***Help from the Holy Spirit

Colossians 1:1-2

COL-025***

Please turn to Colossians 1:3-8 in your Bibles. Our subject is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians." This is segment number three.

We have been talking about the subject of prayer. Praying is talking to God to ask for various favors and blessings, and it is quite proper and right and necessary to do that. Prayer is the way which God has ordained for believers to secure the means for daily living, and for their Christian service activities. Prayer is the Christian's line of defense and attack in the angelic warfare. It is not the last resort when self-confidence and self-effort have crashed. Prayer is our first approach to God in any activity. And the younger you are, the better it is for you to learn that. Don't go praying to God after the problems have arisen. Get in there with prayer before the problem has come to pass in the first place.

In Paul's New Testament of epistles, it is evident that prayer is constantly mentioned as he goes about God's service. He undoubtedly prayed as he traveled between cities. He prays as he works at his tent-making trade, which he had to resort to periodically in order to raise funds for his missionary work when people didn't supply the funds. He prays when he is physically drained. He prays when he is discouraged. And he prays when he is overwhelmed by the demands of the ministry. Paul was not a wimp, even though we have reason to believe from scripture that he was not visually imposing to look upon. But this was a true soldier of Jesus Christ that did not give up, and did not give up, and bore the greatest hardships in order not to give up. He's a great example, but it is prayer that enabled him to carry through. It wasn't just his self-will. It wasn't just that that was his temperament. It was the fact that he knew that this was his line of capacity from God.

He is often in prayer with other believers, and for other believers. The tactic of prayer was Paul's way of spiritual combat in the angelic warfare. He prays with deep thanksgiving for the happy times and for his successes, and the spirit of gratitude is everywhere evident in his prayers.

So prayer is the basis for the Christian's personal service, and for the service of the local church ministry. Unfortunately, prayer is greatly neglected, both by individual Christians and by churches. We find it very hard to be true to the direction to pray without ceasing – all day long, and for everything that comes up. And it is very hard in our frenetic age to get together with other Christians to be able to pray, and yet it is the will of God.

Christians today, and churches today, primarily depend on public relations hype, and programs which appeal to the sin nature, and a ministry which avoids confrontation on moral and doctrinal issues. They depend upon that for their success rather than doctrine and prayer.

Now, it is clear from the Word of God that Satan both hinders the practice of prayer, and that he can actually delay the answers of prayer from God in order to discourage the saints who must keep waiting and keep waiting and keep asking. And we illustrated that last week from Daniel's experience – that it took three weeks to get the answer to prayer, because the angelic demons were out there hindering the return and the transmission of God's message. Prayer is opposed, then, by the forces of Satan because it works. Therefore, if you find that you're not much of a praying person, and what better subject for a rally day message – if you find that you're not much of a prayer meeting attender, you need to go to God and say, "This is not right. I know by the Word of God that it's not right, and I want to be sure that I'm doing the right thing."

Some of you cannot make prayer meeting on Wednesday night. Some of you have circumstances that that does not lend itself to doing that. But you can do it at home. You can make it up in other ways in behalf of ministries of Berean church. But you want to be sure that, if you're not here, it is because God is not leading you to be here. And, of course, when you are here in prayer at prayer meeting time on Wednesday night, it doesn't mean that you have to lead in prayer. It only means that you have to show up and be there in the group, and thus to reinforce us, and maybe just to encourage me – that you're saying "Amen" by your presence to prayer. And you kids ought to do that. How do you think I feel when I don't see you in prayer meeting? We are a church where, in the past, we had 50% of the crowd was nothing but kids. And prayer meeting for them on Wednesday nights was the place to be.

Prayer is opposed by the forces of Satan. And when you blow this off, you better be sure that it's God who's telling you to blow it off, and not the devil. That's good advice. Prayer which is unanswered is prayer which is in violation of the divine technique for prayer.

