



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing



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Worship Music

Prayer

Lord, I am submitting my tongue and my mouth to the Lordship of Jesus Christ today. I am unable to control my tongue by myself, so right now I deliberately make the decision to ask You to invade this area of my life with Your power and Your control. I confess that I need Your help, Lord; I can't do it on my own. Please help me learn how to overcome in this area of my life. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.

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1 THESE ARE the statutes and ordinances which you shall be watchful to do in the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, gives you to possess all the days you live on the earth. 2 You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations you dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains and the hills and under every green tree. 3 You shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire; you shall hew down the graven images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place. 4 You shall not behave so toward the Lord your God. 5 But you shall seek the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His Name and make His dwelling place, and there shall you come; 6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the offering of your hands, and your vows and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock. 7 And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you put your hand, you and your households, in which the Lord your God has blessed you. 8 You shall not do according to all we do here [in the camp] this day, every man doing whatever looks right in his own eyes. 9 For you have not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God gives you. 10 But when you go over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God causes you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about so that you dwell in safety, 11 Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His Name [and His Presence] to dwell there; to it you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes and what the hand presents [as a first gift from the fruits of the ground], and all your choicest offerings which you vow to the Lord. 12 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, and your menservants and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your towns, since he has no part or inheritance with you. 13 Be watchful not to offer your burnt offerings in every place you see. 14 But in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all I command you. 15 However, you may kill and eat flesh in any of your towns whenever you desire, according to the provision for the support of life with which the Lord your God has blessed you; those [ceremonially] unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and the hart. 16 Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it upon the ground as water. 17 You may not eat within your towns the tithe of your grain or of your new wine or of your oil, or the firstlings of your herd or flock, or anything you have vowed, or your freewill offerings, or the offerings from your hand [of garden products]. 18 But you shall eat them before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God shall choose, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, and the Levite that is within your towns; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all that you undertake. 19 Take heed not to forsake or neglect the Levite [God's minister] as long as you live in your land. 20 When the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as He promised you, and you say, I will eat flesh, because you crave flesh, you may eat flesh whenever you desire. 21 If the place where the Lord your God has chosen to put His Name [and Presence] is too far from you, then you shall kill from your herd or flock which the Lord has given you, as I [Moses] have commanded you; eat in your towns as much as you desire. 22 Just as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so you may eat of it [but not offer it]; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it. 23 Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you may not eat the life with the flesh. 24 You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the earth like water. 25 You shall not eat it, that all may go well with you and with your children after you, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord. 26 Only your holy things which you have [to offer] and what you have vowed you shall take, and go to the place [before the sanctuary] which the Lord shall choose. 27 And offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the Lord your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the Lord your God, and you may eat the flesh. 28 Be watchful and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God. 29 When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go to dispossess, and you dispossess them and live in their land, 30 Be watchful that you are not ensnared into following them after they have been destroyed before you and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? We will do likewise. 31 You shall not do so to the Lord your God, for every abominable thing which the Lord hates they have done for their gods. For even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. 32 Whatever I command you, be watchful to do it; you shall not add to it or diminish it.

Chapter 12;...In chapter twelve he gives the conditions whereby they should enjoy the blessings within the land. First of all they are to utterly destroy all of the places, where there the people that inhabited the land worshipped. They were to destroy all of the groves, all of the high places, all of the altars, all of the gods that they served. Everything was to be utterly obliterated so that they would not have any curiosity or memory of their gods at all. Overthrow their altars, break their pillars, burn their groves with fire; cut down the graven images, and destroy the names of them out of the place. [Ye shall do] You shall not do so unto the LORD your God. But unto the place which the LORD God shall choose out of all the tribes to put his name, there shall his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come (Deu 12:3-5): Now God says when you come into the land then I'm gonna appoint a place for you to come to worship. And you are not to just worship me any place in the land. You are not to worship me on the hilltops and in the groves or so forth. Now of course, the Greeks always took the hills and they always worshipped God on the tops of the hills, the acropolises, the outcroppings and those high places within the cities was always where those Greek temples were built. And so it was a common custom in ancient religious systems to build altars on the top of mountains, places of worship or to plant groves and to worship in these groves. But the worship of their gods was always a very licentious type of a worship based around the sexual reproduction abilities because the mystery of life and the creation of life in reproduction was something that was always an awe and a wonder and a mystery to them, which of course it is a very beautiful mystery. They were closer to than we are. They were closer to birth and closer to life in many ways than we are and to them it was an awe and it was a wonder. And thus, they worshipped the reproduction principles and the capacities of reproduction and their worship of their gods often involved relationships and the design for reproduction and so forth. It was just a part of the whole corrupt system of worship in their corruption of God. Making God like a creature and like unto man, which thing actually is done by the Mormons, in a sense, their god is as a man coming to earth with one of his celestial wives and reproducing in a human manner, the first people and so forth. And even as the Mormons themselves will be gods and go out then and reproduce, so that there's a similarity there.

