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Prayer's Power

The Example of Daniel

Mark 1:8 says: "*I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*"
The Holy Spirit is a gift to you that the Lord our God gives us for those times when we are in need.

Acts 1:8 says, "*But you shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.*"

ILLUSTRATION – There's a supposedly true story of a Welsh woman who lived in a remote valley in Wales. She went to a great deal of trouble and expense to have electrical power installed in her home. However, after a couple of months, the electric company noticed she didn't seem to use very much electricity at all.

Thinking there might be a problem with the hookup, they sent a meter reader out to check on the matter. The man came to the door and said, "We've just checked your meter and it doesn't seem that you're using much electricity. Is there a problem?"

"Oh no" she said. "We're quite satisfied. We turn on the electric lights every night to see how to light our lamps and then we switch them off again."

APPLICATION – Why didn't this woman use of her electricity? She believed in electricity...She believed the promises of the electric company when they told her about it. She went to a great deal of trouble and expense to have her house wired for it. BUT - she didn't understand the potential of electricity in her home. AND SO, she used its power sparingly

Do you think God's ever tempted to send someone out...to check on your hook-up? "God was just wondering why your burning candles when you've got His nuclear power plant at your disposal."

We're like that though aren't we? We believe in prayer. We know of the promises God has made and we've even read and heard stories about answered prayers. But sometimes we use prayers power sparingly.

(OVERHEAD)
Why Do We Use Prayer Sparingly?

Gosh, where do you start with this one? How about...

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Why Do We Use Prayer Sparingly?

1) Easily Distracted

- Remember Jesus in Luke 22 praying on the Mount of Olives and he tells his disciples to pray. Jesus comes back...a few times...only to find them all **sleeping**.
- Just this past week I was up early having my quiet time and after reading in the word I was praying while looking outside...before I knew what I was doing I'm out **starting the water for my garden**.
- Do you ever have really **weird things pop into your head** while trying to pray? Why am I thinking about that situation or that person? Former FBC pastor Steve Hill once said, "If the thought doesn't go away, start praying for the situation."

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Why Do We Use Prayer Sparingly?

1) Easily Distracted

2) Spiritual Warfare

Sometimes those thoughts popping into your head that won't leave are from the Lord...prompting you to pray. But sometimes:

- Those thoughts are from the **enemy**...he puts them there through suggestion. It sounds like the voice we recognize as our own within our minds. Do you believe the enemy is capable of putting thoughts into your mind? II Corinthians 10 – Paul tells us to **take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ**.

Why would Paul tell us to do that if our thoughts were completely under our control and our control only? And the context of II Corinthians 10:5 begins in verse 3...context being – Spiritual Warfare.

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³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ

(OVERHEAD)

Why Do We Use Prayer Sparingly?

1) Easily Distracted

2) Spiritual Warfare

3) Spiritual Passiveness

Many Christians believe it doesn't really matter whether they pray or not. They either believe...

- God's gonna do, what **God's gonna do anyway** - so why bother?

- Or – they regard prayer as a last resort after all of their other efforts have failed. Sort of like "Hail Mary" pass in football. They throw it up in the air and hope it reaches the desired destination. They'll pray a little bit. They'll throw up occasional appeals...But in their heart of hearts, they don't view prayer as making that big an impact on the decisions they make every day.
- Or – Sense of needing to get it together first.

Scripture encourages us to discipline ourselves in the area of prayer. Daniel is one of my all time favorites when it comes to an example of a solid prayer life.

Daniel wasn't **distracted or passive** in his prayer life.

- Daniel prayed 3 times every day even though jealous wolves got Darius to outlaw prayer. (Dan. 6:10)
- He prayed in his room, he prayed in the lions' den
 - He prayed for wisdom
 - He prayed for guidance
 - He prayed that God would forgive the sins of Israel and return them to their home

And Daniel prayed in the midst of **Spiritual Warfare**. In Daniel 10 God gives Daniel such a great revelation in the form of a vision that Daniel fasts and prays for 21 days asking God for an answer. Many Christians would have trouble praying for 21 days for anything.

A great angel appears to Daniel, touches him and tells him God dispatched him immediately in response to his prayer...but verse 13 says:

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...the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

Jesus himself taught us to persevere in prayer. In Luke 18 Jesus told the Parable of the 'Persistent Widow' seeking justice. She persisted – it says in verse 5: *...because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!*

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Why Should we stay Engaged in Prayer?

