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Praying For The Lost by Manley Beasley - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/5/9 12:05

Praying for the lost is an area about which much is said but little is known or understood. In order to fully realize the biblical concept we must first have at least a basic knowledge of what real prayer itself involves.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. James 5:16

First of all, prayer is three-dimensional in its effect. Not only does it affect God, but it also affects man and Satan. This is very basic for an understanding of how to pray for the lost. We can learn by simple observation. If I am praying for the lost, then certainly God is involved, for it is He to whom I am praying. Man is obviously involved by the fact that one man is doing the praying and one man is receiving the benefits of the prayer. And, finally I do not think anyone would argue the fact that Satan and his forces are doing everything they can to prevent the salvation of souls. An understanding of this truth helps us see that we may expect a response from God and possible interference from Satan before any actual fruit is born in the individual's life.

Prayer itself is in truth much more involved than just "talking to God." Prayer may express itself in five distinct levels and every level is utilized in prayer for the lost.

Level One: Confession

First of all, prayer is confession and confession is agreeing with what God says about sin. If I see a sin in my life I must recognize it as sin by agreeing with God through confession and receive victory by turning away from it through repentance. This is a clearly defined level of prayer mentioned in Scripture.

Level Two: Petition

Another level of prayer may be identified as petition. Most of us are familiar with this aspect which is simply making a request of God. This level of prayer is usually rendered on the basis of a need or desire that is stimulated by the availability of God.

Level Three: Praise

A third level of prayer that is significant is giving praise or adoration to God. This type of prayer can only come from a recognition of God for Who He is and what He is doing. Praise may be a response to no other distinct revelation than the fact that "God is."

Praise does not depend upon any greater revelation than this.

Level Four: Intercession

The fourth level of prayer is intercession. There are three distinct phases to this level if it is true intercession. There must be the recognition of a genuine need and the identification with the need. And last, a cooperation with God to meet that need, even to the point of sacrifice.

Level Five: Word of Faith

The fifth and final level of prayer is the "spoken word of faith." This is beautifully defined in Mark 11:22-24 where it says: "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." This indicates that man can get in a position where God wants him and can stand against any opposition. Not only can he stand, but he can withstand, confessing what he knows to be the will of God and as a result see the manifestation of God.

How Does it Work?

I asked the Lord to teach me how to pray for the lost and He gave me a classic experience right in my own family. Our second, Stephen, was taught the Word God just as our other three children, from the beginning of his life. He made a profession of faith when he was six. However, as he became a teenager it was obvious that he was rebellious and was enjoying worldly sins without God's corrective chastisement. He was a problem at home, church and school. We found that he had a problem with dyslexia causing him much inner frustration. But we knew that a "new nature" could also take care of that!

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And last, a cooperation with God to meet that need, even to the point of sacrifice.

Finally, after much prayer, we came to the decision that we would pray definitely for him to be saved, even though he said he was a Christian. We went through the five levels of prayer discussed here. Then we asked God for a promise for him in the Word. Things got worse for several months, but we refused to doubt. God gloriously save him and within the year called him to preach. He is now in school training for the ministry.

How does an understanding of these five levels of prayer help you pray for the lost? If it takes all of these levels combined to fully comprise prayer then all must be utilized in order to correctly pray for the lost. Let us look at some brief examples of these principles.

Most of use have seen a Christian get right with God and as a result get saved in the very same service. It is obvious that confession is a powerful aspect of prayer.

On the other hand, many of use have had only to ask God to save another's soul and before long have seen this salvation take place. We can certainly recognize the value of petition as a needed level of prayer.

At times, souls have come to know Jesus as a result of God's people praising Him. Remembering the jailer's response to the praise of Paul and Silas at Philippi recorded in Acts 16:22-34? This is a powerful tool in the arsenal of prayer.

Possibly the only example needed to illustrate intercession for the lost is the sacrifice of intercessory death that our Lord Jesus Himself made. Surely this is all the motivation we need as Christians to enter into the discipline of intercession. The Bible tells us that even now Christ is involved in intercessions for us in heaven.

Many times when all other levels of prayer appear to bring no response, the simple but mighty principle of saying to that mountain, "Be thou removed," results in victory. It would appear from the context that this area is particularly vital in "binding the strong man." We must be willing to stand firm when we know what is the will of God.

Many people relate prayer only to petition, or at best intercession and petition, but prayer can involve much more than just these two levels, and we must be faithful to incorporate all that God has made available to us through prayer in order to see the lost world saved by the grace of God.

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I Timothy 2:1-4, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Re: Praying For The Lost by Manley Beasley - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2011/5/9 14:06

Two great books on the subject of prayer regarding the elements that prayer consists of: "A serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life" by William Law
and a much smaller one "The Hour That Changed the World" by Dick Eastman.