Now I will choose a place when you come into the land. You're not to just worship God anywhere. And thither shall you bring your burnt offerings, tithes, and freewill offerings [and so forth]. You shall not do after all of the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest to the inheritance, that the LORD your God gives you (Deu 12:6,8-9). Now right now you worship God, every man just does what he should feel but you haven't yet come into the rest

of the inheritance. But when you go over Jordan, to dwell in the land which God is gonna give you to inherit, and he gives you rest, your enemies round about, and you're dwelling safely; Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; and thither you thither shall you bring all that I command you... : And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God (Deu 12:10-12), Now God wants you to rejoice before Him. I feel sorry for those churches where the people feel inhibited to worship or rejoice in the Lord. Where their worship is so solemn that there isn't real rejoicing in your heart. I love to just have that neat kind of hilarity that we can have in rejoicing in the Lord as we thank God and praise God for His goodness. And God wanted the people just to rejoice in Him. He wants you to rejoice in Him. But He was going to establish a place. Now the place, first of all, was in Bethany but then later they moved it to Jerusalem. And this is the place that God chose and there the temple was finally built, the place that was chosen by God in the land where the people were to come and to worship God. Now take heed that you don't offer burnt offerings to God in every place that you see (Deu 12:13): In other words, they weren't to be offered anywhere in all the land but there at the place that was appointed by God. Now, you may kill and eat meat wherever you live. You get hungry for meat, go ahead and eat it, have a feast. But most of the time they would offer what they ate to God as a peace offering. And having offered unto God as a peace offering, then they would get the lamb or the ox or whatever would be offered to God as the sacrifice, a peace offering, but in the peace offering you got it back. You offered it to God, they took and burnt the fat and so forth unto God as a sweet smelling savor and all the meat barbecue kind of smell going up and you, though, got to eat the meat. You'd sit down and eat with God, just have a great time and fellowshiping with God. God ate part of it. It was sacrificed and went up in the smoke and burnt offering to God and knows you're sitting down and the idea was eating with God, communing with God. So most of the time you're gonna go ahead and have a lamb for dinner. Great. You take that lamb down to the priest, let him offer the sacrifice to God and then you go ahead and roast the thing and you're eating with God. And so, you have the consciousness of fellowshiping with God whenever you ate meat. The idea that I'm eating with God, I'm fellowshiping with God, I'm communing with God in the eating processes. And it was a very beautiful thing. Now, when they're gonna be in the land and they're gonna be scattered all over the land, they won't be able to bring the ox all the way down every time they want to eat meat. You can't go all the way to Jerusalem. So eat it in your cities. You can go ahead but don't offer it as a sacrifice to God. You're not to make a burnt offering of it, only when you come to Jerusalem was it to be offered in as a burnt offering. So when you come to Jerusalem, then you would go through offering it unto the Lord and then eating of it. However, they were never to eat the blood; but they were to pour it out on the earth as water (Deu 12:16). And this was to be a perpetual thing with them, for the life of the flesh is in the blood and they were thus to thoroughly bleed all of the meat before they would eat it. And so, he tells them the kind of animals that they can eat within their gates, anything that their hearts desire of the clean animals. But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God (Deu 12:18) If you offer them as an offering, freewill offering, peace offering, then you've gotta eat it in the specified place that God has commanded. Thou shalt rejoice before the LORD [again he tells you that] in all that you put your hands unto. And when the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he has promised, and you shall say, I will eat flesh, because my soul longs to eat flesh; you may eat flesh, wherever your soul desires after it (Deu 12:18, 20). Only again be sure you don't eat the blood, for the blood is the life and you may not eat the life of the flesh. Now observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee... Take heed to thyself that you're not snared by following [after the gods of the land that you're going into to possess] (Deu 12:28, 30). What a trap, the worship of these gods became to the people. The curiosity that you might say, How did these nations serve their gods? (Deu 12:30) Now God says, "I don't want you to even be curious about it. Just utterly destroy it and don't wonder curiously "Well, how did they worship". You know, there is a strange curiosity that some people have concerning some of the religious systems. "Well, how did they worship?" and, and it's dangerous to inquire into spiritism, spiritualism and all to just find out what they do. It's a bad curiosity, it's a dangerous curiosity; it can become a snare to you. Thou shalt not do unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination unto the LORD, which he hates, have they done (Deu 12:31); They've done every abominable, hateful thing. Everything that God hates they've done unto their gods. For they have even burned their sons and daughters in fire unto their gods (Deu 12:31). A human sacrifice, infant sacrifice was very common. Burning their children in the fire; heating their little gods until they were glowing hot and then putting their children in the outstretched arms of the little iron idols and letting them just fry to death as they worshipped their gods. God said, "Every abominable thing that I hate they've done in the worship of their gods. You're not to do it. You're not even to be curious." Now, everything that I command you, observe it: thou shalt not add to it, or diminish from it (Deu 12:32) Now over and over God warns us about adding to or taking away from that which he has commanded.