So here's a fitting subject for rally day. If there's anything we need to rally around for the Lord's work, it's the subject of prayer. Please go back to Jude 20-21: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life". Praying in the Holy Spirit – that means the fundamental basis of prayer is from a soul which is controlled by the Holy Spirit. That means that you are a believer in temporal fellowship. That means that all known sins are confessed. Praying goes nowhere when you are out of fellowship in time with God the Father. That is the essential bottom line.

Furthermore, when you are in fellowship with the Spirit of God (when you are in temporal fellowship), a very important thing comes into action. Then kicks in the primary ministry of the Holy Spirit in prayer, which is guiding and helping us to pray effectively. Without Him you can't do it. All the ritual prayers have no Spirit of God in them, so they don't mean anything. All the pretenses to prayer, or all the poetic (read) prayers, are meaningless. Prayer has to be very closely associated with God the Holy Spirit Who indwells each of us.

Romans 8:26-27 says it in the same way, "The spirit also helps our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." Praying in the Holy Spirit – "And in the same way, the Spirit also helps."

**Help**

Now here is the word in Greek so that you understand what the English means, and it is a long word. You don't usually have words this long in the Greek language: "sunantilambanomai" (soon-an-tee-lam-ban'-om-ahee) S U N A N T I L A M B A N O A I. This is the simple little word for "helps" in the Greek Bible. This part, "antílambáno" means to take instead of. It actually has another word. This little preposition means to take instead of. So, the Holy Spirit takes over in prayer instead of you. Now, I don't think some of you have yet caught onto that, to see the power of the effectiveness of prayer. It is not in the cleverness of your language, nor in your determination to do it. It is the fact that when you pray, and you are in fellowship with the Spirit of God, He steps in and takes over the burden of prayer. Now, that puts it all in a whole different perspective. Now you're not just blowing soap bubbles in the air, when you pray, that are going to burst into nothing.

Then, to reinforce it, it adds this little preposition “sun” (sýn). That means "with" or "coming alongside." So, what this long word says in the Greek is that the Holy Spirit takes over at the side of the believer in prayer to assist him. It's like someone who's trying to lift a heavy load, and somebody else comes alongside of him, and gives him a helping hand to lift the load. That's exactly the picture here.

So, I want you to understand that every time you open your mouth in the status of temporal fellowship, so that your prayers are functioning, God the Holy Spirit is there making the system work for you. Now, that's a great deal of comfort because we don't know how to pray as we should. That's what the verse says, and that's true. Sometimes we don't even know if we should ask for something. We don't even know whether we should be praying that this person should continue to live or should die. We don't know whether we should ask God to make this person financially successful, or to crush him into poverty. We are not clear sometime, so we have to go to God and say, "This is what I think, and I'm asking for guidance, and for your help in lifting this load of prayer to the Father's throne of grace. This is a picture of someone helping another to carry a heavy load.

Interestingly enough, this word is used by God the Holy Spirit only one other time in the New Testament. But it is illustrative of its meaning. Please look at Luke 10:40. This is the occasion where Jesus is visiting in the home of Lazarus with his sisters Martha and Mary. Mary is sitting and listening to instruction from the Lord. Martha is trying to be a good hostess, and she's in a frap about getting the meal ready. So at verse 40, "But Martha was distracted with all her preparations, and she came up to Him and said (to Jesus), 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Tell her to 'sunantilambanomai' me." She says, "Tell her to get under the load beside me." Now you can understand what she meant by that. That's the word "help." It's the same word. It's the only other time it's used in the New Testament: "Tell her to get there and give me a helping hand." That is the way we would say it.

What this connotes, then, is that God the Holy Spirit takes an act share in our prayer life. He stands by to help in bearing up our needs before God in general. The Greek language gives us a little bit more instruction here, because the tense is present, which tells us that the Holy Spirit keeps on helping us. This is not intermittent. Anytime you are in temporal fellowship, He's going to help you. The tense tells you that. It's an always continual thing. Secondly, it's in the middle voice in the Greek language, which means that God the Spirit does this for His personal benefit. He wants to do this. This is His great mission. This is to fulfill His duty to you. It's indicative mood. It's a statement of a fact that is true.

