear entered the human vocabulary in that moment. From then on, man began to talk to God as someone separated from Him. Pleading. Hiding. Hoping for mercy. That fallen way of thinking still shapes much of the way people pray today. They pray like orphans instead of heirs, like victims instead of victors. And

when you pray from that posture, every word becomes a confession of separation instead of union.

But something happened at the cross that changed everything. Jesus restored what Adam lost. The veil was torn. The distance was removed.

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ"

(Ephesians 2:13)

You are not praying up to heaven from far away. You are praying from within it. The Spirit of God lives in you, and your words carry authority because they are spoken from oneness with Him. That is why fear-based prayer offends the reality of redemption. When you pray as though God were reluctant, you deny His nature. When you speak as though the problem were greater than the promise, you deny your position.

DEATH AND LIFE IN THE TONGUE

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit" (Proverbs 18:21)

Notice where Solomon says the power lies. Not in your feelings. Not in your circumstances. In your tongue. God's system is built on speaking life, not rehearsing death.

When you speak life, you are agreeing with God. When you speak fear, you are agreeing with the enemy. And both sides are listening.

Let me make this very practical. Imagine two believers who receive the same troubling report from the doctor. The first one prays, "Lord, please heal me. Please do not let this get worse. Oh God, I am so scared." The second one prays, "Father, I thank You that by the stripes of Jesus I was healed. This sickness has no right to stay in the temple of the Holy Spirit. I command it to leave my body in the name of Jesus."

Both sound sincere. Both love God. But they are worlds apart in authority. The first is pleading for what God has already provided. The second is enforcing what the cross has already settled.

IT IS WRITTEN

When Jesus faced Satan in the wilderness, He did not pray, "Father, please help Me resist this temptation." He said, "It is written." And He said it three times.

Those words were not just a quotation. They were a decree. His prayer life was built on His position, not His predicament. That is the difference between those who live in power and those who live in panic.

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63)

Every time you speak in agreement with His Word, that same spirit and life are released through your mouth.

This is why the devil works so tirelessly to keep believers talking from fear. He does not mind prayer meetings, as long as they are full of worry. He does not mind fasting, as long as it is driven by desperation. Because as long as our words carry fear, they empower him instead of God. Satan was defeated at the cross, but fear gives him a microphone in your life. Faith takes that microphone away.

THE MOST DANGEROUS LITTLE PHRASE

There is a phrase millions of Christians say almost every day without realizing what it does. It sounds harmless. It even sounds honest and humble. The phrase is this: "I'm trying."

"I'm trying to believe." "I'm trying to forgive." "I'm trying to trust God." "I'm trying to change." "I'm trying to get my healing."

It feels humble. It feels human. But here is the shocking truth. That phrase quietly denies the finished work of Christ and locks you into a cycle of struggle. "I'm trying" is the language of self-effort, not of the Spirit's empowerment. It puts the focus back on what you can do instead of what He has already done.

The devil does not need you to reject God outright. He just needs you to live as though grace were not enough. Every time you say, "I'm trying," you confess dependence on the flesh, and Jesus said plainly that the flesh profits nothing.

Faith never says, "I'm trying to get healed." Faith says, "By His stripes I was healed." Faith never says, "I'm trying to overcome." Faith says, "Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ." Faith does not struggle toward victory. It speaks from victory.

When you say, "I'm trying," you are really saying, "I do not have it yet." And if you do not believe you already have it, faith cannot operate. Jesus said:

"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:24)

Notice the order. Believe you receive when you pray, not after you see it. The person who keeps trying is waiting for the evidence before he believes. Faith believes first, because it trusts the Word above the world.

A TABLE, NOT A TREADMILL

God designed the Christian life to be a table of trusting, not a treadmill of trying.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (Psalm 23:5)

Notice that it is a table, not a battlefield. In the very presence of your enemies, God has set a table. The table speaks of rest,

supply, and completion. The meal has already been served. And yet many believers stand next to the table saying, "I'm trying to eat."

"For we who have believed do enter that rest"

(Hebrews 4:3)

The greatest evidence of faith is rest. When you truly believe the Word, the trying stops. Peace takes over.

Religion says, "I'm trying to become righteous." Revelation says, "I am the righteousness of God in Christ." Religion says, "I'm trying to be strong." Revelation says, "The Lord is the strength of my life." Religion says, "I'm trying to get closer to God." Revelation says, "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him."

When Jesus said, "It is finished," He did not mean, "I have started something that you now have to complete." He meant that everything you would ever need had been done.

CONFESS YOUR POSITION, NOT YOUR CONDITION

The secret is simple: line your words up with your position, not your condition.

Your condition may say, "I am weak." Your position says, **"Let the weak say, 'I am strong'"** (Joel 3:10). Your condition may say, "I am still bound." Your position says, **"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death"** (Romans 8:2). Your condition may say, "I can't change." Your position says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

This is not denial. It is dominion. You are not pretending the storm is not real. You are reminding the storm that it has already been defeated.

Your senses report facts. Faith enforces truth. And truth always outranks fact. The fact may be that the bank account is low. The truth is that your God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory. The fact may be that the symptoms are present. The truth is that Jesus bore your sicknesses and carried your pains. Facts can change. Truth never does.

YOU CANNOT HOLD TWO CONFESSIONS

You cannot say "I'm trying" and "It is finished" in the same breath. One cancels out the other. One comes from defeat, and the other flows from dominion. Choose the second one.

Train your mouth to agree with truth, even when your senses are shouting the opposite. Never talk failure. Never talk defeat. Never talk lack. You are the righteousness of God. Talk the way He talks.

Your words are not just reactions. They are instruments. Every sentence you speak builds a throne for either faith or fear to sit on.

THE SHOUT AT JERICHO

The most powerful moment in prayer is not when you cry. It is when you speak. Crying may move your emotions, but speaking moves your mountain.

God never told Israel to weep at Jericho. He told them to shout. That shout was not emotional hysteria. It was faith-filled agreement with what God had already said: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand." The walls did not fall because of the volume. They fell because of the agreement. Heaven responded to the sound of faith coming out of the mouths of men.

That same law operates today. When you speak life, unseen forces move. The Spirit confirms the Word. Circumstances begin to bend under the weight of divine authority.

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men"
(John 1:4)

That life now lives in you, and it travels on your words the way light travels through the air. Every faith-filled confession shines light into darkness, and darkness has no defense against light.

RECORD YOUR PRAYERS FOR A WEEK

Here is a little exercise. If you were to record your prayers for a week and play them back, what would they reveal? Would they sound like the language of heaven or the echo of earth? Would they be full of boldness or hesitation? Would they describe your fears or declare your freedom?

Every word reveals which kingdom you are agreeing with. You may be saved and on your way to heaven, but your words will determine whether heaven or hell has influence over your circumstances while you are here.

The secret to transformation is not more striving. It is new speaking. You do not need louder prayers. You need living words. You do not need to convince God. You need to agree with Him.

ACKNOWLEDGE EVERY GOOD THING

"That the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus" (Philemon 1:6)

Your faith becomes effective, not through emotion or desperation, but through acknowledgement. Every time you declare what is in you through Christ, faith is activated. Every time you rehearse what is against you, fear is amplified.

Some people feel that it is more humble to keep pleading and to keep calling themselves unworthy. But true humility is agreeing with God. If He says you are righteous, calling yourself

unworthy is not humility. It is contradiction. If He says you are more than a conqueror, calling yourself defeated is not modesty. It is unbelief.

So what would change in your life if you started speaking as though God were telling the truth? What if every "I hope" became "I have," and every "someday" became "now"?

A DECLARATION OF LIFE

Father, I repent of every fearful word I have spoken in prayer. I will no longer agree with the enemy with my mouth. Today I speak life. I am not trying; I am trusting. It is finished. By the stripes of Jesus I was healed. My God supplies all my need. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free. Let the weak say, I am strong, and I say I am strong in the Lord. I acknowledge every good thing that is in me in Christ Jesus. My tongue will speak life over my body, my family, my finances, and my future. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

The Sword in Your Mouth

Here is a sobering truth that few believers ever stop to think about. The devil is not afraid of your Bible reading.

He is not intimidated by how many verses you highlight, how many chapters you finish, or how many devotionals you complete. He will gladly let you read the Bible for hours, as long as it never becomes revelation. Because what terrifies him is not how much of the Word you read. It is how much of the Word you believe.

The Bible, when it is approached as mere information, is like a sword hanging on the wall of a museum. It is impressive to look at. It has a long history. But it is not cutting anything. When the Word becomes revelation, when it takes root in your spirit and comes out of your mouth, it becomes a sword in the hand of a soldier.

The devil is not afraid of the Word in your hand. He is afraid of the Word in your heart and in your mouth.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Remember the armor Paul describes in Ephesians 6. Every piece is defensive except one.

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17)

The Greek language of the New Testament has two main words that are translated "word." One is *logos*, which often refers to the whole written Word or the message of God. The other is *rhema*, which refers to a word that is spoken, a specific word that has

come alive and been released. In this verse, the sword of the Spirit is rhema. It is the Word of God spoken in faith.

You could own a library full of Bibles and still live in bondage. But one verse of revelation, spoken from a believing heart, can destroy a lifetime of fear.

INFORMATION OR REVELATION?

There is a dividing line in the body of Christ between those who quote Scripture and those who live it. On one side is sense knowledge, which reads the Word as information. On the other side is revelation knowledge, which receives the Word as transformation.

You can read about authority and still live like a victim. You can read about healing and still quietly accept sickness. You can read about victory and still walk in defeat. Knowledge by itself changes nothing.

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)

The word "know" there does not simply mean to have head knowledge. It means to know by experience, to encounter, to become one with. Freedom does not come from reading truth. It comes from knowing truth so deeply that it becomes part of who you are.

THE DEVIL QUOTED SCRIPTURE TOO

Here is something to think about. The devil knows the Bible better than most believers. He quoted it to Jesus in the wilderness. He took a verse from Psalm 91 and said, "Throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you.'"

So what was the difference between the devil quoting Scripture and Jesus quoting Scripture? Satan quoted the Word as information, twisted for his own purposes. Jesus wielded the

Word as revelation, spoken from a heart that was one with the Father. Jesus did not argue. He did not debate. He did not analyze. He said, "It is written," and the devil left.

The Word in your mouth carries no real authority until it has first taken authority in your heart.

This is why so many Christians can recite verses and still live under fear. They read about peace but confess anxiety. They know the promises but question God's timing. They have learned the words but not absorbed the truth. The devil does not mind you studying Scripture academically, because an unrenewed mind can quote truth and still believe a lie.

THE PHARISEES KNEW THE TEXT

Think about the Pharisees. They memorized the Scriptures word for word. They could quote the prophets, debate the fine points of the law, and recite the psalms. And yet when the living Word stood right in front of them, they did not recognize Him.

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (John 5:39-40)

That is the danger of Bible reading without revelation. You can know the text and miss the truth. The Pharisees studied the words but never met the Person. And that is why the devil loves dead religious reading. It produces people who know Scripture but do not know Christ.

BE A DOER

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22)

Notice where the deception comes in. It comes when we mistake hearing for transformation. You can read the Bible every day and

still be deceived if what you read never turns into action.

The devil does not attack your reading habits nearly as much as he attacks your revelation habits. Because the moment you act on the Word, you strip him of his access.

"Resist him, steadfast in the faith" (1 Peter 5:9)

You can only stand against him to the degree that the Word has become part of your inner consciousness. It is not the verse you read yesterday that defeats him. It is the revelation you are living by today.

MEDITATION BRINGS MANIFESTATION

Here is a shocking truth. The devil would much rather you read ten chapters a day without faith than meditate on one verse until it becomes life. He knows that hurried reading produces information, but meditation produces manifestation.

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8)

Notice the order God gave Joshua. First, the Word does not depart from his mouth. Second, he meditates on it day and night. Third, he does what is written. And then he has good success.

Meditation is not repeating words like a parrot. It is digesting them, the way a cow chews its cud. It is letting the Word move from your eyes to your mind, from your mind to your heart, and from your heart to your mouth. That is where faith is born, in the meditation chamber of the soul.

Reading the Word fills your mind. Meditating on the Word transforms your being. When you meditate long enough, you begin to see yourself in the Word, and the Word in you. And that

is when authority begins to flow naturally, because you cannot walk in what you do not see yourself possessing.

A PRACTICAL WAY TO MEDITATE

Let me give you something very simple you can do. Choose one verse. Just one. Let us say it is Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Read it out loud slowly. Then read it again, putting the emphasis on a different word each time. "But MY God shall supply all your need." He is not a distant God. He is my God. "But my God SHALL supply." Not might. Not maybe. Shall. "But my God shall supply ALL your need." Not some. All. "According to HIS riches in glory." Not according to my paycheck, not according to the economy, according to His riches.

Then ask yourself, "If this is true, how would I talk? How would I pray? How would I act today?" And then talk, pray, and act that way.

Do this with one verse for a whole week, and I promise you that verse will stop being words on a page and start being a sword in your mouth.

THE MIRROR OF THE WORD

When the devil tempted Jesus, notice what he attacked. He did not question Jesus' power. He questioned His identity. "If You are the Son of God..." He uses the same strategy on you. "If you are really forgiven, why do you still struggle? If you are really healed, why do you still feel pain? If God really loves you, why is this happening?"

Every time you answer him with reasoning instead of revelation, you lose ground. But when the Word has become who you are, you answer the way Jesus did, with the authority of identity.

"For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does" (James 1:23-25)

The Word of God is a mirror. But it does not show you who you used to be. It shows you who you are now in Christ: redeemed, righteous, restored, and reigning.

Here is the tragedy. Many believers treat the Bible as a subject to study instead of a life to live. They read it as God's Word to them, but not as God's Word about them. And that subtle difference changes everything. When you read the Bible from a distance, as if you were separate from what is written, you will always live like an outsider looking in. But when you read it through the lens of union, seeing yourself in Christ, you realize you are not just reading the story. You are part of it.

ABIDE

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you"
(John 15:7)

To abide means to make your home somewhere. To live there. To breathe there. To draw your life from there. When the Word abides in you, it shapes your inner consciousness until your thoughts start to harmonize with His. You do not just think about Scripture. You think from Scripture.

And notice the promise attached to it. When His words abide in you, you can ask what you will and it shall be done. Why? Because when His words are living in you, what you will is what He wills. Your prayers come out of His Word, and He always honors His Word.

A SOLDIER WHO NEVER LOADS HIS WEAPON

Imagine a soldier who studies his rifle every day. He polishes it. He memorizes every part. He learns its whole history. He can tell you its range and its weight and the year it was designed. But he never loads it, and he never fires it. He is well informed, and completely harmless to the enemy.

That is what many believers have become: students of the Word, but not soldiers of the Word. The Bible was not given for admiration. It was given for activation. It is not a museum piece. It is a living arsenal. Every promise, every truth, every word of Christ is ammunition in the mouth of faith. But until you load it through meditation and release it through confession, it stays dormant.

WHEN THE WORD BECOMES FLESH IN YOU

Revelation always changes behavior. You cannot truly see something in the Spirit and keep living the same way. When Peter received the revelation that Jesus was the Christ, his life changed. When Paul received the revelation of righteousness by faith, he stopped striving and started reigning. When John received the revelation of the love of God, he wrote that perfect love casts out fear.

When the Word becomes revelation in you, fear loses its language. You stop saying, "I hope it works," and you start saying, "It is written." You stop asking, "Why won't God move?" and you start declaring, "God has already moved." Your prayers change from pleading to partnering, from begging to believing.

That is when your prayers stop sounding desperate and start sounding dangerous. That is when your words carry weight in the unseen realm. That is when the devil hears in your voice the same Word that cast him down, and he runs.

READ WITH HIM, NOT JUST ABOUT HIM

This is why the Holy Spirit lives inside you. Not just to remind you of verses, but to reveal their meaning.

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13)

When you open your Bible, invite Him into the reading. "Holy Spirit, show me what this means. Show me myself in this. Show me Jesus in this." Every page can become a conversation. Every verse can become communion. You stop reading about God and start reading with Him.