(Through The Bible; C 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986)

The message of the New Testament is simple, direct, and unmistakable. We are saved by God's grace through faith alone, not on the basis of any good works we have done. The sole responsibility of a Christian is to believe in the love and grace which God freely offers. This clear message stands in sharp contrast to the teachings of those who want us to trust in Christ and obey certain rules or practice certain rites. These teachers call their message a gospel, but it isn't really good news at all. They claim that in order to be acceptable to God, we need to do adequate works. Law and works are placed side by side with grace as a two-part ticket to righteousness. Contrary to these teachers, however, the New Testament insists that it is not law and works that justify, but God's grace and our response of faith. We are faced with a classic either/or situation. Righteousness must either come by faith in Christ alone, or by a perfect keeping of God's law. Right standing with God by faith or salvation by works are mutually exclusive. When we seek righteousness before God, we must make our choice and not look for some compromising middle ground. Abraham was a man who simply believed God, and God accounted him righteous. We stand on the same ground as Abraham and are heirs of the same blessings and promises that he enjoyed. This place of privilege comes only by faith, not by obedience to a code of law or a set of rules. If we seek to be righteous before God by our works, rather than by faith, we find ourselves under a curse. There are no exceptions to this rule. If we look to the law as our hope of assurance before God, the only way we can know security is to keep every commandment flawlessly. As Paul wrote, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10). This means we could never really know if we were saved until we died, and who can live with that kind of pressure? Imagine that you lived a perfect life, keeping every commandment, never committing a wrong action. One day, you decide to cross the street while the walk sign is lit. Suddenly, some driver runs the red light and strikes you down. As you watch his car's transmission pass over your head, you raise your fist and your parting words before leaving this world are your assessment of this idiot's driving habits. In that one small act, you missed the

mark. You fell from perfection. You sinned - and the Bible says the wages of sin is death. You may be able to keep nine of God's commandments perfectly, but if you fall short on number ten, you've missed the target. You have sinned. And the bad news is, unless you keep the whole law and do all that is written in it, you are guilty. It doesn't matter which law you violate; just one failure puts you out. Therefore, you don't stand a ghost of a chance of being declared righteous on the basis of your goodness. You are already out. You've already missed the mark. All you can expect is the curse of the law. Justification by good works is impossible because it relies on imperfect human effort. Legalism is the way of the curse. Conversely, the avenue of true righteousness and blessing is the way of faith because it relies not on your effort but on God's great mercy and abundant grace toward you in Jesus Christ. Though you have missed the mark - though you have utterly failed to be righteous by your own efforts - God has justified, you in His Son. Jesus took the responsibility for your falling short of God's standard and paid the penalty that you owed but could never pay. He gives you His perfect righteousness if you will just believe in Him and place your faith in Him. And now, being made right with God through Him, you are a beneficiary of all the wonderful blessings of God.

