



2 Cor. 5:18

Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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The Science of Prayer

David Clayton



If we had a rich friend who encouraged us to call him as often as possible, and if we knew that every time we gave him a call we would receive \$10,000 how many times would we call him each day? As I was thinking about this I realized that the reason why Christians don't pray more is really because we don't have the assurance that we are going to have what we ask for. This is a startling thing to consider, but if we look at ourselves carefully, most of us will recognize that it is the truth.

From time to time people will call and say, "Please pray for me." And I do pray, but how earnestly and how perseveringly? I realize that the reason why we don't pray more is because we don't have that confidence that our prayers will be answered. If I knew for sure that every time I prayed I was guaranteed to get an answer, wouldn't I pray far more, wouldn't I pray without ceasing, wouldn't prayer become one of the great focuses of my life?

The Bible tells us that as Christians, we are engaged in a titanic battle involving the most powerful entities in the universe:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Eph 6:12)

The enemy we are contending with is not human, the enemy being referred to is Satan and his angels. But what do we know about fighting Satan and spiritual wickedness in high places? In this area our knowledge is very limited and we have absolutely no capabilities. Here our knives, our guns, our physical weapons are useless. We know how to engage in physical conflict, how to win those kinds of battles but this is a different kind of fight. The question is, do we really understand what we are doing?

OUR WEAPONS

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (2Cor 10:3-5)

We exist in physical bodies but we do not fight in that way, our weapons are not carnal (fleshly), but nevertheless they are mighty weapons! They are able to pull down strongholds!

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Eph 6:13-18)

The Belt of Truth: If your waist is weak, your whole body is compromised, no matter how strong the rest of your body is. Your lower back is a fulcrum and your whole body swivels around that point. Your spiritual waist should be supported by the belt of truth. Truth becomes the central key to your strength; Jesus said, "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life." He is the truth about God, in Him God has declared Himself to the universe as He never did before.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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declared him. (John 1:18)

So Jesus is the truth about God, in him we see the true character of God, the beauty of his love and goodness manifested. This is the truth that is the foundation, the center which supports our entire body in the conflict with the powers of darkness.

Breastplate of Righteousness. The greatest tool which a Christian may possess is faith, but there is something which is always connected with faith in God and this is a consciousness of righteousness. When we go to ask God for something and begin with, "Lord, I'm not worthy," we have already half-killed our faith. Righteousness brings a conviction that I am accepted, that I belong here, that I am in the right place. Again, it is Jesus who takes us there because He is our righteousness. This breastplate defends us and makes us strong. It guards us against the darts of the wicked, the constant accusations of Satan.

Satan will always do his duty, but what is our duty? Our duty is to trust that ALL things work together for good to

those who love God! When we understand this, what can hurt us? If my best friend lets me down I can say, "Praise God, it is working for my good." Satan does his worst to harm you, whether physically or spiritually and you say, "Praise God even for this work of Satan because even in this, he is working for my good." That's what faith does. Without faith we can be so pressed down under gloom that we want to go and hide in a hole. But let us remember that where there is a sense of unrighteousness, our faith is weak, self-condemnation and the burden of guilt will destroy our faith. It is the breastplate of righteousness, the righteousness found in Christ, that enables us to have faith.

The Gospel of Peace. Feet are used for traveling, for walking. With our feet shod with the gospel of peace, it means that our only purpose in traveling or moving, and going from place is to carry the gospel. A part of our armor is aggressive evangelism. In sports, the people who get beaten most often are people who are constantly on the defensive. If you play an attacking game, your opponent is too busy defending himself to attack you! It is true also of the carrying of the gospel. When you constantly have your feet shod with the gospel of peace, you speak to everybody that you meet about the good news in Jesus Christ. You don't have time to get into their idle chatter. Even Satan can't get you down if every moment you are talking about the goodness of God! When your aim and goal in life is to share the gospel of peace, you are full of enthusiasm and joy; you're the kind of person that when Satan sees you coming, he takes a different path. He knows you are too much of a challenge for him to face! Paul says that this is a part of the armor, one of the weapons we use to defend ourselves as Christians.

The Helmet of Salvation. The helmet is what protects the head. It represents what is known in the mind, the certainty that we are saved. One of the hazards which Christians are often faced with, is the danger of sin consciousness. Many Christians live under the burden

that "I'm not worthy, I'm not fit, I'm not qualified, I am just a wretched sinner!" We come to God as beggars instead of with the knowledge that in Jesus Christ we are fully qualified! We are "accepted in the beloved," (Ephesians 1:6) not in ourselves! When we are focused on our sins rather than on the salvation provided in Christ, we are seeing ourselves instead of Christ and such a picture is always disheartening, it drags us down, gives us stress and a heavy burden, this is what opens up our minds to the discouragements of the devil. But this is not the way of Christianity; as Christians, we wear the helmet of salvation, we are constantly aware of what God has provided for us in Christ and consequently, we know our identity as the beloved sons and daughters of God.

Continual Prayer. Paul says, "praying always, with all supplication." What is supplication? The word suggest earnestness, it carries the concept of pleading. But when I think of pleading, it seems to suggest that we are to come as beggars, seeking to persuade God to pay attention to us, seeking to get him to change his mind and to do good to us. This concept brings many questions to my mind because God is our Father. We've been taught that God loves us and is willing to answer our prayers; that He's more concerned about our welfare than we are. Why do we need to beg somebody who is just as concerned about us, as we are? We will focus more fully on this thought later in this article.