The devil does not fear your discipline nearly as much as he fears your intimacy. He does not fear your reading plan. He fears your union with the living Word. Because when you start reading for transformation instead of information, you read until the Word starts reading you. And then the devil realizes he is not dealing with someone who just owns a Bible. He is dealing with someone who has become a living letter of it.

A PRAYER FOR REVELATION

Father, I do not want to be a hearer only. I want Your Word to become revelation in me. Holy Spirit, guide me into all truth. Open my eyes when I read. Let me see myself in the mirror of Your Word, redeemed and righteous and reigning in Christ. Let Your words abide in me until I think from them, speak from them, and live from them. Today I take up the sword of the Spirit. I will meditate on Your Word day and night, and I will not let it depart out of my mouth. When the enemy comes, I will answer him the way Jesus did: It is written. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 10

Thank You That It Is Done

Many believers pray for hours and see very little result. But there is one simple prayer habit that takes less than a minute and activates faith like almost nothing else. It is not begging God for things. It is not long, exhausting sessions of intercession. It is something Jesus modeled that most Christians have completely overlooked.

It is thanksgiving. Thanking God for what He has already provided, before you see it with your eyes.

WHY MOST PRAYERS DO NOT ACTIVATE FAITH

Look at how many of us pray. We beg. We plead. We spend long sessions trying to convince God to do something. We work up our emotions. We repeat ourselves over and over, hoping that persistence will finally get His attention. And we leave exhausted, because we are praying from doubt, not from faith. We are asking as though we do not have instead of thanking as though we do.

Think about the typical prayer. "God, please give me strength. God, I need healing. God, help me with my finances. God, give me wisdom." Do you see the pattern? Every sentence asks for what we do not have.

And what does that kind of prayer do inside of us? It establishes in our own consciousness that we do not have strength, that we are not healed, that we are lacking, that we have no wisdom. Every time we pray that way, we confess lack. We declare need. We persuade our own hearts that we do not possess what God has already given.

Faith does not flow from a consciousness of lack. Faith flows from a consciousness of provision.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3)

"As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3)

Look at the tense of those verses. Hath blessed. Hath given. Past tense. Already done. The Word declares provision, abundance, and completeness. When we pray from lack, begging for what we think we do not have, we are contradicting the Word. And faith cannot operate when our confession contradicts what God has said.

THE PRAYER OF FAITH THANKS

The prayer of faith is not begging God to do something He has not done. The prayer of faith is thanking God for what He has already done, and receiving it. Many prayers are really prayers of unbelief dressed up as petitions.

The moment you shift from asking to thanking, from begging to receiving, from confessing lack to declaring provision, faith comes alive.

Now, does that mean we never ask God for anything? Of course not. Jesus told us to ask. James says we have not because we ask not. Paul says to let our requests be made known to God. But notice how Paul says to do it.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7)

With thanksgiving. The request and the thanks travel together. You make your request known, and in the same breath you thank Him that He has heard and answered. And the result? Peace that passes understanding. Not because the circumstances changed yet, but because you prayed from faith, and faith always produces peace.

HOW JESUS PRAYED AT THE TOMB

Look at the way Jesus prayed at the tomb of Lazarus. His friend had been dead for four days. The body was already decaying. Martha was worried about the smell. The crowd was weeping. And before anything visible happened, Jesus lifted up His eyes and prayed this:

"Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.' Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!'"

(John 11:41-43)

Jesus thanked the Father before the miracle. He did not beg the Father to raise Lazarus. He thanked Him that He had already heard. Past tense. Then He spoke to the situation: "Lazarus, come forth." And the dead man walked out of the tomb.

That is the pattern. Thanksgiving first. Declaration second. Manifestation third.

WHY THANKSGIVING IS SO POWERFUL

First, thanksgiving is the language of faith. You do not thank someone for a gift you do not believe you have received. Thanksgiving acknowledges that it is already done.

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Second, thanksgiving shifts your focus from the problem to the provision. When you beg for healing, your attention is on the sickness. When you plead for money, your attention is on the lack. Your prayer keeps you staring at the very thing you do not want. But when you thank God for healing, your focus shifts to His provision. And what you focus on is what grows in your consciousness.

Third, thanksgiving is how Jesus prayed, as we just saw at the tomb of Lazarus, and again when He blessed the loaves and fishes before the multitude was fed.

Fourth, thanksgiving brings your confession into agreement with God's Word. The Word says you are blessed. Thanksgiving says, "Thank You that I am blessed." The Word says He supplies all your need. Thanksgiving says, "Thank You that You supply all my need." And when your words agree with God's Word, faith rises, because faith comes by hearing, and you are hearing yourself say what God has said.

WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

Let me make this very practical.

Instead of praying, "God, please heal me," you pray: "Father, I thank You that by the stripes of Jesus I was healed, according to 1 Peter 2:24. Healing is mine. I receive it now. Thank You that healing is working in my body."

Instead of praying, "God, please provide for me," you pray: "Father, I thank You that You supply all my need according to Your riches in glory by Christ Jesus. That is Your promise. I receive Your provision now. Thank You that Your supply is coming into my life."

Instead of praying, "God, please give me wisdom," you pray: "Father, Your Word says that if I lack wisdom, I can ask You and You give it liberally. I am asking now, and I thank You that You

are giving. I receive Your wisdom. Thank You that it is working in me right now."

When fear comes, instead of praying, "God, please take this fear away," you pray: "Father, I thank You that You have not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. I receive that power. Fear has no authority over me."

When condemnation comes, instead of praying, "God, please forgive me again and again," you pray: "Father, I thank You that there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. I am in Christ. I am not condemned. Thank You that I stand righteous before You."

One kind of prayer begs for what you do not have. The other thanks God for what you already possess. One confesses the problem. The other confesses the promise. One feeds doubt. The other feeds faith.

THIS IS NOT POSITIVE THINKING

Let me be clear. This is not positive thinking. This is not pretending. This is not denying reality. This is agreeing with God's Word. You are not saying the circumstances do not exist. You are declaring that God's Word is a higher reality than the circumstances.

Most prayers start from circumstances: "I am sick, so I need healing. I am broke, so I need money." Thanksgiving starts from what Christ has already accomplished: "By His stripes I was healed. My God supplies all my need." One is circumstance-centered. The other is Christ-centered. And faith always grows in the soil of what Christ has done.

THE POWER OF PRAISE

Thanksgiving thanks God for what He has done. Praise honors Him for who He is. The two go hand in hand, and both are tremendously underrated in the prayer fight.

I believe that the greater part of our prayer life should be praise. Why? Because He has provided everything. If we were truly conscious of being in His presence, we would be full of joy.

"You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11)

"But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel" (Psalm 22:3)

God inhabits the praises of His people. When you praise Him, you are building a throne for Him to sit on in the middle of your situation.

And praise is not just a nice addition to prayer. It is a weapon. Look at what happened to King Jehoshaphat when three armies came against Judah. He did not send out his best soldiers first. He sent out the singers.

"Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated" (2 Chronicles 20:22)

When they began to sing. The battle turned the moment the praise started. Wars have been won by praising God.

WHAT PRAISE DOES

Praise magnifies the Lord in your mind and in your heart. It does not make God bigger, because He is already infinite, but it makes Him bigger in your eyes.

Praise expands your vision and takes the limits off God.

Praise eclipses fear, because when you see God so big and so capable, the problem shrinks back to its true size.

Praise energizes your work. It lifts you above the circumstances and refreshes your spirit.

And praise defeats the enemy. Satan hates to hear God glorified, because he once wanted that glory for himself.

Praise will often get you out of the very pit the devil is trying to throw you into. Paul and Silas were beaten and locked in the inner prison with their feet in stocks. And at midnight they prayed and sang praises to God, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, and every door was opened and every chain fell off.

THE COST OF INGRATITUDE

The Lord loves a thankful heart, because gratitude is what happens inside a heart that meditates on His grace and mercy. That is why He hates murmuring and complaining.

"Nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer" (1 Corinthians 10:10)

The children of Israel saw the Red Sea split, ate manna from heaven, and drank water from a rock, and they still complained their way around the wilderness for forty years. Complaining kept them out of the promised land. And I believe the price of ingratitude is often heaviness and depression. Everything in our lives works better when we praise Him.

Too many of us have turned prayer into a pry bar to get God to bless us. Not many people worship God simply because He is worthy to be worshipped. But praise puts you in the realm of God's possibilities instead of man's impossibilities.

THE PRAISE WALK

My wife and I go for what we call a praise walk almost every day. We usually start by saying, "We are so blessed." And if you start listing all that redemption has provided for you, you will be walking for a long time. You will find yourself bathing in God's awesome love.

Try it. Do not ask for anything for the first ten minutes. Just thank Him. Thank Him for your salvation. Thank Him for His

blood. Thank Him for His name. Thank Him for His Spirit. Thank Him for every promise in His Word. Thank Him for the breath in your lungs. You will be amazed at how your problems shrink as your gratitude grows.

THE SECOND DAY

Here is one more thing that changes when thanksgiving becomes your habit. You stop praying the same request over and over every day.

When you have thanked God for healing according to His Word, you do not need to beg for healing again tomorrow as though He did not hear you. You have received it. Tomorrow, you simply thank Him again that it is yours and that it is manifesting.

Begging keeps you in perpetual need. Thanksgiving moves you into confident expectation.

And joy comes back into your prayer life. Prayer stops being exhausting work and becomes joyful fellowship. You are not wrestling with God. You are thanking your Father. You are not trying to convince Him. You are receiving from Him.

A THIRTY-SECOND PRAYER

This habit does not require long sessions. You can pray a prayer of thanksgiving in thirty seconds: "Father, I thank You that by the stripes of Jesus I was healed. I receive that healing now. Thank You that it is manifesting in my body."

Done. But that thirty-second prayer of faith will do more than thirty minutes of begging, because it is not the length of the prayer that matters. It is the faith in the prayer. And thanksgiving is faith in action.

So starting right now, change how you pray. Whatever you were about to beg God for, stop. Find what His Word says about it. And thank Him that it is already done.

A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Father, I thank You that You have already blessed me with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. Thank You that Your divine power has given me all things that pertain to life and godliness. Thank You that by the stripes of Jesus I was healed. Thank You that You supply all my need according to Your riches in glory. Thank You that You give me wisdom liberally. Thank You that You have not given me a spirit of fear. Thank You that there is no condemnation for me in Christ. I praise You because You are worthy. You inhabit my praise, and I build You a throne in the middle of every situation I face. Thank You, Father, that it is already done. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

Seeing Jesus

All through the Bible, God taught His people to see the outcome before the promise was fulfilled. He did it with Abraham on a clear night under the desert sky.

"Then He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be'" (Genesis 15:5)

Abraham was an old man with no children. His wife was past the age of having babies. Everything in the natural said the promise was impossible. So God took him outside and said, "Look up. Count the stars. That is what your family is going to look like." God gave Abraham a picture to hold onto. Every night when Abraham looked up at the sky, he saw his descendants.

And the Bible says:

"And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6)

SEEING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING

Read through Hebrews 11, the great hall of faith, and you will notice that almost every one of those men and women had to see the end result in order to endure the wait. It says of Moses:

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward... for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible"
(Hebrews 11:26-27)

He endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Moses could walk away from the palace of Egypt because he saw something better. And even Jesus was able to endure the cross because He saw what was on the other side of it.

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2)

The joy that was set before Him. Jesus saw the result. He saw all of mankind offered redemption. He saw sons and daughters reunited with the Father. He saw you. And that vision carried Him through the nails and the thorns.

WHAT TO SEE WHEN YOU PRAY

When we come to God in prayer, we must remember not to pour out our doubts, our fears, and our worries as though they were the main event. That is not the formula Jesus gave us.

"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:24)

When you pray, believe that you receive. In other words, when you pray, see it done. Picture the outcome God has promised. And then do not move from that picture. Stay fixed on it. Keep your eyes on it the way Abraham kept looking at the stars.

The devil's greatest trick is to get our eyes off the promise and onto the circumstances and the impossibilities. As long as he can keep you staring at the size of the problem, you will not see the size of your God.

LOOK THROUGH THE PAYMENT

The very best way to keep your eyes on the outcome is to keep your eyes on the One who paid for it: Jesus. He paid the full

price for us to receive everything that has been promised.

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'"
(John 14:6)

No one receives the promises of the Father except through the sacrifice of the Son. He is the door to everything that has been promised. All of God's promises are fulfilled through Jesus.

"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us"
(2 Corinthians 1:20)

Suppose you are window shopping. You see something in the window you would love to have. The only way you can seriously expect to own it is to know that you have the means to pay for it. If your wallet is empty, all you can do is wish.

It is the same in prayer. You look at the promise through the payment that was made. Jesus paid for every promise of God to be fulfilled in you, through you, and for you. Everything has been made available in redemption. He told us we can use His name. In prayer, you are showing the Father the receipt: paid in full by the blood of Jesus.

BEHOLD THE SON

You can only find your new identity by beholding the victory of the Son. The secret of faith is to get your eyes off your troubles, your sorrow, and your lack, and onto the victory Christ has provided.

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37)

There is no need to rehearse your problems, your anguish, and your woes in prayer. He already knows. The power of answered prayer is in seeing Jesus, and seeing how every promise is fulfilled in Him.

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18)

What you behold, you become. If you behold the problem, you will be shaped by the problem. If you behold the Lord, you will be changed into His image from glory to glory.

SEE THE CITY GIVEN

When God told Joshua to march around Jericho, He gave him a picture before He gave him a plan.

"And the LORD said to Joshua: 'See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor'" (Joshua 6:2)

See, I have given. God spoke in the past tense, as if it were already done. The walls were still standing. The soldiers were still on top of them. But God said, "See it. It is already yours."

When you pray, look beyond the wall. See the victory Jesus has already won. See yourself walking with Jesus, whole and strong. Not bent over with a cane, not wasting away with disease, but tall and straight and healthy, smiling and victorious. See your children serving the Lord. See your marriage restored. See your city touched by revival. Jesus connects you to the power of God: the power of health, of light, of truth, and of life.

PETER ON THE WATER

For as long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he walked on water. It was only when he looked at the wind and the waves that he began to sink.

"But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!'" (Matthew 14:30)

Notice that nothing about the storm changed between the moment he was walking and the moment he was sinking. The wind was just as strong. The waves were just as high. The only thing that changed was where Peter was looking.

The secret is always to look through and beyond the impossibilities. You must see in order to receive. If you cannot see the outcome in your spirit, you will struggle to receive it in your life.

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him"

(1 John 5:14-15)

Confidence comes from seeing. When I pray, I see the redemptive power of Jesus working in that situation, and that is what gives me confidence.

FAITH IS WHO YOU SEE

Faith is more than what you see. It is Who you see.

We must not see ourselves as merely religious people. "I'm a Baptist." "I'm a deacon." "I'm a member of such-and-such a church." Those things may be true, but they are not your identity. Let people know that you are filled with Jesus. That is what makes you a world changer. See Jesus alive in you, and never move from that vision.

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20)

Paul was saying, "I am a dead man. And yet I live. But the life you see looking out through my eyes is Christ reaching out to you."

REJECT EVERY CONTRADICTION

To keep your eyes on Jesus, you must learn to reject every contradiction to the promises of God.

God's Words are the seeds of your faith. Get those seeds into your heart, because seeds always produce after their kind. Plant an apple seed, you get an apple tree. Plant the seed of God's Word, and you get the life of God.

Your thoughts are seeds too. Your thoughts become your words, and your words shape your life. That is why your thoughts must be aligned with God's purpose. When Jesus said the kingdom of God is within you, He was telling you that all the creativity and life of God has been made available in you and through you.

WHAT THE WORLD TELLS YOU

Do not let yourself be limited or boxed in by education, religion, or culture. They will all try to tell you who you are and how you must behave. They will tell you how important you can be, how guilty you should feel, how sickness-conscious you ought to be. They will tell you how poor you are, what you can and cannot afford, what car you can drive, what salary you can earn.

Instead, listen to God. Tune in to His opinion of you, and to how it was all made possible through Jesus. Never leave home without your checkbook, the name above every name, which has paid and still pays for everything. That name tells you how holy you can be, how blessed you can be, how generous, how joyful, how peaceful, and how free.