WHY...should we not give up? Is it because it's hard to get His attention? Do we keep bothering Him until He throws up His hands in disgust and says *"If I don't grant their request I'll never get any rest?"*

No, I don't think that's the issue at all. In fact, our text this morning seems to be saying something very different.

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Why Should we stay Engaged in Prayer?

1) God Hears Our Prayers

He listens. In the 141st Psalm David prayed that God would hear his prayer. In the 2nd verse it says: ***Accept my prayer as incense offered to you, and my upraised hands as an evening offering.*** David knew God takes great pleasure in prayers offered in worship. And the metaphor of incense was 100% accurate.

Revelation 8:4 says:

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The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of the saints, ascended up to God from the altar where the angel had poured them out.

God hears. Back in Daniel 10: The angel told Daniel:

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SINCE THE FIRST DAY that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, YOUR WORDS WERE HEARD, and I have come in response to them

And this wasn't the first time Daniel was given an immediate answer to prayer. Chapter 9:23 also says: ***AS SOON AS YOU BEGAN TO PRAY, an answer was given.***

What if...church. What if every time you and I pray – God not only...gladly hears our prayers...as a pleasing aroma of burning incense? What if, in addition to that, an angel is immediately sent from the throne of God to answer YOUR prayers.

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Why Should we stay Engaged in Prayer?

1) God Hears Our Prayers

2) Prayer Moves things in the Spirit Realm

Not only does God hear...but things happen in the Spirit Realm.

➤ Testimony – Kids from bickering peace through Prayer

Things shift in the realm of the Spirit when we pray. That is exactly what we see in Daniel's life. Again...Daniel 10:12-13:

(OVERHEAD)

Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³But the

prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me

This is one of those rare times when God simply pulls back the curtain allowing us to take a glimpse behind the scenes. Notice when Daniel prayed demonic forces rose up (the prince, head demon, of Persia) and angelic warfare broke out. You know what that means?

- When you pray – You turn loose the powers of heaven
- When you pray – God provides the power to ensure victory over forces of darkness...Satan himself is subject to Jesus' warriors (James 4:7)
- When you pray – Angels are willing to fight on our behalf for the cause of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 1:14 says:

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Angels (are) ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation

We've got to stay with prayer church. Stay in prayer with the belief that things are shifting.

(OVERHEAD)

Why Should we stay Engaged in Prayer?

- 1) **God Hears Our Prayers**
- 2) **Prayer Moves things in the Spirit Realm**
- 3) **Answers come in God's timing**

Daniel 10 tells us Daniel prayed for three weeks...21 days. Now the angel was sent the 1st day he prayed...but didn't arrive until day 21. Now here's the question: What might have happened if Daniel GAVE UP on prayer say on day 19, 15 or day 3? Would the angel still have arrived with his answer on day 21?

The Bible doesn't say, but the implication is - MAYBE NOT!!!

1 Thess. 5:17 tells us to ***Pray without ceasing***. Not that we go around with hands folded and heads bowed. Paul told the church at Ephesus to ***Pray at all times***. Why? Because our prayers carry weight!

One of the biggest reasons people stop praying is their perspective that their prayers aren't being answered.

- Are you praying for someone in your family to become a Christian?
Every prayer you pray puts more and more pressure on that person to listen to God...
 - Mom's Prayer Testimony
 - Didn't receive Jesus until 25 YOA
 - Prayer Gap w/her Gone (7/21/09)
 - Preached at 30 Year reunion

- Do you pray for your friends in their daily struggles?
 - Every prayer you pray imparts to them more and more power from God
- Do you have difficulties with someone at work or school?
 - Every prayer you lift up to God's throne brings God's power to bear on difficult people and situations.

Prayer is AN AGGRESSIVE, ACTIVE MINISTRY that moves forces in the heavenlies.

ILLUSTRATION:

One man describing his prayers said "When I pray - I PUSH
When everything seems to go wrong, I just Push!
When the job gets me down, I just Push!
When people don't react the way I think they should, I just Push!
When my money looks funny and the bills are due, I just Push!
When I want to curse people out for whatever the reason, I just Push!
When people just don't understand me, I just Push!
PUSH stands for:

(OVERHEAD)

P=ray!

U=ntil!

S=omething!

H=appens!