

## Prayer – An Essential Link By Charles G. Finney

### Classic Christian Writings:

Charles G. Finney, in speaking of his revival work, says: “I had been in the habit of rising early in the morning, and spending a season in prayer alone in the meeting house, and I finally succeeded in interesting a considerable number of brethren to meet me there in the morning for a prayer meeting. This was a very early hour, and we were generally together long before it was light enough to see to read.

“One morning I had been around and called the brethren up, and when I returned to the meeting house but few of them had got there. As I came up, all at once the glory of God shone upon and around about me in a manner most marvelous. The day was just beginning to dawn. But all at once a light perfectly ineffable shone in my soul that almost prostrated me to the ground. I think I knew something then, by actual experience, of that light that prostrated Paul on his way to Damascus.

“I used to spend a great deal of time in prayer; sometimes, I thought, literally praying ‘without ceasing.’ I also found it very profitable and felt very much inclined to hold frequent days of private fasting. On these days I would seek to be entirely alone with God and would generally wander off into the woods or get into the meeting house or somewhere – away entirely by myself.

“The spirit of prayer that prevailed in those revivals was a very marked feature of them. It was common for young converts to be greatly exercised in prayer, and in some instances, so much so that they were constrained to pray for whole nights, and until their bodily strength was quite exhausted, for the conversion of souls around them.

“There was a great pressure of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of Christians and they seemed to bear about with them the burden of immortal souls. They manifested the greatest solemnity of mind, and the greatest watchfulness in all their words and actions. It was very common to find Christians whenever they met in any place, instead of engaging in conversation, to fall on their knees in prayer.

“Not only were prayer meetings greatly multiplied and fully attended, not only was there great solemnity in those meetings, but there was a mighty spirit of secret prayer. Christians prayed a great deal, many of them spending many hours in private prayer.

“It was also the case that two or more would take the promise: ‘If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven,’ and make some particular person a subject of prayer, and it was wonderful to what extent they prevailed. Answers to prayer were so manifestly multiplied on every side that no one could escape the conviction that God was daily and hourly answering prayer.

“If anything occurred that threatened to mar the work, if there was an appearance of any root of bitterness springing up, or any tendency to fanaticism or disorder, Christians would take the alarm and give themselves to prayer that God would direct and control all things, and it was surprising to see to what extent and by what means God would remove obstacles out of the way in answer to prayer.”

Prayer is the essential link in the chain of causes that leads to revival, as much so as truth is. Some have zealously used the truth to convert men, and laid very little stress on prayer. They have preached and talked and distributed tracts with great zeal and then wondered why they had so little success. And the reason was that they forgot to use the other branch of the means, effectual prayer. They overlook the fact that truth by itself will never produce the effect without the Spirit of God, and that Spirit is given in answer to earnest prayer.

-- Lectures On Revival