Wrestling. When Paul speaks of our conflict with the powers of darkness, he uses the word, "wrestle." But what does this mean, practically? How do we wrestle? We know how to wrestle physically, but how does one wrestle spiritually? Wrestling carries the connotation of rolling about, trying to get a good grip, sometimes being at the bottom, sometimes being on top as you struggle for the ascendancy. Paul says we are wrestling, so we get the idea it's not a matter of simply speaking a word, it seems to be more than that. Is it a matter of speaking a certain way? Is it

that we have a particular method of speaking? What is this “wrestling?” The fact that there is a struggle is indisputable, because the Bible says so.

A few years ago while focusing on the issue of faith, the thought occurred, “when you ask God for something, you shouldn’t ask again, if you ask more than once, it is because you don’t have faith.” I remember saying that myself! But after a while I realized that this teaching didn’t match reality, and I began to look at those other passages in the Bible which suggest that we are to pray without ceasing and I had to change my thinking.

When we don’t have answers, we can get a little bit confused. It’s okay to be confused if it makes us search more diligently. It’s okay to be confused if we don’t throw down our arms and say, “Okay, everything is a mess, I’m giving up!” You were not born a genius; you don’t have all the information. God doesn’t teach you everything at one moment, so it’s okay if you’re confused as long as it causes you to go and search more diligently. That’s one of the things I thank God for; that He does not allow us to become downcast. It’s all a process of helping us to understand Him and His ways better.

WARFARE

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Rev 12:9)

War in heaven! I am sure we have seen pictures depicting angels fighting with swords, illustrating Satan being cast out of heaven. However, the Bible says that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, so do angels fight with carnal weapons? How do they fight in heaven? We have to believe that the weakest angel in heaven has power to defeat all the forces of Satan in one moment if it comes to physical warfare, because God’s angels exercise his power and authority, and no power of darkness can stand against the power and authority of God. This conflict cannot be phys-

ical. But what is this fight about and how is it carried out?

In Daniel chapter 10 there is an incident recorded which may shed some light on this issue of prayer. In this chapter we find that Daniel has been praying about a certain matter. He has been fasting and praying for three whole weeks. After three weeks the angel Gabriel came to Daniel with a message

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of



Persia. (Dan 10:12-13):

Gabriel told Daniel that from the moment he started to pray, his words were heard and the angel was sent to answer but someone held him up for three weeks. He refers to this person as the “Prince of Persia.” Who is this prince of Persia who had the authority to stand against an angel of God? Clearly, this is not referring to a human person, the literal king of Persia. This refers to the power that was supporting this king of

Persia, which is Satan. In this incident Gabriel was able to overcome this “prince of Persia,” when Michael the archangel came to help him. But the question is, what kind of conflict is this that a heavenly angel is not able to win the battle for three weeks?” Daniel kept on praying and fasting but for three weeks there was no apparent answer to his prayer.

There is something similar in Jude 9 where Jude says that Michael the archangel was contending with the devil over the body of Moses. So Michael the Archangel, who was Jesus in his pre-incarnate identity, went to raise Moses from the dead, but something happened. Satan presented himself and tried to stop Michael from raising Moses. How did Michael fight him? He fought him with words! He simply said, “the Lord rebuke you Satan!” This battle had to do with words! And it makes perfect sense because Satan cannot fight against God by force of might. If there is a fight involving beams of energy, or even swords, Satan cannot stand against Jesus or any of His angels, but it seems that the contest that was going on had to do with words. In this conflict between God and Satan, words are important weapons.

MORE THAN POWER

Many unbelievers say that the God we serve cannot be a good God. Why? Because babies are dying, babies are suffering. Even today, all over the world we can find at every moment some of the most horrible images of human suffering that can be imagined. The atheist will say, “Where is God?” When we say that God is love, they reject the idea, because how can a God of love allow these things to happen when He has the power to stop it, but He doesn’t stop it? But does everything simply depend on the power of God? Is that the reason for everything? If we believe everything depends upon only the power of God, we will never understand.

God is good, God knows everything, God is in charge of the universe, God

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Is It The Mark?



One of the most significant, recent developments in the world has been the onset of the Corona virus pandemic. The most troubling aspects of this “crisis” has been the misinformation which has emerged, particularly from those in authority and from many of those who are recognized as being experts in the field of medicine. The approach of the authorities has been extreme, dictatorial and way out of proportion to the situation. The world has watched the unfolding events with amazement and there has been a great deal of debate as to the significance of what is really taking place. Some see it as a carefully orchestrated plan by a global elite whose purpose is ultimately to gain absolute dominance and control over the masses.

What we want to examine briefly, however, is the idea which has been floated around that this situation might actually be the establishing of the biblical Mark of the Beast. This theory is focused particularly on the Covid vaccines. In some ways we could say that this conclusion is almost justified when we see the draconian steps which have been taken to compel every human being on the planet to be vaccinated. However, although there are a number of features of this situation which bear a striking resemblance to the prophesied Mark of the Beast crisis, the Bible is very specific in describing the elements of this mark and when we examine those elements carefully we can see that there are several critical features of the mark which are missing from this Corona virus crisis.