That is what faith is really all about. We see the Victor. We have a firm conviction, unshakable confidence, and an unwavering expectation that everything God has said in His Word is established forever through Jesus and will come to pass.

SEE JESUS AT WORK IN YOU

We must see Jesus at work in us. We must refuse to see the arthritis, the cancer, the diabetes, the asthma as the final word. Jesus is perfection. He is life. He is light. He is health. And the cells of our bodies will line up with His will and His purpose as we keep our eyes on Him.

We should never accept defeat.

| **"Nor give place to the devil"** (Ephesians 4:27)

We were made to win. Let us keep our eyes on the One Winner who paid for our victory. He has triumphed over principalities and powers. It is done. And because it is done, it is real, and it is here.

THE EYES OF FAITH

Let me close this chapter with a few verses, and I want you to read the little notes I have placed beside each one.

"Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'" (John 20:29). Blessed are those who see Him with the eyes of faith.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Faith sees Jesus as the Rewarder.

"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind" (James 1:6). The one who does not waver is the one who keeps his eyes fixed on the victory of Jesus.

"He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God" (Romans 4:20). Abraham kept seeing the stars.

"Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58). In His own hometown, the people could not see Him as the Christ. They saw only the carpenter's son. And because of what they saw, they received very little.

What do you see when you pray? Do you see the giant, or do you see the God who is bigger than the giant? Do you see the wall, or do you see the city already given into your hand? Do you see the waves, or do you see Jesus standing on top of them, holding out His hand?

A PRAYER OF VISION

Lord Jesus, I fix my eyes on You, the author and finisher of my faith. I will not stare at the wind and the waves. I look through the promise to the payment You made, and I see that every promise of God is yes and amen in You. Thank You that I am more than a conqueror through You. I see myself as You see me: whole, healed, blessed, and victorious. I see my family walking with You. I reject every contradiction to Your Word. Christ lives in me, and the life I now live, I live by faith in You. In Your name I pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 12

Three Prayers That Open the Eyes of the Heart

Many believers are not weak because they never pray. They are weak because nobody ever taught them to pray from the victorious place Christ has already given them.

The apostle Paul never taught the church to pray like orphans. And when you study the prayers he wrote down for believers, something remarkable jumps out at you. He was writing to real people under real pressure. They faced persecution, confusion, and intense spiritual warfare. And yet his prayers for them are never dominated by panic.

He does not mainly pray, "God, please make all their problems disappear." Instead he prays, "God, flood their inner man with light. Open their eyes."

He prays for wisdom. He prays for revelation. He prays for inner strength. He prays that they would understand what has already been given to them in Christ. He did not ignore their problems. He simply knew that revelation changes the person facing the problem, and a changed person changes the situation.

Most of us pour all our energy into trying to get God to fix the outside while our inside stays governed by fear. Paul goes straight to the root. Because when your inside is trained by the Word of God, your outside loses its power to define you.

In this chapter I want to give you three of Paul's prayers. I encourage you to pray them over yourself every day, and over the people you love.

PRAYER NUMBER ONE: THE EYE-OPENER

The first prayer is in the first chapter of Ephesians.

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead"

(Ephesians 1:17-20)

Notice that Paul is not praying for them to get more religious information. He is not praying that they memorize another church phrase or have an emotional high in the next service. He is asking for supernatural sight. He is praying that the eyes of their hearts would be opened.

THE FORTUNE SHE NEVER KNEW ABOUT

Let me show you why this matters so much. Imagine a young woman I will call Rachel, living in a small apartment in a busy city. Her grandfather passes away and leaves her a fortune in a bank account. Millions. But Rachel has no idea the account exists. She never received the letter. She does not have the account number. So she keeps living in that drafty little apartment. She skips meals to save money. She lies awake worrying about the electricity bill.

Is she legally wealthy? Absolutely. Is she living like it? Not even close. She is living poor because she does not know what has already been deposited in her name.

In the very same way, a believer can be seated with Christ in heavenly places and still pray from the floor like a beggar, if the

eyes of his heart have never been opened. This is one of the great crises in the church. Many Christians are not actually waiting for God to give them more. They are waiting for their eyes to open to what His grace has already supplied.

WHAT PAUL DOES NOT PRAY

Look at what Paul does not pray in that passage. He does not pray, "Father, please love them a little more." God already loves them with an everlasting love. He does not pray, "Father, please make redemption a little stronger." Redemption was finished when Jesus walked out of the tomb. He does not pray, "Father, please decide whether You are willing to help them." The cross already shouted His willingness to the whole universe.

Paul prays one thing: open their eyes. Because when the eyes of the heart open, prayer stops being an exercise in begging and becomes a declaration of agreement.

The believer stops saying, "God, I feel so alone," and starts declaring, "Father, You have chosen me and called me in Christ." He stops saying, "I have nothing," and starts seeing the riches of his inheritance. He stops crying, "I am powerless against this temptation," and starts understanding the exceeding greatness of God's power toward those who believe.

RESURRECTION POWER

And what is the measure of that power? Paul points straight to the power God worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

Think about that. The measure of the power available toward you right now does not depend on your mood, your past, your education, your personality, or how emotionally stable you feel today. The measure is resurrection power.

That one truth should shake every bit of fear loose from your prayer life. The power that raised Jesus from the dead is not a

dusty doctrine meant to sit on a shelf. It is the foundation of all Christian confidence. It is heaven's answer to every voice that has ever told you, "You will always be weak. You will always be bound. You will always be on the outside looking in."

The resurrection says something completely different. It says Jesus has triumphed. It says your old nature was judged and buried. It says a new creation has come forth. Therefore your prayer life must be trained by victory, not by fear.

HOW TO PRAY IT

Tomorrow morning, before you start listing everything that is going wrong, open to Ephesians 1 and let the Word train your mouth. Say it out loud:

"Father of glory, give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You today. Open the eyes of my heart. Let me know the hope of Your calling. Let me see the riches of the glory of Your inheritance in me. Let me understand the exceeding greatness of Your power toward me because I believe, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead."

That is not a magic formula. It is mature agreement with Scripture. And as your eyes open, you will discover that the greatest change in your prayer life is not that you have no more battles. It is that your battles no longer get to define you.

That is a dangerous shift for the kingdom of darkness, because fear depends on blindness to operate. Fear needs you to stare at the natural report until the promises of God feel distant and unreal. The enemy does not always try to stop you from praying. Sometimes he is satisfied if he can just train the way you pray, until your own mouth becomes a witness against your redemption.

PRAYER NUMBER TWO: STRENGTH IN THE INNER MAN

There is a big difference between reading about your inheritance and standing in the daily consciousness of it. There is a big difference between quoting a verse about resurrection power and praying as if that power were flowing toward you right now. Until revelation becomes personal, doctrine stays distant.

That is why the second prayer Paul gives us is so necessary. In Ephesians 3, he bows his knees before the Father and prays this:

"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:16-19)

Notice where that prayer goes first. Not to the storm outside. Not to the financial pressure. Not to the people causing trouble. Paul goes straight to the inner man. Why? Because if your inner man is weak, the outer world will govern you. You can have every promise highlighted in your Bible and still collapse under the slightest pressure if your inner man has not been strengthened.

DWELL, NOT VISIT

Paul prays that Christ would dwell in your heart by faith. He does not mean visit. He does not mean show up occasionally when the worship team plays your favorite song, or drop by when you are in a crisis. He means dwell: settle down, take up permanent residence, become the governing presence of your whole inner life.

Many Christians have received Jesus as Savior but have never let the reality of Christ govern their inner world. Their spirit belongs to God, but their thoughts are still trained by rejection. Their mouth says "Lord," but their imagination still pictures failure. Their Bible says "accepted," but their emotions still scream "unworthy."

This is the gap between the legal and the vital. Legally, Christ has made you His own. Vitally, you have to learn to live like His own. Legally, righteousness has been given to you as a gift. Vitally, your conscience has to be trained to stop calling you a failure. Legally, your old nature was crucified with Christ. Vitally, your speech has to stop resurrecting the old identity Jesus already buried. Legally, you have access to the Father. Vitally, your prayer life has to stop standing outside the front door like a stranger.

The finished work of Christ is not weak just because your experience may feel immature right now. Your experience has to be brought up into line with the finished work. That is why Paul prays so strongly for inner strength. A weak inner man makes every outside pressure look final. A strengthened inner man can look straight at the facts without bowing his knee to them.

ROOTED AND GROUNDED

Paul says you are to be rooted and grounded in love. That is not shallow emotion. That is foundation language. Rooted like a great oak tree. Grounded like a skyscraper built on bedrock.

Too many believers are deeply rooted in fear and then lightly sprinkled with a few Bible verses. They are rooted in a history of rejection and decorated with church language on Sundays. And then they wonder why they tip over the moment pressure hits. But Paul prays that your roots would go down deep into the love of Christ until condemnation loses its authority over you.

When you are rooted in that kind of love, you are not easily uprooted by a bad report, a hard day at work, a financial strain, a family conflict, or a dry season. Feelings may shake the leaves, but they cannot pull up the roots.

And then Paul prays that you would be filled with all the fullness of God. Not emptiness. Not survival mode. Fullness. No wonder he goes straight on to say:

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20)

Many people quote that verse as if it were only about outward blessings. But look at the context. The power is working in us. God is not only trying to change what is around you. He is forming someone inside you who can carry the victory of Christ into every place you go.

So pray it slowly: "Father, strengthen me with might by Your Spirit in my inner man today. Let Christ dwell in my heart by faith. Root me and ground me in the love of Jesus. Let me know the love that passes knowledge. Fill me with all Your fullness. Let Your power work in me beyond all I can ask or think."

Pray it until weakness loses its vocabulary in your life. Pray it until your mouth stops saying, "I just can't take this anymore," and starts declaring, "The Spirit of the living God is strengthening my inner man right now."

PRAYER NUMBER THREE: KNOWING HIS WILL

Once your inner man is strengthened, the next thing you need is a clear knowledge of the Father's will. Not vague religious guessing. Not anxious speculation. Not waking up every morning wondering whether God is playing hide-and-seek with His direction for your life.

"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy" (Colossians 1:9-11)

Filled with the knowledge of His will. Not sprinkled with a little advice. Filled. Paul is praying for a life governed by supernatural clarity.

Many believers who love God still live with a thick fog over their decisions. They know just enough of the Bible to feel guilty, but not enough revelation to walk steady and confident. So they spend their lives second-guessing. "Is this God? Is this just me? What if I miss it? What if I ruin everything?"

Now, this does not mean you will know every detail of your future. You are not God, and that is probably a good thing for all of us. But it does mean you do not have to live as though the Father has left you in the dark. His Word is a lamp. His Spirit is your Teacher. His peace is an umpire in your heart. His wisdom is available to anyone who asks. Confusion is not part of your inheritance.

WALKING WORTHY

Paul tells us why we need this knowledge: so that we might walk worthy of the Lord. Prayer is not just for private comfort. It is for walking. Revelation that does not affect your daily walk has not yet become vital in you.

To walk worthy does not mean earning your place in Christ. You do not obey God to become accepted. You obey Him because you have already been accepted. Grace never makes a believer

passive. Grace teaches a believer to live powerfully from his new nature.

And Paul prays that you would be strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. Natural strength can grit its teeth and endure for a while, but it usually turns bitter. Divine strength produces endurance with joy, because your inner life is drawing from a heavenly supply.

So pray it: "Father, fill me with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding today, so that I can walk worthy of You, please You in every way, and bear fruit in every good work. Strengthen me with all might according to Your glorious power, so that I can endure with joy."

PASS IT ON

These three prayers are not only for you. They are some of the most powerful prayers you can pray over your children, your spouse, your pastor, your friends, and even those who do not yet know Jesus. Put their name right into the prayer: "Father, give my son the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Open the eyes of his heart."

And then teach others to pray them. Obedience is the starting line, but multiplication is the goal. We learn so that we can teach. We are strengthened so that we can strengthen others.

A PRAYER FROM PAUL'S PRAYERS

Heavenly Father, thank You that You have not left me in the dark or praying like an orphan. Give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You. Open the eyes of my heart to see the hope of Your calling, the riches of Your inheritance, and the exceeding greatness of Your resurrection power toward me. Strengthen me with might by Your Spirit in my inner man. Let Christ dwell in my heart by faith. Root me and ground me in

ENTER THE PRAYER FIGHT

Your love, and fill me with all Your fullness. Fill me with the knowledge of Your will, so that I may walk worthy of You and be fruitful in every good work. I will pass these truths on to others. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

CHAPTER 13

Your Helper in the Fight

The kind of prayer that pleases God most is prayer that is directed by the Holy Spirit.

Actually, that goes far beyond prayer. It applies to every area of the Christian life. The life that pleases God is a life led by the Holy Spirit.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14)

To become a child of God, you must be born of God's Spirit. That is the doorway into the Christian life. But to live as a child of God, you must keep being led by the Spirit. And many people who have been born again have never really learned how to be led by the Holy Spirit in daily living. This is especially true when it comes to prayer.

In the same chapter, Paul applies this principle directly to our praying.

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27)

OUR WEAKNESS

Paul says we all have a weakness. It is not a sickness of the body or the mind. It is simply part of being human in a fallen world.

The weakness is this: we do not know what to pray for as we ought.

Different translations put it in different ways. Some say we do not know what to pray for. Others say we do not know how to pray. I believe both are true. Sometimes we think we know what to pray for, but we do not know how to pray about it. And sometimes we are completely at a loss. We do not know what or how.

Have you ever been there? A friend calls with devastating news. A child is in trouble and you do not know the whole story. A situation is so tangled that every prayer you can think of seems either too small or completely wrong. You kneel down and nothing comes out.

God's answer for that weakness is the Holy Spirit. Jesus called Him the Comforter, the Helper, the One called alongside to help. He comes to help us live the life we need to live and pray the prayers we need to pray.

HE TAKES HOLD TOGETHER WITH US

The word "helps" in Romans 8:26 is a rich one. It carries the idea of someone taking hold of the other end of a heavy load and lifting it together with you. Picture two men carrying a heavy table up a flight of stairs. One alone would struggle. But when the second grabs the other end, the load becomes manageable.

That is what the Holy Spirit does in prayer. He does not take the whole thing out of your hands and leave you sitting on the couch. He takes hold together with you. As you yield to Him, He prays through you the prayer that really needs to be prayed.

Notice how personal Paul's language is. The Spirit Himself makes intercession. He, the Spirit, intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. This is not an impersonal force. This is the third Person of the Godhead, living inside you, praying the perfect will of God through you.

In a very real sense, the secret of effective praying is learning to yield to the Holy Spirit, intelligently and willingly, and letting Him pray through you.

WHERE THE POWER COMES FROM

Here is something every believer has noticed, even if they never said it out loud. Two people can pray almost exactly the same words over the same sick person. One prayer seems to bounce off the ceiling. The other one shakes the room, and the person gets up healed. What is the difference? It is not the vocabulary. It is the power behind the words.

"For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power"

(1 Corinthians 4:20)

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20)

Look at that last phrase again. According to the power that works in us. There is no limit to what God is able to do. But what actually flows through our praying is according to the power at work inside us. And that power is the Holy Spirit. He is not an extra for advanced Christians. He is the source of every prayer that really accomplishes something. A prayer that comes only from our own minds and our own strength may sound lovely, but it does not move mountains.

"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," Says the LORD of hosts (Zechariah 4:6).

I find that very freeing. It means effective prayer is not about long prayers or clever prayers. To be honest, some of us pray far too many words. Effective prayer is about yielding, letting the Spirit who lives inside you supply both the direction and the power. Your words are the wire. He is the current.

A PRAYER MEETING THAT NEVER CLOSES

I have come to believe that the real key to a powerful prayer life is to let the Holy Spirit keep a prayer meeting going inside you all the time. Not only when you are on your knees. When you are driving, working, cooking, even sleeping.

| **"I sleep, but my heart is awake"** (Song of Solomon 5:2)

The Holy Spirit never stops interceding. When you give Him room, He keeps praying through your spirit while your mind is busy with other things. That is part of what Paul meant when he told us to **"pray without ceasing"** (1 Thessalonians 5:17). You will notice it when a prayer rises up in you in the middle of an ordinary afternoon, or when you wake up in the night and find you are already praying. Do not shrug it off. That is the prayer meeting inside you, and you have just been invited to join in.

