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Chapter Eight

Praying, Weeping & Loving

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Now we come to the chapter where the men of God stand out. We come to the place where the real work in Christ must take place in the individual life. The place of war, the place of fellowship, the place of brokenness, the place of contrition, the place of being built up, the place where God delights to dwell with His children.

It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."

I find it interesting that the disciples never asked for more ministry. They never asked how to reach the lost, how to cast out demons, how to speak in tongues, how to grow their followers, how to strategically do missions. No, they asked, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Where are the men today who, like the disciples, asked how to pray? Where are the men today who, like Nehemiah when hearing that the walls of Jerusalem (or in our case America) were broken down and the gates burned, sat down and wept and mourned for days and fasted and prayed before the "God of heaven"? Where are the men today who, like the prophet Jeremiah, say, "Oh that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" Where are the men today who, like the Apostle Paul, say, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren?" Well, let me tell you, there are men such as these, I know men such as these, but they are few and far between.

Listen to how Howard Guinness worded it from his wonderful little book entitled, *Sacrifice*.

"Where are the young men and women of this generation who will hold their lives cheap, and be faithful even unto death, who will lose their lives for Christ's sake - flinging them away for love of him? Where are those who will live dangerously, and be reckless in this service? Where are his lovers - those who love him and the souls of men more than their own reputations or comfort, or very life? Where are the men of prayer? Where are the men who count God's Word of more importance to them than their daily food? Where are the men who, like Moses of old, commune with God face to face as a man speaks with his friend, and unmistakably bear with them the fragrance of the meeting through the day? Where are God's men in this day of God's power?"

I have heard it said by others that the common thread that is woven through all the different men that God has used mightily in the past is their devoted and relentless prayer life. The more I read about men such as these, I find this to be true. Although they were very much different, even in theological views, they had something in common, they all knew the Living God and they toiled in prayer - they had a deep communion with God Himself.

Prayer, that being truly devoted and at times toilsome, is a must for every believer who desires to know God in a true and more powerful way. It is a reality of every believer who desires to break free from the deep roots of secular humanism. It's not just to say prayers but to commune with God and battle the flesh outside the camp. It is a type of prayer that loses track of time because of the overwhelming goodness and surpassing beauty of God. It is to fellowship with God, to hear from God and to be exposed by God. It is to literally not need man to teach about knowing Him, but God Himself with and upon a man in such reality that everything else is seen as rubbish in comparison to His glory. This type of prayer wars against the flesh, wars against Satan and leaves one completely without doubt as to the kindness, loveliness and amazing power of Almighty God. This type of prayer is in the early hours of the morning when the body is often the most weak and the eyelids fail to remain open. If Pagans can worship Satan between midnight and three AM, can we not also wake up for dedicated worship to the one true and Almighty God?

To merely write of such prayer and to read of such prayer is nothing but dead rotten words and mental stimulation unless put into tangible action. You see, you and I must have a reality of this type of prayer as our hidden strength and joyous fellowship. Is it difficult? Yes, especially at first. Your mind will drift wayward, your body will chase after rest, your eyes will close, and your desire will not be strong. But if you ask God for the desire, He will put a desire for Him into you; but know this, He will not do the work for you. It is a war that you must engage for yourself. For without this conflict, without deep fellowship and prayer with God, you will never truly have deep burdens and tears for the lost people of this world, and especially the suffering saints that boldly and tearfully stand for the name of Christ.

Does it matter to you today, does it matter to you at all that God's spiritual Jerusalem, the church, is now married to the world – that there is such a coldness sweeping the land? Closer than that, does it matter about the Jerusalem that is in our own hearts? The sign of ruin that is slowly draining spiritual power and passion, blind to lukewarmness, blind to the mixture that is creeping in. That's all the Devil wants to do is get the fight out of you and kill it. So you won't labor in prayer anymore. You won't weep before God anymore. You can sit and watch television and your family go to hell.

It seems that in these days if one speaks of personal sacrifice in the Christian life they are immediately labeled as radicals, legalists or extremists. A great majority of this labeling comes from professing Christians themselves. But the men of old knew better; they knew God. Look at the Apostle Paul, he sacrificed greatly. Look at the early Church, the Anabaptists, the Scottish Covenanters, the Puritan Christians, the Underground and suffering Christian Church around the world to day. They knew (know) about sacrifice for the Holy name of Christ. Look at what King David said in 2 Samuel 24:24 and let us follow his example. "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing."

Let me ask you, how much of your life do you offer God that actually costs you something? Whether it is physical or financial? Whether little or great? What about how you honor God in what and how much you eat? Or what about how much time you sleep? If you don't eat much or eat nutritious foods, is it for God's glory or your waist line? If you don't sleep much, is it because you can't or for the purposes of prayer? How do we ever expect to be in the prayer closet if we never enter? How can we expect to ever truly love and care for people if we do not want the sacrifice and discomfort of taking God's own heart upon us? How can we love without a burden? How can we see with God's eyes, hear with God's ears and feel as God feels if we don't really desire Him and desire Him in such a way that it costs us?

Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.

If Jesus Christ, the Author and Founder of our faith, prayed often, and much of His time was in the early hours of the morning, should we not do the same? Or what about the Apostles, did they not give themselves to prayer? Prayer is mentioned in almost every chapter of Acts. "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

Where are the pastors today who fight back hell at three, four or five O'clock in the morning? Where are the pastors who weep between the porch and the altar? Where are the preachers who pray and fast so as to drive out the demons of this world?

Today, are we at all like the widow in Luke 18? "Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying, 'In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.' And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man Comes, will He find faith on the earth?' Will the Son of Man find faith in us? Does He see it from the throne now? If so, by what biblical evidence does He see it?

There seems to be the beginning movement of men going back to the foundation of Christian leadership in the home. But most of the talk seems to revolve around spiritual leadership, discipleship, homeschooling and Christ-centered devotions. Hear me clearly here, I absolutely agree that these things are good and are essential to the Christian home, but where is the message that men need to be men of prayer? Where is the message stating they are to put away childish things and stand in the Gap? Men are to get past the milk of infants and digest solid food. Fortunately there are a few preachers out there who are still preaching these things.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

How can men today be teachers when they are too busy playing video games and acting like mere kids? How can men today practice when they will not wake up and seek God? Even today God says to us: "Yet even now, declares the Lord, 'Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments.' Now return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil. Let the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, 'Spare Your people, O Lord, and do not make Your inheritance a reproach, a byword among the nations.' Why should they among the peoples say, 'Where is their God?' We need authentic men who are truly born again and who strive to practice the realities of the Christian life. We need men who will pray, weep and love.

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.”

“God is looking for a man to stand in the gap. This position cannot be entrusted to the immature, the spiritually under-developed, but to men. Many of us have many things to cast off before the Lord will put on us anything like a real prayer burden.”

“Don’t think that your mouth can do more than prayer. Prayer always does more than your mouth. Always. And if you have not learned to pray, you have not learned much. Although you might have a doctorate degree, if you have not learned to pray, you don’t know much.”