COVID VACCINE THEORIES

There are quite a number of theories as to the significance of the Covid vaccines and they could probably all be covered under the following ideas

1. There are those who fully support the vaccinations, promoting the idea that they are harmless and necessary for the safety of the world’s population.
2. There are those who believe that the vaccines are potentially harmful, but necessary.
3. There are those who believe that the vaccines are experimental and dangerous and that it is reckless and irresponsible to use them on human beings without much more extensive trials. Included in this group are a great many medical doctors and scientists.
4. Then there are those who are labeled by the popular media as unbalanced conspiracy theorists. These by and large believe that the vaccines are deliberately designed to kill people, with the aim of reducing the world’s population.
5. There are also those who believe that the RNA vaccines in particular are aimed at modifying the genetic structure of people so that they will lose the ability to worship God and to make rational decisions. This is primarily the group which believe that this vaccine is closely associated with the Mark of the beast and even, that it itself, constitutes the mark of the beast.

However, while we agree that there is something strange and suspicious about the way the global powers have approached the Covid pandemic and the unbalanced effort to compel all and sundry to be vaccinated, it is clear that this situation does not fulfill all the specifications of the biblical Mark of the beast. Let us consider the following clear characteristics of the mark:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MARK

First of all, the mark is the mark of the beast – it belongs to the beast and must be clearly identified as having some clear connection with the beast. Of course, in order to make this connection we have to correctly identify the beast. Some people believe the beast represents the Papacy, some believe that it represents some individual person who will be a global dictator at the end of time. I believe that the beast overall represents the great empires of the Old World and that the present manifestation of the beast is the European Union. Be that as it may, neither the Corona virus, nor the vaccine can be associated with any of these interpretations of the beast.

Some have suggested that the beast represents the United Nations because of course, this organization has been foremost in seeking to have the entire world vaccinated. But the United Nations does not fulfill the specifications of the beast.

First of all, Revelation 13 shows us that there are two great political powers at the end which are involved in the crisis of the Mark. One is the ten-horned beast from the sea and the other is the two-horned beast from the earth. There are two powers, not one. The United Nations involves all the nations of the earth so, if the beast represented the UN, there would not be two beasts, there would be only one. The fact that there are two, reveals that the beast does not represent some unified, single global entity like the UN. It represents a major power, yes, but there is another like it, so we have to look somewhere other than the UN, in identifying the beast. As I said, all the evidence points to this ten-horned beast as being presently manifested as the European Union, the other two-horned beast represents the United States.

According to the prophecy, the United States (the two-horned beast) will seek to compel every person on the earth to receive this mark, which is the mark of

Science of Prayer

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wants to save everybody, All things work for good to those who love God. These are absolute truths, but let us consider something: If we don't pray, will God continue to do everything that needs to be done? If we don't understand this issue of prayer, if we don't understand the place of prayer in the conflict that is taking place, we may develop bad ideas about God. But in the universal conflict between God and Satan, there is something involved that is more than simply the love of God and the power of God. This is an important truth that we need to understand.

Does prayer really change things? Can it even be that a person may be dying and that this condition will change if we pray? Can prayer affect whether a person is lost or saved? Will the starving get food if we pray when it would have been otherwise if we had not prayed? If we don't have the right answer to these questions then we may be badly affected even in our Christian experience. First of all we won't see the need of prayer and secondly, we won't be able to understand what is happening in the invisible world.

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. (Luke 22:31-32)

Here is another statement made by Jesus which provokes an interesting question: If Jesus had not prayed for Peter would his faith have failed? Did Jesus' prayer make a difference, or was his prayer for Peter just a token exercise? The answer is self-evident, his prayer did make a difference! Jesus understood what was going on behind the scenes when Satan asked for access to Peter that he might put him through severe testing. Something was going on there, Satan was attacking God's kingdom, he was waging war against God, but he was not using a spear or a sword, or

Europe (the ten-horned beast). From this perspective, the Corona virus/vaccination crisis does not fit the specifications. There is no known connection between either the virus or the vaccines which would make them belong in some special way to Europe.

Secondly, The Mark of the beast is received in either the right hand or the forehead. While it is true that this is not a literal mark that can be seen with visible eyes, yet the specific location means something. There is nothing either literal or symbolic about the Corona vaccines which could be interpreted as being a mark in either the right hand or the forehead.

Thirdly, when the mark of the beast arrives, there will be a great awakening among true Christians all over the world. There will be the preaching of the gospel on a level and with an intensity never before seen in the history of the Christian Church. The Bible describes it under the symbolism of three angels flying through the heavens, preaching the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. According to the Scriptures, at that time the world will be lightened with the glory of God. The arrival of the mark will be recognized as such by those who are the true children of God and the result will be a great awakening and revival. There has been no such spiritual awakening associated with the Corona virus pandemic. While Christians have been very concerned, the crisis has not been of such a nature as to cause a great revival.