What's he going to help you with? Well, He has to help you, we're told, with our "weakness." Here's how this word looks in the Greek language. It's the Greek word, "astheneia" (as-then'-i-ah) A S T H E N E I A. It connotes physical, soul, and spiritual disability. It's a disability of any kind: either in your body; in your soul; or, in your spirit. The believer is in a constant state of weakness in these areas. And the Holy Spirit is continually helping you. How? Through your prayer. Do you have a physical problem? If you are a disoriented Christian, the first thing you think of is your doctor's phone number. That is dumb. The first thing you think of is prayer to get the Holy Spirit online, helping you with your physical need to get well.

Now you need the doctor, but you also should have taken care of certain problems beforehand. You should have taken care of all those free radicals that are constantly being generated in your body from the lack of nutritious food that's hard to secure because of the way food is prepared and shelf-stored for the grocery store and all that. You should have been out there dealing with the antioxidants. You should have been dealing with the things that keep your immune system functioning at a good level, so that the free radicals that float around (or the destructive elements) create into tumors, and the cancers, and the cataracts, and the arteriosclerosis, and the heart problems, and all the other things. That's all where they come from. Then these things are not going to get a chance to get at you. You should have done that. And you should have been exercising – all that.

However, be that as it may when the problem arises physically, you go to God in prayer. And then you start remembering what you should have done. And you decide, "Gee, it is a lot cheaper to take nutrition and vitamins and antioxidants than to be sitting around there in hospitals with doctors. It's a whole lot cheaper – and it's a lot more fun.

So physical weakness – we have them. We have them in our soul: in our emotions; our wills; and, our thinking. And you have to go to God and say, "I have a weakness here. I think wrong. I have bad emotions toward this girl, or toward this fellow. I have wrong expressions of my will. I just do the wrong thing. I have a weakness. It's a deadly thing spiritually. And I go to God to get the weakness solved. And I guarantee you He will do it. He will change your taste. And you have a weakness in your spiritual life. You go to God and say, "I have a terrible weakness in my spirit. I don't feel like praying. I hardly ever think of it, and I don't have a compatibility with God spiritually. I don't have a compatibility with knowledgeable Christians, and I need some help because that's a terrible weakness. I don't even mind staying home from church." It's just the easiest thing in the world for me to do. That's a bad spiritual weakness, and you should never dignify it. You should just say, "It is bad," and this is the thing that God can solve through prayer. It is the work of the Spirit of God to come in to assist us at this point.

These weaknesses are the cause for the inward groanings of the believer that we read about in Romans 8:23. It says, "Not only this – that all of creation has come under the curse of God because of Adam sin. We ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit (we who are Christians), and the Holy Spirit is the firstfruits of our redemption. Even we Christians groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." Even we Christians have these inward groanings of our weaknesses: the weaknesses of our souls; of our spirits; and, of our bodies.

Sometimes a Christian is so overwhelmed that he does not know how to even speak to God in prayer, or how to ask what he needs to deal with. This is the evidence of our weakness from a world which has been contaminated with sin, and which is under God's curse.

**Prayer is Necessary**

Actually, the Greek language here puts this even more pointedly when it says in Romans 8:26, "We do not know how to pray as we should". The Greek says, "We do not know how to pray as it is necessary." It uses a Greek word that means "it is necessary" to pray. It's not only to do it right. We don't even know that it's necessary to do it. That's how calloused we are, and indifferent we are, and disoriented we are, to pray. We don't know how to pray as the desperation of necessity. The same person who would not think of not getting up in the morning, and getting out on time to report to the employer, doesn't give a flip and a second thought about prayer. He thinks it is necessary to report into his employer on time, and even to be there, but it is not necessary to pray with all the consequences that that will have in his life, both now and in eternity.