A Tragic Error;.... One of the most tragic errors the church can make is to emphasize the work that believers should be doing for God. How many times have you heard heavy, condemning sermons that tell you, "You ought to be praying more! You ought to be giving more! You ought to be witnessing more, or reading your Bible more, or serving God on some committee more!" How often do you go to church looking for encouragement only to hear about your failure and how disappointed God must be with you? The last thing I need is for someone to lay a heavy burden on me about my failures. I know I ought to be doing more. No one needs to tell me that I don't pray enough or read my Bible enough or give to God enough. All I get from such messages is a huge guilt complex. My frustration increases because I really want to love God more, to pray more, to have a deeper fellowship with Him. When we place our emphasis on areas of failure, we end up creating defeated, discouraged Christians who give up and drop out of the race. What a different message we see when we turn to the New Testament! It highlights not what we ought to be doing for God, but what God has already done for us. What we can do for God can never be enough. Our efforts at righteousness are always marred by our imperfections. But what God has done for us is perfect, beautiful, complete, and fantastic. How sad that we have reversed the equation and constantly harp upon our responsibility instead of God's wonderful grace! This is why we see so much of the church on the verge of dying out. We don't need someone to remind us of our failure as much as we need someone to show us the way out of our predicament. We need grace, not guilt.

Your One Duty;.... God has given you but one simple responsibility: to believe in His promise. You can enjoy the blessing of a relationship with God even though you may not pray enough, or give enough, or sacrifice enough because of your faith in what God has already done for you. God made Jesus to be sin for you that you might be made the righteousness of God through Him. Jesus imparts to you His righteousness when you simply place your faith and trust in the work He has done for you. His work is all of grace. Paul opened his letter to the Galatians with the salutation, "Grace be to you." He closed it with, "Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen." His benediction takes on a rich depth of meaning in light of the letter's sharp focus on the glorious grace of God. The grace of Jesus, not the law of Moses, was the Galatians' greatest need. To walk in the power of His Spirit, not in the vain efforts of the flesh, was their calling. How did the Galatians respond? We are not told. Perhaps this is because the question raised in Galatia is always an open one. Will you rely on your own righteousness, or will you trust in God's gracious provision? Will you remain in the simple message of salvation by grace through faith? Or will you add your own list of righteous works to the finished work of Christ? Will you walk in the flesh or in the Spirit? Will you glory in the cross of Christ alone? Or will you seek the approval and rewards of this world so that you may glory in your flesh? These are issues that every believer in every generation eventually must wrestle with. The answers you stand for will spell the difference between peace and fear, pride and true humility, even spiritual life and death. May you stand without wavering for the grace of Jesus Christ. May you not be moved by the deceptive desire to please men. May you be so heavenly minded that you are of the greatest earthly good, holding out the word of life in an increasingly dark and hopeless world. And may you glory this day in what Jesus has done for you, and in that alone.

("Why Grace Changes Everything"; Chuck Smith; Chapter 13: "Our Sole Responsibility")

2. The Purpose of Prayer;....How we need to pray! Not to talk about it. Not to have conferences about it. But to actually practice the privilege of prayer. Paul said, "Continue in prayer" (Colossians 4:2). The Greek word for "continue" speaks of persistence and constancy. Continue steadfastly in prayer. Why is persistence necessary in prayer? Some people say that praying for the same need more than once shows a lack of faith on our part. Yet, in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed the same prayer three times (Matthew 26:39-44). Also, in speaking of his own thorn in the flesh, Paul the apostle said, "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me" (II Corinthians 12:8). Jesus taught persistence in prayer in two parables. In the first one He said, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). He then illustrated this by the story of a callous judge and a determined widow. The widow visited the judge every day saying, "Avenge me of mine adversary." The judge, even though he did not fear God or man, said, "This woman will drive me crazy by coming here every day!" So, he wrote out his judgment in her favor. Then Jesus added, "Shall not God avenge his own elect? I tell you that he shall avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:2-8). At first I found difficulty with the fact that Jesus used an unjust judge as a comparison with our just God. But the parable actually shows a vast contrast. If an unjust judge could be persuaded to act by the persistence of a woman, how much more will our fair and loving Father bring about a just and speedy judgment for those who are calling upon Him. The other parable about persistence in prayer concerns a fellow who heard a knock on his door at midnight. He opened the door to find some of his friends had come to spend the night. Wanting to feed them before he bedded them down, he went to the cupboard but found he didn't have enough bread. So, he went to his neighbor's house, knocked on the door, and said, "Open up and give me some bread! I've got company." The neighbor replied, "I'm already in bed with my wife and children. Come back tomorrow." But the fellow kept knocking and wouldn't stop until he had what he needed. Because of this man's importunity, the neighbor finally got up and gave him the bread (Luke 11:5-10). We see that the Bible teaches persistence in prayer. Does that mean our prayers persuade God to do things our way? Does God have an arbitrary reluctance to answer us, and we make Him give in to our demands by being persistent and obnoxious? I hardly think so. I am convinced that prayers do not and cannot change the purposes of God - though you pray fervently, though you petition with tears, though you pray for days. God is far too loving to give in just because you are weeping and persevering for something He knows would be detrimental to you and would destroy you in the end. Prayer doesn't change the purpose of God, but prayer can change the action of God. ...Jesus said, "Your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask him" (Matthew 6:8 NKJV). Your prayers aren't informing God of your situation. He knows all your needs before you ever ask Him. But your prayers open the door and allow God the opportunity to,