The next point is that the mark of the Beast Initiates the fall of Babylon which is accompanied by a great exodus when God's people get out of her. Babylon represents the great false religious system which dominates the world. It is false, but apparently God has many people inside of this system who have been honestly deceived and who do not realize the true extent of her rebellion and betrayal of God. When the mark of the beast is established, apparently Babylon will be fully involved in receiving and promoting it and this is what will open the eyes

of God's people who are inside, and lead to the great exodus.

Let us consider also that the Mark of the Beast crisis constitutes the final decisive test for the people who live on the earth. It constitutes the moment of God's judgment and those who receive the mark will place themselves in a decisive position where they have rejected God. For such people the moment of repentance has passed forever, they have been enlightened, they have been given a clear understanding of the implications of what they are doing, yet they have chosen the mark about God and so they will be irrevocably lost. This is absolutely not true of those who have received the vaccines. Many of those who have been vaccinated are true children of God, perhaps misguided and misled, yes, but certainly the taking of the vaccines does not mean that a person has rejected God and sealed his destiny as a lost soul.

The final thing I would point out is that the Mark of the Beast should be something that is biblically demonstrable. By this I mean that it should be identifiable as something which is contrary to God's way as outlined in the Scriptures. By examining the Bible we should be able to pinpoint the mark outlined there in some way, as some satanic principle or practice which is condemned by God. God cannot judge the world unless there is some clear standard by which men can know that their behavior is contrary to his will. The Bible is the standard revelation of God's will and it outlines his purposes and his principles. If we cannot find the mark of the beast described in it somewhere, then it will not be possible for anyone to recognize when it arrives. In other words, though the mark is not clearly identified in the Bible, yet it should be described there and in such a way that it should be clearly something that is abhorred by God. Something so simple that it is a matter of black and white. If people do not understand the significance of the choice they are making then it cannot be a test.



any kind of tangible weapon. What he was using was arguments against Peter. His arguments had so much power that God had to allow him to do things that God did not want to be done. The same thing happened in the case of Job, and Jesus, understanding what was happening, said, "I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith may not fail."

We understand what the weapons of our warfare are but do we understand how to use those weapons? Do we understand why those weapons are so effective and how to use them? If we don't understand how to use them we might be the most powerful people in the world, but still be living the weakest and most defeated lives.

In Philippians 1:19, the Apostle Paul says:

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:19)

Now when he says 'salvation', I don't think he means salvation from sin. I think he means salvation from the situation he was in. I think he was in prison and he was looking forward to being set free from prison. He expected to be delivered through the prayers of the church. So Paul clearly believed that prayer changes things.

We see this again in Romans 15:30,31 where Paul says,

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints." (Romans 15:30, 31)

Paul is asking the people to strive with him. What does the word 'strive' mean? It means to struggle. He asked them to struggle with him in prayer. So there's a struggle going on, there's a fight going on, and this part of it is being fought by words, by prayer.

PRAYER WARRIORS

So maybe there something to this concept of a prayer warrior! If there is a fight and somebody fights effectively, wouldn't we call him a warrior? Are there people who know how to pray more effectively than others? Are there people who know how to use the weapons of our warfare more effectively than others - particularly the weapon of prayer? I have always balked a little bit at the term "prayer warrior." Maybe it's because of how people misuse the term or because of how these kinds of people are perceived. Many of them seem to think that the essence of effective praying is to keep repeating the same thing for long periods of time. They think that their long speaking makes them warriors. So maybe that is why I've not



liked the term, but when I look at the Bible, and the concept of fighting through prayer, I think there is such a thing as a prayer warrior, but we do need to define that properly.

We can find examples of such people in the Bible. In Luke 2:37, it speaks about a woman who was introduced to Jesus when He was just born; It says of this woman, Anna,

And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. (Luke 2:37)

It seems that all this old woman did night and day, was pray, and to the ignorant eye, it seems to have been a great misuse of her time, but look at what God did for her as a result! She was one of the few people who recognized Jesus Christ for who he was. Two people recognized Him when He was

a baby: this woman, Anna, and Simeon the old man. Do you think it was chance or accident? Do you think God was hearing her prayers? I know that prayer is often no more than a ritual for many people, but this lady was sincerely seeking God and developing a relationship with Him through her constant praying and it enabled God to work in her life more than He could work in the lives of many others. So in this sense I would say that this lady was a prayer warrior.

We may also remember the case of Cornelius. Cornelius was a Roman centurion, but he was constantly praying to God. He was not considered to be one of God's people because at the time, the Jews were God's designated people. But what was he doing? He was praying constantly and serving God by sharing what he had with others. An angel appeared to him and it says in Acts 10:4:

And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. (Acts 10:4)

It didn't matter that he was not a Jew, his name was known in heaven, his prayers were being heard and as a result, God sent an angel to him and brought salvation to his household.

Consider the Syrophenician woman, we may not think of her as a prayer warrior but I don't think most of us have ever prayed like that woman. She comes to Jesus and she says, "Lord, please help." But Jesus doesn't even look at her, yet she keeps on praying! Everything is discouraging but she keeps on praying. She says to herself, "I can't get through to Him, let me go to His disciples." So she goes to His disciples but They don't have anything to give her either. They try to discourage her but she won't stop, so they come to Jesus and they say, "send her away because she's bothering us." Jesus' response seems hard and cold when he says, "I'm not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." There it is; a conclusive word: "Go your way, Lady,

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Legal Issues

KEY QUESTIONS

In John 12:31 Jesus said:

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (John 12:31)

In Revelation 12: 9,10 it says,

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (Rev 12:9-10)

Apparently Satan's power has been broken to the point where he has been cast out of heaven! But the key questions still remain:

Why must we wrestle against a defeated enemy? If the man is knocked out and lying on the canvas, why do we still need to wrestle against him?

