



You're in Warfare!

Christians around the world agree prayer is essential to see God move on our behalf, win the lost world to Christ and build God's kingdom. Yet studies show pastors spend about 12 minutes in prayer a day, and the average believer spends only eight minutes. At the same time, they don't mind engaging at length in other Christian activities, such as Bible studies, concerts, retreats, evangelism and charity work. Why does prayer come last on our list of priorities? Could it be that the enemy succeeded to convince us that all those other activities are easier and produce better results than prayer?

The truth is the devil knows the Almighty God restricted Himself to act on the prayers of His people. Just consider Scriptures like these ones:

- + *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14).
- + *"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it"* (John 14:13-14).

Since our prayers will activate heaven, the devil does all he can to prevent us from praying and seeing God's promises fulfilled.

When Jesus, the Son of God, took on human form and lived among us, He made prayer His highest priority. This gave God the Father complete freedom to work unhindered through Him.

The Gospel of Luke points out that Jesus was in prayer when the Holy Spirit descended on Him. He prayed and fasted 40 days before starting His ministry. He prayed all night before He chose His disciples. He prayed before He faced each busy day of ministry. He prayed before He fed the 5,000. He prayed before He raised Lazarus from the dead. He was in prayer when He was transfigured, and He still prayed when He was hanging on the cross.

Jesus' prayer life was so powerful His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray like Him—and He did. If Jesus, who is our example, and the apostles after Him found it necessary to spend hours in prayer, what about us? Why do we pray so little even after studying the New Testament, reading books on prayer and attending conferences on prayer?

I believe it's because we don't realize we are engaged in a real war where the enemy is shooting deadly bullets with the intention to kill us and destroy the work of God. Therefore, we

react with physical activities and human wisdom to the unseen spiritual battle instead of using the weapons of warfare God gave us and the power of prayer to defeat the enemy.

The devil is happy with our ignorance and tries his best to make prayer look unattractive and futile. All the while God tells us, *"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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 6:10-12).


Once we, as Christians, start engaging in serious prayer, the enemy's strategy is to hinder us from praying effectively. Here are some of his favorite tactics:

- + When praying with others, we pray for two minutes and suddenly our minds wander off to other things, only returning when someone says "Amen."
- + We pray and get discouraged if there is a lack of excitement and absence of "spiritual" feelings.
- + We pray and neglect to exercise faith, which is the very thing that enables God to do the impossible.

So what should we do to overcome the tactics of the devil and succeed in becoming Christians whose prayers will change this world? This is how we need to respond:

- + When we have difficulties seeing beyond the physical world, we must believe God's Word that we are in warfare.
- + When we don't feel like praying, we must exercise discipline and pray anyway.
- + Whenever our minds wander off, we must take our thoughts captive and continue praying.
- + If everything in us wants to substitute activity for prayer, we must decide to follow Jesus' example and keep praying.
- + When we pray and don't see the answer right away, we must exercise faith and patience until we receive what God promised in His Word.

My dear friend, for you to learn how to pray, you most probably don't need more books and expert teachings on prayer. What you need is practice. Just do it.

 I'd like to invite you to begin your journey of prayer by joining us every first Friday of the month for our live-streaming prayer meeting. For more information, visit our website at www.gfa.org/prayer.