God says that we have to pray as it is necessary to pray – not the way you'd like to pray, but the right way. And only the spirit of God can give us the content and the manner of proper prayer. So, upfront we should pray. Upfront, we by nature, don't have the capacity to do it right. Upfront, God has covered us by giving us the indwelling Holy Spirit such that, when we are in full confession of sin to Him, and we are in temporal fellowship, He takes over, and He makes it right.

**The Holy Spirit**

That verse 26 says, "As it is necessary, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us". And here's the next important word. It also is a long one. On rally day we give you your full money's worth in everything: "huperentgchano" (hoop-er-en-toong-khan'-o, H U P E R E N T G C H A N O, This word means "intercedes." The last part of this word is a verb, and it means "to meet with in order to converse." "Entugchanó" means to get together and have a conversation. Therefore, it comes to mean "to intercede." This little preposition "hupér," which is added here means "in behalf of" – "to intercede in behalf of." So, what the word means is to make a petition or an intersession on behalf of another. This is the only time that this word is used in the whole New Testament. God Holy Spirit said, "I want to make this very clear. I want to be very emphatic. I'm going to use one word; a very special word, and I'll never use it again in all the books of the New Testament: "huperentugchanó." And it means "to intercede in behalf of" a believer, during his prayers, to help him to do it right.

Now, that should be great news: "I pray. I'm not sure how to do it. I'm not even sure I should be asking for this. I'm not sure how to phrase this. I'm not sure the basis for my approach, but this bothers me, and I need some help. I need some guidance." And the Spirit of God will step in, and He'll fix it. He'll make it right. But you must make the move to pray in the first place. And then He will intercede before the throne of grace. And when the message gets up to God the Father, it's all straightened out. It's the way it should be. It's proper in content, and proper in form, and He will help you to be able to pray as it is necessary to pray.

This word is in the present tense, which also tells us that God the Holy Spirit constantly does this interceding for us. Its active voice, which means that the Holy Spirit Himself steps up to the throne of grace and does it. It's a statement of biblical fact.

The Holy Spirit's emotional intensity in praying for our needs is described as "groanings which cannot be expressed in words." This means groanings too deep for words. Now, this is not too deep for words for us. This is too deep for words for the Holy Spirit. And it's a way of describing how deeply is His emotional intensity in our behalf.

So what a wonderful thing prayer is! What a powerful thing it is! Now, start matching yourself up with all those crises points in your lives, and with all those concerns as to what you should do with yourself: with your time; with your days; with your skills; with your possessions; and, with your money, and turn it over to the Spirit of God to give you some signals and some guidance, and then for you to jump when opportunities are offered, and you react because He has given you the answer to your prayer, because He took them to the throne of grace in a proper way. And when the results come, you can see that we shouldn't even have to tell ourselves that thanksgiving should be involved. When we get answers to this kind of a power system that works for us, it is very natural to be grateful.

Now look at Romans 8:27, "He who searches the hearts (that's God the Father) knows what the mind of the Spirit is." The Father knows what is the prayer desire of the Holy Spirit. This is the unity factor. God is One in essence. The Holy Spirit intercedes according to the will of God. The Holy Spirit is able to do what we're not able to do all the time. He always prays according to the plan and purpose of the Godhead. Though the believer may not know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit voices his prayer request for him.

Now, there's something else you should be aware of. When you are a praying Christian, and when you have taken this seriously, and you spend this time in prayer, for whatever that issue is that concerns you, God the Holy Spirit not only deals with that matter, but He prays for you for the things that you haven't thought of – the things that you should have been praying for in your behalf, and the things that you should have been talking to God about in regard to yourself, and your children, and your family. He steps in and helps you for the things that you should have been praying for: for your fellow believers; for your church ministries; and, for the nation, He steps in, and all the personal things that you have omitted, He takes over for you.