Why the need to pray repeatedly if God is already willing? God knows everything, He is aware of our needs and is more than willing to answer, so why does He delay his response, making it necessary for us to persevere in repeating our requests?

There are some who say, "Well, God simply waits and God delays because He wants to build the believer's faith." I find it difficult to accept that as a complete explanation because in many cases unanswered prayer leads to painful and even devastating consequences such as death from slow, horrible diseases. When we look at the way God worked in the time of the apostolic Church we don't find this happening. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever. So what is really going on?

In Revelation 5:8 we find an interesting verse:

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. (Rev 5:8)

It seems clear that these twenty-four elders are humans who once used to be here on earth but were taken up to heaven, probably at the time of Jesus' resurrection (Matt 27:52, 53). But the point is this: how is it that these people are involved with our prayers? They are represented as having golden vials full of incense which represents the prayers of the saints. This suggests that when you and I pray our prayers in some way pass through the channel of these elders. So, it may not be correct to think that God is the only person involved with our prayers! This does not seem to make sense because of course, the Bible teaches very clearly that there is only one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5). But, this passage is also in the Bible and here, it suggests that there are others involved, which are these twenty-four elders. Even though Revelation is a symbolic book it means something. God is trying to say something and it is our responsibility to try to understand what God is saying to us in this passage.

OUR MEDIATOR

We know, of course, that Jesus is the only mediator between God and us. God, is our Father and He has the same attitude towards us that Jesus has, but the Bible does present Jesus as mediator and in fact, in Revelation 8:3, the work of Christ is represented there by an angel who is offering up incense before God. It says:

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before

the throne. (Rev 8:3)

Notice, it's not just the prayers of the saints which are offered before God, but there is also incense being mingled with the prayers of the saints. What does this incense represent? It represents the righteousness of Christ.

When God gave the Israelites instructions concerning their system of worship, He told them to make a certain kind of incense; a special kind of incense that they were to use to anoint the sanctuary and anoint the priests, and nobody else was to make any oil like it in Israel. Anybody who made any oil like it was to be put to death! This incense represented the righteousness of Christ, and this is why in Revelation 8:3, we see this special incense being symbolically offered with the prayers of the saints. This incense, Christ's righteousness, is the only basis of our acceptance with God, it is only because he is our righteousness that God is able to intervene on our behalf, to respond to our prayers because, in our natural state, outside of Christ, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, utterly unlike the pure, holy standard which would enable a person to claim benefits from God.

With all of this being said, however, when we study this subject of prayer it is clear that there are some important factors to consider:

We know that God loves us with an unconditional love. He wants to do good for every one of us. He wants to make us happy. This is absolutely true.

It is also true that God has provided a way for all our prayers to be answered through Jesus Christ. Christ is my righteousness, he is the reason why God is able to be involved in my life. As Paul tells us in 2 Cor 1:20, "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen."

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

But there is a legal issue involved in how God deals with us. God is not the only person involved. Satan is involved and the universe is involved. Those are factors which influence the way God is able to deal with us.

If we consider the story of Job, we can see this reality illustrated: Satan came to God and said, "Job only serves you from selfish motives, his only reason is that when he serves you, he is able to obtain benefits. Give me the opportunity to remove those benefits and I will prove my point!" So God allowed Satan the opportunity to prove his point and as a result, Job was put through terrible afflictions including the loss of all his ten children! But the question is, did God have to take up this challenge from Satan? Why did he need to prove anything to the devil? Why not just chase him away with his lying arguments?

The fact is that the conflict between good and evil, between God and Satan, is being observed by the entire universe. All of God's intelligent creation is watching these two great powers to understand more clearly the accusations which Satan has made against God, to see where right and truth lies. For this reason, everything that God does, every decision he makes must be done in a visible, transparent way so that it may be clearly seen that he is fair and just in all things. The apostle Paul tells us that we, who are God's children are involved in this conflict and that even in the things which happen to us and the way in which we respond to these events, God is being judged!

For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. (1Cor 4:9)

If it were simply a physical battle then the conflict would have been over before it started; Satan cannot stand against the power of God for one moment. However, it is clear that there is more involved than simply the question

of who is stronger, God or Satan. There is the question of right, the question of God's need to be fair in the way he deals with Satan. In this battle God is limited in exercising His physical power. He limits himself because he will not overwhelm or destroy Satan until the entire universe sees and understands the issues which are at stake in the conflict and can see clearly the terrible consequences of rebellion against God.