do those things that He's been desiring to do, but wouldn't do in violation of your own free will. In John 15:16, Jesus said to His disciples "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that to do those things He desires to do. It is giving God my consent to do what He desires in my life. God has given me a free will and will not violate my free will. Thus, I must ask in order to receive. God knows that in one year I will need a particular thing, because He knows all my exact needs in advance. I don't know my needs even a month from now. If God gave me today what I'll need in a year, then I might not use it as He intends it to be used. So, as I become aware of my needs, I cry out to God, "Help me and meet this need now." I have finally become aware of the problem. But God has been aware of it all the time. Now when I ask Him for help, He is free to give it to me because I'll use it as He wants it to be used.

God's Timing;...Sometimes our prayers are answered almost as quickly as they're spoken. Eliezer the servant was sent by Abraham on a special mission: to find a wife for Isaac. As he came to a certain well, Eliezer said, "Lord, let a young virgin come here to draw water and when I say to her, 'Give me a drink.' Let her answer, 'Not only will I give you a drink, but I'll also draw water for your camels.'" And Lord, let her be the one you have chosen as a bride for Isaac." While the servant was yet praying in his heart, a young girl came to the well to draw water. He said to her, "Give me a drink." She quickly let the water jug down from her head, gave him a drink, and then said, "Not only thee but I will also draw for thy camels." And she drew water for the camels (Genesis 24:1-20). This is one of those beautiful, instantaneous answers to prayer that always thrills us. No sooner do the prayers escape the heart than God is answering them. It is also true that we have prayed many years for certain needs and have not seen the answer. Why is it that some prayers are answered immediately and others seem to be delayed? We pray for some people and they're healed. We pray for others and they die. First of all, this demonstrates that we're not in control of the situation. God is in control and He does according to His own purpose and will. Prayers should never be thought of as changing the purposes of God. We have a very wrong concept of prayer when we think of it as changing God's mind, altering God's purposes, or getting my will done. The true purpose of prayer is to get God's will done - to open the door for God to accomplish that which He has purposed to do. Thus, we are led to the conclusion that true prayer begins in the heart of God. God makes known to me what is His purpose, His desire, His wishes. I offer it back to God in prayer, and the cycle is completed. When I pray in this manner, I am in harmony with God's will. In I John 5:14,15 we read, "And 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 whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." Actually, I am the one often changed by prayer. Many times as I am praying God will speak to me. He will show me His way and His plan, which is always so much better than what I had in mind. While in prayer, God deals with me and shows me the folly of certain things that I have been insisting, and practically demanding, from Him. I respond, "Thank you, Lord, for not answering me during the last five years." He knew what was best for me all the time! At this point in my life, as I look back, I am as thankful for the prayers He did not answer as those He did. God has a plan for this earth, and He has chosen human instruments to do His work. Some people say that God can only work through man. That's not true. God has chosen to use man. God could work in any way He wants. He is not limited by human instruments. If we fail, God isn't going to fail. At times in history God has used angels to do His work on earth; such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. We must not lay the heavy responsibility of thwarting God's purpose on any person. We sometimes hear said, "If you fail to help in the purposes of God, the program of God is going to fail, and you'll be responsible! You'll have to stand before God and answer for that failure!" That isn't true. God will accomplish His purpose one way or another. By choosing to use you to do His will, God is giving you the blessed opportunity of knowing the joy of working together with Him. Then, as results begin to take place, He rewards you as though you did the work! When you get to heaven you'll be rewarded for those accomplishments, even though it was God who did the whole thing! When the survival of the Jewish race was being threatened by a cruel edict, Mordecai told Esther, "If you at this point hold your peace, deliverance will come from another quarter. But you'll be destroyed (Esther 4:14). He was warning her that when they try to wipe out the Jews, she would not escape the edict, even though she was in the palace. Likewise, when you fail to do God's will, deliverance will come from another quarter. You'll lose the blessing and the reward of being a co-laborer with God, but God's program and purpose will not fail.