THREE WAYS THE SPIRIT HELPS US PRAY

The Bible shows us several ways the Holy Spirit helps us pray. Let me give you three.

THE FIRST WAY: GROANINGS TOO DEEP FOR WORDS

The first way is the one Paul mentions in this very passage: groanings which cannot be uttered.

Many of the things we most need to pray about are too deep for words. Ordinary words are simply not big enough. Deep down inside each one of us there is something much bigger than our minds. The Bible calls it our spirit. Our spirit is always hungering and thirsting for God. Our spirit has things locked up inside it that it longs to express to Him.

But as long as we are limited to what our little minds can understand and approve as reasonable, our spirit cannot fully express itself. So one way the Holy Spirit sets our spirit free to

pray is through groanings that come from somewhere deeper than the intellect.

I have been present when believers were given that kind of prayer. It is very moving. It is very solemn. There is a weight to it. You know you are standing on holy ground. Often, after that kind of prayer, the person cannot even tell you what they were praying about, but they know something was settled.

Do not be afraid of it if it comes. Do not shut it down because it does not look neat and tidy. The Spirit of God is praying through you for things your mind does not yet understand.

THE SECOND WAY: THE RIGHT WORDS IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE

The second way the Holy Spirit helps us is by giving us the right prayer in our own language. It is a prayer we would never have thought of on our own.

Let me tell you a story I heard from a man who served as a young soldier during wartime. He did not yet know the Lord personally. A Christian family in the town where he was stationed invited him and another soldier over for Sunday supper. He had never been in a home like that. To begin with, they bowed their heads and asked God to bless the food. Nobody in his family had ever done that. But he adjusted, the meal was delicious, and he started to relax.

And then, at the end of the meal, without any warning, everybody around the table began to pray out loud, one after another. There were seven or eight people around that oval table, and he quickly calculated that his turn was coming. He had never prayed out loud in public in his life. He was literally paralyzed with fear.

When his turn came, he had no idea what was going to happen. He just opened his mouth, and out came these words: "Lord, I

believe; help my unbelief!"

He did not even know those words were in the Bible. But years later he said that it was as good a prayer as he had ever prayed, and he took no credit for it. The Holy Spirit gave it to him.

That still happens today. You start to pray about a situation, and suddenly a phrase rises up in you, a verse you had forgotten, a request you had not planned, a name you had not thought of in years. That is the Helper giving you the right words.

THE THIRD WAY: A PRAYER LANGUAGE

The third way the Holy Spirit helps us pray is through a prayer language in an unknown tongue. This is spoken about many times in the New Testament.

Some people find it hard to understand. The truth is, it cannot be fully understood with the natural mind. It is an activity of the spirit that goes beyond what our little minds can grasp. But thank God that the Christian life is not limited to what our minds can comprehend. Thank God that we serve a God bigger than our intellect.

One of the ways God frees us from the tyranny of the mind is by giving us, through the Holy Spirit, a language of prayer. We are praying in a real language, but not one we have learned. We have simply yielded to the Holy Spirit and let Him pray through us what needs to be prayed.

"For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries... He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself" (1 Corinthians 14:2, 4)

Look at the three things Paul says are happening when we pray in this way.

First, we are speaking directly to God, not to men. That is an amazing privilege in itself.

Second, in our spirit we are speaking mysteries, divine secrets, things too deep for our minds to fully grasp.

Third, we are building ourselves up spiritually, even when our minds do not understand everything that is going on.

Jude says the same thing:

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 1:20)

When you pray in tongues, you are praying the perfect will of God, because the Spirit who prays through you knows the mind of God perfectly. You do not have to wonder whether you are praying the right thing. He is praying it.

TWO MORE WAYS HE HELPS: THE PROMISE AND THE OPEN MOUTH

There are two more ways the Holy Spirit helps us pray, and I want you to have both of them in your arsenal.

The first is praying the promise back to God. The Holy Spirit wrote the Scriptures, and He loves to take a promise from the Word, light it up in your heart, and give you the faith to hold God to it.

Look at King David. God sent the prophet Nathan to tell him that He was going to build David a house, a royal line that would last forever. It was far bigger than anything David had imagined. And David did not walk away wondering whether it would ever happen. He went in, sat down before the Lord, and prayed this:

"And now, O LORD, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, let it be established forever, and do as You have said"

(1 Chronicles 17:23)

Do as You have said. That is one of the most powerful prayers a human being can pray. A young woman in Nazareth prayed the

same way when the angel told her she would carry the Son of God.

"Then Mary said, 'Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word'" (Luke 1:38)

Let it be to me according to Your word. When the Holy Spirit quickens a promise to you, that is your cue. Take it, turn it back to God, and say, "Father, You said it. Do as You have said." That is not presumption. God Himself invites it.

"Then the LORD said to me, 'You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word'" (Jeremiah 1:12)

"Put Me in remembrance; Let us contend together; State your case, that you may be acquitted" (Isaiah 43:26)

This is the very heart of what I mean when I say we command with the Word. You are not begging God to change His mind. You are agreeing with what He has already decided, and enforcing it against everything that stands in its way.

The second way is even simpler. Sometimes the Holy Spirit just asks you to open your mouth.

"I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10)

There will be times when you kneel down with no plan and no words. Open your mouth anyway. Begin to thank Him, and then let Him fill it. Very often you will find yourself praying something you had never thought of, about yourself, about someone else, about a situation that was not even on your mind. Pay attention when that happens. That is frequently how God shows you His will. The prayer the Spirit gives you is the revelation of what He wants to do.

And beyond all of these there is travail, the deep, groaning, birthing kind of prayer that brings forth what God has promised.

The Bible tells us that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs, and that we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves too (Romans 8:22-23). In the kingdom of God, just as in the natural world, there is no birth without labor. We will look at that kind of prayer more closely in a later chapter. For now, simply know that when it comes, it is the Holy Spirit carrying a burden through you, and something is about to be born.

FIX YOUR MIND, LET HIM PRAY

Here is a practical key. When you pray in the Spirit about a situation, fix your mind on what you are praying about, and let the Holy Spirit do the praying. Bring the person or the need before the Lord in your thoughts, and then yield your voice to the Spirit.

Paul said:

"What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding"

(1 Corinthians 14:15)

Both. Not one or the other. There is a time to pray with your understanding, in your own language, using the promises of God. And there is a time to pray in the Spirit, beyond your understanding. A mature prayer warrior learns to flow between the two.

Often you will find that after a time of praying in the Spirit, understanding comes. A word of direction rises up. A Scripture comes to mind. A burden lifts and joy takes its place. That is often the sign that something has been accomplished in the spirit realm.

IF YOU HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED THIS

Some reading this book have never prayed in a prayer language. Maybe you were taught that it is not for today. Maybe you have

seen it misused and it made you uncomfortable. Maybe you simply never knew it was available.

Let me encourage you. This gift is for every believer who wants it.

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13)

On the day of Pentecost, Peter said the promise was "to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." That includes you. Ask the Father in faith to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Thank Him that He has. And then open your mouth and yield your voice to Him. Do not wait for Him to move your tongue for you. You do the speaking; He gives the words. Just like Peter stepping out of the boat, you discover it as you step out.

THE SPIRIT ALSO LEADS YOUR OTHER PRAYERS

The Holy Spirit does not only help us pray in tongues. He leads every kind of prayer. He prompts you to pray for someone at two in the morning. He reminds you of a promise in the middle of a hard conversation. He puts a burden on your heart for a nation you have never visited.

Learn to pay attention to those nudges. When someone's name suddenly comes to mind, pray for them right then. When you feel an unusual heaviness about a situation, take it to the Lord. Many believers have later found out that the moment they felt prompted to pray was the very moment someone they loved was in danger.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring

to your remembrance all things that I said to you"

(John 14:26)

YOU ARE NEVER ALONE IN THE FIGHT

Here is the great comfort of this chapter. You are never alone in the prayer fight. Even when your words fail, even when your mind goes blank, even when you do not know what to say, the Holy Spirit is right there, taking hold together with you.

Jesus is interceding for you at the right hand of the Father. The Holy Spirit is interceding through you from within. And you, the believer, stand on earth as the one through whom heaven's prayers are released into this world. That is a winning team.

So the next time you kneel down and do not know what to pray, do not get up and walk away discouraged. Say, "Holy Spirit, help me. Pray through me." And then yield to Him. You will be amazed at what comes out.

A PRAYER FOR THE SPIRIT'S HELP

Holy Spirit, thank You that You are my Helper. Thank You that when I do not know what to pray or how to pray, You take hold together with me and make intercession according to the will of God. I yield to You. Pray through me with groanings too deep for words. Give me the right words in my own language. Fill me afresh and let me pray in the Spirit, speaking mysteries to God and building myself up on my most holy faith. Teach me to pray with my spirit and with my understanding also. Make me sensitive to Your promptings, day and night. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

CHAPTER 14

Binding the Strong Man

While we must see prayer as war, I want to say again very clearly that we are not fighting against God. We are not trying to overcome His reluctance. We are standing with God in violent opposition to the oppressor.

Our job is to enforce the kingdom of God on earth and to resist the forces of Satan wherever they are trying to hold ground. The born-again believer has been given back power and authority to rule in life. Dominion, victory, triumph, and conquest are what Jesus paid for. We have been promised a winning life, if we are willing to fight for it.

THE VICTORY TO BE ENFORCED

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus unleashed a force that restructured the entire spirit world. He went into the strongest fortress of the enemy and came out holding the keys.

"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death" (Revelation 1:18)

The god of this world has been dethroned by the Son of God. And through prayer, we are the enforcers of that victory. The ones who have been set free have become the ones who set others free.

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12)

This verse is not talking about physical violence. It is talking about a holy spiritual determination that refuses to let the enemy

keep what belongs to God. It is the attitude of someone who says, "Devil, you are not keeping my children. You are not keeping my health. You are not keeping my city. In Jesus' name, let go."

BIND THE STRONG MAN FIRST

Jesus gave us an important principle of spiritual warfare when the religious leaders accused Him of casting out demons by the power of Satan.

"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house" (Matthew 12:28-29)

Think about a burglar trying to rob a house where a powerful man lives. If the strong man is awake and armed, the burglar will not get far. But if he first ties up the strong man, he can carry off everything in the house.

Jesus was saying that is exactly what He was doing to the devil's kingdom. He was binding the strong man and taking back what Satan had stolen. And He has given us the same authority.

"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18)

The same is true in prayer. Before you can see the goods recovered, you must first deal with the strong man who is holding them.

STRONG MEN OVER PLACES AND PEOPLE

The Bible shows us that there are ruling spirits over certain territories and groups of people. In the book of Daniel, the angel told Daniel that he had been delayed for twenty-one days

because **"the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me"** (Daniel 10:13). That prince was not a human ruler. He was a spiritual power set over that nation.

I have seen this in ministry around the world. Certain nations and people groups seem to be held under a particular darkness that has been in place for generations. Certain cities seem to be gripped by a specific kind of sin. Certain families seem to carry the same pattern from grandfather to father to son: the same addictions, the same divorces, the same sicknesses, the same poverty.

These are strongholds, and often there is a strong man behind them. Our prayers are not just requests. They are spiritual weapons aimed at those strongholds.

AIM YOUR BLOWS

Paul said he did not fight like a man who swings wildly at the air. He aimed his blows to do the most damage.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Our weapons are not carnal. They are not human weapons like manipulation, anger, gossip, or political schemes. They are mighty through God. And what are they mighty for? Pulling down strongholds.

A stronghold is a fortress. In the spiritual sense, it is a structure of lies that the enemy has built in a person's mind, in a family, or in a community. It is an argument, an imagination, a "high thing" that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. It might be the

lie that says, "You will always be poor." Or, "Everybody in our family dies young." Or, "God could never use someone like you." Or, "This city will never change."

We pull down those strongholds by casting down the lies and replacing them with the truth of God's Word, and by bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

HOW TO PRAY AGAINST A STRONGHOLD

Let me give you a simple way to pray when you are facing a stronghold.

First, identify the lie. What is the enemy saying? What is the pattern? What thought keeps coming back? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what is really going on behind the scenes.

Second, find the truth. Go to the Word and find what God says about that very thing. If the lie says, "You are cursed," the truth says, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." If the lie says, "Your son will never come back to God," the truth says, "I will contend with him who contends with you, And I will save your children."

Third, bind the strong man. Speak directly to the spirit behind the stronghold in the name of Jesus. "In the name of Jesus, I bind every spirit of addiction operating against my family. You have no legal right here. Jesus has defeated you, and I enforce His victory."

Fourth, loose what God has promised. "I loose the peace of God, the freedom of Christ, and the plan of the Father over my family in Jesus' name."

Fifth, thank God and stand. Do not keep begging. Thank Him that it is done, and keep standing on the Word until you see it.

BREAKING CURSES

Many believers live under a sense that they are somehow cursed. Things keep going wrong. The same disasters keep repeating. And they wonder whether some old family curse or some word spoken against them is still active.

Here is the good news. If you are in Christ, every curse has been broken at the cross.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus"
(Galatians 3:13-14)

Jesus became a curse so that you could receive the blessing. That is the exchange of the cross.

And God's Word declares that no curse can land on the person He has blessed.

"For there is no sorcery against Jacob, Nor any divination against Israel" (Numbers 23:23)

"Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, So a curse without cause shall not alight" (Proverbs 26:2)

"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me,' Says the LORD" (Isaiah 54:17)

Notice the last part of that verse. Every tongue that rises against you, you shall condemn. You. God does not say He will do it while you sit by. He says you have the authority to condemn every word spoken against you.

So if you have reason to believe that a curse, a word, or a generational pattern has been operating in your life or your

family, here is what you do. Renounce any doors you or your family may have opened through sin, the occult, or rebellion. Receive the forgiveness Jesus purchased. And then declare, in the name of Jesus, that every curse is broken by the blood of the Lamb, and that you and your household walk in the blessing of Abraham. This is so important that I have given the whole next chapter to it.

THE SEVENTY CAME BACK REJOICING

When Jesus sent out seventy of His disciples, they came back amazed.

"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' And He said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:17-19)

Over all the power of the enemy. Not some of it. All of it. And notice that these were not the twelve apostles. They were seventy ordinary disciples. Ordinary believers, using the name of Jesus, saw demons flee.

And Jesus said these signs would follow, not just apostles, not just pastors, but them that believe:

"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons" (Mark 16:17)

A WORD OF BALANCE

Let me add a word of balance here, because some people take spiritual warfare to an unhealthy extreme. They see a demon behind every bad hair day. They spend more time talking about the devil than about Jesus. They shout at the enemy for hours and never spend any time worshipping the Lord.

That is not what I am teaching. Our focus is Jesus. Our confidence is in His finished work. We do not fear the devil, and we do not give him more attention than he deserves. We simply recognize that he is real, he is defeated, and we have authority over him. We deal with him the way a policeman deals with a lawbreaker: firmly, briefly, and with the full authority of the government behind us. And then we get back to the business of worshipping our King.

Remember also that the battle is fought from victory. You are not trying to defeat the devil. Jesus already did that. You are enforcing a defeat that has already happened. The enemy is like a criminal who has been tried and sentenced but is still trying to act as though he were free. Your job is to remind him of his sentence.

THE WEAPONS IN YOUR HAND

So what are the weapons of our warfare? Let me list some of them for you.

The name of Jesus, the name above every name, to which every knee must bow.

The blood of Jesus, by which we overcome the accuser.

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12:11)

The Word of God, the sword of the Spirit, spoken in faith.

Praise, which confuses the enemy and sets ambushes against him.

Praying in the Spirit, which builds you up and prays the perfect will of God.

Agreement with other believers, which multiplies authority.

And fasting, which sharpens your spiritual sensitivity. Jesus said that some kinds of strongholds go out only by prayer and fasting. These weapons are mighty through God. They are not toys. They are not decorations. They were designed to pull down strongholds. Use them.

