

MISSIONARY BATTLES - BOOT CAMP (PRAYER)

Colossians 4:2-6

Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies. (Westminster Catechism)

For prayer- "As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray." Martin Luther
Prayer is a time of preparation for the spiritual warfare that we will experience throughout the day. You won't go into battle without first being trained, so why go to war spiritually without first preparing. Paul parallels prayer and battle in Ephesians 6:18-20. This shows a clear relationship between prayer and spiritual warfare.

METHODS

1. Devoted - often and regular, the more your pray the more powerful it becomes
Paul tells us elsewhere to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This means we are to always be in a state our prayer unto God.

"Pray as you think. Consciously embrace with your heart every gleam of light and truth that comes to your mind. Thank God for and pray about everything that strikes you powerfully." John Owen
"Let your private seasons of prayer be, if possible, regular, frequent, and undisturbed. Effectual prayer avails much. Have you nothing to pray for? Let us suggest the church, the ministry, your own soul, your children, your relations, your neighbors, your country, and the cause of God and truth throughout the world." CH Spurgeon

Do you believe that the prayers and petitions that you lift up to God can have any effect on your future and the future of others?

2. Alert - if you find yourself falling asleep, then do something to stay awake (walk, coffee, etc.).
We must always be on guard for the traps of Satan (such as disguising answered prayer).

Jesus told the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane to be watchful and pray in Mark 13:38
"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

We not only need to be alert to tempting situations but we must also know what is going on in others lives so that we may know how to specifically pray for them. God tells us to lift up specific needs not just general needs. The more specific our prayers the better we can distinguish answered prayers.

3. Thankful - in Christ we know that all our battles will be won and thus gratitude should come from this. James 1:9-10 "Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation."

James 3:1-3 tells us what the result of an unthankful heart is.

"Even though your way may be dark, can you not encourage your heart with the triumphs of His Cross and the advancement of His truth?" CH Spurgeon

The fervency of your prayer for others' salvation is a measure of the intensity of the gratitude of your own!

GOALS

1. Prayer for the Missionaries- directly to their needs for effective ministry.

One of my missionary friends always says "Don't pray for the work, prayer is the work." This essentially means that the work/harvest that they are able to have is the direct result of prayer. So we must be in constant prayer for missionaries around the world that the Lord may make the harvest great.

Also, we need to be in constant prayer for the missionaries' personal health. In order for the missionaries to be effective, they must be constantly renewed spiritually. So we must intercede on their behalf that God would renew their strength daily.

2. Open doors for the Gospel- opportunities for the missionaries to have open doors to present Christ in that situation.

Paul also asks for prayer for open doors in 2 Thessalonians 3:1 "Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored." It is quite ironic that Paul is asking for open doors in which he can present the gospel since he is currently in prison. This call for open doors is a call to us as believers to seek any opportunity in which we can present the gospel. We should be in prayer for these situations at work, school, home, etc.

3. Clear and powerful Word- making the mystery clear to unbelievers.

The mystery is explained in Colossians 1:27-28 Mystery is because it would have never been determined if the Son of God had not revealed the plan of God the Father.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 exactly how he could keep the message of Christ simple and clear. "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. So I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

Paul gives his reason in 1 Corinthians 2:5 "that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

THE TRENCHES (EVERYDAY ACTIONS)

1. Wise Behavior- determining what to do when the Bible doesn't specifically tell you what to do. The wisdom comes through saturation of the scriptures. You must become all things to all men without losing your identity in Christ.

In several places Paul directly links wisdom to spiritual maturity. This means knowing the will of the Lord and walking in such a manner that is worthy of the Lord. Col 1:9-10 "And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Also in Eph 5:15-17 "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

Wisdom is only found in the Lord. We can't find spiritual wisdom anywhere outside of the council of God. Colossians 2:2-3 "to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Foolishness is explained in Colossians 2:20-23

2. Make Opportunities- times alone in the car, an unusual crisis which brings openness, an unusual comment. The opportunities aren't easy and aren't always there.

To purchase - the same word is used to mean redeem or to purchase the time, which means that the opportunity most likely will cost you something. A parallel passage is Ephesians 5:15-16. Intervention is required because the days are evil and unbelievers won't just come to you. This also means that we must be intentional about seeking and taking hold of those times. They won't always be available and thus you must not waste any of them.

Luke 21:12-14 "But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness." This explains why we are persecuted for our faith and the opportunity to share Christ even in those bad situations.

3. Salty Speech- the words that come from your mouth should not be boring and mundane, instead your words should be seasoned in a way that creates a longing for Christ. You must long for the gospel before you can make someone else long for Christ.

A direct correlation is seen with Luke 14:33-35 and Matthew 5:11-13. We are called to live in the world but not be of the world. We must learn how to be actively involved in the world without becoming like the world.

4. Individual Attention - Each person has specific needs that you must be able to adapt and change in order effectively reach each individual. 1 Peter 3:15-16 "but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,"

They ask about hope because they see something so different the worldly lifestyle. The reason for the hope is because of Christ and all that is within Him.