Of course, today, many of these questions and issues have been already answered. The life and death of Jesus unmasked Satan and revealed the truth about Satan's government beyond controversy. Satan cannot stand in the way of our blessings anymore like he did with Daniel and like he did with Job,



because now, today, Jesus is the basis of all we're entitled to. In Christ we are entitled to every blessing that God has to give.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: (Eph 1:3)

However there is still an issue and it involves the question, is my relationship with Christ a genuine relationship? All God's blessings are given to us in Christ, but they are only given **in Christ** so, if my relationship with Christ is not genuine, am I entitled to those blessings, or does Satan still have authority over me? The obvious answer is, those who are not in Christ are still under the dominion of Satan, they are not entitled to the benefits provided in Christ! Even if a person makes a profession of being a Christian, but his profession is not genuine, he still remains under the authority of the devil. In such a case God

does not have the authority to intervene in the life of such a person and consequently, the prayers of such a person will be ineffective, he will have no power with God!

PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

There is still another important element that needs to be introduced into this discussion: There are many of us who continually lift our thoughts to God in silent prayer. This constant communication is good, but such prayer is between each person and God alone. Such prayer does not pass through the twenty-four elders; it does not pass through the public arena therefore it does not have any legal ground or standing. I am not saying it is not good, because it develops our personal relationship with God, but in terms of answered prayer, which is to take place in the public arena on a legal basis, do silent prayers have any effect?

Jesus says,

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32)

Jesus says, "confess me before men," he doesn't say, "Whosoever shall confess me in his heart?" He's talking about the public demonstration of where your heart is. This gives God the right to intervene in your life, this is what Jesus seems to be suggesting. The more clearly we can publicly demonstrate faith in Christ, the greater God's right to answer our prayers. There has to be a measurable reason for God to intervene in our lives.

In John 14:21 Jesus says,

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. (John 14:21)

Doesn't God love everybody? So why does He say, "He **shall be** loved of my Father?" Notice that there is a condition attached to God's love, according to this verse! Yet we have been made to understand that God loves everyone,

even the wicked and the disobedient; but here, it says that it is those who obey him who will be loved! It seems contradictory, but when we consider the facts that we have been discussing the solution becomes clear. The person who obeys God, who keeps his commandments will open the way for God to **demonstrate** his love for that person. Not to love the person, but to **reveal, to manifest** His love towards such a person; God loved us all along, it was always in God's heart even before we were born, but He's not able to show that love unless we demonstrate our commitment to Him. Because the whole controversy is being played out as a public demonstration. It's not private between you, God, and Satan, it's a public thing.

THE WATCHERS

This suggests that when we are making our petitions to God, it is better if we pray out loud rather than silently in our minds. Of course God hears when we communicate silently, but when we are asking for something and expecting God to act, we should speak out because God is the only one who can read our minds and there are others involved who are not able to do so.

In Daniel chapter 4 Nebuchadnezzar was given a dream and he was told he was going to be mad for seven years. Notice that God did not make this decision concerning Nebuchadnezzar in isolation, there were other heavenly beings involved:

This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. (Dan 4:17)

There is a heavenly tribunal involving "the watchers and the holy ones" who are seeing what is happening and who are even involved in the decision-making. God makes sure that whatever He is doing is recognized as being just and fair by heavenly beings. Satan has accused him of being unfair and to dis-

prove Satan's lies, He acts transparently in everything. So these decisions are not made by him alone, He's doing everything with the observation of those heavenly beings.

Once we understand this, our whole approach to prayer and to making requests of God, becomes different. I am a father and even when my children were small, I would not want to do something that they thought was unfair. I tried to do everything so they could see that their father is a man who can be trusted and that he's fair. This principle is easy to understand, so even though, in heaven, they are not saying, "God you may," or "God you may not," they are watching. And God is careful that everything He does is evidently fair. He's not going to interfere with Satan's property even if His heart is breaking. He operates within the limitations of what is fair and right. Adam chose Satan's way for the whole planet, but in Jesus God has provided another way and he says to us, "I'm giving you all a chance to get out of it!" Jesus is our way of escape and we are free to choose him and place ourselves under God's jurisdiction, but if we don't choose Christ, obviously we remain Satan's legitimate property.

So our words and our behavior should tell heaven and Satan and everybody that we believe in Jesus, that we belong to Him. It is this demonstration that gives God the right to work in me and through me. So if we are asking God for something it should be with a strong, confident, faith-filled voice. We should speak with authority and power because we believe. The half-hearted statement that suggests that I only partially believe, or I wish, or I hope, will not carry any power! It's the **demonstration** of faith that gives God the authority to work in our lives. It is the demonstration of faith, not just a statement that I believe; not just a feeling that I believe, but a demonstration of faith!

When ten men came to Jesus and said, "we have leprosy, please heal us," what did Jesus say? "Go and show yourselves to the priest." Were they healed at the

moment? No! When they **demonstrated** their faith, when they started going, then they were healed! Look at the woman with the issue of blood who touched His garment; She was there in the crowd in His very presence but was she healed? No! But she demonstrated her faith! She reached out and touched His garment, then she was healed! It's the demonstration of faith that enables God to intervene.

May our heavenly father help us to understand how we may fight more effectively as we utilize these weapons of our warfare.