A PRAYER OF WARFARE

Father, I thank You that the weapons of my warfare are not carnal, but mighty through You to the pulling down of strongholds. In the name of Jesus, I take my authority over every strong man that has set itself against my life, my family, my church, and my city. I bind you, and I declare that you are defeated by the cross of Christ. I cast down every lie, every imagination, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and I bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. I declare that Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law, and that every curse over my life and my household is broken by the blood of the Lamb. No weapon formed against me shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against me I condemn. I loose the blessing of Abraham, the peace of God, and the plan of the Father over my life. In the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

CHAPTER 15

Break Every Curse

Some people live as though an invisible hand keeps pulling them back. Every time they get close to a breakthrough, something goes wrong. The job falls through at the last minute. The marriage hits the same wall their parents' marriage hit. The money runs out right when it was finally starting to come in. They work hard, they love God, they go to church, and still it feels like they are walking uphill in the rain while everybody around them is strolling in the sunshine.

If that sounds like you, I want you to read this chapter slowly. Not because I want you to go looking for a demon behind every flat tire. I don't. But the Bible talks very plainly about blessings and curses, and most believers have never been taught how to tell the difference, or what to do about it. And the good news, the very best news, is that Jesus has already done everything needed to set you free.

THE GREAT EXCHANGE

Let us start where the answer is, not where the problem is.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:13-14)

Read that again. Jesus became a curse so that you could receive the blessing. That is the great exchange of the cross. He took what you had coming so that you could have what He had

coming. He hung on that tree under every curse that was due to you, so that every blessing that was due to Him could come to you.

Think of a man who owes a debt so large he could never pay it in ten lifetimes. Interest is piling up. Letters keep arriving. And then one day a letter comes that says, "Paid in full," signed by someone he has never even met. He does not have to earn it. He does not have to beg for it. He only has to believe the letter and stop living like a debtor.

So our starting point is not fear. It is the cross. Whatever has been working against you, it was dealt with on that hill outside Jerusalem. Your part is to find out what belongs to you, close every door the enemy has been using, and then enforce what Jesus already paid for. That is prayer as a weapon.

WHAT A BLESSING IS, AND WHAT A CURSE IS

The word bless, in its different forms, appears hundreds of times in the Bible, and the word curse is not far behind. They are two of the great themes of Scripture. And yet if you asked most Christians to explain what a curse actually is, they would shrug their shoulders.

Here is the simplest way I know to say it. A blessing and a curse are both words loaded with spiritual power. A blessing carries the favor of God into a life. A curse carries harm. They are not superstition, and they are not just bad luck. They reach beyond the natural world.

And notice that they usually travel on words.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit" (Proverbs 18:21)

We spent a whole chapter on this already, how our words either agree with God or agree with the enemy. Here is the same truth from another angle. Words spoken over a life matter. A father

who tells his son for twenty years, "You'll never amount to anything," has spoken something over that boy. A man who says about himself, "Everybody in my family dies of heart trouble, and I'm next," is pronouncing a sentence over his own body. James saw this happening even among believers.

"Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so"
(James 3:10)

The other thing to know about curses is that they tend to run downhill through families. God Himself said so when He gave the Ten Commandments.

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exodus 20:4-6)

Look at the mercy at the end of that verse. Iniquity runs for three or four generations. Mercy runs to thousands. God's blessing is far bigger than any curse. But the verse also explains why some families keep repeating the same sad story, generation after generation, the same addictions, the same broken homes, the same early graves, until somebody in that family stands up in the name of Jesus and says, "It stops with me."

You can be that somebody.

TWO LISTS IN ONE CHAPTER

There is one chapter in the Bible devoted almost entirely to blessings and curses. It is Deuteronomy 28. It opens with a list of

blessings and then gives a much longer list of curses. Read it for yourself sometime. When you boil it down, you will see that the two lists are mirror images of each other.

On the blessing side you find a people lifted up, fruitful in every area of life, healthy, prospering in the work of their hands, victorious over their enemies, the head and not the tail, above and not beneath.

On the curse side you find the exact opposite: brought low, barren and unfruitful, sick, failing, defeated, the tail instead of the head, beneath instead of above.

"And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them"

(Deuteronomy 28:13)

I love that picture of the head and the tail. The head decides where the body goes. The tail just gets dragged along behind. So ask yourself honestly: Am I making decisions and walking in the direction God has shown me? Or am I being dragged around by circumstances I do not understand and cannot control? God never intended His children to live as the tail.

SIGNS THAT SOMETHING MAY BE WORKING AGAINST YOU

Now I need to be careful here, and I want you to be careful too. Not every hardship is a curse. Jesus told us plainly that in this world we would have tribulation. Sometimes trouble is simply the ordinary weather of a fallen world. Sometimes it is a test. Sometimes it is the result of our own poor choices, and we need to correct them. And sometimes it is the enemy pushing back because you are doing damage to his kingdom.

And please hear this. If you or someone you love is sick and has not yet been healed, that is not proof of a curse, and it is not proof that anybody lacked faith. Never let anyone lay that weight on you. Seeking God and seeing a doctor are not rivals. Keep taking the treatment your doctor has given you while you stand on the Word. God uses both, and He loves you in the middle of both.

But there are some patterns that should make you stop and ask the Holy Spirit whether something more is going on. Over the years I have seen the same kinds of things again and again where a curse was at work. Here are some of them.

Repeated breakdowns, where a person or a family keeps falling apart emotionally or mentally.

Sickness that keeps coming back, especially the kind that seems to run in the family.

Marriages that keep breaking and families that keep pulling apart, one generation after another.

Money that never stays, where there is always more month than paycheck no matter how hard you work.

A strange string of accidents, where one person always seems to be the one who gets hurt.

A family history of early or unnatural deaths.

One of those on its own may mean nothing at all. But when you see several of them together, especially running down through a family line, it is worth getting alone with God and asking Him to show you the root.

A man once described it to me like this. "It's like driving with the parking brake on. The engine runs fine. There's gas in the tank. I'm pressing the pedal. But something keeps holding me back, and I can smell the brakes burning." If that describes your life, keep reading.

A CURSE ALWAYS HAS A CAUSE

Here is a verse that gives great hope.

"Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, So a curse without cause shall not alight" (Proverbs 26:2)

A curse cannot just land anywhere it likes. It needs a landing place. A bird can flutter around all day, but it cannot settle unless there is somewhere to perch. In the same way, a curse needs a cause, an open door, a legal ground. Take away the cause, and the curse has nowhere to sit.

That is why it so often helps to find the cause before you deal with the curse. You do not just cut the weed off at the ground. You pull up the root.

So what are the causes? Deuteronomy 28 gives us the big one right at the beginning.

"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 28:1-2)

The root of blessing is hearing God's voice and doing what He says. And the root of the curses later in that chapter is the opposite: not listening, and not obeying. Everything else is a branch growing out of those two roots. Let me show you some of the branches the Bible names.

OTHER GODS AND THE OCCULT

At the very top of the list is turning to any power other than the living God. That is what the first two commandments are about, and it is why the warning about the third and fourth generation is attached to them.

This includes every kind of occult practice, and the Bible names a good many of them.

"There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you"

(Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

Fortune tellers. Horoscopes. Ouija boards. Psychic hotlines. Tarot cards. Spells and charms. "Harmless" games with spirits at a sleepover. Whenever we go to some other source for what only God has the right to give us, whether it is guidance, protection, knowledge of the future, or healing, we are bowing to another god, whether we mean to or not.

People tell me, "But I only did it once, as a joke." I understand. But the enemy does not have a sense of humor. A door opened as a joke is still an open door. Again and again I have watched believers who could not seem to break through in some area of their walk with God finally confess and renounce something like that from years before, and the barrier came down almost immediately.

And do not forget objects. Israel was warned not to bring idols, and things devoted to false gods, into their homes.

"Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing"

(Deuteronomy 7:26)

When the gospel came to Ephesus, the new believers did not keep their occult books on the shelf as souvenirs. They burned

them, no matter what they had cost.

"And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver" (Acts 19:18-19)

So walk through your home with the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to show you anything that does not belong in the house of a child of God: statues of false gods, occult objects, charms, anything connected with witchcraft or idol worship. If He puts His finger on something, get rid of it. You may be surprised how the whole atmosphere of your home changes.

DISHONORING FATHER AND MOTHER

Another branch is dishonor toward parents.

"'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth'"
(Ephesians 6:2-3)

Notice the promise: that it may be well with you. The reverse is also true. A person who refuses to honor their parents will find that something is never quite well in their life.

Now, honoring does not mean agreeing with everything your parents did. Some of you had parents who hurt you deeply, and I am not asking you to pretend they did not. Honor does not mean approval. It means you release the bitterness, you forgive them from your heart, and you refuse to speak contempt over them, even if they have already passed away. Some of the most dramatic turnarounds I have ever seen came on the day a grown man or woman finally forgave a father or mother they had resented for decades.

TRUSTING IN MAN

Here is one most of us read right past.

"Thus says the LORD: 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited. Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit'" (Jeremiah 17:5-8)

Look at the picture of the cursed man. Good comes, and he does not even see it. He lives in the salt land while the rain falls all around him. And what is the cause? Trusting in man, making flesh his strength, a heart that has turned away from the Lord.

This one is especially for people who once walked in the grace and power of God and then slowly slid back into relying on their own cleverness, their own effort, their own connections. It is a danger for churches too. Some contemporary churches were born in a mighty move of the Holy Spirit, and over the years they traded the power of God for programs and personalities. The blessing dried up, and nobody could figure out why. The way back is the same for a church as it is for a person: repent, and put your trust back in the Lord.

And look at the blessed man in the very same passage. A tree planted by the waters. Green leaves in the heat. Fruit in the year of drought. That is the life God wants for you.

OTHER OPEN DOORS

The Bible names other causes too. Injustice toward the weak and the helpless. Sexual sin. Stealing, and lying under oath; the prophet Zechariah saw a flying scroll of curse that went into the house of the thief and the liar and stayed there until it had eaten the whole house away (Zechariah 5:1-4). Holding back from God what belongs to Him (Malachi 3:8-10). Preaching a different gospel from the one the apostles preached (Galatians 1:8-9).

I am not giving you this list so you can dig through every corner of your past with a magnifying glass, feeling more and more condemned. That is not how the Holy Spirit works. He convicts; He does not condemn. I am giving it to you so that when the Holy Spirit puts His finger on something, you will recognize it and know what to do about it.

WHEN OTHERS SPEAK AGAINST YOU

What about curses spoken against you by other people? Remember Balak, the king of Moab, who hired the prophet Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam tried three times, and every time he opened his mouth, blessing came out instead.

"How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? And how shall I denounce whom the LORD has not denounced?"
(Numbers 23:8)

"Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you"
(Deuteronomy 23:5)

If people have spoken evil over you, cursed you, or even practiced witchcraft against you, you do not need to live in fear. God turns the curse into a blessing for those He loves. Your part

is to forgive them, bless them, and enforce your protection in the name of Jesus.

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse"
(Romans 12:14)

HOW TO WALK OUT FROM UNDER A CURSE

Now we come to the best part. This is where prayer becomes a weapon.

Remember, you are not trying to get Jesus to do something new. He already became a curse for you. You are simply taking hold of what He did and enforcing it. Here are the steps I walk people through.

First, settle your faith on the cross. Do not start with the problem. Start with Galatians 3:13. Say it out loud until it is settled in you: "Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law, having become a curse for me."

Second, confess any known sin. Confess your own, and where the Holy Spirit shows you, confess the sins of your family line that opened the door. Daniel and Nehemiah both confessed the sins of their fathers along with their own. You are not taking the blame for what your grandfather did. You are agreeing with God about it and closing the door.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"
(1 John 1:9)

Third, forgive everyone who has ever hurt you. This is not optional. Unforgiveness is one of the widest open doors there is.

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25)

Fourth, renounce every contact with the occult, by name if you can, and get rid of any objects connected with it.

Fifth, take your authority and speak. This is not a time for begging. Speak to every curse in the name of Jesus and command it to be broken. Declare that the blood of Jesus has cancelled every legal claim against you.

Sixth, receive the blessing. Do not leave an empty space. Thank God for the blessing of Abraham, and declare it over your life, your home, your children, and your work.

"So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham" (Galatians 3:9)

And seventh, walk in it. Remember the root of every blessing: hearing the voice of God and doing what He says. If you go back to not listening and not obeying, you leave the door open again. So stay close to Him. Stay in the Word. Stay quick to repent. That is how you stay in the blessing.

SOMETIMES THE CURSE IS THE WALL

Here is something I have seen many times. Sometimes a curse stands like an invisible wall between a person and the answer to their prayers. They pray for healing, for provision, for a breakthrough, and nothing seems to get through. Then the curse is broken, and the answer that was blocked comes flowing in, sometimes without anyone even praying about that particular need again.

That is why I do not want you to skip this chapter, even if you think it does not apply to you. You may find that the very thing you have been praying about for years is waiting on the other side of a door you need to close.

But do not become curse-conscious. Become blessing-conscious. Jesus is bigger than every curse. You are not a prisoner of your family tree. You have been grafted into a new one. You are not a

child of your bloodline's failures. You are a child of God, an heir of the blessing of Abraham, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love"

(Colossians 1:13)

You have been moved. You live at a new address now. And the curse does not have your new address.

A PRAYER OF RELEASE FROM EVERY CURSE

Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that You are the Son of God and the only way to the Father. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins and rose again from the dead. Thank You that on the cross You became a curse for me, so that I could receive the blessing. I confess all my sins, and where You show me, the sins of my family line that opened the door to any curse. I ask You to forgive me, and I receive Your forgiveness now. I choose to forgive everyone who has ever hurt me or wronged me, just as I want You to forgive me, and I forgive each one by name right now. I renounce every contact that I or my family have had with the occult and with false gods, and I will get rid of anything in my home that is connected with them. Now, in the name of Jesus, I take my authority, and I break every curse over my life, my family, and my household. Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law. A curse without a cause has nowhere to land, and I remove every cause by the blood of Jesus. I receive the blessing of Abraham. I am the head and not the tail, above and not beneath. I will listen to Your voice and do what You say. Thank You, Father, that it is done. In the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

The Wandering Mind

We have all been there. You decide to set aside time for God. You close the door. You kneel down or sit quietly. And immediately your thoughts start running wild.

Your brain suddenly serves up a list of every text message you forgot to send. The chore you neglected. The deadline coming up on Thursday. A random memory from five years ago. A song you heard on the radio. What you are going to cook for dinner. And before you know it, ten minutes have slipped away, and you have spent nearly all of it trying to remember what you were talking to the Father about.

The enemy loves to use that struggle to load sincere believers with false guilt. "You see? You cannot even pray for five minutes. Your love for God must be shallow. Real Christians do not have this problem."

But the truth of the gospel is completely different. A wandering mind in prayer does not mean you have a defective spirit. It simply reveals an undisciplined mind that has never been taught how to follow your spirit. And a mind can be trained.

YOUR SPIRIT IS WILLING

Look at what Jesus said to His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, when they kept falling asleep during the most important prayer meeting in history.

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"

(Matthew 26:41)

Notice what Jesus did not say. He did not say their spirit was weak. He said their spirit was willing.

If you are born of God, your recreated spirit is alive to Him. Your spirit knows its Father. Your spirit loves His presence. Your inner man never drags its feet and whines, "I don't feel like praying." That whining voice does not come from your born-again spirit. It comes from an unrenewed mind and an undisciplined body.

God designed a clear order for how a human being should function: the spirit leads, the mind agrees, and the body obeys. In many believers, that order has been turned upside down. The body and the senses speak first and loudest. The mind scrambles to serve whatever the senses demand. And the spirit waits quietly in the background, hoping for permission to lead.

Paul described that tension:

"For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind" (Romans 7:22-23)

Paul's inward man delighted in God. But he recognized the pull of his natural faculties going the other way.

WHERE YOUR SPIRIT LIVES

To win this battle, it helps to understand how God made you. You are not just a body with a brain on top. The Bible says you are spirit, soul, and body.