You have a lot of problems (all of us do) that, unfortunately, we're not even aware of. Other people are better aware of our problems than we are. But the Spirit of God comes in. And we don't want to say, "Father, I'm a real dummy. This is what I'm always doing." And we don't want to say that. Other people know you're a real dummy, and that you're always doing something that you shouldn't. But the Spirit of God takes it over, and He presents the problem, and says, "Father, this needs to be fixed. Help Joe Blow to get it done right." He prays for what we don't even think of praying for, that we need to pray for. That's part of: "as it is necessary to pray."

Now back to Jude 20, "But you, beloved (you Christians), building yourselves up on your most holy faith." That means learning Bible doctrine: "Praying in the Holy Spirit. And this is the most common word for prayer. It's a long word too. This is the Greek word "proseuchomai" (pros-yoo'-khom-ahee) P R O S E U C H O M A I. The verb "euchomai" means "to pray." The proposition "pros" means face-to-face. So, what the word is saying that you're eyeball-to-eyeball with almighty God in speaking to Him.

Now in the Old Testament that was not true. You had to bring your sacrifice. You had to come to the priest, and the priest had to pass on the information to God. That is not so today. You are your own priest. There is no mediator between you and God except Christ Jesus Who is our channel. And when you pray, you are praying face-to-face with God. That's what the Greek makes so clear. Any Greek who read this would understand. He would gasp to think that he's going to pray face-to-face with God. He's not going to go through a priest.

Now you should not discount that as: "Well, that's nice to know that." It is important to know the dignity of the occasion – and to know the dignity of meeting with God. When it is time for you to pray, you meet with God. If you have some distinguished visitor come to your home; you're going to be there waiting to meet them face-to-face. You're not just going to blow them off. And on Wednesday night, when you're not here in prayer, and you could be, you've just blown off a visit with God with the group, because He's there. That's a doctrinal principle. Jesus says, "When two or three of you are going to gather together in My name, I'm going to be right there with you." So every time we meet in that library over there, that's a very hallowed place because of the presence of Christ, as He is here now, and the angels of God, as they are gathered around us in this room, delighting to what they're hearing, that is exalting Christ, and that is honoring the Word of God unseen to us, but as real as the person next to you.

In Jude 1:21, it says, "Keeping yourselves in the love of God." You keep yourself in the love of God by confession of known sins as per 1 John 1:9. Keeping yourselves in the love of God means that you are in fellowship with him in time. You never lose your eternal fellowship, but your time fellowship can be broken: "Anxiously awaiting for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life." This is finishing our salvation, and taking us to heaven. But in the meantime, we keep ourselves in temporal fellowship.

Now, here's some more that the Greek Bible makes clear to us. In Jude 20, "Praying in the Holy Spirit" is called a present participle. And a present participle is something that is done at the same time as the main verb of the sentence. And you see the rest of the sentence is Jude 1:21. And the main verb is "keep yourself". So, while you're keeping yourself in temporal fellowship, that's when you pray – praying in the Holy Spirit, while keeping yourself in temporal fellowship. Don't go praying when you're out of fellowship. Don't go praying when you know you've cheated somebody out of something, and haven't made it right, or when you have done something slanderous and disrespectful towards somebody, and you haven't made it right. Until confession is made, you're wasting your time, and you are wasting your life. That's the worst thing. A life that could be storing treasures in heaven is simply being burned up.

So, these two go together. When you pray, you do it while you're in temporal fellowship in the love of God. Jude 20-21 then requires the status of temporal fellowship with the Father for Holy Spirit prayer support to be given.

**The Mechanics of Prayer**

Now, it's important for us to take a look at the mechanics of prayer. To whom do we pray? And those of you who are in our midst, who are teachers in the Academy; in the clubs; in the Sunday school; and, in the Training Union, please get this straight. To whom do we pray? You do not teach your little children to say, "Dear Jesus. . ." Only the pop Christianity churches do that. Only the swinging groups do that. The Bible's way is very clear. See if you can figure it out from John 17:1: "These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, 'Father, the hour has come. Glorified Thy Son that the Son may glorify Thee." You see that it was clear that the prayer of Jesus was addressed to the Father.