A Plan for your life

Can you think of a father who has no will or plan for the life of his son? Can you imagine a mother who has no clear will or definite ambition for her daughter? Can you imagine a man who has no special desire or pattern for the one he chooses to be his wife? Can you conceive of a king or ruler who has no will or desire or law to govern the conduct of his people? A captain who has no plan for his soldiery? An employer who has no plan or pattern to guide the labor of his workers? A shepherd who has no object in view for his sheep? A vine that has no positive purpose in its branches? If so, then you may also think that God does not have a plan for your life, for every one of these symbols is used in the Bible to represent the relation the Christian bears to His Lord.

Know therefore Christian, that God has a will and plan for your life.

- G. Christian Weiss - *The Perfect Will of God*



Exhaustion

Lenworth Frankson



Feeling overly tired and fatigued or having little energy is something which affects a large number of people. This extreme tiredness or exhaustion may be caused by simple factors like a lack of sleep or coming down with a cold or the flu. However, it can also be caused by underlying health conditions. Even though everyone feels tired from time to time, chronic fatigue can harm your quality of life and prevent you from doing things you enjoy. Exhaustion isn't a mental disorder, but it can be caused by anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, neurological and sleep disorders, anemia, electrolyte abnormalities, diabetes, obesity, an infectious disease or cancer. In most cases, fatigue can be remedied by lifestyle or dietary modifications, correcting a nutrient deficiency, or treating an underlying medical condition. Still, to improve extreme fatigue or exhaustion one would need to find out exactly what is causing it. Here are some suggestions that may explain why a person feels exhausted so often:

INSUFFICIENT HIGH QUALITY SLEEP

Getting enough sleep is essential for overall health. Unfortunately, many of us do not get enough, which may lead to fatigue. During sleep, your body performs a number of critical processes, including releasing important growth

hormones and repairing and regenerating cells. This is why most people wake up feeling refreshed, alert, and energized after a night of high quality sleep. Importantly, sleep should be restful and uninterrupted to allow your brain to go through three stages of non-rapid eye movement (NRIM) sleep, and one stage of rapid eye movement sleep (REM), the stage in which you dream. Even though sleep time should be individualized, it is recommended that adults get at least 7-8 hours of sleep per night for optimal health.

NUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES

Not eating enough, or instead eating foods that are not nutritious, can cause fatigue. If you eat foods that cause spikes in your blood sugar, as soon as those sugar levels drop, you could feel fatigued. The goal should be to eat a balanced diet, complete with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein. Nutrient deficiencies may lead you to feel exhausted on a daily basis, even if you are getting more than 7 hours of sleep.

Deficiencies in the following nutrients have been linked to fatigue:

- iron
- riboflavin (vitamin B2)
- niacin (vitamin B3)
- pantothenic acid (vitamin B5)
- pyridoxine (vitamin B6)
- folate (vitamin B9)
- vitamin B12
- vitamin D
- vitamin C
- magnesium

Anemia affects 25% of the world's population. This is a condition in which you lack enough healthy red blood cells to carry adequate oxygen to your body's tissues. Having anemia, also referred to as low hemoglobin, can make you feel tired and weak. There are many

forms of anemia, each with its own cause. Iron deficiency anemia is the most common type, responsible for 50% of all anemia. Fatigue is one of the most common symptoms of this condition, but it typically improves once iron stores are restored.

Studies suggest that up to 20% of people in the United States and United Kingdom ages 60 and over are deficient in vitamin B12. This deficiency is especially common in older adults because the body's ability to absorb B12 declines with age. B12 is critical for oxygen delivery and energy production, so low levels can cause extreme fatigue. Additionally, a vitamin D deficiency may cause fatigue. Over half of the world's population has inadequate vitamin D levels. Because these deficiencies are quite common, it is important to have your levels tested if you're experiencing unexplained fatigue. Typically, fatigue related to a deficiency in one or more nutrients improves once your nutrient levels normalize.

STRESS

Stress is often interpreted as a threat to survival. When this happens, it increases the release of stress hormones from your brain, further contributing to your experience of emotional exhaustion. When you are able to focus on small neutral or positive events, your brain is able to understand that the threat is not as dire as it may first seem. The amount of stress hormone released is decreased so you are able to feel more emotionally balanced. When stress begins to accumulate from negative or challenging events in life that just keep coming, you can find yourself in a state of feeling emotionally worn out and drained. This is called emotional exhaustion. For most people, emotional exhaustion tends to slowly build up over time. Emotional exhaustion includes emotional, physical and performance symptoms. Although some stress is normal, chronic stress is

linked to fatigue. In fact, chronic stress may lead to stress-related exhaustion disorder (ED), a medical condition characterized by psychological and physical symptoms of exhaustion. Chronic stress can cause structural and functional changes in your brain and lead to chronic inflammation, which may contribute to symptoms like fatigue. While you may be unable to avoid some stressful situations, especially those related to work or family obligations, managing your stress can help prevent complete exhaustion. One suggested way to manage and decrease complete exhaustion is to set aside time to decompress by taking a bath, meditation and prayer or going for a walk. Other strategies to reduce emotional exhaustion include:

- Eliminate or minimize the stressor when possible
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Prayer and meditation
- Exercise
- Get enough sleep
- Practice mindfulness to engage in the present moment
- Certain medical conditions

If you're experiencing unexplained, chronic fatigue, you should visit your doctor and discuss your symptoms.