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

Go back to the very beginning and you can see all three.

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;

and man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7)

The body was formed from the dust below. The breath of life came from God above. And when the two met, man became a living soul, a person who can think, feel, and choose, a person who can say, "I will," or, "I won't," and has to answer for it.

Your soul is your mind, your emotions, and your will. That is the part of you the world knows best. Just look at how many words we have that come from the Greek word for soul: psychology, psychiatry, psychic. The world is very aware of the soul. But it hardly knows the spirit exists.

The Bible says plainly that it does.

"But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding" (Job 32:8)

"Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12:1)

Think about that. God puts forming your spirit right alongside stretching out the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth. Your spirit is the deepest, truest part of you. It is the part that knows God, hears God, and receives understanding from God. And real understanding does not come from education, as useful as education is. There are plenty of very educated people with no spiritual understanding at all. Understanding comes when the Spirit of God breathes on the spirit of a man.

"The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the inner depths of his heart" (Proverbs 20:27)

Jesus said that rivers of living water would flow out of the heart of the one who believes in Him, from his innermost being, and John tells us He was speaking about the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39). When you were born again, the Holy Spirit joined Himself to your spirit.

"But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him"
(1 Corinthians 6:17)

PRAY FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Here is why this matters so much for prayer. Most of the time when our minds wander, it is because we are trying to pray from our soul alone. We are praying from our heads, our feelings, and our worries. And the soul, left to itself, is restless. It hops from thought to thought like a sparrow hopping from branch to branch.

But God is Spirit, and He is looking for people who will meet Him spirit to Spirit.

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24)

Real prayer starts on the inside and flows out. Your spirit, joined to the Holy Spirit, takes the lead. Your soul follows and agrees. Your body cooperates. That is the order God designed.

Think of your spirit as the driver of a car, your soul as the steering wheel and the pedals, and your body as the car itself. When the driver is awake in his seat, the car goes where it should. When the driver dozes off and the wheel is left to itself, the car drifts all over the road. A wandering mind in prayer is very often just a steering wheel with nobody holding it. Wake up the driver.

How do you do that? With the Word of God, because the Word is the one thing that reaches all the way down to your spirit.

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"
(Hebrews 4:12)

The Word separates what is merely soulish from what is truly spiritual. It cuts through the noise of your thoughts and feelings and wakes up your spirit. And the Holy Spirit bears witness with your spirit that you are a child of God (Romans 8:16). As your spirit takes the lead again, it brings your soul back into line and settles it down.

That is exactly what the four keys in this chapter are for. They are not tricks for concentrating harder. They are ways of putting your spirit back in the driver's seat.

AN UNTRAINED SERVANT

From the day you were born, your mind was educated entirely through your physical senses. What you could see, touch, hear, taste, and smell. For decades, your mind has been trained to react instantly to whatever is in front of it.

Then you step into prayer, and suddenly you are asking that same mind to do something completely against its training. Instead of watching the visible world, it must turn toward the invisible God. Instead of reacting to the pressures in front of it, it must listen for the quiet witness of the Spirit.

Of course it feels unnatural at first. Your mind is not acting out of rebellion. It is simply an untrained servant doing exactly what it was trained to do for years.

That changes everything. If a wandering mind were a sign that your spirit was dead, you would need more tears and more condemnation. But because the issue is training, you do not need more guilt. You need a practical way to teach your mind to follow where your spirit already wants to go.

Think about how much training your mind has received to wander. Every buzz of the phone, every short video, every news alert has conditioned it to jump from one thing to the next. When your phone vibrates, your hand reaches for it before you even think about it. Repetition turned that movement into a reflex.

And the mind will always default to whatever it has been consistently fed.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34)

The good news is this: whatever has been trained in the wrong direction can be retrained in the right direction.

"Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2)

Notice the word "set." It is an intentional, deliberate act. You do not sit back and hope your thoughts drift toward heaven like a balloon. You take hold of the steering wheel of your mind and you set it on the things of God.

Let me give you four practical keys for training your wandering mind.

KEY ONE: PREPARE BEFORE YOU PRAY

One of the most common mistakes believers make is to sprint straight out of the noise of daily life into prayer and expect instant calm and laser focus.

Picture someone who has spent the last two hours scrolling through videos, reading alarming news, and answering heated messages. Then he shuts the screen, drops to his knees, and wonders, "Why can't I concentrate? Why is my mind racing a hundred miles an hour?"

Your mind is like an engine. You cannot slam it into reverse at highway speed without a violent skid. Give your soul a runway to slow down.

Put your phone in another room. Not face down on the table. In another room. Turn off the television. Step into a quiet place. And then spend ten or fifteen minutes reading the Word slowly

and peacefully. Not to rush through a checklist. Not to prepare a lesson. Just to let the truth wash over your thinking.

"I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways" (Psalm 119:15)

The Word of God has a stabilizing gravity. It gathers up your scattered thoughts and gently pulls them away from the noise. As your eyes rest on His promises, the racing engine slows down. Your spirit becomes more and more aware of the Father's presence.

When you prepare your mind beforehand, you do not have to fight distractions during prayer. You simply walk into fellowship.

KEY TWO: PRAY WITH A CLEAR DIRECTION

Another reason many believers drift in prayer is that they come to the throne room with no idea where they are going. They kneel down, close their eyes, take a deep breath, and then think, "Well, what should I pray about?"

The moment that question hangs unanswered in the air, the mind takes it as an invitation to go wandering. One second you are thanking God for His goodness. The next you are planning what to pick up at the store. Five minutes later you open your eyes and realize you have completely lost your place.

Look at what Paul says: "Let your requests be made known to God." He assumes you know what your requests are before you begin. Faith is never vague. Living faith always has a target, and it always knows the Word it is standing on.

Now, does the Holy Spirit lead us in prayer? Absolutely, as we saw in an earlier chapter. But the Holy Spirit was sent to be your Helper. He was never sent to replace your responsibility to prepare your heart.

Look at the great men and women of prayer in the Bible. Nehemiah came to God with a specific burden for the broken

walls of Jerusalem. Hannah came with a specific cry for a son. Solomon came with a specific request for wisdom to govern God's people. None of them came wandering aimlessly.

So here is a practical habit: keep a prayer notebook built on the promises of God. Not just a wish list of complaints, but a list of prayers anchored in Scripture.

Begin with the biblical pattern:

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name" (Psalm 100:4)

Then pray the Scriptures over your life. If you need direction, pray James 1:5. If you want spiritual growth, pray Ephesians 1:17-18. If you are weary, pray Ephesians 3:16. Pray Colossians 4:3 for open doors to share the gospel. Pray for your family, your church, your pastors, the lost, and the work God has placed in your hands.

And then something wonderful happens. As you pray through the Scriptures with a clear direction, you suddenly realize you are no longer relying on your own effort. A promise leaps off the page. A friend's face comes to mind. A holy burden rises up from deep within. The Helper has stepped in. Prayer stops being a discipline and becomes a partnership.

KEY THREE: USE THE RUDDER OF YOUR TONGUE

Even with preparation and a clear direction, every believer faces the moment when a stray thought slips past the guard. What do you do when your mind suddenly wanders off?

Most of us try to fight thoughts with thoughts. We grit our mental teeth and try to force ourselves to think about God. Anyone who has tried that knows it rarely works. Thoughts are

seldom defeated by silent thoughts. Thoughts are captured by spoken words.

God has already placed within your body the instrument for steering your mind: your tongue.

"Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires" (James 3:4)

A massive ship, tossed by violent waves and driven by howling winds, is steered by a small rudder under the waterline. In the same way, God designed your tongue to be the rudder of your inner life.

When your mind starts drifting into tomorrow's schedule or yesterday's worries, do not sit silently and wrestle with it. Open your mouth and speak. Begin praising the Father out loud. Declare the Word of God with your own voice.

Why does this work so well? Because your ears hear your own voice, and your mind is forced to follow what your mouth is saying. You cannot easily think about one thing while you are speaking something completely different.

David knew this secret. When his emotions were sinking toward despair, he did not just let his soul drag him down. He spoke to it.

"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God"
(Psalm 42:11)

"Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!" (Psalm 103:1)

David did not wait until his emotions felt like praising God. He commanded his soul to praise.

Let me make it very practical. Suppose you are praying and suddenly your mind drifts to your finances, and anxiety whispers, "How are you going to pay that bill next week?" Do not panic. Do not waste energy feeling guilty. Take hold of the rudder. Open your mouth and say out loud, "Father, I thank You that the Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want. I thank You that my God shall supply all my need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. You are my provider, and I rest in Your faithfulness."

What just happened? That anxious thought lost its power. Your mind had to drop its panic and follow the sound of God's Word coming out of your own mouth.

And as you keep speaking, something else happens. There comes a point where your words naturally become fewer. The Scriptures have quieted your mind. Your worship has anchored your soul. Your spirit is wide awake. You are no longer straining. You are simply resting in the presence of your Father. And that quiet place is often where heaven's clearest directions are given.

KEY FOUR: STAY A LITTLE LONGER

The fourth key is simple, but it changes everything: do not leave too soon.

Many believers spend the first ten minutes of prayer quieting their thoughts. And just when their mind is beginning to settle and their spirit is beginning to lead, they look at the clock and jump up. "Oh, fifteen minutes. That's enough." They walk out right when the Holy Spirit was about to minister to them.

Distraction often hits hardest just before breakthrough. When your phone suddenly seems to buzz with urgency, when drowsiness suddenly weighs down your eyelids, when your mind suddenly remembers a dozen things that cannot wait, those are often signs that you are on the doorstep of something. Stay. We will talk more about this in the next chapter.

THE FRUIT OF A TRAINED MIND

What happens when a believer's mind has been trained to follow the spirit?

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16)

Notice that Paul does not say, "Spend all day wrestling with your flesh." He says, "Walk in the Spirit." The focus of the New Testament is not on constantly fighting the darkness. It is on walking in the light. The more your spirit is fed with the Word and exercised in fellowship, the less your mind will wander.

"You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3)

When your mind is trained, you can walk through a noisy workplace or manage a busy household with an inner man that stays anchored in God. That is what Paul meant by "pray without ceasing." Not that you spend twenty-four hours on your knees, but that you live in a continual awareness of God.

And a quiet mind becomes a clear landing strip for the voice of the Holy Spirit.

"Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10)

Stillness comes before knowing.

A THIRTY-DAY CHALLENGE

Let me challenge you to try this for thirty days.

First, prepare your mind before you pray. Put away your devices and spend ten minutes in the Word before you say a single word of prayer.

Second, never enter the secret place without a direction. Know what promises you are standing on. Begin with thanksgiving. Pray the Word.

Third, when your mind drifts, do not get frustrated. Use the rudder of your tongue. Speak the Word out loud until your mind falls back in line.

Fourth, stay longer than your feelings want to stay.

And when you have done this for thirty days, find someone who struggles the way you used to struggle and show them how.

Many believers are quietly giving up on prayer because they think their wandering thoughts prove they are second-class Christians. They do not need more condemnation. They need someone to say, "Let me show you why your mind wanders, and let me show you how to steer it back."

A PRAYER FOR A STAYED MIND

Father, thank You that my spirit is willing and that I love Your presence. I refuse the guilt and condemnation the enemy has put on me about my wandering mind. My mind is not my master; it is a servant that can be trained. Today I set my affection on things above. I will prepare my heart with Your Word before I pray. I will come to You with clear direction. When my thoughts drift, I will take hold of the rudder of my tongue and speak Your Word. Keep me in perfect peace as my mind is stayed on You. Let my spirit lead, my mind agree, and my body obey. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 17

The Prayer That Stays

Some people read what I have written about thanksgiving and faith and think I am saying that prayer should always be quick and easy. Thank God for the answer, walk away, done. And there is a great deal of truth in the thirty-second prayer of faith. But that is not the whole picture.

There is also a kind of prayer that stays. Prayer that wrestles. Prayer that puts its shoulder against the boulder and keeps pushing until it moves. And if we are going to be soldiers in the prayer fight, we need to understand both.

THE WIDOW WHO WOULD NOT QUIT

Jesus told a story specifically to teach us about this.

"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: 'There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"

(Luke 18:1-5)

Now, we have to be careful how we read this. Jesus is not saying God is like that unjust judge, someone who has to be nagged and worn down. In fact, He is saying the opposite. If even a wicked judge will eventually give justice to a persistent widow, how

much more will your loving Father, who is righteous and good, answer His own children?

"And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:7-8)

The point is not that God is reluctant. The point is that we must not faint. The question at the end is not "Will God answer?" The question is "Will He find faith?" Will He find people who keep standing, keep believing, keep praying, and do not give up before the answer comes?

Notice what the widow was asking for: "Avenge me of mine adversary." She was not asking for something selfish. She was asking for justice against an enemy who was oppressing her. That is a perfect picture of the prayer fight. We stand before God and say, "Father, the adversary is stealing what You have given. Give me justice." And we keep coming until the enemy lets go.

WHY DOES IT SOMETIMES TAKE TIME?

If God is willing, and if we pray in faith, why do some answers take time? The Bible gives us several reasons.

Sometimes there is resistance in the spirit realm. Remember Daniel. He prayed, and the angel later told him, **"From the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days"** (Daniel 10:12-13).

Daniel's prayer was heard the first day. The answer was sent the first day. But there was a battle in the heavenlies for twenty-one days. And what did Daniel do during those three weeks? He kept praying. He did not quit on day twenty. If he had given up,

would the answer still have come? We do not know. But we know he stayed, and the answer broke through.

Sometimes the timing belongs to God. A farmer plants a seed and the harvest does not come the next morning. There is a season.

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart"

(Galatians 6:9)

And sometimes the waiting is working something in us. Faith, like gold, has to be tested to prove it is real.

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing"

(James 1:2-4)

Real faith never gives up, or it was never really faith. Faith sees the end from the beginning and refuses to let go.

PRAY IN FAITH, PERSEVERE IN PRAISE

So how do you combine the prayer of faith that receives the answer at once with the prayer that perseveres? Here is how I put it: pray in faith, and persevere in praise.

When you pray according to God's Word, believe that you receive at that moment, just as Jesus said. Settle it. And then, every day until you see it, come back, not to beg again as if He had not heard you the first time, but to thank Him, to stand, to speak the Word over the situation again, and to resist anything the enemy is doing to hinder it.

That is not unbelief. That is the persistence of faith. It is like a soldier who has been ordered to take and hold a hill. He takes it the first day. But he stays on it, guarding it, until the enemy stops counterattacking.

SEVEN TIMES ON THE MOUNTAIN

Look at Elijah on top of Mount Carmel. God had promised rain after three and a half years of drought. Elijah had already told King Ahab, "There is a sound of abundance of rain." Faith had already spoken. And then Elijah went up to the top of the mountain, bowed down with his face between his knees, and prayed.

"And said to his servant, 'Go up now, look toward the sea.' So he went up and looked, and said, 'There is nothing.' And seven times he said, 'Go again.' Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, 'There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!'"

(1 Kings 18:43-44)

There is nothing. Six times the servant came back with the same report. There is nothing. There is nothing. But Elijah did not quit. He had heard the sound of rain in his spirit, and he kept praying until he saw it with his eyes. And the seventh time, a little cloud the size of a man's hand appeared. And soon the sky was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.

James uses Elijah as our example:

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly" (James 5:16-17)

Elijah was a man just like us. He had the same emotions, the same weaknesses. And yet his persistent, fervent prayer shut and opened the heavens. That kind of prayer is available to you too.

STRONG CRYING AND TEARS

The Bible tells us that even Jesus prayed this way.

"Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears

to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear" (Hebrews 5:7)

Strong crying and tears. Jesus was not a stranger to agonizing prayer. And look at Gethsemane.

"And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44)

Now, this is very different from the fearful, begging prayers we talked about earlier. Jesus was not praying from doubt. He was not trying to convince an unwilling Father. He was carrying the weight of the redemption of the whole human race. That is a burden. And there are times when the Holy Spirit will give you a burden for a person, a city, or a nation, and you will find yourself praying with a depth and intensity you did not plan.