How about Ephesians 5:20? "Always give thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father." By now you probably can figure it out that giving thanks (which is part of prayer) is to be done to God the Father.

**The Lord's Prayer**

How about Matthew 6:9? "Pray then in this way: 'Our Father Who art in heaven." The disciples said, "Give us a sample prayer, Jesus, for the Kingdom." Now, please remember this prayer, "Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed would be Thy name" – that is not a prayer that you should be praying. That is not a prayer for this age of grace. This is a prayer on Jewish ground. It is a kingdom prayer. It is not in Jesus' name. It is entirely an Old Testament prayer. And it is a good prayer, for it has good principles of examples, and things that should concern us. But anytime you see a group of Christians in some church that get together at a certain point in a service (and there's multiplied hundreds of them all over the country doing it now), and they all say, "Our Father" together. The Catholics do it to gain merit to get into heaven. Those of you who've been shot down at sea, and are floating around in the raft, and you're desperate for some rain, and some food, and some fish, and for survival, you get everybody to say, "Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." And, boy, the fish come jumping into the raft, and the rain comes down. Baloney! That is not a prayer of magic, and it is not the way God works.

**Pray to God the Father**

However, it is an indicator to Whom we pray. So, the first point of the mechanics of prayer is that it is directed to God the Father. But all members of the trinity have a part in prayer.

**Pray in the Name of Jesus**

It is, therefore, in the name (or the authority) of God the Son. In John 14:13, Jesus says, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." You are to pray in His name; that is, on His authority.

John 15:16: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain. And whatever you ask of the Father (there's the direction – to the Father again) in My Name, that He may give it to you."

So it is quite proper and right that we pray in the name of Jesus. John 16:23-24, "And that day you will ask Me no questions. Truly, truly, I say to you that if you ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My Name; that is, on the basis of what I stand for. And what I stand for is the will of God. What you ask in the proper propriety of the will of God is compatible with My Name. Until now, you have asked for nothing in My Name." That's Old Testament ground. You ask for it on the basis of the promises of God in the Old Testament – not on the promises of the name of the Son. Now you are to ask, and you will receive, and your joy may be full."

Now, some people think that it is cool not to close their prayers in the name of Jesus. They think it's sort of ritualistic. They don't seem to think it's ritualistic to be praying again and again for the same thing. They don't think it's rich ritualistic to address God, or the Father, when they pray. But they will come to the end of their prayer, and there will be silence. And most of us are waiting to respectfully remind ourselves that we approach God in the name and authority of His Son. He knows that. But that's the reason. It's not a magical phrase, but we say it to remind ourselves that we have a right to approach the throne of grace on the authority of Jesus Christ. He's cleansed us. He's given us justification. He has reconciled us to the absolute righteousness of God. He has redeemed us from the slave market of sin. We have a right to speak to God the Father on the basis of the Son.

And I find it irritating when people do that, because I'm sitting there, waiting for them to say the next phrase. And there's great silence that now follows. And I think that either they've died (which I hate to think of them having the bad taste to do it right there in prayer meeting); or, that they have suddenly slipped out and disappeared, and they just evaporated. So I have to open my eye to see if they're still there, and realize that it's all over. It's not an upbeat, cool, sophisticated thing to do – not to admit that this is in Jesus' name. And it is a nice way for you to say, "This is the end." At least close your prayers with an "Amen," then the rest of us will know that you're waiting for us to go on.

Also, Ephesians 5:20, "Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father."

**Pray in the Power of God the Holy Spirit**

And then, of course, God the Holy Spirit is involved in the whole prayer effort, as we've already seen. Ephesians 6:18: "With all prayer and petition, praying at all times in the Spirit."

Romans 15:13 also emphasizes this principle: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all prayer and peace, and believing that you may have abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Also, then, of course, our verse in Jew 20 once more, that is very explicit: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit."