God Wants to Bless You;...Second Chronicles tells us of King Asa's relationship with the Lord. When he first came to the throne, the King was faced with a very difficult situation - the Ethiopians were encamped around his people. King Asa cried out to God, "LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee" (II Chronicles 14:11). He knew the odds against him surviving meant nothing to God. If God be for us, who can be against us? God and you make a majority. The Lord was with Asa, and the king went out and destroyed the Ethiopian armies. When King Asa returned from victory the prophet Azariah met him and said, "The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (II Chronicles 15:2). Asa began to prosper. He became very strong and powerful. In the later years of his reign he was threatened again. But this time, the threat came from Baasha, the king of the northern tribes of Israel, who was building fortified cities north of Jerusalem in preparation for an invasion. King Asa took money out of the treasury and sent it to hire Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, to invade Israel from the north. This caused Baasha to withdraw his troops from invading Judah and to deploy them to defend the northern border. It was a clever and successful strategy that worked. However, rather than seeking the Lord in prayer, he sought human help. The prophet Hanani came to him and rebuked him for seeking the aid of man rather than the help of God. The prophet reminded him of how the Lord had helped him against the Ethiopians at the beginning of his reign, and he declared, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chronicles 16:9). Here the Bible is declaring one of the basic truths of God. He is looking for people to bless. God wants to work in your life and bless you. He wants to use you as one of His channels, as one of His instruments. But He's waiting for you to come into alignment with His plan. The moment your life comes into harmony with the purposes of God, you become a channel through which God's power and love can flow to a needy world. God is looking for people whose hearts are in tune with His desires. Thus, the greatest prayer is "Lord, bring me into harmony with Thy will." You can't improve on that. But it has to be more than just lip service. It must come from the heart. And that's not easy. There are so many things I want done, and so many of my prayers reflect selfishness. So many of my petitions are for things that would bring me comfort, ease, and happiness. But the real purpose of prayer is to see the work of God accomplished in my life and then, through my life, in the lives of others. I believe that God intends to give you many of the things you pray for, but His timing is different than yours. Many times God delays the answers to your prayers for a very good reason. One reason God may delay an answer

to your prayer is that He desires to give you more than what you were asking for at the moment. Hannah is a good example of this. She had been barren for years. Her husband had another wife with many children. Day after day Hannah's barrenness plagued her. One day Hannah and her husband were traveling to the tabernacle while the other wife stayed at home with the kids. On their journey to Shiloh her husband asked, "Hannah, why are you so sad?" Hannah replied, "Give me children." He responded, "Am I God that I could give you children? Aren't I better to you than many sons? Aren't you satisfied with me?" When Hannah arrived at the tabernacle the agony of her heart was so great that she couldn't even utter her request. She felt the grief so deeply that she just lay before God in the court of the tabernacle. Her lips were moving but she made no sound with her voice. Eli the priest passed by and saw Hannah prostrate before the Lord. He thought she was drunk and ordered her to stay away from wine. Hannah said, "No, I am not drunk. But the handmaiden of the Lord is grieved because she is barren. I've been pleading with God to give me a son. If He will give me a son, I have promised to give him back to God all the days of his life" (I Samuel 1). That's what God wanted to hear from Hannah, because God needed a man. The state of the nation Israel was so corrupt that there wasn't a man around for God to use. Before God could get a man, He had to get a woman. Therefore, He dealt with Hannah's heart. Hannah had been praying for a son for many years - a son for her own joy and pleasure, a son that would put an end to the taunts from the other wife. Hannah had prayed, "Lord, give me a son. Take away the shame." But finally she prayed, "Lord, give me a son. And I'll give him back to You all the days of his life." Hannah had finally come into harmony with the purposes of God. The priest told her, "Go in peace. The Lord has heard your prayer. You will have a son." Hannah went home and God gave her a son, Samuel. He became a prophet, a priest, and one of the most outstanding leaders of God's people in the Old Testament. Yes, God wanted to give Hannah a son all the while. But He delayed the answer to her prayers, so that He might work in her heart until she would be aligned with His purpose. Do not get discouraged when God delays the answers to your prayers. He may want to give you so much more than what you've been asking for. God knows the right time to answer our prayers. Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they receive: "The promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" Acts 1:4-5,8 After Jesus spoke these things, while His followers were standing with Him on the Mount of Olives in Bethany, He ascended into heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. The disciples returned to Jerusalem and continued steadfastly in prayer in one accord. The Bible says that they continued for ten days to wait till the day of Pentecost had fully come. It would have been possible for God to have poured out the Holy Spirit on them in the first ten minutes, but for His own purposes He saw fit to wait ten days (Acts 1-2). How long are you to persist in prayer? Until you get an answer - either a yes or no.

