



The Soul-Winner's Secret

Chapter 3 – Prayer

Prayer is the way of approach to God, and the soul-winner keeps it open by constant use. It is the channel by which all spiritual blessings and power are received, and therefore the life of the soul-winner must be one of ceaseless prayer. "Pray without ceasing," wrote Paul. It is the breath of the soul, and other things being equal, it is the secret of power.

It is written of Jesus, "And it came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." And this was followed by mighty works.

What an amazing statement is this: "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them;" and this: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you;" and this: "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you!" And yet, amazing as they are, there they stand in "the Scripture of truth," a challenge to every child of God who is jealous for God's glory, who longs for the triumph of righteousness and who seeks the salvation of souls.

The soul-winner must pray in secret; he must get alone with God and pour his heart into his Heavenly Father's ear with intercessions and pleadings and arguments, if he would have good success. There is no substitute for much wide-awake, expectant, secret waiting upon God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the gift of wisdom, strength, courage, hope, faith, discernment of times and spirits, and a glowing, burning, comprehensive message from Him to the people. If men fail at this point, they will in due time fail at every point Jesus said: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Here, then, is the secret of success closet communion and counselings and conversations with God, who is our Father, and who can and will no more turn away from us when we come in the spirit of an obedient and affectionate child, than can the sunlight when we throw open the windows and doors and stand in its beams.



I say it reverently. He cannot turn away from us, but will surely reward us, and that openly, because He said He would, and He cannot lie.

Prayer must be definite. Once, when Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus sat by the wayside begging, and when he heard Jesus was passing by, he began to cry out and say: "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me," but that prayer was not definite – it was altogether too general. Jesus knew what Bartimeus wanted, but He desired Bartimeus to state exactly what he desired, and said to him:

"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Then the blind man prayed a definite prayer.

"Lord, that I might receive my sight," and the definite prayer then received a definite answer, for Jesus said unto him:

"Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole," and immediately he received his sight.

We should be as definite when we go to God, in asking him for what we want, as we are when we go to the store. The salesman is prepared to sell us anything and everything in the store, but he in reality sells us nothing until we tell him what we want, and so it is with our Heavenly Father.

Our prayers must be bold Paul said: "We have a great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities, and was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," and adds: "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace in time of need." Of course this boldness must be coupled with humility, but the greater the humility, the greater the boldness, if mixed with faith. I have often been amused and amazed at the boldness with which children come to their parents for the things they need and the things they want, and how gladly does the true parent respond to the child's request, especially if it expresses a genuine need! And Jesus said: "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?"



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The devil stands mocking and teasing the praying souls to drive him from his knees and from his Father's face, but let him rather come boldly in the name of Jesus and wait patiently for the things he desires, and he shall have an abundant reward. It is not our Heavenly Father's will to disappoint His trusting children, but rather to give them their utmost desire, yea, "exceeding abundantly above all they ask or think," for His heart is all love toward them; therefore let them not be timid and wavering, but steadfast and bold as His dear children.

Prayer must be importunate, persevering. Jesus teaches this very clearly in His parable of the importunate friend "Which of you," said Jesus, "shall have a friend and shall go unto him at midnight and shall say unto him; 'Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine in his journey has come to me and I have nothing to set before him and he from within shall say, 'Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed I cannot rise and give thee.' I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth;" and then Jesus adds: "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened unto him;" by which Jesus means to teach that we are to hold on in prayer till we get an answer. If the answer is delayed, our own hearts will be searched, the purity of our motives will be proved, and our faith will be purified, tried, developed and strengthened for future and greater triumph.

Jesus prayed three times that the cup of death in the garden of Gethsemane might pass from Him. It was not death on the Cross, but death in the garden He feared and the apostle tells us, in Hebrews 5:7, that He was heard. Daniel abstained from all pleasant food for three weeks at one time, and prayed until God appeared unto him and said: "O man, greatly beloved, fear not; peace be unto thee; be strong; yea, be strong;" and added, "I will show thee that which is noted in the Scriptures of truth," and then told him all that he desired to know. And Elijah, after his victory over the priests of Baal, sent his servant seven times to look for the cloud that should bring rain, while he bowed his face between his knees, and poured out his heart to God in prayer until the cloud appeared that should bring the floods of rain. Muller sometimes prayed every



day, and often several times a day, and that for months and years for some things he wanted, before the answer came, but come it did in due time. Though the answer be delayed, it is not God's purpose to deny us without letting us know the reason why.

Prayer must be for the glory of God and according to His will. If we ask things simply to gratify our own desires, God cannot grant them. James said of certain ones, "Ye ask but ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts," but John said, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.; and if we know that He heareth us.... we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" Jesus said, "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you. ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."

We are to ask according, to the things revealed as His will in His Word, and according to the principles laid down therein; therefore we should study His Word constantly and hide it in our own hearts, and see to it that we hide ourselves in His heart and thus be filled with the truth; we shall then not ask amiss, and being filled with the Spirit, we shall not be denied.

Prayer must be mixed with faith – must be believing prayer. "Whatsoever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive and ye shall have." Oh, what a victory I got one morning over the devil, when he tried to shake my faith and confidence! I laid hold of that promise and wrestled through to the solid rock of believing prayer, and had one of the most glorious soul-saving days in my life! The man whose faith is constantly wavering shall receive nothing from the Lord. (James 1: 6-7.)

Finally, prayer must be in the name of Jesus. "Whatsoever ye will ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son," said Jesus.

"The Blood, the Blood is all my plea," and with that plea the vilest sinner may come, while the child of God may approach with unabashed boldness into the presence of his Heavenly Father and claim all the resources of Heaven in his warfare against sin, in his effort to save sinners and build up the kingdom of God.