I'm particularly concerned that all you young people become praying young people. One of the most critical things that those of you who are older face now is to become a man and a woman. You're not that now. You're nothing but children. Until you walk across that stage, and they give you your high school diploma, you're a child. And you're under your parents' authority. And in the Old Testament, you were under that authority until you were 20 years old. And in the Old Testament, if you were rebel, the authorities had the right to put you to death. It is a serious matter to respect and to honor your parents when you're a child, because that shows that you respect and honor God Who has placed these parents in authority and guidance over you.

However, the first thing you need to do in order to become a man and woman of substance and quality is to become a praying person. Do it now. Then you will not have a lot of scars on your life with things that you'll do such that, in the years ahead, you'll grow up, and you look back, and you'll regret that those things are over there. Then as you go through life, you'll become a person of great impact upon the people around you and upon society, because you're a man or a woman of prayer. I cannot stress that enough.

If there's anything you should do today as a young person, it is rally to prayer. It will give you care and guidance for the rest of your life. You will never regret it. But if you become a person who is indifferent to the Word of God, and you cannot pray for what you're doing, then you will become a disaster. And you know that there are certain things that the sin nature lust pattern says, "Do this." And you know that in your heart you cannot say, "God, I'm going to do this. It's evil. It's rotten. It's obscene. It's bad, but please bless me and it's while I'm doing it." You wouldn't want to pray like that. When you are not inclined to pray, it is because the Spirit of God is not saying, "Go for it." The Spirit of God is not saying, "I will reinforce you in this. Pray. I will back you up. I will carry you through successfully. I will give you a great blessing."

One of the most incisive of pieces of wisdom in the Old Testament is that we should not be as horses and mules who have to be led around with a bit in our mouth, but that we should be receptive to divine viewpoint guidance. And some people can never be led by instruction in the Word of God gently to do what is wise. But God has to put a bit in their mouth, and make their mouth bloody with all kinds of things that come into their lives: tragedies; regrets; humiliations; and, shames.

When you pray, you'll be ashamed of certain things that you should be ashamed of. When you pray, you'll have the courage to rise up above the rest of the people in your time. You will not stand as one of the crowd in their evil. And I'll tell you something else. When people spot you as a young man or a young woman of great integrity, and one that does not do shameful things, but one that takes honor very seriously: when people need information; when they need advice; when they need someone to carry them through a crisis; and, when they need help, I guarantee you that they'll turn to you. They're not going to turn to those slobs that surround you at school and in our society. They're not going to associate you with that evil gang. They're going to know that you are a person that has a touch with God, and you are the person that they will want.

Now, if that's a has been a problem for you, please go home before you come to the afternoon meetings, and get off by yourself where there's a mirror, and take a look at yourself and say, "I am made in the image of God. Therefore I will not be a pig in my conduct." One of the most amusing things is to see people who are moral pigs who have great wealth. So, they build themselves a fancy pigsty, and then they move around in it, and they say, "Am I not wonderful?" Just look at television. It is worse this season than ever before. Look at the names. I could rattle them off, and you would know who they are. These men and women are pigs. They have great big sources of money. They live in magnificent buildings, but that's their pigsty, kids. That's their pigsty, adults. Remember that. These people are nothing. But you are something – made in the image of God as indeed they are. But they have chosen to follow the path of the prodigal son. Do you want to do that?

I would call upon you this day to rally to the nobility of your calling in Christ Jesus. You are a prince; or, you are a princess. You are a member of the royal family of God. Act accordingly, and you have set your feet on a path that there can be nothing but showers of blessing from one end to the other.

One thing more before we close. If you've stepped off the path, confess it to God the Father, not to people. Confess it to Him, and then forget it. Do not insult him by brooding over it. Forget it; lift your chin up; put your shoulders back; brush the dust off; and, go on, in the magnificent role of the child of God in His royal family.

God our Father, we thank You for prayer, and for the power of transformation that it has. Prayer changes things.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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