Pointers on Prayer;....In Colossians Paul exhorts us to "watch," which literally means to "stay awake." Sleepiness is one of the weaknesses of our flesh while we pray. When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane praying, He found His disciples asleep. He said, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40). God wants our minds to be sharp and alert when we talk to Him. I think it's insulting to talk to God when our minds are half-awake. Paul also exhorts us to pray "with thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2). Our prayers should always be coupled with thanksgiving. The Psalms serve as an ideal example of this. David prayed for everything in the Psalms - for himself, for his friends, and for his enemies. He also filled the Psalms with praises and thanksgiving unto God. They are as well-balanced with thanksgiving as with requests. Quite often, but not often enough, people come to me and say, "I don't have any problems to lay on you. I just wanted to praise the Lord with you! The Lord has been so good to me. I want to tell you how He's been blessing my life. That's so exciting! I hear so many problems as a pastor that it's a great joy when someone says, "No problem. I just want to tell you the Lord is so good!" That's glorious! It's a shame to continually lay some heavy problem on God. We ought to be thanking Him more for what He has already done for us. In the early days of the United States the Puritans observed days of fasting and affliction. There was at least one day of fast each month of the year. Then someone said, "Let's have a day of thanksgiving! We won't fast or afflict ourselves, but we'll have a feast to thank the Lord for all He has done." Thus, Thanksgiving began. Certainly, personal petitions are necessary in our prayers. But if I only pray when I have some desperate need in my own life and only bring personal petitions to God, I'm denying myself a fantastic blessing. Oh, that I would go to God with more praises and thanksgiving! Paul also exhorts us to pray for ministers (Colossians 4:3). May God help the ministers. Often, people place ministers on a pedestal and make us into something we're not. We're all too human. I wish I were more of a saint, but I'm not! Ministers have problems just like everybody else. We go through the same trials, perhaps to an even greater degree than most other Christians. Many times we're under heavier attacks by Satan because of our position of spiritual authority and leadership. Ministers need prayer. Someone asked Spurgeon about his success. He answered, "My people pray for me." The Apostle Paul said, "Pray for us." What did Paul want them to pray for him? He wanted to pray that God would open a door of utterance (Colossians 4:3). At this point Paul was in prison. You'd think that he would desire liberty. "Pray that God will open the door of the prison and get me out of this place!" Instead Paul prayed that God would open the door of opportunity to freely speak the word. Pray that God will help me not to be a powerless minister, but to be filled with His Spirit. Help me not to speak a lot, but say nothing. Pray that God will help me not to be a fantastic minister, speaking only to please and excite the people. Pray that I'll not be an idle minister, not being thoroughly furnished in the word. Pray that I'll not be a cold minister and become unresponsive to the people's needs. Pray that I might be a faithful minister speaking forth the mysteries of Christ, really demonstrating His love, setting an example before the flock, walking humbly before God as He would have me to do. Pray for your ministers. We covet your prayers. In turn, we'll pray for you.

EFFECTIVE PRAYER LIFE

by Chuck Smith

(AMP Bible; The Everyday Life Bible; Joyce Meyers; Scripture; Commentaries; Past Pastor Sermons; Dictionary; 2006; pg 294-296)
(Word 9 Bible Software; 2010; Concordance, Dictionary, Scripture, Sermons of Saints past, Devos; Sparkling Gems From The Greek)

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