

THE PRAYER LIFE

1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 (NASB)

¹² “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,

¹³ and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.

Live in peace with one another.

¹⁴ We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

¹⁵ See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.

¹⁶ Rejoice always;

¹⁷ pray without ceasing;

¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit;

²⁰ do not despise prophetic utterances.

²¹ But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good;

²² abstain from every form of evil.”

How to Be Delivered from Prayerlessness; How Deliverance May Continue

The greatest stumbling block in the way of victory over prayerlessness is the secret feeling that we shall never obtain the blessing of being delivered from it. Often have we put forth effort in this direction, but in vain! Old habit and the power of the flesh, our surroundings with their attractions, have been too strong for us. What good is it to attempt that which our heart assures us is out of our reach? The change needed in the entire life is too great and too difficult. If the question is put: “Is a change possible?” Our sighing heart says: “Oh, no, for me it is entirely impossible!” Do you know why that reply comes? It is simply because you have received the call to prayer as the voice of Moses and as a command of the law. Moses and his law have never yet given anyone the power to obey.

Do you really long for the courage to believe that deliverance from a prayerless life is possible for you and may become a reality? Then you must learn the great lesson that such deliverance is included in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, that it is *one of the blessings of the New Covenant which God himself will impart to you through Christ Jesus*. As you begin to understand this you will find that the exhortation, “**Pray without ceasing**”, conveys a new meaning. Hope begins to spring up in your heart that the Spirit—who has been bestowed on you to cry constantly, “**Abba, Father**”—will make a true life of prayer possible for you. Then you will hearken, not in the spirit of discouragement, but in the gladness of hope, to the voice that calls you to repentance.

Many a one has turned to his inner chamber, under bitter self-accusation that he has prayed so little, and has resolved for the future to live in a different manner. Yet no blessing has come—there was not the strength to continue faithful, and the call to repentance had no power, because his eyes had not been fixed on the Lord Jesus, If he had only understood, he would have said: “Lord, you see how cold and dark my heart is: I know that I must pray, but I feel I cannot do so; I lack the urgency and desire to pray.”

He did not know that at that moment the Lord Jesus in his tender love was looking down upon him and saying: “You cannot pray; you feel that all is cold and dark: why not give yourself over into My hands? Only believe that I am ready to help you in prayer; I long greatly to shed abroad My love in your heart, so that you, in the consciousness of weakness, may confidently rely on Me to bestow the grace of prayer. Just as I will cleanse you from all other sins, so also will I deliver from the sin of prayerlessness—only do not seek the victory in your own strength. Bow before Me as one who expects everything from his Savior. Let your soul keep silence before Me however sad you feel your state to be. Be assured of this—I will teach you how to pray.”

Many a one will acknowledge: “I see my mistake; I had not thought that the Lord Jesus must deliver and cleans me from this sin also. I had not understood that He was with me every day in the inner chamber, in His great love ready to keep and bless me, however sinful and guilty I felt myself to be. I had not supposed that just as He will give all other grace in answer to prayer, so, above all and before all, He will bestow the grace of a praying heart. What folly to think that all other blessings must come from Him, but that prayer, whereon everything else depends, must be obtained by personal effort! Thank God I begin to comprehend—the Lord Jesus is Himself in the inner chamber watching over me, and holding Himself responsible to teach me how to approach the Father. This only He demands—that I, with childlike confidence, wait upon Him and glorify Him.”

Brethren, have we not seriously forgotten this truth? From a defective spiritual life nothing better can be expected than a defective prayer life. It is vain for us, with our defective spiritual life, to endeavor to pray more or better. ***It is an impossibility.*** Nothing less is necessary than that we should experience that he who “**is in Christ Jesus is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new**” ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). This is literally true for the man who understands and experiences what it is to be in Jesus Christ.

Our whole relationship to the Lord Jesus must be a new thing. I must believe in His infinite love, which really longs to have communion with me every moment and to keep me in the enjoyment of His fellowship. I must believe in His divine power, which has conquered sin and will truly keep me from it. I must believe in Him who, as the great intercessor, through the Spirit, will inspire each member of His body with joy and power for communion with God in prayer. My prayer life must be brought entirely under the control of Christ and His love. Then, for the first time, will prayer become what it really is, the natural and joyous breathing of the spiritual life, by which the heavenly atmosphere is inhaled and then exhaled in prayer.

Do you not see that, just as this faith possesses us, the call to a life of prayer which pleases God will be a welcome call? The cry, “**Repent of the sin of prayerlessness**”, will not be responded to by a sigh of helplessness, or by the unwillingness of the flesh. The voice of the Father will be heard as He sets before us a widely opened door and receives us into blessed fellowship with Himself. Prayer for the help of the Spirit to pray will no longer be in fear of an effort too great for our power; it will be but falling down in utter weakness at the feet of the Lord Jesus, to find there that victory comes through the might and love which stream from His countenance.

If the question arises in our mind: “will this continue?” and the fear comes: “You know how often you have tried and been disappointed”, faith will find its strength, not in the thought of what you will, or do, but in the changeless faithfulness and love of Christ, who afresh has helped you and assured you that those who wait on Him shall not be ashamed.

If fear and hesitation still remain, I pray you by the mercies of God in Jesus Christ, and by the unspeakable faithfulness of His tender love, dare to cast yourselves at His feet. Only believe with your whole heart that there is deliverance from the sin of prayerlessness. “*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](#)). In His blood and grace there is complete deliverance from all unrighteousness and from all prayerlessness, Praised be His name forever!