That kind of travail is where many miracles are birthed. Isaiah said, **"As soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children" (Isaiah 66:8)**. Paul told the Galatians, **"My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you" (Galatians 4:19)**.

Do not run from that kind of prayer when the Spirit brings it. Embrace it. It is a holy privilege.

THE ANGEL CAME WHILE HE STAYED

Look again at Jesus in the garden. If anyone ever had a reason to cut prayer short and say, "This is too painful, I can't concentrate," it was Jesus that night. His soul was crushed. His sweat fell like drops of blood. And yet He stayed on His face before the Father.

And what was heaven's response?

"Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him" (Luke 22:43)

Pay close attention to the order. Jesus chose to stay in the presence of God, and then strength was ministered to Him. The strength did not come before He started praying, to make it easy. It came while He remained. Heaven often reserves its deepest strength for those who stay, not for those who rush.

That is why the enemy fights so hard the moment your prayer begins to go deeper than surface words. He is not afraid of a rushed five-minute monologue. What he dreads is what happens when you stay long enough for the Holy Spirit to take over. He knows that if you remain, light will break through your confusion, peace will replace your panic, and wisdom will expose his traps.

LABORING IN PRAYER

Paul wrote about a man named Epaphras, a faithful servant of the church in Colosse.

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Colossians 4:12)

Labouring fervently. The word means to strive, to contend, like an athlete in the arena. Epaphras was not a famous apostle. We know almost nothing else about him. But Paul held him up as an example because he wrestled in prayer for the people he loved.

I believe that one day, when we stand before the Lord, one of the things we will most regret is how small our praying was. Not how small our buildings were, or our budgets, or our crowds. How small our praying was.

JACOB WOULD NOT LET GO

Think about Jacob at the brook Jabbok. He wrestled all night with the angel of the Lord. As the day began to break, the angel said, "Let me go." And Jacob said:

"I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

(Genesis 32:26)

And he came away from that night with a new name and a limp. His name was changed from Jacob, the schemer, to Israel, the one who struggled with God and prevailed. The limp reminded him for the rest of his life that he had been in the presence of God.

There is a holy stubbornness that refuses to let go of God's promise. It is not stubbornness against God. It is stubbornness for God, against the enemy, against discouragement, against every voice that says, "Just give up."

HOW TO KEEP GOING

So how do you keep praying when the answer seems slow? Let me give you some practical help.

Keep a written record. Write down what you are standing for and the Scripture you are standing on, with the date. When doubts come, go back and read it. When the answer comes, write that down too. Over time you will build a history with God that will strengthen your faith for the next battle.

Keep thanking. Every time you think of the situation, instead of worrying about it, thank God for the answer. That keeps your faith fresh and your heart light.

Keep speaking the Word. Do not let your confession slip back into fear. If the Word was true on the first day, it is still true on the hundredth.

Find a partner. Ask someone you trust to stand in agreement with you. We will talk about the power of agreement in the next chapter.

And keep your eyes on Jesus. He is faithful. He has never failed one of His promises, and He is not about to start with you.

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."

(Hebrews 10:23)

A PRAYER OF PERSEVERANCE

Father, I thank You that You are faithful who promised. I will not faint. I will not give up before the answer comes. I have prayed according to Your Word, and I believe I have received. Now I stand, I thank You, and I keep speaking Your Word until I see it with my eyes. Like Elijah, I will look again and again until the cloud appears. Like Jacob, I will not let go of Your promise. Like Jesus in the garden, I will stay in Your presence until strength comes. Holy Spirit, when You give me a burden, I will carry it in prayer until it is birthed. Let me never stand before You ashamed of the smallness of my praying. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 18

Standing in the Gap

If you tell someone you are going to pray for them, please make sure you actually do it.

I know how easy it is. Someone shares a need after church or in a message, and we say, "I'll be praying for you." We mean it at the time. And then life gets busy, and by Tuesday we have forgotten all about it.

But intercession is not a polite phrase. It is one of the most powerful things a human being can do for another human being. When you stand in the gap for someone, you step into the place between that person and the enemy, between that person and God's judgment, between that person and their destiny, and you hold it open with your prayers.

WHAT AN INTERCESSOR IS

An intercessor is someone who stands between. Think of the old city walls. When there was a breach in the wall, a gap where the stones had fallen, the enemy could pour in. The safety of the whole city depended on someone standing in that gap until the wall could be rebuilt.

We saw earlier the heartbreaking verse in Ezekiel where God said He looked for a man to stand in the gap and found none. But the Bible also gives us wonderful examples of those who did stand.

When Israel made the golden calf, and God's judgment was about to fall, Moses stood in the gap.

"Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written"

| (Exodus 32:32)

And the psalmist later wrote:

| **"Therefore He said that He would destroy them, Had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach, To turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them"**

| (Psalm 106:23)

One man stood in the breach, and a nation was spared.

THE GREAT INTERCESSOR

Of course, the greatest intercessor of all is Jesus. He stood in the ultimate gap, between a holy God and sinful humanity, and He bridged it with His own body on the cross. And He has not stopped.

| **"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them"** (Hebrews 7:25)

He ever lives to make intercession. That is what Jesus is doing right now. And when we intercede, we are simply joining Him in what He is already doing. We become His voice on earth, praying what He is praying in heaven.

FIRST OF ALL

Paul told Timothy that this was not an optional extra for super-spiritual people. It was the first thing.

| **"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"** (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

First of all. Before the programs, before the projects, before the building fund. Pray for all people. Pray for those in authority, whether you voted for them or not. Pray because God desires all people to be saved.

Notice the connection. Our intercession is tied to the salvation of the lost. The Father wants all to be saved. Jesus died for all. The Holy Spirit is convicting the world. And they are looking for intercessors on earth who will partner with them for the souls of men.

PRAYING FOR THE LOST

When you pray for someone who does not know Jesus, how do you pray? Here are some ways the Word teaches us to pray for them.

Pray that the blinders would come off their eyes.

"Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them"
(2 Corinthians 4:4)

In the name of Jesus, bind the god of this world from blinding their minds, and ask the Father to let the light of the gospel shine into their hearts.

Pray that God would send laborers across their path.

"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:38)

Pray for the person at their workplace, the neighbor, the relative, the stranger on the plane, whom God will use to speak to them. And be willing to be that laborer yourself.

Pray that the Holy Spirit would draw them and convict them, not with condemnation, but with the goodness of God that leads to repentance.

And keep praying. Paul's heart's desire and prayer for Israel was that they might be saved. Some of the people you pray for may take years. But many a prodigal has come home because a mother or grandmother refused to stop standing in the gap.

THE POWER OF AGREEMENT

There is a special power when believers pray together in agreement.

"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:19-20)

The word "agree" in that verse is the word from which we get "symphony." It means to sound together in harmony. Not just to say the same words, but to be in harmony in heart and faith.

All the authority needed in prayer is present when two believers pray in true unity in the name of Jesus. Jesus Himself is in the midst of them. On that basis, whatever they ask, it shall be done.

This is one reason why the enemy works so hard to bring division into marriages, families, and churches. He knows that agreement multiplies authority. Moses said that one would chase a thousand, and two would put ten thousand to flight. Division does not just hurt our feelings. It weakens our prayers.

So if you are married, pray with your spouse. It may feel awkward at first. Do it anyway. Hold hands at the kitchen table and agree together over your children, your finances, your health, and your future. Some of the most powerful prayer meetings on earth have two people in them.

WHEN THE CHURCH PRAYED

Look at what happened when the early church prayed together.

When Peter and John were threatened by the authorities and told never again to speak in the name of Jesus, they went back to the other believers. And they did not hold a committee meeting. They held a prayer meeting.

"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.' And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:29-31)

Notice what they did not pray. They did not pray, "Lord, please make the persecution stop." They prayed, "Lord, give us boldness, and stretch out Your hand to heal." And the building shook.

Later, when King Herod arrested Peter and was planning to execute him after the Passover, the church went to prayer again.

"Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church" (Acts 12:5)

That very night, an angel walked into the prison, woke Peter up, knocked the chains off his hands, opened the iron gate, and walked him out into the street. And when Peter knocked on the door of the house where they were praying, the girl who answered was so excited she forgot to open the door. The church was praying so hard for Peter's release that they could hardly believe it when it happened. I love that. It shows they were ordinary people just like us. But they prayed, and God moved.

A WORD ABOUT PRAYER CHAINS

I mentioned earlier that I am careful about prayer chains in some contemporary churches. Let me be clear: I am all for people

praying together. What I caution against is the idea that God needs a certain number of people to pray before He will act, as though prayer were a petition drive with signatures. It is not the number of people that moves God. It is faith and agreement.

A prayer chain where every person truly believes and agrees in faith is a powerful thing. A prayer chain that simply passes along worry from one phone to the next is not. So if you are part of a prayer chain, do not just pass on the bad news. Pass on the promises. When someone calls you with a need, find a Scripture and agree with them in faith right there on the phone.

BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2)

Something real happens when we pray for each other. It is not just nice words.

I read about a scientific study published some years ago in which researchers used brain scans on people lying in a scanner in one room, completely isolated, unable to see or hear anything. In another room, people who had been trained to pray focused loving, healing prayer toward them at random times, with the person in the scanner not knowing when. And during the times they were being prayed for, areas of their brains connected with calmness, emotional resilience, and well-being showed measurable activity, and those areas were quiet when no one was praying.

Now, I do not need a brain scan to believe the Bible. But it is wonderful when science catches a glimpse of what God has been telling us all along.

"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16)

Your prayers for one another are doing real work. God is moving through your prayers to touch other people's bodies, minds, and lives, even at a distance.

JOB'S TURNAROUND

Here is a beautiful truth about intercession. When you pray for others, God often moves in your own life too.

"And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:10)

Job's friends had not been kind to him. They had accused him and lectured him while he sat in the ashes. And God told Job to pray for them. When he did, God turned Job's own captivity around.

Sometimes the breakthrough you are waiting for is on the other side of praying for someone else, especially someone who has hurt you.

HOW TO START

Make a list. Write down the names of family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, church leaders, government leaders, and nations that God puts on your heart. Do not try to pray for everyone every day. Divide the list up over the week.

Pray the Word over them. Use the prayers of Paul from Ephesians and Colossians. Put their names right into the verses.

Listen for the Holy Spirit's promptings. When someone's face suddenly comes to mind, stop and pray for them right then.

And when you tell someone you will pray for them, pray right then if you can. Do not wait. Put your hand on their shoulder or pray with them over the phone. That way you will never forget.

A PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Father, I thank You that Jesus ever lives to make intercession, and that I can join Him in that work. I take my place in the gap. I pray for my family, my friends, my church, my leaders, and my nation. In the name of Jesus, I bind the god of this world from blinding the minds of those I love, and I ask You to let the light of the glorious gospel shine into their hearts. Lord of the harvest, send laborers across their path, and make me one of them. I agree with my brothers and sisters in faith, and I thank You that where two or three are gathered in Your name, You are in the midst. Help me to bear the burdens of others and so fulfil the law of Christ. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 19

Morning Orders

Every morning when you wake up, the world will try to define you. Your problems will be waiting to greet you. Your fears will try to claim you before your feet even touch the floor.

But before you check your phone, before you answer an email, before you step out into that battlefield called today, you must rise with a declaration. In the army, every soldier receives his orders before the day's mission. In the kingdom of God, the morning is when you receive yours.

Every new day is not a guarantee. It is a gift. When you open your eyes, heaven has given you another opportunity to fulfill your assignment on earth. That is why how you begin your day matters so much.

"My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up"
(Psalm 5:3)

A MORNING DECLARATION FROM ISAIAH 43

One of the greatest morning passages in the Bible is found in Isaiah 43. God spoke these words to Israel, and through Christ they belong to every believer.

"But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you'" (Isaiah 43:1-2)

When you begin your morning with this word, you are not praying for victory. You are praying from victory. Your morning prayer shifts from "Lord, help me survive today" to "Lord, I thank You that no river can drown me, no fire can consume me, and no fear can hold me, because You are with me."

IDENTITY BEFORE ACTIVITY

Notice how God begins. "I have called you by your name; You are Mine." He does not start with what you should do. He starts with who you are.

The world trains us to define ourselves by performance, by achievements, by failures, by titles and possessions. But heaven defines you by relationship. God says, "You are Mine."

If you let your activity determine your identity, you will live in constant instability. When you succeed, you will feel valuable. When you fail, you will feel worthless. When people applaud, you will feel important. When they ignore you, you will feel forgotten. But when you begin each day rooted in your identity, your activity cannot shake your value.

You do not work to be loved. You work because you are loved. You do not strive to be accepted. You move because you are already accepted. That one shift will change how you approach your whole morning. Instead of rushing into the day trying to prove yourself, you walk into it expressing who you already are.

And notice that He called you by your name. He did not say, "Hey, you over there." He is personal. He is specific. Heaven knows exactly who you are and why you are here.

FEAR GETS NO SEAT AT THE TABLE

When the sun rises, fear is often the first enemy that tries to walk into the room. It creeps in through thoughts about yesterday's mistakes, today's pressures, and tomorrow's uncertainties. But God's word is "Fear not, for I have redeemed you."

God does not just advise you not to fear. He commands it, and He gives you the reason: you are redeemed. To be redeemed means you have been bought back. You are no longer owned by failure, sin, or death. Fear thrives on insecurity, but redemption establishes security.

The enemy knows that if he can plant fear in your morning, he can paralyze your whole day. That is why the first moments after waking are so important. If your first words are full of worry, your spirit is heavy before the day has started. But if your first declaration is, "I will not fear, for I am redeemed," you shut the door before fear can pull up a chair.

Fear is an intruder, and intruders are only powerful when you leave the door unlocked. Redemption is the lock.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7)

Fear is not from heaven, and if it is not from heaven, it has no legal right to stay in your atmosphere. Your morning is where you set the boundaries. You declare, **"This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it"** (Psalm 118:24). You draw the line, and you decree that fear will not be the architect of your day.

THROUGH THE WATERS, NOT AROUND THEM

Some mornings you wake up already knowing the weight that is waiting for you outside the door. Bills. Deadlines. Conversations you do not want to have. Health battles. Family struggles.

Isaiah 43 does not promise there will be no waters and no fire. It promises that in the middle of them, He will be with you. Difficulty is not a sign that God has abandoned you. His presence is often closest when the waters rise highest.

Fire without Him destroys, but fire with Him refines. Ask Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They went into the furnace

bound, and the king looked in and saw four men walking loose in the middle of the fire, and the fourth looked like the Son of God. When they came out, they did not even smell like smoke.

So you cannot measure your day by the size of the obstacle. You measure it by the certainty of His presence. Waters rise, but He is greater. Fires burn, but He is stronger. Enemies plot, but He is nearer.

And remember: problems have an expiration date. Rivers rise, but they recede. Fires rage, but they burn out. Valleys seem long, but they lead to higher ground. Think back to what you thought would destroy you years ago. You survived it. What felt permanent then is just a testimony now. Problems are seasonal. God's promises are eternal.

PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT

"Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, And I have loved you" (Isaiah 43:4)

Precious. Honored. Loved. The Creator of the universe looks at you and calls you precious. That word means valuable, treasured, rare, irreplaceable. You are not common. You are not disposable. You are not an accident.

The morning is often when the enemy tries hardest to plant lies about your value. He wants you to rise out of bed already feeling small and defeated. That is why your first declaration should not be your to-do list, but your identity. "I am precious in His sight. I am honored. I am loved."

Your value is not determined by your appearance, your performance, or anyone's opinion. It is determined by the price that was paid for you. And the price paid for you was not silver or gold, but the precious blood of Jesus Christ. If heaven was willing to pay that much to redeem you, your life carries significance far beyond what your circumstances suggest.

EVERY MORNING IS A COVENANT SIGN

The rainbow was a covenant sign to Noah. But for you, every new morning is a sign that God's covenant is still in force. The fact that you opened your eyes and took a breath is evidence that His mercy did not fail.

**"Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not. They are new every
morning; Great is Your faithfulness"**

(Lamentations 3:22-23)

The world wakes up to survive another day. The children of God wake up to enforce covenant promises.