They may recommend testing to rule out certain health conditions that cause fatigue, such as sleep apnea, hypothyroidism, cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, multiple sclerosis, anxiety disorders, kidney disease, depression, diabetes, and fibromyalgia. It is important to know that it is abnormal to feel exhausted all the time. Getting proper treatment for an underlying medical condition can help you feel better and improve other areas of health as well.

DIETARY IMBALANCES

To maintain energy and get the nutrients our body needs to perform critical processes, it is important to consume a balanced diet high in nutrient-dense foods. Eating very little or poor quality ultra-processed foods low in essential nutrients, will lead to calorie and nutri-

ent deficiencies, which can cause exhaustion. Insufficient calories and nutrients like protein can cause your body to start breaking down fat and muscle to meet energy demands. This leads to a loss of body fat and muscle mass, which may trigger fatigue. Older adults are especially at risk of malnutrition and nutrient deficiencies due to factors like age-related changes in appetite and reductions in physical activity. Additionally, diets high in ultra-processed foods impair energy levels. For example, a diet high in added sugar may harm sleep and lead to chronically high blood sugar and insulin levels, which can result in fatigue.

TOO MUCH CAFFEINE

Caffeine beverages like coffee and energy drinks will give you a temporary boost of energy, but reliance on them may make you more tired the next day and that is because too much caffeine can harm sleep, which may cause fatigue. Research shows that feeling tired in the morning leads people to consume large amounts of caffeine, which impairs your sleep cycle. In turn, you may overuse coffee or other caffeinated drinks for energy, which continues the cycle of poor sleep followed by too much caffeine. Drinking too much caffeine is linked to increased nighttime worrying, sleeplessness, increased nighttime awakenings, decreased total sleep time, and daytime sleepiness. While some studies show that caffeinated beverages like green tea and coffee may have some health benefits when consumed in moderation, energy drinks are extremely high in stimulants and added sugar. I highly recommend that we should avoid them whenever possible. If you're currently experiencing sleep issues and frequently drink caffeinated beverages, try cutting back or even better eliminating these beverages to see whether it helps improve your sleep and energy levels.

INADEQUATE HYDRATION

The many biochemical reactions that take place in your body every day result in a loss of water that needs to be replaced. Dehydration occurs when we

don't drink enough liquid to replace the water lost in our urine, stools, sweat, and breath. Several studies show that being dehydrated leads to lower energy levels and a decreased ability to concentrate. Dehydration affects our entire body, including your sleep cycles.

A study in over 26,000 Chinese and American adults associated inadequate hydration with shorter sleep times. Dehydration can also make one feel more fatigued during exercise and negatively affect the exercise endurance. Hydration needs depend on several factors, including your weight, age, sex, and activity levels. The key is drinking enough to maintain good hydration. Common symptoms of dehydration include thirst, fatigue, dizziness, and headaches .

OVERWEIGHT OR OBESITY

Being overweight is significantly linked to a greater risk of many chronic illnesses like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers, but it may also increase your risk of chronic fatigue. Obesity greatly increases your risk of obstructive sleep apnea, which is a common cause of daytime fatigue. It is also linked to increased daytime sleepiness regardless of sleep apnea, suggesting that obesity directly affects the sleep cycle. Obese people have a higher risk of conditions associated with fatigue, including depression and type 2 diabetes. Maintaining a healthy body weight will support good sleep and energy levels, while getting high quality sleep can help prevent weight gain and reduce fatigue.

Fatigue is a lingering tiredness that is constant and limiting. With fatigue, there is unexplained, persistent, and relapsing exhaustion. It is similar to how you feel when you have the flu or have missed a lot of sleep. If you have chronic fatigue, you may wake in the morning feeling as though you haven't slept or you may be unable to function at work or be productive at home. You may be too exhausted even to manage your daily affairs. In most cases, there's a reason for the fatigue, try to find out exactly what is causing it and work at eliminating the stressors. God has prom-

Exhaustion

Continued from previous page

ised that he will always provide a way out so you can endure.

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” Philippians 4:6,7

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” 1 Peter 5:7



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The Science of Prayer

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I have nothing for you!” But she doesn’t give up! She keeps on coming and Jesus finally puts the nail in the coffin because He calls her a dog. He says, “It is not fit to take the children’s bread and give it to dogs.” But even then, she will not stop. That is a prayer warrior! Her tremendous need and her unshakeable faith leads her to say, “but Lord, even the little dogs under the table pick up the crumbs that fall from the table.” Jesus is amazed! With joy on his face he exclaims, “oh woman, great is your faith!” He shows her what has been in His heart all along and he happily grants her request.

But the question is, why did she have to stay there begging and pleading and praying, trying to move Jesus to act on her behalf? Was it that she needed to

soften the heart of the Lord and to find a way to gain his sympathy? Was he really hard-hearted towards her at the beginning? Absolutely not! Something was happening in the background that was not obvious to her, but what is important is that she hung onto the belief that “this man will not let me down, so no matter what it takes I will never let go because I know he will eventually grant what I ask.” This is a prayer warrior; somebody who is not discouraged by circumstances; somebody who trusts God so much that even His words cannot turn her away. Even if his face seems hard and his words seem discouraging, she will trust his heart. She had heard of Jesus and she knew the kind of person he was, she was sure that he would come through for her, and he did!