A PATTERN FOR MORNING PRAYER

Let me give you a simple pattern for your morning orders. You can pray through it in ten minutes, or you can take an hour. The point is to set the course of your day in agreement with heaven.

BEGIN WITH GRATITUDE

When you open your eyes, let the first response of your heart be thanksgiving. Thank Him for life, for breath, for strength. Breath is not automatic. It is a gift. Gratitude recognizes that you woke up not because of your alarm clock, but because heaven authorized one more sunrise for you. Never begin your day with complaints. Begin with thanks. Gratitude is the seed for more.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE KING

Then pray, "Father, let Your kingdom come in my life today. Let Your will be done in me as it is in heaven." You are placing yourself under His rule. You are saying, "Father, I have plans, but Yours are higher. Guide me into Your design for this day." When you align with His rule, you step out covered by the backing of heaven's government.

ASK FOR WISDOM

Wisdom is the master key. Knowledge fills your mind, but wisdom guides your steps. Ask Him for wisdom, and He gives liberally. Ask for discernment to recognize the difference between a distraction and an opportunity, between what is urgent and what is important. A single wise decision can save years of struggle.

ALIGN WITH YOUR PURPOSE

Pray, "Lord, order my steps into the assignment You designed for me." Purpose is the reason you were created. When you walk in what God created you to do, you do not have to chase favor. Favor follows function.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way" (Psalm 37:23)

DECLARE HIS PROTECTION

Cover your life, your family, your home, and everything connected to you with the protection of God. Ask Him to guard your mind from confusion, your body from harm, and your spirit from discouragement.

"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust'" (Psalm 91:1-2)

You may not know what the day holds, but you know who holds the day.

ASK FOR DIVINE CONNECTIONS

No one fulfills their purpose alone. Ask the Lord to connect you with the people He has appointed to cross your path today: those who need to hear about Jesus, those who carry wisdom for you,

those He wants you to bless. And ask Him to protect you from wrong connections that would distract or derail you.

SPEAK PROVISION

Declare that the God who called you is the God who supplies you. Vision without provision leads to frustration. But He never gives an instruction without releasing the means to fulfill it.

"Father, I thank You that You supply all I need today for the work You have given me."

PRAY FOR INFLUENCE AND IMPACT

Ask God to make your life count today. "Lord, let my words heal. Let my actions inspire. Let my presence bring light into the darkness. Let someone be closer to You tonight because they crossed my path today."

CANCEL FEAR AND INTIMIDATION

Boldness is the language of the kingdom. Say, "I walk in confidence. I walk in peace. I walk in faith today. Fear has no place in me."

SEAL IT WITH THANKSGIVING

And finally, thank Him in advance. Do not wait until you see it. Faith thanks before it receives.

PRAYER IS ALIGNMENT

The danger of rushing into your day without prayer is that you step into activity without alignment. You may be busy, but not effective. You may move fast, but in the wrong direction. When you pray in the morning, you are not informing God of your plans. You are inviting His plans to govern yours.

Prayer pulls you out of survival mode and pushes you into assignment mode. You stop asking, "How will I get through

today?" and start declaring, "What has God assigned for me to accomplish today?"

Anxiety says, "The water will drown me, the fire will burn me, the day will crush me." Authority says, "The water cannot overflow me, the fire cannot consume me, the day cannot break me." The difference between those two postures is where you start your morning. Start in fear, and you will live in reaction. Start in the Word, and you will live in dominion.

A MORNING DECLARATION

Father, thank You for this new day. Thank You for breath, for life, and for strength. I will not fear, for You have redeemed me. You have called me by my name; I am Yours. When I pass through the waters, You are with me; the rivers shall not overflow me. When I walk through the fire, I shall not be burned. I am precious in Your sight, honored, and loved. Let Your kingdom come and Your will be done in my life today. Give me wisdom. Order my steps into my assignment. Cover me, my family, and everything connected to me with Your protection. Connect me with the people You have appointed. Supply all I need. Let my life bring light to someone today. I cancel fear and intimidation, and I walk in confidence, peace, and faith. I thank You in advance for a victorious day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER 20

Order Before the Miracle

Many believers spend their entire Christian lives asking God for blessing, breakthrough, and promotion, and yet they never build the framework needed to carry what they are asking for. We treat answered prayer like a lightning strike, hoping that if we shout loud enough or cry long enough, God will drop a miracle into our laps.

But the kingdom of God is not a system of luck. It is a kingdom governed by spiritual laws, by order, and by design. And in this last chapter I want to show you that a soldier who wins the prayer fight is also a soldier who builds order into his life, so that what is won in prayer can be held and carried.

PRAYING FOR WHAT YOU HAVE NOT PREPARED FOR

Let us be honest. When we look at the average prayer life, what do we find? Many believers are fervently praying for things they have never prepared for. They are crying out for results they have not structured their character, their calendar, or their habits to sustain.

We pray for influence, but we live in disorder. We pray for financial abundance, but we have no budget. We pray for a godly marriage, but we never set aside time to talk. We pray for a powerful prayer life, but we stay up until one in the morning scrolling on our phones and then wonder why we cannot get up at six.

Prayer is glorious, vital, and indispensable. But prayer without order often leads to frustration. Prayer brings revelation. Order

prepares the place for manifestation.

Think about a seed. An apple seed does not hold an emotional prayer meeting in the dirt, pleading, "Oh God, please make me a tree." It does not fast for fruit. All the seed needs is to be placed in the right environment. When the soil is right, the moisture is present, and the light is provided, fruit becomes inevitable.

So the question is not only, "God, when will You bless me?" It is also, "Have I prepared the environment where the blessing can grow?"

ORDER BEFORE MAN

Go back to the very first chapter of the Bible. Before God formed man, what did He do? He established order.

"The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2)

The earth was without form. It had no structure. It was void. It had no content. The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters with creative power. And yet God did not create man on the first day while everything was still in chaos.

He spent five days bringing order. He separated light from darkness. He set boundaries for the seas. He brought up the dry land. He organized the plants and trees. He placed the sun, moon, and stars to govern the times and seasons. Only then did He form the man and place him in the world.

God fixed the environment before He formed the man. He does not release purpose into pandemonium.

And where did He put Adam? Not in a tangled jungle.

"Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it" (Genesis 2:15)

A garden is a cultivated, ordered place. It is potential brought under management. God told Adam to dress it and keep it, to tend it and guard it. Whatever you refuse to manage will end up managing you.

THE SPIRIT IS HOVERING

This explains why many believers have a frustrating experience. They go to wonderful meetings. They feel the presence of God. They weep at the altar. They sense the anointing hovering over their lives. They know God has great things for them. And then they go home, and nothing changes. Year after year, no advancement, no fruit, no progress.

Why? Often it is because the Spirit is hovering over their potential, but they have never built the structure needed for it to take form. They want the miracle, but they have not built the altar.

THE ALTAR BEFORE THE FIRE

Look at Elijah on Mount Carmel, before the rain we talked about earlier. The prophets of Baal had spent all day screaming and cutting themselves, and nothing happened. Then it was Elijah's turn. And what did he do first?

"And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to... Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold... And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood" (1 Kings 18:30-33)

He repaired the broken altar. He arranged the stones in order. He dug the trench. He put the wood in order. He laid the sacrifice in place. And only then did he pray, and the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed everything, even the water in the trench.

Elijah's prayer was short. But it was prayed over an altar that had been put in order.

FIFTIES AND HUNDREDS

Look at Jesus feeding the five thousand. He had five small loaves and two fish and a massive, hungry crowd on the hillside. Did He just start throwing pieces of bread into a pushing, shoving mob, the way someone feeds pigeons in a park? No.

"Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties" (Mark 6:39-40)

Jesus did not release the miracle of multiplication until the people were organized into fifties and hundreds. Why? Because increase requires structure. If the Son of God required order before He multiplied barley loaves, why would we expect Him to pour multiplication into lives that are in complete disorder?

Order is the landing strip for the miraculous.

"Let all things be done decently and in order"
(1 Corinthians 14:40)

VISION GIVES YOU A HOLY NO

Why do so many of us resist order and discipline? Why does the flesh throw a tantrum whenever the word "routine" comes up? Usually because we have never connected discipline to a clear vision.

"Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law"
(Proverbs 29:18)

The word "perish" there carries the idea of casting off restraint. When there is no vision burning in your heart, discipline feels like a prison. But discipline with vision becomes acceleration.

Think of an athlete training before dawn in the cold rain. Why does she drag herself out of a warm bed and push her body to its limit? Not because she loves pain. Because she has a vision of standing on the podium. That vision gives meaning to every repetition.

When you have a vision of what God wants to do through your prayers, you will find the strength to say no to the things that steal your prayer time. Every time you say yes to a distraction, you are saying no to something God has called you to. A consecrated no protects your destiny.

PRUNING

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2)

A good vinedresser does not only cut off dead branches. He also cuts back healthy branches. Why? Because those extra shoots are pulling water and nutrients away from the main clusters of fruit.

Sometimes the thing that is keeping you from a powerful prayer life is not something bad. It is something good that is crowding out something better. A good television program. A good hobby. A good activity at church, even. Pruning is cutting away the good so that the best can flourish.

REDEEMING THE TIME

Every human being receives exactly the same twenty-four hours every day. The king and the laborer get the same amount. Nobody gets twenty-six hours, and nobody gets twenty-two.

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16)

To redeem means to buy back, to rescue from waste. When you set aside a regular time for prayer and guard it, you are not being rigid. You are rescuing your future from the hands of the enemy.

People rarely lose their destiny in one dramatic explosion. They lose it minute by wasted minute, scroll by mindless scroll.

Here is how it works. You make a decision. That decision sets up a structure. That structure becomes a habit. That habit builds your character. And your character shapes your destiny. You do not directly choose your future. You choose your habits, and your habits build your future.

BUILDING A STRUCTURE FOR PRAYER

So let me give you some very practical steps for building order around your prayer life.

Choose a time. Jesus rose a great while before day. Daniel prayed three times a day. David prayed evening, morning, and noon. Find the time that works for your life and guard it like an appointment with the King, because it is one.

Choose a place. Your closet, whatever it looks like. Have your Bible, a notebook, and a pen ready there, so you do not waste the first ten minutes looking for them.

Go to bed on time. Many prayer lives are lost the night before. If you want to rise early to pray, you cannot stay up late watching things that fill your mind with noise.

Put the phone away. Not just on silent. Away.

Keep your prayer notebook. Write down what you are standing for, the Scriptures you are standing on, and the answers when they come.

Build in rhythms. A daily time alone with God. A weekly time of prayer with your spouse or family. A regular time of prayer with other believers. Times of fasting when the Spirit leads.

And start small if you need to. Fifteen faithful minutes every day will do more than three hours once a month. Faithfulness in little things leads to authority in big things.

THE STRUCTURE SERVES THE SPIRIT

Now, a word of caution. Structure is not the goal. Relationship is the goal. We do not want to swing back into the religious performance we talked about in the early chapters, where prayer becomes a cold checklist and we feel nothing.

The riverbanks are not the river. But without the banks, the river spreads out into a stagnant swamp. With strong banks, the same water becomes a mighty current that can turn turbines and light up whole cities. Structure does not replace the life of the Spirit. It channels it.

So build the banks, and then let the river flow.

A PRAYER FOR ORDER

Father, You are a God of order. You brought form out of chaos, You placed Adam in a garden, and You organized the multitude before You multiplied the bread. I ask You to bring Your order into my life. Show me what to prune. Show me where I am wasting the time You have given me. I commit to set apart a time and a place to meet with You, and to guard it as an appointment with the King. Let my habits build my character, and let my character serve Your purpose. Let my life become an altar put in order, ready for Your fire to fall. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The World May Never See

We have come a long way together. We started on the battlefield, with Paul's armor and his call to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. We walked into the secret place and closed the door. We discovered why heaven waits for a man or woman on earth to agree with God. We climbed up to the throne and saw that we are seated together with Christ, far above every principality and power.

We left the begging line and took our place as sons and daughters. We stopped measuring our redemption with our reasoning. We stopped praying for more faith and started using what we have. We learned to speak life instead of fear, to take up the sword of the Spirit, to thank God that it is already done, and to keep our eyes on Jesus. We prayed the prayers Paul prayed. We leaned on our Helper, the Holy Spirit. We learned to bind the strong man and pull down strongholds, and we saw every curse broken at the cross. We learned to pray from our spirit and trained our wandering minds. We learned to stay. We stood in the gap for others. We received our morning orders. And we built an altar in order for the fire to fall.

Now it is time to put the book down and pick up the fight.

Let me remind you of something I said near the beginning. The world may never see what happens behind your closed door. Nobody may ever know about the mornings you rose early, the nights you stayed up interceding, the tears you cried over a prodigal child, the declarations you spoke over your city when nobody else seemed to care. There may be no applause and no recognition.

But heaven sees. And heaven will shake the world because of it.

"And your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly" (Matthew 6:4)

I believe we are living in a day when God is raising up a praying people. Not a people who whine and beg and wring their hands, but a people who know who they are in Christ, who know the authority they carry, and who open their mouths in faith to enforce the victory of the cross. Ordinary men and women, young and old, rich and poor, in every nation, who have discovered that prayer is not preparation for the battle, but the battle itself.

I want you to be one of them.

So here is my challenge to you. Do not let this be just another book you read. Tomorrow morning, before you look at your phone, get up and receive your orders from the King. Find your closet. Close the door. Open the Word. Thank Him for what He has done. Speak to your mountain. Bind the strong man. Stand in the gap for someone you love. And then walk out into your day as a soldier who has already won.

And then teach someone else. Pray with your spouse. Teach your children how to pray from the throne. Gather two or three friends around the kitchen table and go through these truths together. Disciples make disciples. Soldiers train soldiers. A praying church is built one praying believer at a time.

The enemy is real. But he has been defeated. And the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you.

Enter the fight.

A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I thank You for every truth You have shown me in these pages. I receive them, and I will live them. Thank You that I am Your child, seated with Christ in heavenly places. Thank You for

ENTER THE PRAYER FIGHT

the armor, for the name of Jesus, for the blood of the Lamb, for the sword of the Spirit, and for the Holy Spirit who helps me pray. I am not a beggar; I am a son, a daughter, a soldier in Your army. I take my place in the gap. I enter the prayer fight, not toward victory but from victory. Let my secret life with You be strong, and let my public life carry Your power. Use my prayers to destroy the works of the devil, to bring the lost home, to heal the sick, to set the captives free, and to bring Your kingdom to earth as it is in heaven. And let me teach others to do the same. In the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

THE JESUS BOOT CAMP

Other Books by Paul



The Jesus Boot Camp



Dare to Be a Mother



While You Were Busy



When Lies Enter Your Home



Rise Up and Walk



The Book That Cannot Be Buried



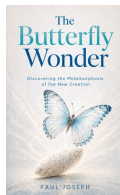
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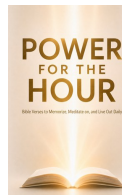
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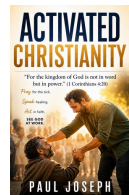
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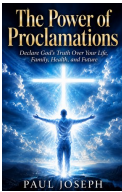
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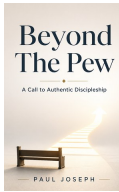
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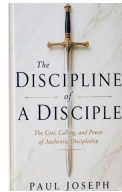
The DNA of the New Man



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WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN ROUTINE PRAYERS ARE NOT ENOUGH?

There comes a moment in every believer's life when passive devotion must give way to fierce, targeted spiritual engagement. Spiritual opposition does not surrender to good intentions—it bows only to the authority of God's Word wielded in persistent faith.

ENTER THE PRAYER FIGHT is a field guide for every Christian ready to move from frustration to breakthrough. With sharp biblical insight and deep spiritual clarity, Paul Joseph exposes the unseen resistance that sabotages our petitions and reveals how to pray with precision, power, and enduring authority.

Whether you are battling persistent mind wandering, confronting deeply entrenched curses, or carrying a burden to intercede for your family and community, this book equips you with the posture and discernment needed for total victory.

Stop fighting in your own strength. Learn the strategy of the Spirit, take up your weapons, and step boldly into the fight.

